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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Jonathan Allen Fowler entitled "Adventures of an 'Itinerant Institutor:' The Life and Philanthropy of Thomas Bernard." I have examined the final paper copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in History.

John Bohstedt, Major Professor

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ADVENTURES OF AN 'ITINERANT INSTITUTOR:' THE LIFE AND PHILANTHROPY OF THOMAS BERNARD

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
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Jonathan Allen Fowler
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of
Corinne Garrett Fowler (1904-1996).
My grandmother's passion for exploring history
touched me and all who knew her.

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I have incurred many debts in writing this dissertation and taking this degree. Any scholarship that I have achieved is due to many excellent teachers along the way. I would like to thank the professor of my first graduate history class, Dr. Alan Grubb of Clemson University. He awakened my passion for British literature and history. My dissertation committee, Dr. Owen Bradley, Dr. Palmira Brummett, and Dr. John Zomchick, have obviously been essential to the completion of this thesis, but they first inspired me with their teaching. Each has managed to achieve that difficult balance between research scholarship and dynamic teaching. I thank them and consider them mentors. The completion of this project was also made possible by the assistance of Dr. Jeff Sahadeo and Dr. Lorri Glover. Thank you both. I would be remiss if I failed to acknowledge my primary mentor, Dr. John Bohstedt, whose instruction, patience, and support have made me a better scholar. Dr. Bohstedt's guidance led me to this dissertation topic and what value there is in the finished product owes much to his critical reviews and suggestions.

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ABSTRACT

Sir Thomas Bernard founded, directed, or subscribed to more than twenty associated charities. His most famous brainchild, the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, became a national clearing house for charitable plans, public health measures, and employment or educational schemes from all over Britain. Simultaneously Bernard, as a Buckinghamshire magistrate, instituted administrative changes to foster independence and moral restraint among relief recipients. On a few issues, including vaccination and fever hospitals, Bernard appealed directly to parliament for financial support; or, as with the excise on salt, he spearheaded a campaign for a parliamentary repeal. This study examines Bernard's life and work as part of a general response to the social and economic crises born of British industrialization coupled with war against revolutionary France.

This biography argues that Bernard pioneered or popularized virtually every major British charity innovation from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; moreover, that his endorsement of more selective distribution of relief, self-help among the poor, and the application of scientific principles to relief, stemmed from his childhood socialization. I also demonstrate that Bernard never hesitated to call on local or national government resources to assist or complement the work of his private charities. Bernard's experience supports Joanna Innes's description of a 'mixed economy' of welfare where private, public, personal, and ecclesiastical forms of relief often complemented rather than competed with one another.

Bernard's philanthropic projects enlisted the help of Britons from every corner of the island, calling on the well-to-do to use their wealth, power and influence to promote the general welfare while asking the poor to assist in their own recovery. On one hand, I maintain that Bernard's message to the wealthy fostered the making of a new British ruling elite from 1780-1820, one that espoused hard work, disinterested leadership, and ostentatious patriotism to

justify its place of privilege. On the other, the democratic nature of associated charities afforded subscribers practical political experience, including Britons without the public franchise. This experience mobilized thousands of Britons to address national issues and in the process facilitated the social and political integration of the British nation.

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INTRODUCTION

An impressive gallery of paintings still adorns the weathered walls of the former London Foundling Hospital, now the Coram Family Charity. Included among these, though hidden from plain view, rests a portrait by Opie of a mature gentleman seated at a writing desk. Turning his gaze from the small picture window framing the opposite wall of his study, the subject cocks his head slightly in suggestion that the artist has interrupted the work at hand, apparently the composition or editing of a manuscript clutched in the subject's left hand. The gentleman's countenance, though affable, is unfamiliar, his anonymity secure but for the painting's caption which reads: "THO^{S} BERNARD ESQ^{R} L.L.D. Treasurer of the Foundling Hospital and Chancellor of the Diocese of Durham."[1]

While no life can be condensed into a single portrait, Opie's work provides a fitting memorial and perhaps the only tangible testament to Bernard's life and work save his voluminous writings. Having through marriage and a successful legal practice accumulated a fortune, Bernard quit the law in 1795 to embark on a charitable career that spanned twenty-three years, during which he fought child labor, illiteracy, unemployment, epidemic disease, and other social problems. While Bernard gave generously to these causes, his main contribution came not from his wallet but from his pen. Many philanthropists donated more money than Bernard to charitable projects, but few, if any, could rival him as a publicist. He wrote more than 60 brief reports of individual projects such as workhouses, schools of industry, soup-kitchens, fever hospitals, and friendly societies. In addition, Bernard penned at least 15 pamphlets on broad social and political issues including education, religion, taxation, freedom of the press, and aging. He must have spent most of his waking hours at his writing desk, making Opie's depiction *apropos*.

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[1] I have only observed an engraved copy of the painting from James Baker *The Life of Sir Thomas Bernard, Baronet* (London: John Murray, 1819); however, Rhian Harris, curator of the Foundling Hospital Museum of the Coram Family Charity, and her assistant, Jane Broadhurst, inform me that the original portrait hangs in an office there.

It is fitting, too, that the inscription to Opie's Bernard gives primacy to Bernard's position at the London Foundling Hospital. Of all his philanthropic work, the Foundling was arguably the charity dearest to Bernard's heart, perhaps because it was his first leadership role, perhaps for more personal reasons. The fact that Bernard's marriage produced no issue, for example, may have contributed to the affection that both he and his wife, Margaret, felt for the orphans of London. Before 1795 Thomas had subscribed to other philanthropies, including the Proclamation Society and the Philanthropic Society; but he took no managerial responsibilities at either.[2] However, when he retired from his law practice that year in order to "meliorate the domestic Habits of the labouring Class" he accepted the Treasurership of the Foundling – a position that required both constant attention and residence on the charity's estate.[3] Bernard's tenure at the Foundling was an active one; he introduced scientific improvements to the charity, especially in the diet of the children. The treasurer remodeled the kitchens of the estate with stoves and cooking utensils designed by Count Rumford, a leading authority on the subject at the time. The move resulted in a significant reduction in fuel costs.[4] He also supervised the cutting of new roads on the estate. When houses were built on these new thoroughfares, their rentals produced impressive revenues during the economically depressed age of revolutionary wars. From 1806 to 1810 Bernard's responsibilities at the Foundling ebbed as he assumed the less demanding duties of Vice-President. But even after 1810, when he held no official position at the charity, his ties to the orphans of the West End remained strong. In fact when he died in 1818, he returned to his charitable roots and was interred by his own request in the subterranean vault of the Foundling chapel. The

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[2] The Proclamation Society was formed in 1787 to enforce the King's Proclamation against Immorality and Profaneness on the Christian Sabbath. Created in 1788, the Philanthropic Society tried to rehabilitate juvenile delinquents.

[3] James Bernard-Baker, ed., *Pleasure and Pain, 1750-1818* (London: John Murray, 1930), 49.

[4] Benjamin Thompson, the Count Rumford of the Holy Roman Empire (1753-1814), was an internationally acclaimed inventor and reformer of poor houses, especially in Munich. Several biographies of Rumford exist. A good start is Sanborn C. Brown, *Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1979). An interesting, but less flattering portrayal appears in Morris Berman, *Social Change and Scientific Organization: The Royal Institution, 1799-1844* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978).

children of the hospital honored Bernard's posthumous return by forming a funeral procession, boys on one side, girls on the other, just as Sir Thomas would have wished.[5]

The Foundling marked a recurrent motif in Bernard's life, but his wider accomplishments earned him a reputation as an "indefatigable philanthropist."[6] The Foundling was just the beginning of Bernard's ever-expanding circle of charitable enterprises and ideas. The main vehicle for Bernard's expanded role in charitable projects was the SBCP, the Society for Bettering the Condition and Improving the Condition of the Poor– a clearing house for information and ideas on various philanthropic schemes.[7] In 1797 he co-founded the Society with the E. J. Eliot, Shute Barrington, and William Wilberforce.[8] As the Society's secretary and leader, Bernard was also the main author and editor of the SBCP's publications. In addition, he played key roles at the London Fever Institution, the Royal Jennerian Society, and the Association for the Relief of the Manufacturing and Laboring Poor, among others. So varied and vigorous were his labors that one contemporary observed that "at one time he [Bernard] may be said to have had half the Poor in the metropolis nestling under the wings of his patronage."[9]

Bernard's multiple charitable subscriptions do not fully explain his reputation. After all, other individuals donated more money or belonged to more charitable societies than did Bernard, yet they did not enjoy his renown. What partly won Bernard his pride of place in the philanthropic community was

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[5] The Bernards were particular about the separation of the genders at the Foundling. They commonly presided over the children's midday meal with Mrs. Bernard heading the girls' table and Thomas attending the boys'. The vault no longer exists and the Bernard's marker may have perished when the hospital moved to Hertfordshire in 1934.

[6] J.R. Poynter, *Society and Pauperism: English Ideas on Poor Relief, 1795-1834* (London: Rutledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 91.

[7] The analogy to a modern clearing house I borrowed from David Owen, *English Philanthropy 1660-1960* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1964), 106.

[8] E. J. (Edward James) Eliot, 1758-1797, M.P. and philanthropist. Shute Barrington, 1734-1826, bishop of Durham from 1791 to 1826, noted for promoting philanthropy and education. William Wilberforce, 1759-1833, M.P., philanthropist, anti-slavery champion, and leader of the Evangelical lobby known as the Clapham Sect.

[9] Thomas Frognall Dibdin, *Reminiscences of a Literary Life* (London: J. Major, 1836), 230. Cf. Sophia E. Higgins, *The Bernards of Abingdon and Nether Winchendon, A Family History* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1903-4) 4 vols., IV:140.

incessant activity. Few, if any, could rival the hours that he logged. For the majority of subscribers to associated charities, their primary benevolent act was writing a cheque and attending an occasional meeting. Thomas Bernard was rarely so passive. He was a doer, who wanted to direct and truly labor for those ventures to which he subscribed. In his declining years Bernard maintained his fervor for charitable causes but channeled his impulses into a national campaign for the repeal of the salt duties, a domestic tax on the use of salt which he felt weighed particularly hard on British laborers. He spent the final months before his death corresponding with scientists and magistrates gathering information for the parliamentary repeal. Bernard's tenacity and determination did not go unnoticed by fellow philanthropists. The Reverend William Gilpin expressed most eloquently the nature of Bernard's character when he wrote of Thomas that "Charity is often disposed to open its purse: but seldom to take pains; though a man's time is frequently more useful than his money."[10]

The particulars of Bernard's tale may have been singular in scope and intensity and they are of historical worth by themselves. However, Sir Thomas's labor was part of a much grander narrative, that of Great Britain's reaction to a half-century of demographic, social, economic, political and cultural change associated with the early Industrial Revolution and a bitter rivalry with revolutionary France. Religious awakening and new intellectual currents helped Britons make sense of this world. Donna Andrew summed it best when she observed that "Evangelicalism and Malthusianism set the tone and agenda, political economy the limits of interference, and utilitarianism the methods by which the benevolent attempted to re-knit the tattered social fabric of English social life and strove to recreate social harmony through the reunification of interclass bonds and interests."[11] Bernard was an active participant in many of these trends that enhanced his reputation as a philanthropist. While his fame centered around charity reform, Bernard's life and work helped redefine British

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[10] Baker, *Life of Sir Thomas Bernard*, 126.

[11] Donna T. Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police: London Charity in the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 169.

identity and nationalism, make a truly British ruling class, and increase political mobilization in Britain. Such an accomplished and influential gentleman deserves the label 'social reformer' because the organizational and publicity methods that he pioneered had broad applications and impact in British society. The present work offers an overdue examination of Bernard's life within the context of philanthropy, society, and politics. Such an approach gives due credit to a man who was more than just an energetic philanthropist.

Philanthropy & Social Welfare

The late 18th and early 19th centuries marked a crucial period in the development of modern British welfare systems, both public and private. Spurred by the experience of the first Industrial Revolution and by war with France, welfare reformers dealt with myriad social problems brought on by rising population and industrialization. Private charities addressed the most pressing issues of the day, from rising poor rates and crime to unemployment, epidemic disease, and even declining church attendance. When they did, however, they often cooperated rather than competed with poor law administrators and other public officials. On the other hand administrators of parochial aid often enlisted the help of private philanthropists or charities. The line between public and private forms of relief was rarely as pronounced as modern historians have suggested. As a result, significant changes in voluntary charities from the 1780s to the 1830s were echoed in statutory changes of public institutions. Bernard provides a bridge between these two parallel developments because he was active in both.

Statutory reform of the poor laws, if not outright abolition, was high on the agenda of late eighteenth-century social critics. As poor rates steadily rose with population from 1750, reformers such as Joseph Townsend attacked institutional public relief as contributing to the dual problem of rising poor rates and overpopulation. According to critics the poor laws' safety net and its provision for additional relief for each dependent child encouraged paupers to have more children. Critiques of the poor laws were hardly new, but they gained in intensity

as would-be reformers published innumerable pamphlets on the subject. Important practical reforms included the Speenhamland (Berkshire) magistrates' use of bread price tables to standardize relief. On a national level the Gilbert Act of 1782 provided for the collection of parishes into unions for the purpose of sharing a workhouse and its costs. These attempts to make public relief more standardized, more centralized, and ultimately less expensive culminated in the most significant welfare statute of the early nineteenth century, the New Poor Law of 1834.[12]

Although better known for his private charity, Thomas Bernard pioneered local innovations in parochial relief. In the 1780s and '90s, while serving as a county magistrate in Buckingham, he sought to infuse greater discrimination into the distribution of public relief. In contrast to the now-famous Speenhamland system of uniform bread price tables, Bernard proposed to treat each application individually on its specific merits. This would entail keeping tables of a different kind, recording the personal details and circumstances of each applicant. That would allow a magistrate to tailor relief to the specific experience of the recipient. Since poorhouses and workhouses treated residents the same whether dependent pauper or temporarily unemployed, Bernard also opposed their construction. He preferred plans that distributed outdoor relief to the seasonally unemployed and reserved the poor house for the sturdy beggar. Bernard's thoughts on a national reform of the poor law appeared in his public critique of Samuel Whitbread's poor law proposal where he voiced these very concerns about discrimination in the administration of relief.

Private charity also faced criticism and calls for reform at the close of the eighteenth century. Critics charged voluntary charities with causing the very problems they sought to relieve, especially when they offered emergency relief in the form of food or funds. Indiscriminate almsgiving, it was argued, encouraged

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[12] Lynn Hollen Lees, *The Solidarity of Strangers: the English poor laws and the people, 1700-1948* (Cambridge University Press, 1998); On the rise of poor rates, see George R. Boyer, *An Economic History of the English Poor Law 1750-1850* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), or the contemporary account of Joseph Townsend, *A Dissertation on the Poor Laws*, (1786; reprint, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971); and Poynter, *Society and Pauperism*.

paupers to rely upon charity rather than seeking employment. But just as administrators of statutory relief initiated reform so too did charity volunteers who altered their methods markedly after the mid eighteenth century. To a certain degree charity reform was a European phenomenon, but it was particularly pronounced in Britain.[13] For nearly a century, British charity volunteers had demonstrated their willingness to innovate. In the late seventeenth century, volunteers established the first associated charitable clubs and societies that were modeled on early joint-stock companies.[14] Stock companies had shareholders but charities had subscribers whose collective donations proved a more reliable and flexible source of revenue than earlier forms such as endowed charities. Endowed charity depended primarily on posthumous giving that specified how it was to be used. Once monies were earmarked for a specific cause, trustees lacked authority to redirect funds to other needs as they arose. Subscription charities, by contrast, gave donors direct control over the management of funds by means of annual election and direction by committees of subscribers and that made such 'associated' charities more flexible. Living donors could revise their targets as conditions changed, or as they learned from trial and error what forms of relief worked best.

By the late eighteenth century, voluntary charities ambitiously sought to reform the lower orders and to "re-knit" bonds between classes. The adaptability of associated charities made these significant changes possible. Whereas mid-century societies, during war crises, had promoted population growth as a priority, by the end of the century Malthusian concerns made that goal irresponsible and dangerous. The primary aim of late-century charities was not to blindly cultivate a greater population in Britain, but to reform a populace that, in the mind of critics, had already become too numerous. Reform focused on reuniting those classes of Britons which had been sundered by the impersonal and indiscriminate

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[13] British charitable societies had counterparts on the Continent. See Hugh Cunningham and Joanna Innes, eds. *Charity, Philanthropy, and Reform from the 1690s to 1850* (London: Macmillan Press, 1998), especially the introduction.

[14] Owen, *English Philanthropy*, 5-6.

relief of previous decades. Late eighteenth-century fashioners of charitable theory and practice, including Bernard, worked toward this ideal by "individualiz[ing] and moraliz[ing] the donor-recipient relationship" through home visitation.[15] In addition to bringing people together, visitation served a police function – a trend that predominated in charities during the troubled 1790s. When charitable donors went to the homes of recipients they witnessed firsthand the conditions of relief applicants and thus were in a better position to evaluate the deserving/non-deserving status of those visited.[16]

Another major theme of voluntary relief between the 1770s and 1830s was the search for efficient and economic forms of assistance. Caught in the push for economy, reformers commonly called for the de-institutionalization of large-scale charities such as the London Foundling Hospital that had appeared in the mid eighteenth century. De-institutionalization meant cutting overhead cost either by limiting the amount of relief, or by giving preference to out-relief, that is assistance distributed to recipients living at homes. Cutting cost and championing out-relief allowed charities to operate without the institutional facilities required by indoor aid. The move toward de-institutionalization originated, according to Donna Andrew, with the dispensary movement of the 1770s. These dispensaries were outpatient clinics where the poor could get free medical advice and medicine. Dispensary physicians also made house calls for those unable to attend the clinic.[17] Distributing medical aid in dispensaries on an outpatient basis seemed preferable to maintaining mammoth institutions such as the London Foundling and the Lying-In Hospital, the former of which kept orphans for years while the latter housed patients for months. Reformers feared that extended stays might encourage dependency among patients.[18]

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[15] H. Cunningham, "Introduction," *Charity, Philanthropy and Reform*, 6.

[16] On deserving-non-deserving see, Owen, *English Philanthropy*, 96. Soup kitchens and home visitation are discussed in B. Kirkman Gray, *A History of English Philanthropy: from the dissolution of the monasteries to the taking of the first census* (1905; reprinted, New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1967), 255-59.

[17] M. Dorothy George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* (1925. 2nd printing; Chicago: Academy Chicago Publishers, 2000), 62-6.

[18] Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, chapters 4, 6.

While the Foundling and similar institutions came under public fire, domestic-based forms of assistance became the darlings of British charitable reform. Ultimately, as late-century voluntarism focused on domestic relief, its efforts became galvanized into a vague but comprehensive notion of self-help.[19] Self-help, what the historian B. Kirkman Gray called "the great principle of social order at this time," described the general attempt by reformers to make recipients of aid the main agents in their own recovery. Involving recipients in their own improvement could, it was believed, regulate or police the social order by preventing social problems before they happened. Eighteenth-century police depended on controlling disorder by positive force, but it also meant pro-actively regulating the general welfare of society by providing relief or sometimes education to society's ragged or criminal fringes. This philosophy of police stemmed from an enlightened confidence that humanity could be rehabilitated either by improving the social environment, or by offering individuals positive incentives or negative punishments. Voluntarists consequently tried to rehabilitate all types of recipients, *e.g.* children, the blind, prisoners, by changing the social conditions in which people lived and worked. From an emphasis on environmental factors, it followed that the home drew serious attention from voluntarists. Many, as Hugh Cunningham noted, placed a renewed emphasis on the significance of the family as a social unit that could offer assistance and succor to potential relief applicants, and which could serve as a focal point for relief efforts.[20]

The concentration of charitable reform in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries fostered other significant developments for associated philanthropies. Philanthropists, for example, articulated a 'new philosophy' that presented the collection of empirical information as part of the charitable goal. As Bernard put it: "Let us therefore make the enquiry into all that concerns the POOR, and the promotion of their happiness, a SCIENCE." The term 'new philosophy' was Bernard's, but B. Kirkman Gray borrowed it to describe a new

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[19] B. Kirkman Gray, *History of English Philanthropy*, 256.

[20] H. Cunningham, "Introduction," in *Charity, Philanthropy and Reform,* 6-8.

understanding of poverty, relief, and charity aimed at making philanthropy as scientific and as systematic as possible. For charitable reformers this meant discovering and targeting the root causes of poverty rather than treating poverty's superficial manifestations. Private charities made limited progress toward standardization, centralization, and economy, falling short in this respect of the achievements of the New Poor Law. They did, however, forge a crude national network of charitable activity. Although this national network helped integrate national, regional, and local organizations, it also, according to Hugh Cunningham, gave birth to denominational rivalries between Anglican's and Dissenters' charities.[21]

In the world of private voluntarism Bernard was even more innovative and influential. The SBCP, undeniably Bernard's greatest contribution in this respect, became a model for de-institutionalized charity. It emphasized self-help, maintained a discriminating relief policy, and spearheaded the formation of a national charitable network. As an information clearing house, this society was "one of the most innovative institutions of its day or any other," and "may be seen," according to Frank Prochaska, "as an early 'coordinating' charity."[22] Although it occasionally distributed material relief, the SBCP's primary form of aid was information. The motive principle behind the society was self-help, specifically the promotion of thrift and economy. The Society's reports and publications offered moral instruction, vocational training, and even cookery advice. The Society's preference for intellectual rather than material aid obviated the need for extensive, costly facilities, thereby assuaging reformers' fears that long-term relief in a permanent institution might lead to pauper dependence. In a further attack

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[21] H. Cunningham, "Introduction," in *Charity, Philanthropy and Reform, 6*-8. On the 'new philosophy' see Kirkman Gray, *History of English Philanthropy*, 278. T. Bernard, "Preliminary Address to the Public," *Reports of the Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor.* Hereafter *The Reports.* (London: 1797-1817) 7 vols. I: 1-2. On religious denominations and charity, see M.J.D. Roberts, "Head versus Heart? Voluntary Associations and Charity Organization in England, c.1700-1850," In *Charity, Philanthropy and Reform*, 77-8. Bernard's religious views are explored briefly in Owen, *English Philanthropy*, 105-6; and Frank Prochaska, *The Voluntary Impulse, Philanthropy in Modern Britain* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), 31-33.

[22] Prochaska, *Voluntary Impulse*, 31.

on dependency and in attempt to ensure that relief be properly directed and distributed, the SBCP promoted donor visitation, background investigations, and other forms of assistance where recipients were monitored by the distributing agency. In short, it epitomized many late eighteenth-century trends in charitable practice save one: denominational rivalry. Bernard's Anglican ties never prejudiced relief at the SBCP or any other of his societies. He stressed performing good works rather than supporting an agenda of the Church. His philanthropic goals overrode sectarian concerns and his charity was open to all faiths as reflected in the faiths of his collaborators which included Quakers, Methodists, Catholics, and Baptists. Although in this respect the SBCP deviated from the practice of contemporary charities, its impact on British practice was profound and its methods, according to Frank Prochaska, became "the stock in trade of philanthropy well into the Victorian era."[23] Although less known, many of the ideas and methods that made the SBCP so influential, Bernard developed while engaged in earlier charitable pursuits, especially the London Foundling Hospital.

British Nationalism

Benedict Anderson defined a nation broadly as "an imagined political community."[24] An historical application of this definition to Great Britain requires an exploration of how and when the inhabitants of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland began to think, or 'imagine' themselves as part of a common nation. In 1992, Linda Colley produced a study, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, that argued "war with France brought Britons, whether they hailed from Wales, Scotland, or England, into confrontation with an obviously hostile Other and encouraged them to define themselves collectively against it." Colley's opposition model explains one factor in how British identity was "superimposed, if only for a while, onto much older alignments and loyalties." Britishness, she adds, did not replace but coexisted with English, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish identities. The foil of France was complemented by a variety of other catalysts. The

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[23] *Ibid*, 32.

[24] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983).

development of better roads, canals, and eventually railways improved communications and commerce between regions and brought Britons together logistically, while the emergence of a newspaper and periodical press fostered mental integration. The spread of associated clubs and societies, moreover, facilitated "spatial integration across the British Isles and colonies ... a process in which associations served, along with war, religion, and much else, to create a new, if ambivalent sense of Britishness at the end of the eighteenth century."[25]

These common developments explain how and when the imagined political community of Britain emerged, but not fully why. Why did English industrialists and Scottish tradesmen choose to identify themselves as Britons? What led them to support this new nation? Reasons varied, of course, but Colley made a striking observation. "Identification with Britain served," she wrote, "as a bandwagon on which different groups and interests leaped so as to steer it in a direction that would benefit them."[26] Patriotism, in other words, could be self-serving. A worker enlisting in the army did so to win local prestige or capitalize on the opportunity to travel, while a merchant subscribed to a philanthropic society because it was socially respectable. Each supported Britain for his own reason, not in blind service to a British state run by an uncaring aristocracy. Patriotism could also promote change; it need not be socially or politically conservative as is commonly assumed. Take, for example, patriotic societies such as the Society of Anti-Gallicans, the Marine Society, or the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, Manufacturers, and Commerce (hereafter, Society of Arts).[27] The commercial men

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[25] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 5-6; 367-70. For a comparable study of Englishness in this same period, see Gerald Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism: a cultural history, 1740-1830* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987). For the importance of print capitalism for the development of nationalism, see Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 37-46; Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800, The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 452; and R. J. Morris, "Clubs, societies and associations," In *The Cambridge Social History of Great Britain 1750-1950*, 5 vols. *Volume III, Social Agencies and Institutions*, edited by F.M.L. Thompson (Cambridge University Press, 1990), III: 414.

[26] Colley, *Britons*, 5.

[27] Founded by Thomas Shipley in 1754, the society received a royal charter in 1847. For a biography of Shipley see D. G. C. Allan, *William Shipley: Founder of the Society of Arts* (London: Hutchinson, 1968). On the society's work, see Derek Hudson and Kenneth W. Luckhurst, *The Royal Society of Arts 1754-1954* (London: John Murray, 1954), and D. G. C. Allan and John Abbott, eds., *The Virtuoso Tribe of Arts and Sciences: Studies in the Eighteenth-Century Work and Membership of the London*

who founded these eighteenth-century societies served national as well as personal interests. They encouraged military vigilance, national economic strength, as well as public spiritedness. Mercantile interests formed private societies to address national issues because the aristocratic British state was not. If the state had done enough to promote military vigilance or economic growth, there would have been no need for a Society of Arts. The very existence of these patriotic societies, therefore, "challenged the way that the British state was currently organized." In similar fashion, Gerald Newman surveyed more overt bourgeois critiques of patrician lifestyle in his study of eighteenth-century English literature. Colley, though, warned against viewing patriotic societies such as the Society of Arts "simply as a piece of bourgeois assertiveness" because in many instances merchants collaborated with their social betters on these projects.[28] Cooperation between classes enhanced the social standing of these merchants while allowing them to institute changes without conflict.

If workers and commercial men had their reasons for joining the British nation and acting its patriot, so too did the ruling order which, after 1780, imagined itself as 'British' for the first time.[29] The reasons for the consolidation of English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish aristocracies are diverse and are buried in the unique social, economic, and international pressures of the late eighteenth-century. Industrialization and international rivalry presented the aristocratic British state with unprecedented challenges. No Old Regime government had ever faced such rapid social and economic change, and confrontation from the French Other only added to the sense of crisis. A third problem for the aristocratic state was the aforementioned patriotic societies and the critiques they engendered. These organizations afforded politically marginalized Britons a forum for social comment and action. Since many subscribers lacked national political franchise, their ability to vote within their societies and clubs offered a "much broader interpretation of what it was to be an active patriot;" it also put forth a more

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Society of Arts (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992).

[28] Newman, *Rise of English Nationalism*, 63-122; Colley, *Britons*, 87-94.

[29] David Cannadine, *Aspects of Aristocracy: Grandeur and Decline* (London: Penguin, 1994), 9-36.

inclusive definition of citizenship that acted to censure the entire aristocratic social, cultural, and political system.[30]

After 1776 implicit criticism evolved into overt attacks on the traditional aristocracy. Urban radicals, 'respectable' bourgeoisie, and country gentlemen openly challenged the ruling elite and the system of 'Old Corruption' that supported them.[31] Military defeat by American colonists and their French allies, not to mention subsequent losses to the French revolutionary armies and Napoleon, fostered nothing short of a crisis of legitimacy for the ruling order. How competent were Britain's 'natural' leaders if they could not vanquish rag-tag colonists or the French peasant armies of a self-made emperor? Critics hurled these and other jibes at an aristocracy who, in addition to seeming incapable of ruling effectively, also exhibited arguably unpatriotic behavior. Fashionable Britons preferred Italian and French art and educated their sons via a Grand Tour of the Continent. Worse still, they commonly spoke French rather than English at social gatherings. Traditionally, these practices had distinguished the aristocracy socially and culturally from its inferiors, but by the late eighteenth-century respectable critics perceived these same customs as awkward, ill-conceived, and unpatriotic affectation.[32]

The British elite, despite challenges to its patriotism and moral authority, weathered the onslaught, re-made itself, and survived well into the Victorian era. Public patriotism played a key role in this process. The privileged began their preservation by closing ranks and integrating the Anglo and Celtic elites into one British body. David Cannadine described this transfigured elite as a 'new' ancien regime. The nascent ruling order included Anglo and Celtic landowners commonly interconnected by marriage, but also self-made merchants, nabobs, and industrialists, who, as Cannadine put it, "bought their way in and gradually

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[30] Colley, *Britons*, 93-4. The implicit critique of the ancien regime that she attributes here to patriotic societies echoed the broadening of political discourse associated with the formation of the 'public sphere.' See pp. 17-20 of this introduction.

[31] Colley, *Britons*, 148-54, Philip Harling, *The Waning of 'Old Corruption': The Politics of Economical Reform in Britain 1779-1846* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 6; and Cannadine, *Aspects of Aristocracy*, 20-1.

[32] See Gerald Newman, *Rise of English Nationalism*, x

established themselves as bona fide landowners." The spectrum also encompassed state servants who, unlike their Continental counterparts, never became "a separate (and inferior) service nobility."[33] The diverse springs of this new elite distorted its apparent fluidity. The British elite was not truly open for only a select few penetrated its defenses so that by 1820 it had become, according to Cannadine, more exclusive, not to mention more powerful and wealthier, than its English, Welsh, Scottish, and Irish predecessors.[34]

Integration and enrichment added pressures for a ruling elite under siege from outspoken critics. "How was consolidation as a caste to be combined with demonstration of broad patriotic utility? How, crudely, could the distinctive wealth, status and power of the new British ruling class be packaged and presented so as to seem beneficent rather than burdensome, a national asset rather than an alien growth?"[35] Elite Britons needed to rehabilitate their public image by embracing a new value system and distancing themselves from what critics had posed as the values, or lack thereof, of their Anglo-Celtic predecessors. They adopted, at least in public, a 'new ethos' characterized by "relentless hard work, complete professionalism, an uncompromising private virtue, and an ostentatious patriotism."[36] Adhering to this new ideal required fundamental changes in elite education, art patronage, travel, and dress. British aristocratic art patrons, for example, opened their private collections for public viewing. Moreover, they increasingly sponsored domestic rather than foreign artists.

The transformation of elite culture contributed also to changes in the manner of British government. Although the most famous example of moderate reform was the Reform Bill of 1832, there were additional changes in the Church of England and in the state's economic policy. Blessed by a generation of relative peace and assisted by Conservative and Pittite governments' retrenchment policies after Waterloo, per capita public spending in 1851 was significantly less than it

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[33] Cannadine, *Aspects of Aristocracy*, 34.

[34] *Ibid*, 21; Colley, *Britons*, 155-64.

[35] Colley, *Britons*, 164-5.

[36] *Ibid*, 192.

had been in the 1780s.[37] These public reforms were all part of the same preservation process. "The British political elite," according to Philip Harling, "was able to shield more and more of its authority from the critique of Old Corruption through economical reforms and the cultivation of an image of disinterested management."[38] In sum, the British aristocracy became public models of patriotism and public service and in so doing helped articulate values that defined Britishness. The adoption of this patriotic ethos and public image neutralized the attacks of its more moderate and respectable critics. Opposition to such a publicly patriotic and disinterested elite ran the risk of being labeled unpatriotic or even radical, either of which, in the wake of the French Revolution, drove fear into the hearts of almost all property-owning Britons. Becoming public patriots ensured the dominance of this new British elite well into the Victorian era.

This biography portrays Bernard as an ardent British patriot and therefore part of this general elite reaction. His place among the ruling order was arguably as novel as the body itself. In 1750 Sir Thomas entered the world not as an aristocrat, but simply as Tom Bernard, third son of a Lincolnshire lawyer. Francis Bernard, Tom's father, used his wife's family connections to win a royal appointment as governor of the North American colony of New Jersey, and later Massachusetts. After twelve years of colonial service, King George III rewarded Francis by conferring the title, baronet. After first passing to his elder brother in 1779, the baronetcy fell to Thomas in 1810. From an official point of view, this new title bestowed greater prestige and social standing on the new Sir Thomas, but it was a status that the philanthropist had earned by his own exploits. By the close of the eighteenth century Bernard owned landed estates in England and Ireland and traveled in London's polite social circles. He had made innumerable contacts through his public philanthropy. These connections won him a significant degree of political influence in local parishes as well as in the halls of Westminister. Sir Thomas Bernard's personal ascent from the middling ranks of

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[37] Harling, *Waning of 'Old Corruption,'* 11-13.

[38] *Ibid,* 4.

society earned him a place among the new and truly British elite that had been forged between 1780 and 1820.[39]

My purpose here is to direct future scholarship toward the central role played by Bernard's charities, and similar institutions, in the cultural make-over of the British elite. Bernard's public labors epitomized the core values of the British ruling order, while his publications gave voice to a new ethos. Societies such as the SBCP became a place for landed and commercial gentlemen to gather together under the auspice of public service. Here commercial men might enhance their social prestige, but the landed elite could demonstrate their dedication to public service. SBCP reports, especially Bernard's essays, were rife with pronouncements on the social responsibilities of the elite and warning that the ruling order could only merit its privileged position through self-sacrifice. "If the rich are *selfish, indolent, and* NEGLECTFUL OF THE CONDITIONS ON WHICH THEY HOLD SUPERIORITY OF RANK AND FORTUNE ... they become," Bernard once wrote, "PAUPERS *of an elevated and distinguished class.*"[40] By championing disinterested public service in his writing as in his life, Bernard articulated a patriotic and scathing indictment of the parasitic aristocracy of the Old Regime. Despite, or perhaps precisely because of such commentary, Bernard and his societies enjoyed the support of many members of the British elite, including peers, members of Parliament, bishops, and wealthy industrialists. For an elite trying to shed a reputation as unpatriotic and incompetent, participation in philanthropic associations that preached public service and demonstrated practical results provided positive publicity. Charitable societies offered much the same public cachet as novel art patronage societies such as the British Institution for the Promotion of the Fine Arts. Colley mentions the latter in her discussion of elite culture, but not the former.[41] Their inclusion in the current discussion of elite

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[39] Cannadine used these dates as rough parameters. *Aspects of Aristocracy*, chapter 1.

[40] T. Bernard, "Prefatory Introduction to the Second Volume," *The Reports* II: 26.

[41] Colley emphasized the role of patriotic associations, such as the Marine Society, which, preserved impoverished British children for future military service and thus served both charitable and nationalist purposes. Colley's recognition of charity's tie to nationalism did not extend to her examination of the late nineteenth century.

patriotism seems justified because like opening private art collections to the public or adopting less ostentatious and more pragmatic dress, encouraging charitable activity projected an image of public service for the new British elite. Charity reform could be just as crucial to this process as the changes in aristocratic education, dress, and art patronage that she examined.

Bernard lived during a particularly sensitive stage in the development of British identity among the elite, but his significance was broader still.[42] His charities promoted the spatial and mental integration of Great Britain. As the most prolific journalist of philanthropy, Sir Thomas, who was also an accomplished institutor, rallied Englishmen, Welshmen, Irishman, and Scotsmen around common national causes. While publicity had promoted success at the London Foundling Hospital and other British charities, at the Bernard's SBCP it was crucial. The Society's primary goal was to publish and disseminate local philanthropic ideas and projects to a national audience for the purpose of instruction and example. As J. R. Poynter described, "Propaganda was its aim. The Society was not to conduct experiments [on poor relief], but to report on them.[43] Accordingly the Society produced, between 1797 and 1817, forty periodic reports that circulated to all parts of the British Isles and overseas. Each report contained four or five accounts of specific charitable experiments, as well as several appendices of pertinent information. After five or six reports had appeared, the SBCP re-published them in a collective volume. Seven volumes appeared over twenty years, all but two of which included introductory addresses, or essays designed to remind readers of the Society's ideals, accomplishments, and future concerns. Like the newspapers and novels of the eighteenth century, charitable publications facilitated Britons' ability to imagine themselves a part of a broader community with common problems and concerns.[44] The "periodical

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[42] Colley identified three stages in the formation of British identity: 1707-1776 (Scottish union to American Independence); 1776-1815 (American Independence to Waterloo; and 1815-1837 (Waterloo to Queen Victoria). The middle period proved most crucial to elite notions of patriotism.

[43] Poynter, *Society and Pauperism*, 92.

[44] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, chapter 3 discusses the role of the printed media in this process.

literature which grew around many voluntary societies," according to R. J. Morris, "gave the local reader-subscriber the sense of being part of a national movement with interests in common."[45]

Although numerous authors contributed to the publications of the SBCP, Bernard's was the guiding voice and integrating vision behind the Society. After honing his literary and journalistic talents at the London Foundling Hospital, Thomas Bernard served both as primary author and chief editor of *The Reports of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor* (hereafter *The Reports*). Bernard's editorial duties included selecting correspondence for publication, condensing selections into manageable length, and adding explanatory notes and detailed commentaries. Moreover, he personally composed the introductory addresses to each collective volume of *The Reports* – a fact which led SBCP readers to associate his name (more than Wilberforce or The Bishop of Durham) with the work of the Society. That impression was hardly misleading since Bernard wrote 62 of the Society's 184 reports while his co-founders accounted collectively for 8. David Owen obviously had these statistics in mind when he wrote "that in some of its activities the Society was hardly more than Bernard under another name."[46] Bernard's commentary on the diverse subject matter of *The Reports* (*e.g.* fever hospitals, schools of industry, savings banks, friendly societies, agricultural improvements, free chapels, child labor in factories *etc.*), earned the editor a reputation with his wide audience as a leading expert on many useful projects, charitable and otherwise. I can offer no definitive figures for circulation, but according to the *SBCP Annual Report for 1810*, the Society ordered 24,000 copies of its publications printed that year.[47] The numbers may be inexact, but no other philanthropic publication could boast similar production.

Bernard's publicity campaign in *The Reports* was largely responsible for the expansion of the SBCP and similar philanthropic societies into branch chapters

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[45] Morris, "Clubs, Societies and Associations," III: 414.

[46] Owen, *English Philanthropy*, 106.

[47] This figure includes publications other than *The Reports*. The Society published some accounts individually, printed compilations on subjects such as education and information for cottagers.

throughout Britain. Bernard's charitable labors may have been headquartered in London, but their impact was felt far beyond. SBCP branches appeared at Clapham, Sheffield, Liverpool, Owestry, Cork, Edinburgh and Dublin. While these branches remained autonomous and set their own local agendas, their founders were inspired by the spirit and techniques espoused by Bernard in *The Reports*. The unifying voice of Bernard at the SBCP gave structure and purpose to an understanding of Britain's myriad social problems, as well as to their popular solutions.

While many Britons read Bernard's work, his impact was not limited to print media; indeed, he was more than just a distant London author. Bernard led personally and by example during his many sojourns outside the metropolis. He became, in effect, a traveling philanthropist, visiting York, Newcastle, Cornwall, Cheshire, Northumberland and elsewhere to observe, to offer assistance and instruction, and to make notes for future articles of *The Reports*. Bernard's peregrinations won admiration from colleagues but ire from local skeptics, including a gentleman from Brighton who labeled the philanthropist "[a] sort of itinerant institutor."[48] Though meant as an insult, this label was fitting The 'itinerant' Bernard was, after all, an 'institutor.' In addition to the SBCP, he co-established several philanthropic societies in London, including the Fever Institution, the Infant Asylum, the Fish Association, and the Royal Institution of Great Britain. All told Bernard subscribed to at least 26 philanthropic societies, serving as vice-president of seven, member of the directing committee of two others, and governor of yet another four.[49] While he fell well short of Wilberforce's seventy-odd charitable subscriptions, Bernard earned the moniker itinerant institutor.[50]

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[48] Bernard's detractor was was a Mr. Jackson, whose comments appeared in a letter to his brother Sir George Jackson. They followed Bernard's attempt to establish a free chapel and school for the poor in that coastal town. Jackson called the proposed chapel 'a wolf in sheep's clothing' designed 'to establish a Methodist chapel under the guise of a Church of England one,' See Higgins, *The Bernards,* IV:189-91.

[49] This figure was taken from F. K. Brown, *Fathers of the Victorians: the Age of Wilberforce* (Cambridge University Press, 1961), 356.

[50] Owen, *English Philanthropy,* 92.

Bernard helped generate a British national charitable community in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-centuries with the SBCP as its focal point. The intellectual exchange that originated from this nexus proved to be reciprocal.[51] Local philanthropists offered Bernard arguably as much inspiration as he gave in return. It is clear, for instance, that London's premier philanthropist advocated free chapels, those that did not charge pew rents, be opened in major cities after he had observed the operation of just such an institution at Bath. On the other hand, attempts to spread free chapels throughout Britain occurred only after Bernard published an account of their advantages in *The Reports*. This brief example illustrates the mutually beneficial mechanism by which charitable Britons came together in a national network – one that defined problems as well as solutions and by doing so facilitated Britons ability to imagine themselves a nation with common interests. Societies and clubs contributed "to spatial integration across the British Isles and colonies during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries" and, as Peter Clark observed, "served along with war, religion, and much else, to create a new, if ambivalent sense of Britishness at the end of the eighteenth century." [52]

The preceding outline of developing British nationalism sheds light on Sir Thomas Bernard's place in this grand narrative. Bernard constantly challenged aristocrats to earn their privileges through selfless acts of national service. He tried to shame them by labeling their luxurious lifestyles as French affectation. His numerous injunctions spurred some of their number to revamp their image and reform their ways, at least publicly. His incessant charges helped forge a new value system for an emerging British elite to which Bernard himself belonged. Bernard's other major contribution to British nationalism grew from the many societies he helped form. New philanthropic societies, along with the periodical press they generated, brought Britons from every region and from all walks of life together for common charitable purposes and in so doing facilitated the physical integration of Great Britain into a more coherent social, cultural, and political

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[51] Clark, *British Clubs*, 455.

[52] *Ibid*, 452

body.

Public Sociability and Political Mobilization

The commerce of ideas generated within Britain's national charitable network echoed a more general development of new forms of public sociability, including scientific lectures, concerts, assemblies, and, of course, clubs and societies. Philanthropic societies comprised only a portion of the estimated 25,000 associated groups in the English-speaking world alone. Myriad religious, medical, scientific, gaming, literary, and professional societies seemed to supplant, in many instances, guilds and other more ancient social bodies. By the century's close British societies also became more formal (more officers, by-laws, etc) and institutional (owning their own space), a fact that helped make them the dominant form of urban sociability in eighteenth-century Britain.[53] Given the eighteenth-century explosion of clubs and societies, Peter Clark rightly labeled Britain "an associational world."

The formation of this nascent associational world was emblematic of broad social mobilization in response to the specific social pressures of industrializing Britain. On one hand, voluntary societies served as a "social response to the problems posed by change and complexity."[54] Clubs and societies possessed, according to R. J. Morris, "an enormous potential for enabling a society experiencing rapid and disturbing change to adapt to that change, to experiment with and devise new values." This certainly held true of Bernard's societies, many of which addressed Malthusian concerns by offering novel solutions such as fever hospitals and public vaccination projects. On a political level, voluntary associations offered "a means of asserting status for those outwith the established institutions of state power."[55] Morris's claims recall the importance of volunteer

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[53] The expansion of clubs was a European and colonial phenomenon, too, but exact figures are unavailable. British societies were more diverse and numerous than their Continental or colonial counterparts. For more on British clubs, see Clark, *British Clubs*, 2-20, 98.

[54] Morris, "Clubs, Societies and Associations," III: 395. On the expansion of public sociability by way of clubs and associations see Clark, *British Clubs*; or Marvin B. Becker, *The Emergence of Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

[55] Morris, "Clubs, Societies and Associations," III: 400.

organizations as expressions of patriotism and assertions of political rights. "Being a patriot," Colley argued, "was a way of claiming the right to participate in British political life."[56] In support she offered examples such as the Marine Society. The commercial men who subscribed to this body were often politically disenfranchised but within the organization they enjoyed full citizenship and the vote. Bernard's SBCP offered similar opportunities for participation. Its administration, for instance, employed Britons from all classes, from all regions, and from each gender to address national issues from education to unemployment. The more democratic composition of the SBCP and similar projects expanded the boundaries of British citizenship geographically and socially. Men and women, noble and non-noble could be patriotic and could make a difference on key national issues. This marked a key step toward general political mobilization that was not limited to club and society life. During the war with France, tens of thousands of working class men joined voluntary corps to participate in national defense.[57]

The connection between Clark's 'associational world' and political mobilization included what he described as "low-level but regular political experience."[58] The scope of that experience varied from club to club. For some, political experience was limited to attending meetings and voting on the society's internal policies; however, by the end of the eighteenth century, members' goals and experience broadened. Late-century societies sought to impose social discipline not just on their own organizations, but on society as a whole.[59] Bernard's SBCP certainly conformed to this trend since it constantly called on Britons to sacrifice for the greater good. With bigger goals in mind, clubs and societies generated political pressure through the media, or in some instances, by mobilizing expert opinion for the purpose of legislative change. Overtly political societies such as the radical Hampden clubs and Political Union societies applied pressure for the reform of parliament, but 'non-political' clubs, including charities

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[56] Colley, *Britons*, 4.

[57] *Ibid*, 6.

[58] Clark, *British Clubs*, 464-8.

[59] *Ibid*, 98-113.

also used pressure tactics to influence the government.

Measuring the impact of voluntary societies on political mobilization and parliamentary action is challenging. On the one hand voluntary societies, even those charitable societies which advocated greater discrimination in relief, seemed to stimulate debate and action both within government and without. "It is certainly true," as Joanna Innes concluded, "that much play was made of dissuading the poor from supposing that they had an enforceable claim to material assistance. At the same time, it is hard to see that states actually *surrendered* very much power in this period. In almost every case, the scope of their activities in the welfare field expanded rather than contracted."[60] In sum, the expansion of clubs and societies stimulated an increase in government relief activity. This stimulus, however, was often indirect. Examples of clubs directly lobbying Parliament exist; however, they rarely produced any legislative results and when they did the laws enacted often proved ill-conceived. More commonly, the creation of novel societies that targeted specific needs -- public health, small pox vaccination, lending libraries -- indirectly pointed new directions for government and the state to assist or control in the future.[61]

Thomas Bernard was one of a select group of philanthropists to win lasting parliamentary results. Jonas Hanway worked for almost ten years before legislators passed the 1767 Act for Better Regulation of the Parish Poor Children, better known as the Hanway Act. Bernard's charitable expertise and reputation drew the attention of MPs and ministers, who consulted the Foundling Treasurer and SBCP Secretary on several occasions. Even when they did not seek his advice, he was likely to offer it. When Parliament investigated the food crises of 1799-1800, both Lords and Commons examined Bernard regarding the use of rice as a dietary substitute for grain.[62] Bernard's selection was no accident. Members of

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[60] Joanna Innes, "State, Church and Voluntarism in European Welfare, 1690-1850," in Cunningham and Innes, *Charity, Philanthropy and Reform*, 48; and "The 'mixed economy of welfare' in early modern England: assessments of the options from Hale to Malthus (c.1683-1803)," In Martin Daunton, ed. *Charity, Self-Interest and Welfare in the English Past* (London: University College London Press, 1996), 139-80.

[61] Clark, *British Clubs*, 465-8.

[62] Baker, *Life of Bernard*, 65-69; Bernard Baker, *Pleasure and Pain*, 64.

both Houses, some of whom were actually SBCP subscribers, viewed Bernard as an expert on the subject because his experimental use of rice at the London Foundling Hospital had been publicized in *The Reports*. In subsequent years Bernard was a witness during the Commons' debate of the Cotton Mill Bill (1802) and a pensionary-grant (1803) for Edward Jenner in reward for his development of small-pox vaccination. Bernard's most extensive and prolonged lobbying effort dominated the final two years of his life. From 1816 to 1818 Bernard led a campaign against the salt duties, a series of excise taxes on the sale and use of salt. He not only testified before Parliament, but mobilized public opinion to pressure the entire inquiry. Bernard's propaganda produced only a partial repeal of the duties by 1817, but complete repeal, which came in 1825, owed much to Bernard's mobilization of opinion on this issue. The final repeal was one of several economic reforms from the 1820s and '30s that responded to external political pressure and that, as Philip Harling suggested, "shield[ed] more and more of [ruling-class authority] from the critique of Old Corruption."[63] Bernard and his colleagues were among those pressure groups that hounded parliament and in the process helped modernize the political world of Great Britain.

Bernard's political achievements speak to what some scholars have labeled the expansion of political discourse. In 1962 the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas posited that eighteenth-century voluntary societies created a new 'public sphere' in which bourgeois outsiders forged their own arena to discuss issues separate from the traditional public arenas of church and state. Since then the club experience that historical research uncovered has rarely fit the ideal posed by Habermas. Few societies, for instance, avoided any state, church, or familial influence, nor was their composition homogeneous. In sum, the historical public sphere was never as separate or self-contained as Habermas's general depiction. Revision has led scholars to forward new terminology to describe the historical phenomenon originally labeled the public sphere. Marvin Becker, for example, described the eighteenth-century expansion of political discourse as a

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[63] Harling, *Waning of 'Old Corruption,'* 4.

defining trait of modern 'civil society.' More recently, Peter Clark employed the term 'social space' when describing "a field of social action, where the social and cultural identities of the urban better-off were constantly reformulated and reshaped." Like Habermas and Becker, he saw this as an important agency for social and political change. "The evolving area of social space – free from the tyranny of the state and the family, and in which associations increasingly exercised the dominant voice – had," according to Clark, "important implications for the emergence of a new, more advanced society."[64] Private citizens debating public issues independently, or at least separate from the charge of church, crown, or college, threatened the political fabric of the Old Regime.

Historiographical Approach

Modern historians have justly referred to Sir Thomas Bernard as "an indefatigable philanthropist" and elsewhere as "a capital example of the philanthropic impulse in a singularly pure form." Various social theorists have also presented Bernard as a pioneer. In the late nineteenth century, George Jacob Holyoake, leader of the cooperative movement, claimed:

> It was Bernard who first used the term 'science' in connection with social arrangements. Thirty years later Robert Owen, who, as we shall show, had doubtless read these papers, began to write upon the 'Science of Society.' Seventy and more years elapsed before Lord Brougham, who knew all about Mr. Bernard's views, became the President of the 'Social Science Association.'[65]

Holyoake's purpose was to discover the origins of socialism in Britain so his positive assessment of Bernard seems curious. He viewed the socially privileged Sir Thomas as a major influence on early British socialists, especially within the cooperative movement and among the Fabians. M. E. Jersey's observations of the SBCP in 1905 support such a claim: "there is hardly any suggestion known to the

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[64] Becker, *Emergence of Civil Society*, xxvii; cf. Clark, *British Clubs*, 464.

[65] George Jacob Holyoake, *Self-Help A Hundred Years Ago* (London: Swan Sonnenschein,1888), 37.

modern social reformer which does not find place in their pages."[66] Lord William Beveridge, one of the architects of the British welfare state, viewed Bernard as an 'precursor' to social investigators such as Charles Booth. In *Voluntary Action* (1949), he also described Bernard's quest to make poor relief a science as "singularly modern, not to say Fabian."[67] However, nearly two centuries of sporadic recognition failed to produce a comprehensive study of either the Society or its founder.

The fragmentary historical record of Sir Thomas Bernard, while unfortunate, is completely understandable. First of all, Bernard fell victim, at least in part, to what Edward Thompson termed the "condescension of posterity." Several modern social historians portrayed Sir Thomas and the SBCP as innovative, but most observed also that Bernard's projects rarely survived him intact. The short-lived nature of Bernard's societies was interpreted as indication that they were ill-conceived or insignificant when, in fact, their termination owed much to the social conditions that prevailed after 1815. The thrust of Bernard's philanthropy had been greater discrimination in relief. After Waterloo when demobilized soldiers and sailors swelled the ranks of the unemployed, few Britons were willing to apply deserving or non-deserving labels to patriotic veterans. As the battle for greater discrimination in philanthropy lost momentum, more indiscriminate giving, which had never completely disappeared, experienced a resurgence. Several decades later Victorian philanthropists took up the mantle of charitable reform and the attack on indiscriminate relief had to be re-fought and won.

Modern historians of Victorian Britain mistook this interval for an unexplored divide and when they recorded the exploits of nineteenth-century philanthropic reformers such as Shaftesbury or Bernardo, they frequently ignored, or never investigated earlier champions of self-help. Recent scholarship has

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[66] M. E. Jersey, "Charity A Hundred Years Ago," *The Nineteenth Century and After* LVII (Jan-June 1905): 656.

[67] Lord William Beveridge, *Voluntary Action: A Report on Methods of Social Advance* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1949), 127.

partially corrected the myopia of Victorian historiography by showing that many of the issues and solutions addressed by Victorian philanthropists were confronted previously by reformers of the late eighteenth century. When Shaftesbury fought to protect climbing boys, or when the Charity Organization Society tried to create a science of charity, they often followed the work of pioneering men and institutions such as Bernard and the SBCP.[68] The period from 1780 to 1820, when Bernard's impact was greatest, now may be appreciated as a crucible in which modern charitable forms were first tested. Since such recognition has only come recently, the scarcity of studies on Bernard and other philanthropists becomes more intelligible.

Another factor that deflected scholarly attention from Bernard was the historical teleology of the welfare state.[69] Modern historians, when discussing Bernard's accomplishments, often dismissed, or underestimated his importance because his projects failed to anticipate the more democratic, egalitarian forms of relief such as prevail in welfare states. In British historiography this teleology grew from an assumed distinction between public and private forms of relief, one that effectively produced two separate types of historian: those of private charity and those of public welfare systems *i.e.* the poor laws. For the late eighteenth-early nineteenth- century era, this dichotomy usually produced two types of study: either a narrative culminating in the New Poor Law of 1834, or, a more isolated account of a specific charity, such as the London Foundling Hospital. Although historians often have treated public and private forms of relief separately, the two were by no means unrelated or self-contained in the historical experience of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britons. In these histories private charity played the foil to superior and presumably more efficient statutory, publicly-funded relief. Since the bulk of Bernard's work relied on private charities, it was ignored, or viewed as secondary, and he was labeled a 'private' philanthropist and

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[68] "[T]o a certain degree the 'Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor' may be seen as the precursor of the Charity Organization Society." Mersey, "Charity a Hundred Years Ago," 688.

[69] An historiographical overview appears in Alan J. Kidd, "Philanthropy and the 'social history paradigm'," *Social History* 21 (May 1996):180-92.

relegated to a background position in the history of British poor relief. Even the SBCP, arguably the most unique charitable institution of its day, has drawn little more than passing mention until recently– a fact David Owen explained when he wrote, "perhaps because of its unquestioning acceptance of prevailing notions of class relationships, the Society's activities have aroused little interest among latter day social historians."[70] Bernard's acceptance of social hierarchy only further encouraged historians to consider his projects as more 'traditional,' even aristocratic.

These overstated historiographical models and their dismissal of Bernard now seem misguided. In the last two decades, as welfare states look increasingly to voluntarism to assist in a variety of relief measures, the history of philanthropy has been revised. Since the welfare state no longer marks the final and most evolved stage of relief, its teleology is in decay. The private-public division has been particularly vulnerable. Hugh Cunningham, for instance, argued that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century philanthropists rarely distinguished between public and private relief; moreover, they frequently proposed schemes that relied both on voluntarism and public assistance. Joanna Innes acknowledged the close relationship between the state, church, and voluntarism in eighteenth-century relief efforts and described it as a 'mixed economy of welfare.' Between 1750 and 1850, each element contributed, but, she argued, without any sense of the state being senior partner, and absent any discernable conviction that something akin to a welfare state was inevitable, or even desirable.[71] Even the assumption that Bernard and his charities "accepted prevailing notions of class relationships" has become suspect as revisionists recognize that social classes, especially among the elite, were not static but in flux.

Although renewed interest in voluntarism justifies a re-evaluation of key voluntary philanthropists, the task is not without its difficulties, especially since teleology never fully accounted for the paucity of work on Bernard. In his case, a complex character coupled with a diversity of philanthropic projects (small pox

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[70] Owen, *English Philanthropy*, 107.

[71] J. Innes, "Mixed Economy of Welfare," 139-80.

vaccination, free chapels, salt taxes, art patronage, etc.) have made him an enigmatic figure. Pinpointing Bernard's faith or the role of religion in his philanthropy, for example, has been a slippery subject for historians. Some scholars portray Sir Thomas as an Evangelical member of the Clapham sect whose first priority was preserving the authority of the Church of England; however, others proclaim this philanthropist to be "a latitudinarian Anglican" with a "practical and liberal cast of mind."[72] Documentation for either view could be culled from Bernard's many publications–a circumstance which uncovers the root of the problem. Discerning Bernard's core thoughts, religious or otherwise, depends upon sifting carefully and repeatedly through voluminous essays and available personal reflections. Only after cautiously weighing all available information is it possible to distinguish between outright contradictions (which are possible with any human being), and superficial inconsistencies which simply need context to be appreciated.

Aside from the enigmatic character of Bernard's mind, the primary cause for such fragmentary knowledge of this man lies in the fragmented nature of the sources. Thomas Bernard wrote prolifically. Most, if not all, of his publications have survived, but his personal letters and papers are few, the bulk of them having been destroyed or lost. Some of Bernard's autobiographical writings survived and were published in 1930 by the grandson of Thomas's sister Amelia. That grandson, James Bernard Baker, combined Sir Thomas's philanthropic memoir with a travel journal that the young lawyer had penned in 1780 and added the general title *Pleasure and Pain*.[73] Two biographical accounts of Bernard also exist, but they were written by family members and not by professional historians. Bernard's nephew, the Reverend James Baker, published *The Life of Sir Thomas Bernard, Baronet* in 1819. More than eighty years later, Sophie Higgins, grandniece of Bernard, compiled a family history containing several chapters on

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[72] Berman, *Social Change and Scientific Organization*, 6-7; and Prochaska, *Voluntary Impulse*, 32.

[73] Bernard-Baker's title contrasts the pleasures of Thomas's travel journal with the pains associated with his philanthropic career. The latter description he borrowed from a dedication to Bernard that read "Charity is often disposed to open its purse, but seldom to take pains." *Pleasure and Pain*, vii.

Sir Thomas.[74] Baker's account offers very little original observation since it is an almost verbatim copy of Sir Thomas's unpublished autobiography. Higgins fortunately provides better insight into the all-important arena of Bernard's domestic life. It contains excerpts from the letters and diaries of Thomas's siblings as well as family estate records. Many of the family records are preserved at the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies in Aylesbury. Some minute books from Bernard's societies exist, but many are incomplete so that the task of narrating Bernard's life and historical importance requires piecing together a variety of sources, published and private, personal and public, comprehensive and incomplete.

The present study embraces the challenge of writing Bernard's story and justifies the effort based on the broad import of this man. Even though historians' depictions have been sparse, they repeatedly acknowledge Bernard's privileged place among social reformers, as does an early nineteenth-century tale. At an English inn an unnamed gentleman welcomed a road-weary traveler to a chair by the tavern's warm fire. As the pair began to talk, the guest shared one of his many adventures: "In a sequestered part of Italy, when pressed by human hunger and fatigue, [I] sought refreshment and repose in a wild dwelling in the mountains, and was agreeably surprised at being offered a pie; but horror of horrors! on examining its contents [I] found – a human finger!" Before the bard could continue his tale the sober gentleman interrupted: "'Nothing more probable, Sir, and I well know the person to whom the finger belonged– Sir Thomas Bernard, Sir, for he has a finger in every pie.'"[75] The comic image of Bernard's hand in everyone's business attests to his considerable reputation. That repute rested upon years of public work and practical successes and helps justify a comprehensive analysis of this man, his life, and his work.

My analysis of Sir Thomas Bernard draws from several recent revisions in the history of philanthropy. Historians once explained the flowering of anti-

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[74] Sophia E. Higgins, *The Bernards of Abingdon and Nether Winchendon, A Family History* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1903-4) 4 vols.

[75] Quoted in S. Brown, *Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford*, 214.

slavery movements, Christian missionary work, and charitable societies from 1750 to 1850 as indicative of a tradition of benevolence that inspired a rise of humanitarianism in Europe and North America.[76] In the 1960s and '70s that explanation lost favor as revisionists exposed personal and class interest behind what had seemed altruism. New charities appeared because they allowed individuals or groups, such as the bourgeoisie and aristocracy, to assert or maintain authority over the distribution of relief. Portraying philanthropy as social control corrected the naivete of earlier scholarship, but led to oversimplified and reductionist analyses. Too often charitable acts were reduced to involuntary responses to socio-economic conditions, or as single-minded acts of class warfare. This social-control model has, in turn, faced the process of revision. Recent historiography has steered a more moderate course through the polar extremes of earlier work, taking for granted neither the altruistic or interested motives of the charitable. Equally significant, recent scholarship acknowledges the complexity of human motivations and the culture in which decisions are made.[77] It is not enough to convey motives as interested or altruistic, the more challenging task is to expose the hidden origins of such acts, to define the cultural milieu that establishes individual or group interests. Instead of asking does this or that charity serve the self-interest of its donors, ask what cultural factors lead a donor to perceive that it is in his best interest, personally or as part of a group, to relieve the poor, to cure the diseased, or to employ the unemployed? And additionally, why would a donor assume the superiority of one type of relief over another? On the other hand, why would an unemployed laborer in dire need reject one form of relief, but accept another?[78]

Asking new questions has led historians beyond the social-control model and in search of a culture of philanthropy. Frank Prochaska, for example, found class interest lacking as an explanation of elite behavior in Britain during the

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[76] Thomas L. Haskell, "Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part I," *American Historical Review* 90 (1985): 339-61.

[77] Colin Jones, "Some Recent Trends in the History of Charity," In *Charity, Self-Interest and Welfare*, 51-63; and Kidd,"Philanthropy and the 'social history paradigm'," 180-92.

[78] Kidd, "Philanthropy and the 'social history paradigm'," 180-92.

French Revolution. By the logic of social control British charity should have spiked to meet that social, economic, and military crisis. When Prochaska observed no clear rise in philanthropy during the 1790s and no let up after 1815, he challenged the notion that the character and scope of philanthropy was dictated primarily by the logic of existing conditions. Social and economic conditions, he argued, may have less to do with elite giving than a 'philanthropic disposition' that was broadly Christian.[79] "The philanthropic disposition was inseparable from religion in the Christian mind, the word charity itself was synonymous with the conduct of Christ."[80] Prochaska claimed the origin of this disposition in the domestic sphere where British children were socialized into a culture of benevolence.[81]

Donna Andrew also explored the importance of cultural factors in her study of eighteenth-century London philanthropy. She highlighted several instances where similar social and economic conditions produced vastly different forms of relief. During the mid-century wars, employment schemes were popular with philanthropists; however, similar conditions in the 1760s and '70s found few reformers championing work schemes. Andrew attributed this contrast to changing intellectual currents and attitudes toward certain modes of relief.[82] As culture evolved, so too did charitable systems. Andrew, like Prochaska, acknowledged a fundamental truth: elite responses to the needy were mediated through cultural values.

In writing this biography one of my primary aims is to discover the cultural lens through which Bernard interpreted his changing world. Re-grinding this lens requires an exploration of his family, his education, his profession, his faith, and many other personally defining experiences. This socialization affected how Bernard interpreted the many social, economic, and political events that he witnessed firsthand, developments such as the American Revolution, the

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[79] F. K. Prochaska, "Philanthropy," In *Cambridge Social History of Great Britain,* III: 357-93.

[80] Prochaska, "Philanthropy," III: 378.

[81] *Ibid*, 380.

[82] Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, chapters 2 and 3.

Industrial Revolution, and the French Revolution. It also informed his response. Population growth, rising poor rates, unemployment, disease, political disorder, and the many other crises engendered by these events cannot fully explain the variety and scope of Bernard's philanthropic societies. They cannot, for example, account for why a dedicated philanthropist would found an art patronage society to meet social ills. I seek a more complete understanding of this itinerant institutor that requires recreating his culture. Only then can we achieve a real appreciation of why Bernard retired from a lucrative legal practice to minister to orphans, or of what led him to prioritize science, education, and church attendance.

PART ONE:

FIRM FOUNDATIONS, 1750-1796

In 1818, as Sir Thomas Bernard reflected upon his life, he wrote: "It has always been my wish that I might so live, as that the Blessings of existence should not have been thrown away on an idle & useless Creature."[1] During his quest to be useful, Bernard lobbied for two key pieces of legislation, co-founded or subscribed to a score of charitable societies, and penned numerous commentaries on pressing social issues such as epidemic disease, inflationary food prices, education for the poor, and child labor.[2] While pioneering small pox vaccination, urban fever hospitals, and protection for children apprentices, he also championed the opening of free chapels, viz. no pew rentals, in order to increase Anglican church attendance in urban areas. He devoted considerable time also to changing the manner in which Britons patronized painting. These last two projects strike the modern reader as quaint but hardly essential. Surely if Sir Thomas wished to be useful, he could find more immediate and pressing issues than church attendance and art patronage. Bernard's sensibilities were different; he considered declining church attendance and the secondary status of British painting as serious social issues with practical consequences. He argued, for example, that improvement of the fine arts was essential to Britain's future economic prosperity.

Bernard's choices and priorities when forming new societies reflected his culture and socialization. Something in his experience suggested to him that church attendance and art patronage were just as crucial as vaccination or fever hospitals. In this respect, Bernard typified elite charity which, according to historian Frank Prochaska, was "a response to the complaints and aspirations of the needy, *moderated by their own perceptions of what was required and the best way to proceed.*"[3] Knowing that gives new meaning to Bernard's opening comments in his memoir. His wish to be useful was more than mere fancy, it was

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[1] Bernard-Baker, *Pleasure and Pain,* 49.

[2] The Factory Act of 1802 and the partial repeal of the Salt Duties in 1817.

[3] Prochaska, "Philanthropy," 371, added emphasis.

an internalized and defining ethic for his life and a primary motivation for his 23-year philanthropic career. Many of Bernard's personal decisions stemmed from this ethic. When he quit his lucrative legal practice in 1795, for example, it was in search of a 'useful' but non-remunerative occupation.[4] If Bernard adhered to broadly utilitarian principles in his personal life, he applied similar axioms to the correction of social problems. His attempt to make a science of philanthropy, his campaign to eliminate the salt tax, and his plans for updating the poor laws reflected a desire to make poor relief, taxation, even government as useful, effective and efficient as possible.

The first two chapters of this thesis explore Bernard's early socialization from which the ethic that shaped his philanthropy originated. The journey begins in the mid eighteenth century with an investigation of three fundamental influences: family, faith, and education. A number of disparate sources helped reconstruct the world of Bernard's youth; unfortunately few come from his own pen. Only a handful of Bernard's correspondence survive, but his sibling's personal letters, a diary written by a younger sister, Julia, and the private papers of his father filled many gaps in information. Two additional secondary sources, a Bernard family history and a biography of Thomas by his nephew James Baker, also opened vistas into the world of this future philanthropist's youth, especially his family and education.[5] For Thomas Bernard philanthropy really did begin at home as his parents fostered a charitable disposition by example, but while at college and as his father's assistant, he also connected, if only peripherally, with the 'associational world' of North America and Europe. These early influences profoundly affected his later philanthropic work.

The third and fourth chapters focus more on Bernard's early professional life, during which Thomas gained his first experience with statutory poor relief and private charity. His letters, along with a travel journal he composed after a

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[4] Bernard's financial security rested on his lucrative legal practice, but also on his wife's inheritance from her father Patrick Adair, a London Merchant.

[5] James Baker's 'biography' was basically a verbatim copy of Sir Thomas Bernard's unpublished reminiscences.

trip to the English Lake District, indicated how keen a social observer Thomas had become. His tenure as a civil servant in the War Office also provided valuable administrative experience that Bernard applied as a magistrate in Buckinghamshire and later as the treasurer of the London Foundling Hospital. The hospital was one of the most important and famous British charities of the eighteenth century and Thomas matured as a philanthropist during his treasurership. There Bernard confronted the main critiques against institutional philanthropy, that it fostered the poverty it was designed to relieve, and that it encouraged dependence and thus was both a social and moral evil. His response was quick. He pioneered visitation schemes at the orphanage, introduced scientific technology in food preparation, and developed a publicity campaign to enhance the image of the struggling charity. His exceptional appreciation for the power of publicity and the printed word strongly influenced all of his later projects. In sum, Bernard's experience as the director of a private charity and as a parochial magistrate capped a series of lessons that originated in his family, his faith, and his education. All things considered, Thomas Bernard had a firm foundation from which he built a singular philanthropic career.

CHAPTER ONE:
TOM BERNARD'S SCHOOL DAYS, 1750-1769

In his study of Victorian philanthropy, Frank Prochaska described a "philanthropic *disposition*, Christian in character, geared to the giver as well as the recipient." Prochaska did not suggest that all philanthropists were Christian, only that those who were maintained a particular understanding of the relationship between their charity and their religious experience. He traced the origins of this character to the domestic nature of British Christianity where family devotions and readings were as integral as church attendance. Domestic forms of worship fostered a culture of benevolence modeled after the life of Christ in which children were taught to be charitable. Prochaska cited Dorcas meetings and Mothers meetings as particular examples of socializing activities that shaped the philanthropic disposition. His findings call to mind the well-worn phrase that charity begins at home, but his primary purpose was to account for why, despite its relative prosperity, Victorian Britain was so inundated with new charities. "To religious enthusiasts," he explained, "charitable motives may be independent of social and economic conditions, though they may accommodate them."[1] Thomas Bernard was undoubtedly Christian and his statements indicate a disposition similar to that described by Prochaska. "To pure and vital CHRISTIANITY," Bernard wrote, "we must look for the basis of every essential and permanent improvement, in the condition of the poor." Elsewhere he cited a statement from the Roman emperor Julian as proof that "charity originated in Christianity, and *was first practised by the Christians*."[2] Following Prochaska's claim that Victorian charity originated in domestic devotions, we will examine Bernard's domestic circumstances. This chapter tests this premise to see what family and religious elements may have socialized him in a culture of benevolence such as described by

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[1] Prochaska, "Philanthropy," 377-8.

[2] T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to the Fifth Volume, addressed to William Wilberforce, Esq. M.P.," *The Reports* V: 30, 41.

Prochaska.

There are additional reasons for exploring Bernard's family life. As an adult, he often extolled the virtues of the domestic sphere, especially in his philanthropic writing. When advocating that able-bodied poor receive relief in their homes rather than be imprisoned in poorhouses, Bernard argued: "There is no principle of action more chiefly engrafted in the human heart, not even the preservation instinct of self-love, than THAT AFFECTION, which unites the poor man to his cottage and family." He later expanded upon the nature of that affection as a motive for self-help charity: "It is *our first duty, and our nearest interest*, to sweeten and encourage his toil, and to attach him to his condition and situation ... by supplying the means of education for his children, and of religious duty and consolation for himself and his family; and by giving him occasional aid and *kind* assistance, when age, infirmity, or any domestic calamity requires it."[3] Bernard's statement, though directed to the cottager, reflected his thinking on the family in general, as indicated elsewhere when he portrayed the *sacred bonds* of family as "one of the most valuable possessions of the human race."[4] Bernard clearly esteemed the social, economic, and religious functions of the family unit. His positive perspective stemmed from his own socialization.

In the cathedral town of Lincoln on 27 April 1750, Francis Bernard, a provincial lawyer, and Amelia Bernard neé Offley, daughter of Stephen Offley of Norton Hall in Derbyshire welcomed their fourth child and third son. Although they named their son Thomas, he soon became known by the shortened 'Tom'. Tom was only two when his mother gave birth to another son, Shute, and by the time the Bernard's third son reached the age of seven, he had three more younger siblings: Amelia, William, and Frances Elizabeth. With two elder brothers, Frank (Francis Jr.) and John, and an elder sister, Jane, Tom was surrounded by close

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[3] T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to Wilberforce," *The Reports*, V: 46-7.

[4] T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to the Third Volume, addressed to the Lord Bishop of Durham," *The Reports* III: 25.

family.[5]

Tom's eight years in the crowded Lincoln home remain obscured by a lack of sources. The family lived in the center of town in Minster Yard, the area immediately surrounding the cathedral. They socialized with several influential families, including the Pownalls, one of whom was Thomas Pownall, Royal Governor of Massachusetts from 1757-1760.[6] Francis cultivated the connections hoping that one day they would help him provide for the future of his ever-expanding brood. The provincial barrister also tried to create a stable and warm home environment for his children, perhaps because his own childhood had not always been so. Francis's father, also named Francis, had been Rector of Brightwell in Berkshire, but had died when his son was only three years old. By age 6 the young Francis Bernard also lost his mother to smallpox, so he was raised thereafter by his step-father, Anthony Alsop. Tom's parents saw that he and his siblings had time to play and be creative. In order that his children have such a place outside the confines of the city, Francis leased a small piece of land in Nettleham parish on the outskirts of the cathedral town. It served, according to the family historian, as a summer retreat for the Bernard children and since it contained the ruins of an ecclesiastical palace, it afforded great adventures for their imagination.[7] Little else is known about Tom's first home, save that it must have been crowded with so many children under one roof.

Providing for seven children strained the finances of the family and its ambitious head. Francis held several positions of local import, including that of Public Notary, Commissioner of Bails, Steward of the City of Lincoln, Deputy Recorder of Boston, Receiver-General of the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln, and Proctor of the Consistory Court of the Diocese; however, he aspired to improve his family's position further still.[8] In search of greater financial security, Francis

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[5] Amelia gave birth to Frank on 9/27/43, to John on 1/26/45, and Jane on 8/23/46. From 1747-49, she had a son, Joseph, who lived one month, and a daughter, Amelia, who died before reaching her first birthday. After Thomas, Shute was born on 7/26/52, a second Amelia on 9/16/54, William on 5/27/56), and Frances Elizabeth on 7/27/57. Higgins, *The Bernards'* I:215.

[6] Higgins, *The Bernards*, I: 204.

[7] *Ibid*, 209.

[8] Higgins, *The Bernards*, I: 183, 204.

called on his wife's familial connections, namely William Wildman Barrington, second Viscount and future Secretary at War. Lord Barrington was Amelia's maternal first cousin. Other influential members of her family included Major-General Samuel Barrington, Admiral John Barrington, and Shute Barrington, the future Bishop of Durham.[9] In 1757 Lord Barrington used his influence to convince the Earl of Halifax at the Board of Trade to secure Francis Bernard's appointment to the governorship of New Jersey.[10] Bernard had been particularly solicitous of a colonial governorship for its income, £1000 per annum, but more importantly for the control of patronage that went with such a post. A colonial appointment, he hoped, would enable him to place five sons in respectable careers. Bernard's appetite had likely been whetted by what he knew of Thomas Pownall's post in Massachusetts, or perhaps from his wife's other maternal uncle, Colonel Samuel Shute, who had been governor of Massachusetts from 1716 to 1727.[11]

1758 held dramatic changes for Tom Bernard and difficult choices for his parents. In April, the Bernards embarked on the month-long voyage to America, but not before saying goodbye to two sons, Frank (Francis) and John, and two daughters, Jane and Fanny (Frances Elizabeth), Amelia's nine-month old infant. At least two factors figured in the difficult decision to leave Fanny behind. First of all, Amelia was four-months pregnant with another child. The couple feared that the harsh nature of the journey combined with the fragility of an infant might endanger three lives: Amelia, her unborn child, and her nine-month old infant. The education of the elder children seems to have been the primary consideration for their stay in England. In 1757, Frank received a scholarship at St. Peter's College, Westminster, while John attended the grammar school in Lincoln. Jane, too, was being schooled in the cathedral town, but family records provide no specifics.[12] The fact that both Frank and John later joined the family in Massachusetts suggested another plausible reason for the family split, that was

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[9] William Wildman Barrington (1717-1793), John Barrington (d.1765), Samuel Barrington (1729-1800), and Shute Barrington (1734-1826).

[10] Higgins, *The Bernards*, I: 2, 19; T. Bernard, *Life of Sir Francis Bernard*, 5-6.

[11] Samuel Shute (1662-1742). Higgins, *The Bernards*, I:215-17.

[12] Higgins, *The Bernards*, I:218-23.

insurance against a worst case scenario. Just as some parents today travel separately, the Bernards may have divided their family so that all would not be lost should the journey prove disastrous. For a close-knit family, which the Bernards most certainly were, 1758 must have been filled with the mixed emotions of anticipation and promise, tempered by regret and loss. For Tom personally the excitement of celebrating a birthday en route to a new home in a new world must have been muted by anxiety over becoming, in effect, the eldest son. Whatever may have been streaming through Tom's head, there is no doubt that his new position within his American family fostered a special relationship between father and son, one that persisted even after Frank and John came to the New England colony.

The Bernards arrived at Perth-Amboy on 14 June 1758, but their stay in New Jersey lasted only two years. As the family settled into its new surroundings, Amelia, on 1 October, delivered her sixth son, Scrope. Although Francis seems to have enjoyed his new home and his new responsibilities, his ambition was not yet sated. Letters to his patron, Lord Barrington, indicated a desire for a more lucrative and prestigious post when one became available.[13] His appeals paid off in 1759 with his appointment as governor of Massachusetts. In July 1760 the Bernards relocated to Boston, where they lived for the next nine years. The move to New England was to have a profound impact on Tom's life because there he received the core of his education, first at home, then at a local grammar school, and finally at Harvard College. Eighteenth-century Boston bustled with all kinds of social, cultural, and intellectual life. It was a thriving social center of taverns and coffee houses, fire insurance clubs and scientific societies. Tom's introduction to this colonial capital meant access to the latest ideas from the Old and New Worlds and it profoundly affected him.

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[13] Francis Bernard to Lord Barrington, May 23, 1759, in *The Barrington-Bernard Correspondence and Illustrative matter 1760-1770*, ed. Edward Channing (Cambridge: Harvard University Pres, 1912), 4-6.

The Bernard Home and School

Although little is known of the Bernards' Lincolnshire and New Jersey homes, Julia Bernard, who was born in New Jersey, described the Boston situation in her memoir. The youngest Bernard child remembered three residences in the Boston area, including the governor's official residence, the Province House, which stood in the center of town. The 'Government House', as she called it, was elegant but apparently too formal for her childhood tastes. There the Bernards experienced "'a peculiar state of intercourse with the inhabitants, everybody coming to us, and we going to nobody, a public day once a week, a dinner for gentlemen, and a drawing-room in the afternoon when all persons of either sex who wished to pay their respects were introduced, various refreshments handed about, and some cards.'"[14] Elsewhere she remarks, "'In Boston [Government House], none of the family, grown up brothers excepted, ever walked out in the town; we had a large garden, but it seemed rather a confinement.'"[15] Julia's comments presented a less than appealing image of this residence, but her sense of physical confinement probably resulted more from her age and gender than the domestic situation. In colonial American cities, gentlemen, according to one historian, "knew no limits" while the movements of gentle women were highly restricted by notions of gentility.[16] There were simply too many rough and unrefined areas of the city that might offend a woman's delicate sensibilities.

While notions of gentility and proper form also explain Julia's sense of mental constraint in the city, life at Jamaica House, the Bernards' country residence along Jamaica Pond near Roxbury, provided her a sense of release. "'We ran pretty much at liberty," she happily noted, adding "there was no form or etiquette.'"[17] The form and etiquette to which Julia alluded was part and parcel of her father's political standing, but it also reflected her family's position among an increasingly genteel colonial elite. By the mid eighteenth century 'the refinement

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[14] All quotations from Julia's memoir are taken from Higgins, *The Bernards*, I: 282.

[15] *Ibid*, 283.

[16] Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 166-67.

[17] Higgins, *The Bernards*, I: 283.

of America,' that is the development of very specific notions of civility and polite behavior, had much progressed.[18] Styles of dress, modes of speech, public manners and deportment created a very self-conscious American elite whose rules and standards formed bonds of association but also the means of excluding those who fell short. Public conversation, for example, was a practiced art in which the genteel could demonstrate their knowledge, grace, and style. Certain topics, those that might cause a listener unease or embarrassment, were to be avoided. More typically the genteel discussed their botanical collections, gardening, or the latest book that they had read. Breaking these rules would reveal an impostor or pretender to gentility.[19] It is little wonder that life at Province House, which was almost always on public display, was stifling for Julia and why Jamaica House was such a welcome change. Surely Julia was not the only member of the Bernard family who relished this haven from the pomp and circumstance of the governor's mansion.

All of the Bernards seem to have taken full advantage of their sojourns in the country. Julia recalled that "'there was a town coach and a whiskey for the young men to drive about. I was used from a child to ride on horseback; and from childhood none of us had fear of anything.'"[20] Riding was a favorite Bernard pastime and Frank, the eldest son, was known within the family as a tamer of wild horses. The liberty of the Jamaican Pond retreat recalls a similarly wholesome spot outside Lincoln, the land Francis had leased for that purpose. Julia's memoir speaks of another retreat, a third residence among the apartments at Castle William, a peninsular fortress in South Boston. The Bernards withdrew there when summer heat became unbearable. Julia's primary memory of these lodgings were daily swims in the Atlantic ocean.

Obviously Julia's experiences in Boston differed from those of her elder brother Tom. The 'grown-up brothers,' as she noted, could venture the streets of Boston while she was confined to Government House and its gardens.

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[18] Bushman, *The Refinement of America*, xiv-xv.

[19] *Ibid*, 81-88.

[20] Higgins, *The Bernards*, I: 283.

Additionally Julia may have had less access to her father than her elder brothers. At Jamaica House she recalled "my Father was always on the wing on account of his situation. He had his own carriage and servants, my mother hers."[21] Her memories from this period center around her mother, which suggests that much of her childhood was sequestered in her mother's portion of the house. Despite these gendered differences, Julia mentions many activities in which all the Bernard family participated. These areas are of particular use in reconstructing the domestic world in which Thomas Bernard developed.

Julia Bernard's portrait of their Boston home outlined an educational, cultural, and religious center where her mother served as "the presiding genius." Francis Bernard may have been the unquestioned head, but Amelia played the major role in the domestic education of their children.[22] Julia's account of this pedagogy indicates that the Bernard children received a better than average education. In her sitting-room Amelia oversaw a wide array of subjects, ranging from literature to religion and geography to astronomy. While she used travel journals and *The World Displayed* (1762) to teach her children world geography, Amelia employed an orrery to open their minds to the wonders of astronomy.[23] Julia vividly recalled the latter in her memoir:

> I forget the manner in which my mother opened our minds to the sublime wonders of the heavens. Astronomy, she said, was a very exalting study. With a large orrery, moving by clockwork, she explained to us all the motion of the planets. The cause of the different seasons, the day and night, changes of the moon, &c., shown to us by the effect of light and darkness. All these things I had as clear an idea of at eight and nine years as I have now, and

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[21] *Ibid,* 284.

[22] Higgins, *The Bernards,* II: 69.

[23] Samuel Johnson, ed. *The World Displayed: or, a curious collection of voyages and travels, selected from the writers of all nations* 20 volumes: (London, 1759-60); Amelia's interest in astronomy may reflect the influence of Harvard Professor John Winthrop (1714-1779), who was the foremost American astronomer. Not only was Winthrop a friend of Francis, his sons were Thomas's classmates at Harvard.

never received any other instruction in those sciences.[24]

The closing remark of Julia's recollections indicated just how limited was the typical curriculum of a girl's education. Gentle women and girls were rarely versed in classic languages or in the sciences since most of their education was informal and aimed at refining their ability to be pleasing company for their husbands and guests. Although Tom and his brothers would receive formal training outside of the home, all the Bernard children benefitted from the their mother's tutelage.

The manner in which the governor's wife instructed the children may have been as important as the curriculum itself. Amelia tried to make learning fun and was, if the following two excerpts from Julia's memoir be believed, in the main successful.

> I can never remember any troubles or difficulties about learning; no tasks, no punishments, no gloomy hours, no scolding. I don't know how my mother managed it, but our minds expanded, and we had great delight in reading, making it frequently our amusement at night when left to ourselves.
>
> No school, no governess; I cannot recollect anything ever wearisome or unpleasant that we had to do. No childish books, no fatiguing tasks; the first book I can recollect reading was the 'Spectator," which, with the 'Guardian" and 'Tatler,' we took great delight in.[25]

Julia's memory was understandably vague, but it described an education absent of strict discipline and the rote memorization that characterized many contemporary grammar schools.

The Bernard children's domestic education was not completely unstructured. Julia recalls learning "fine passages out of Milton, and Shakespeare

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[24] Higgins, *The Bernards*, II: 70.
[25] *Ibid*, 74, 70.

– whose wit and beauties were familiar to us – his oddities we comprehended not." She also wrote fondly of the family *salon* hosted by the Bernard matriarch in her apartments. "My mother's dressing-room was also the resort of my elder brothers, some grown up, and of my father when leisure permitted – when interesting conversation was going on, sometimes reading." In this *salon* "the best authors were always lying about, which were read and talked of – Addison, Milton, Shakespeare, voyages, history, &c."[26] These family discussions afforded the children an opportunity to discuss much of what they were reading with the benefit of the greater knowledge of their elder siblings, not to mention their erudite father, Francis. The governor knew many authors but was especially versed in the works of Shakespeare and was known to demonstrate his prowess whether solicited or not. In this environment Tom and his siblings learned a love of many English literary greats; they also developed key skills in expressing their own thoughts in an exchange of ideas that characterized the informal learning that took place in clubs and taverns.

In addition to learning to appreciate modern literature, the Bernard children became very conversant in other fine arts. In this respect the influence of Francis was most obvious. The governor and his wife, for example, hosted concerts by local musicians including military bands. Julia remembered these concerts as her first exposure to the works of Handel and Corelli, which she much admired. Julia and the other children were encouraged to develop their own artistic abilities. She received private lessons in the harpsichord and each of the Bernard children played a musical instrument. Jane Bernard, the eldest daughter, dabbled in painting while Tom and his brothers explored their creativity by writing poetry. Julia recorded that this domestic cultural environment continued after the family returned to England: "reading and music were the chief recreations in our mansion; my father frequently read to us at night the best plays and amusing and interesting books."[27] Their adolescent artistic exploits continued later in life as Scrope published verses in student magazines while at Oxford and Thomas,

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[26] *Ibid*, 74, 70.

[27] *Ibid*, 240-1.

though known more for his prose, published several essays on art patronage and literary criticism, especially in support of the British Institution for Promoting the Fine Arts in the United Kingdom (Chapter Six below).[28]

The domestic education of the Bernard children included religious and moral training as may have been deduced earlier by mention of their study of Milton, Shakespeare, and Addison and Steele. "I took delight in reading serious books by myself," Julia noted, adding, "we had no novels or trifling books in the house. My mother's favourite book, I think, was 'Paradise Lost,' parts of which I got by heart."[29] The moral tone of Milton's epic was grave indeed, but the journals of Addison and Steele were also "explicitly moral and self-consciously didactic" in their own fashion. Their lessons for moral and social responsibility echoed, too, the tone of civility that permeated the courtesy manuals that were so popular among the colonial American elite.[30] The Bernards' moral instruction, however, was never divorced from the Christian faith. "I have great cause to be thankful," Julia wrote, "that my mind was early impressed with religious feelings." "As long as I can remember," she added, "I went to my mother's sitting-room every morning, a large Bible always on one of her tables, and read to her."[31] Julia's elder sister, Amelia, must have been equally impressed by their mother's instruction because she taught Cato, a black slave and the Bernards' cook, to read the Bible. He was later baptized in England after having been freed.[32]

Although Julia's memoir is frequently scant on details, her moral instruction must have proceeded in part by way of example. Julia relayed a story of her mother's concern for the poor and less fortunate. When the family returned to England they settled near Aylesbury. There her mother saved a poor man accused of robbery from the gallows as described below.

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[28] Thomas Bernard to Scrope Bernard, 20 May 1782, Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, Spencer Bernard Papers (D/SB/P/6).

[29] Higgins, *The Bernards*, II: 240.

[30] Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The Colonial Experience 1607-1783* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1970), 366. On courtesy books in colonial America, see Bushman, *Refinement of America*, 30-60.

[31] Higgins, *The Bernards*, II: 70.

[32] *Ibid*, 218.

> A report got about that the man had met with hard measure, as one witness proved an alibi. My mother on hearing this sent for the gaoler – my father was in town – and gathering all the information she could from the man, one of us wrote down the particulars. She was going to town, took the papers, and they were laid before the Home Secretary of State. An immediate respite was sent. I went with a lady to the jail. The gaoler showed us thro' a window the man mentioned and another under condemnation reading together in the Bible. After full investigation, it was proved that the man had been hastily condemned. My mother returned; he was liberated, and came to our house, begging, with his wife, to see her and thank her. She went to the hall-door, I with her; it was an affecting moment; I can scarcely recollect it without emotion.[33]

The example of Amelia Bernard obviously made a lasting impression. Julia later married the Reverend Richard Smith and the couple assisted Thomas in several philanthropic projects. There is no reason to conclude that Julia's experience was singular. Tom and the rest of the Bernard children, whose first education was at home, could not help but be affected by the moral and social example established by their mother. Clearly Thomas Bernard was not the first in his family to exhibit a charitable disposition.

Formal Education: Harvard College

When the Bernards reached New Jersey, if not before, the domestic education that Tom received under his mother's tutelage was complemented by more formal training outside the home.[34] There were few schools in colonial New Jersey, and apparently none that its new governor considered 'good.' The dearth of good schools left gentlemen few options: send their sons to schools in New York or Philadelphia, put them out to private tutors, or send them back to England. Bernard wrote to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts

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[33] *Ibid,* 243-44.

[34] If Tom attended a grammar school in Lincoln there is no mention of it in family records.

(hereafter SPG), specifically to two influential members, the Bishop of Bristol and the Reverend Philip Bearcroft.[35] The governors' primary concern was for the education of his two school-aged sons, but he appealed to the Anglican society in most general terms: "it would be of great public utility, if we could get a Minister, a gentleman well qualified & disposed to teach the learned languages in a public school."[36] His request included an application for the customary £10 bounty that the SPG offered to hire educators, in this instance to employ an 'undermaster' to teach English writing and mathematics. Before the bishop or Bearcraft could respond, the governor had discovered a man he considered ideal for the new school, an SPG missionary named Samuel Cooke.[37] Bernard wrote to Bancroft hoping to get Cooke re-assigned from South Monmouth County in New Jersey, but in the meanwhile he sent his sons to study there.[38] Under Cooke's tutelage, Tom, who was nine, and his seven year old brother, Shute, probably studied the 'learned languages,' Latin and Greek, as well as English composition and mathematics. This curriculum was typical for sons of the colonial elite, and it certainly was the type of instruction that the governor had requested in his correspondence with the SPG. The Bernard boys, however, left Monmouth after only a year and by July had relocated to Boston.

The family records are largely silent on Tom's further education in Boston, save that he attended a local grammar school. He may have attended the Boston Latin School where in the early eighteenth-century students first memorized *A Short Introduction to the Latin Tongue* (1709) then parsed sentences from Aesop's *Fables* and other simple passages. By the fourth year students tackled the writings of Erasmus and Ovid's *De Tristibus* and by year six the histories of

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[35] Francis Bernard to the Bishop of Bristol, 24 March 1759, and Francis Bernard to Reverend Dr. Bearcroft, 24 March 1759, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Sparks MSS. Francis Bernard Papers. (hereafter FBP) 13 vols. I: 169-71, 171-2. Philip Bearcroft (1697-1761) was Secretary of the SPG from 1739 to 1761. See C. F. Pascoe, *Two Hundred Years of the SPG: An Historical Account of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1701-1900.* 2 vols. (London: 1901) 2:836.

[36] Francis Bernard to Bearcroft, FBP I:171-2.

[37] Samuel Cooke (d.1795) Scottish missionary for the SPG, stationed in Monmouth County from 1750-1775. Pascoe, *Two Hundred Years,* 2:854, 865.

[38] Francis Bernard to Bearcroft, 26 July 1756, FBP I:179-80.

Lucius Florus, the oratory of Cicero, and the poetry of Virgil.[39] Even if Tom went elsewhere, his course of study would have followed a similar pattern. A letter from Francis Bernard to Benjamin Franklin provided additional sketchy details about Tom's tuition. The governor boasted that Tom was "a very good Classick *(sic)* Scholar for his age & will be above the common pitch by next Summer."[40] Despite Tom's scholarship, his entry to college was postponed a year after his classmates had already matriculated. Tom remained in grammar school until 1764 because of a family problem, which, incidentally, had been the primary cause for the governor's correspondence with Franklin. The worry was Bernard's eldest son, Frank. Disagreements over the direction of Frank's studies at Christ Church Oxford had grown progressively worse. Apparently Frank planned to study only the fine arts, but Francis was determined that his son also study a more useful and practical curricula of math and science. The governor reprovingly recalled Frank to Boston, promising the dean of Christ Church that Frank would keep up with his class. Francis and John Winthrop planned to tutor Frank in math and natural philosophy before sending him back to Oxford.[41] A little over a month before Frank's scheduled return, he fled to Pennsylvania and then to Virginia. The governor wrote Franklin hoping to hear word of his prodigal son. Given the uncertainty of Frank's situation, the governor likely postponed Tom's departure.

While Tom bided his time in grammar school, his father explored options for the following year. Bernard's letters to Franklin contain several inquiries about the College, Academy, and Charitable School of Philadelphia, the body that became the University of Pennsylvania.[42] Despite the proximity of Harvard College to Boston, the standard three-year program at Philadelphia appealed to the governor, perhaps because Tom had been, in effect, held back a year. By April

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[39] Robert Middlekauff, "A Persistent Tradition: The Classical Curriculum in Eighteenth-Century New England," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 18 (1961): 62-3.

[40] Francis Bernard to Benjamin Franklin, 13 December 1763, FBP III:11-3.

[41] Francis Bernard to Lord Barrington, 24 May 1862. FBP II:190-2.

[42] Bernard's interest in the college may have originated as an attempt to broach any subject other than the prodigal Frank. Bernard's previous letters had solicited Franklin's help in finding the boy, a most embarrassing position for the governor. Francis Bernard to Benjamin Franklin, 13 December 1763, FBP III:11-3.

1764 it seemed that the governor's heart was set on Philadelphia. "The present state of the college here," he wrote Franklin, "makes it more expedient to send my son to Pennsylvania."[43] Bernard's missive alluded to the fire of 24 January 1764 that destroyed Harvard Hall, home to the college's library and philosophical apparatus.[44] The prospect of another son living far from home must have cause the governor great anxiety. As a precaution he made tentative arrangements for Tom to board with Francis Alison, a Presbyterian divine.[45] Alison was known for his scientific pursuits and promoted a curriculum of natural history courses at the College of Philadelphia. He was also a charter member of the American Philosophical Society. While his scientific bent may have appealed to the similarly minded Bernard, his position as a minister must have been foremost in the governor's thoughts. He assumed that with Alison, Tom would be "under a proper restraint."[46]

The fourteen year old Tom never attended Philadelphia; rather he enrolled at Harvard College in the fall of 1764, making the short trek from Boston to Cambridge. Tom's attendance was made possible by the college's quick recovery and perhaps by the governor's unwillingness to send Tom to a distant school. The governor dedicated much time and effort to getting Harvard back in order. Working with the legislature and the people of New England, the governor secured numerous donations of books, money, and apparatus for the college. He personally donated 10 guineas in cash, but more importantly 300 volumes for the library. Bernard was also instrumental in securing £100 from the SPG.[47] Even though Tom would be closer to home, his father felt it necessary to keep a watchful eye on

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[43] Francis Bernard to Benjamin Franklin, 9 April 1764, FBP III:35.

[44] Josiah Quincy, *The History of Harvard University.* 2 vols. (Cambridge: John Owen, 1840), II: 112-15; and T. Bernard, *Life of Sir Francis Bernard*, 30-31.

[45] Francis Alison (1705-1779), Scottish-born Presbyterian divine, rector and Vice-Provost of the College and Academy of Philadelphia. Thomas Harrison Montgomery, A *History of the University of Pennsylvania from its Foundation to A.D. 1770* (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Co, 1900), 63-66; Brooke Hindle, *The Pursuit of Science in Revolutionary America 1735-1789* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1956): 81, 90, 128.

[46] Francis Bernard to Benjamin Franklin, 9 April 1764, FBP III:35.

[47] See Quincy, *History of Harvard*, 2: 485-93; and Francis Bernard to the Archbishop of Canterbury, 18 August 1764, FBP III:247.

his son when he could not be there. He chose not to board Tom in the dormitory, but with Dr. William Kneeland, a former tutor of the college and son-in-law to the president of the college, Edward Holyoke. This home would provide, Bernard hoped, the same 'proper restraint' for a teenager that the governor sought previously from the Reverend Alison of Philadelphia.[48] With these arrangements in place, Tom, because of his social standing as the governor's son, took his customary place at the head of the class of '67. The college did not implement the more democratic system of determining class position by merit until 1782.

Harvard, when Tom Bernard arrived, had recently undergone structural and curricular changes that made it perhaps the finest colonial institution of higher education. Beginning in the mid-fifties, students had to read classic texts in public or perform Latin and Greek dialogues for various audiences, including oral quarterly exams, which had only been instituted in 1760.[49] Freshmen and sophomores read aloud to their tutors weekly, while upperclassmen debated in the forensic manner. Disputations, a staple of European universities since the Scholastic movement of the Middle Ages, had, by the eighteenth century, become hackneyed; however, Harvard rejuvenated the practice by de-emphasizing their trite syllogisms and introducing fresh and poignant topics such "Is civil government more favorable to human liberty than entire freedom from legal restriction?" (1737) and "Are the people the sole judges of their rights and liberties?" (1769).[50] These public debates became a regular feature of the College overseers' semi-annual visits as well as commencement exercises. Other structural changes included a new tutorial system. Traditionally one tutor was assigned to each classification of students. The freshman tutor instructed only freshman and he did so for the entire curriculum be it Latin, astronomy, or

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[48] Clifford K. Shipton, *Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard College in the Classes 1764-1767, with Bibliographical and Other Notes: Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, XVI (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1972): 442-47; and XVII: 97-100.

[49] Bush, *History of Higher Education in Massachusetts*, 69-71.

[50] These topics were cited in Cremin, *American Education: The Colonial Experience*, 466. The demise of disputations at Oxford is discussed in L. S. Sutherland and L. G. Mitchell, eds., *The History of the University of Oxford.* xvols. *Volume V: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986): 469-72. For the same at Harvard, see Bush, *Higher Education in Massachusetts*, 69-71.

natural philosophy. In 1766, however, tutors began to specialize as to subject matter. Now the math and science specialist tutored only those subjects, but to freshman, sophomores, juniors, and seniors alike.[51] The new system meant that students more consistently learned from field experts, a considerable improvement that also affected professorships at many colonial colleges. Harvard, for example, endowed special chairs for the study of math and science.[52]

Although by modern standards the eighteenth-century Harvard student's course of study was limited, several mid-century curricular changes were in the works. Latin and Greek still dominated core courses as professors required students to prepare extensive English translations of Horace and Homer.[53] However, natural philosophy and other scientific studies increasingly made their way into the curriculum of colonial colleges. Thomas Bernard knew well these strengths and weaknesses, but when he reflected upon his alma mater in 1790 he remembered his education as "liberal and well-directed." In elaborating he wrote:

> Devoid of the habits and examples of the fine arts, and of cultivated and elegant life ... the members of Harvard college nevertheless made a successful progress in literature. Some acquaintance with the poetic, but more with the prosaic compositions of the ancients; a competent knowledge of the technical parts of logic and rhetoric, and a considerable proficiency in natural philosophy, mathematics, and astronomy, particularly in the practical parts, were the result of four years residence, previous to their taking their first degree.[54]

If the enthusiasm of Bernard's remarks seemed muted, the fact that his attitude toward Harvard was generally positive was nothing short of remarkable since these comments graced the pages of Thomas's biography of his father. Even

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[51] Bush, *Higher Education in Massachusetts*, 71-2, and William C. Lane, "The Rebellion of 1766 in Harvard College," *Transactions of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* Volume 10 (1904-6): 38-9, 52.

[52] Cremin, *American Education: The Colonial Experience*, 512-23.

[53] Bush, *Higher Education in Massachusetts*, 71.

[54] T. Bernard, *Life of Sir Francis Bernard,* 26-27.

though the governor had supported the college in many ways, a Cambridge mob of Harvard students stormed Harvard Hall during the crisis over the Townsend Acts (1769) and defaced Sir Francis's portrait by cutting out its heart. Given these circumstances Thomas's comments were generous and attest to an educational environment that properly stressed the study of science. Harvard's dedication to increased mathematical and scientific instruction was manifest in its scientific apparatus which was, according to one historian, "equal, if not superior, to similar collections in many European colleges."[55] The endowment of a professorship in math and natural philosophy in the eighteenth century was further indication of the college's commitment to a more practical curriculum.

Harvard's considerable interest in providing solid scientific instruction reflected the pragmatic bias of education at Scottish and English dissenting academies. Many professors at Harvard and other colonial universities had intellectual ties to figures of the Scottish Enlightenment or to the universities at Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Saint Andrews, all of which were known for superior scientific education. Another major influence on Harvard came from English dissenting academies, most of which originated in response to the religious conformity laws at the Oxbridge institutions. In contrast to the classical programs at Oxbridge, these academies stressed a practical education which meant excellence in math and the sciences. Thomas Hollis epitomized this dissenting influence. He personally endowed two professorships at Harvard, the first in Divinity and a second in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy. The Hollis Professorship of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy required its chair to demonstrate experiments during lectures, to set aside office hours for the discussion of students' questions, to, whenever possible, reflect upon the wonders of God, and finally, to advance "true learning," that is to research the practical applications of science.[56] The spirit of the first Thomas Hollis continued when his

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[55] I. Bernard Cohen, *Some Early Tools of American Science: An Account of the Early Scientific Instruments and Mineralogical and Biological Collections in Harvard University* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), 10-1.

[56] Cohen, *Early Tools of American Science*, 12-17.

nephew, also named Thomas Hollis, donated a sphere, orrery, and microscope to Harvard in 1732. The younger Hollis expressed his wish that the machinery would promote "usefull knowledge" and "the advancement of natural and revealed religion."[57]

The immediate and changing needs of colonial New England were also crucial for the future of Harvard College. By the eighteenth century colonial New England had matured as a society. While becoming more pluralistic religiously and culturally, New England developed a more diverse economy and its population grew considerably. Between 1740 and 1770, for example, the population of New England doubled and urban growth gave birth to cities of considerable size.[58] Its enlightened and secular urban culture included a periodical press, numerous libraries, public lectures, and various social clubs and societies. The merchants, accountants, printers, craftsmen and civil servants who inhabited colonial cities appreciated the importance of practical education in their own lives. New England newspapers catered to this audience by publishing articles on scientific subjects and advertising public lectures and scientific experiments, while local libraries stocked natural history and philosophy textbooks. This maturing colonial society birthed several scientific societies that interacted with each other but also with European institutions such as the Royal Society of London, or the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (later the Royal Society of Arts).[59] Before he moved his family to Boston, Francis Bernard greatly anticipated the prospect of joining its enlightened and scientific culture. He wrote his patron, Lord Barrington, that the city "is perhaps the most polished & Scientific Town in America. I shall find there a good public library, many very conversable men,

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[57] *Ibid*, 12.

[58] Raymond Phineas Stearns, *Science in the British Colonies of America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970), 502-3.

[59] On the culture of American science in connection with Europe, see Stearns, *Science in the British Colonies*, 505-26. On Harvard's secularization, see Hindle, *Science in Revolutionary America*, 85-88. On the Society of Arts, see D. G. C. Allan and John Abbott, eds., *The Virtuoso Tribe of Arts and Sciences: Studies in the Eighteenth-Century Work and Membership of the London Society of Arts* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992).

tolerable musick & other amusements."[60] Harvard's shift to a slightly more practical education was hardly accidental; it was part of this thriving urban culture. While established as a theological school, by the mid 18th-century Harvard's mission, like its curriculum and the surrounding community, had evolved considerably. Future clerics continued to matriculate at Cambridge, but the more typical Harvard alumnus became a teacher, merchant, lawyer, or civil servant. Secular professions demanded a more practical education than the classical program; therefore, there was a greater need for courses in science and mathematics by the time Tom Bernard entered Harvard College.[61] Tom, too, expressed an awareness that the Boston community helped shape the college. Poetry, he observed "had never been the pride or passion of the place [Harvard]: nor could it be expected to flourish," he added, "in a country, where the novelty of the settlement, the religious prejudices, the political habits, the cast, the genius, the character of the people, were all adverse to its prosperity."[62] While a backhanded complement at best, Bernard's comment reiterated the point that the college's focus on a more practical curriculum grew from the needs of the community.

Tom Bernard's study at Harvard built on his previous home instruction and grammar-school education. Initially he had learned modern literature and astronomy in the cozy confines of his mother's sitting-room, then later the rigors of Greek and Latin at a Boston school. At Harvard John Winthrop, an internationally famous astronomer armed with a world-class philosophical apparatus, assumed the instruction that began with Amelia Bernard and the family orrery. Tom's grammar-school mastery of classic languages, moreover, facilitated his understanding of the poetry of Horace and Homer as taught at Harvard. Though it built on Tom's experience, his Harvard tuition opened new

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[60] Francis Bernard to Lord Barrington, 19 April 1760, *Barrington-Bernard Correspondence*, 12.

[61] Oxford also felt pressure to adopt a more practical curriculum in the mid-eighteenth century. Lucy Sutherland, "The University of Oxford in the Eighteenth Century: A Reconsideration," in *Politics and Finance in the Eighteenth Century* Edited by Aubrey Newman (London: The Hambledon Press, 1984), 491-518.

[62] T. Bernard, *Sir The Life of Francis Bernard*, 28.

opportunities to explore its more practical curriculum. Most importantly, his residence at Cambridge liberated Tom from the daily control of his parents. It allowed him to form his own ideas and to develop a sense of independence.

When he arrived Tom must have had mixed feelings about Harvard's new emphasis on public oratory. He may have welcomed teaching through discourse since it mirrored the literary environment of his home instruction; however, Tom had a stutter, what a family source called a "hesitancy in his speech," and it likely was a source of embarrassment in the more formal public disputations, readings, and exams that the college required. His impediment definitely affected his participation in commencement exercises. Custom dictated that Tom, as head of his Harvard class, present the Class-Day Valedictory in Latin. President Holyoke remarked that Tom performed this duty "indifferently both as to Speech and Action," while another in attendance noted that Tom "did it as well as was expected."[63] At the following Commencement Day, Tom's class standing once again required a prominent speaking part, this time another speech in Latin, the Salutatory Address. The governor, however, intervened on behalf of his son. He arranged for Tom to present a lesser speech in English, perhaps one of the forensic disputations in English that became a part of commencement exercises in the 1760s.[64] Tom must have been humiliated by his father's interference and by the public demotion that would have been obvious to those in attendance. Although Tom wrote his speech, he did not present it, presumably because of his humiliation. Bernard's impediment continued to inhibit him later in life. Bernard's first biographer claimed that Thomas's decision to become a conveyancer rather than a barrister stemmed from the amount of public speaking involved in the latter post.[65] Similarly, the editor of *Sibley's Harvard Graduates* argued that in 1770 Bernard took his A. M. in absentia because he did not want to recite his thesis to another Harvard commencement.[66] While his stutter undoubtedly caused

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[63] *Sibley's Harvard Graduates,* XVI: 442-43.

[64] Bush, *Higher Education in Massachusetts*, 36n.

[65] Baker, *Life of Sir Thomas Bernard*, 5.

[66] *Sibley's Harvard Graduates,* XVII: 98.

Bernard grief, this latter claim seems baseless. From 1769 Tom served as his father's private secretary and when the governor was recalled to England later that year Tom naturally accompanied him. There was little opportunity, or reason, for the governor's son to return to America for the sake of commencement.

Bernard's scientific tuition at Harvard under John Winthrop, the Hollis Professor of Natural Philosophy and Mathematics from 1738 to 1779, happily entailed no public disputations. Much of his study took place in the lecture hall where Winthrop earned a reputation as a dynamic speaker.[67] In 1764, Tom's freshman year, he heard Winthrop expound upon pneumatics and optics, astronomy and geography, surveying, hydrostatics, mechanics, natural history and navigation.[68] Tom may have, like Thomas Pickering (A.B. 1763), felt intimidated by Winthrop's knowledge and overwhelmed by the speed with which he covered material in class. Apparently the Hollisian professor "touched on a few matters rapidly," and while "the subjects of course were very familiar to him - to the novitiates," according to Pickering, "'it was all Greek.'"[69] Perhaps Tom's impression was closer to that of Stephen Sewall (A.B. 1761), who observed that "each new lecture seemed a new revelation," or Samuel Langdon (A.B. 1740) who bragged that Winthrop "had the happy talent of communicating his ideas in the easiest and most elegant manner, and making the most difficult matters plain to the youths which he instructed," a reference perhaps to the many experiments that he conducted during lectures.[70] Winthrop's willingness to meet and discuss his lectures with students enhanced his popularity and made him an even more effective teacher. Holding office hours, fielding and responding to student feedback, were not typical of Winthrop's peers who preferred quiet acquiescence and simple memorization. One alumnus remembered that his training in Locke's *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* "saved both the tutor and scholar the

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[67] No biography of Winthrop exists save sketches in *Sibley's Harvard Graduates,* IX: 240-64 and Michael N. Shute, ed. *The Scientific Work of John Winthrop: An Original Anthology,* (New York: Arno Press, 1980).

[68] Hindle, *Science in Revolutionary America,* 93

[69] *Sibley's Harvard Graduates,* IX: 245.

[70] *Ibid,* 245.

trouble of thinking."[71] Winthrop's stimulation of discussion and his open invitation for conference in the less intimidating confines of his office not only set him apart from other professors; it probably made him a favorite of the taciturn Tom Bernard.

Bernard's impressions of his professor remained unspoken, but Tom could not have helped noticing the general import of Winthrop's work. Tom knew of Winthrop before he became his student at Harvard. He knew of the professor's active role in the New England community and how he carried his practical perspective on science outside of the college through public lectures on earthquakes, electricity, and comets. To the layman, astronomy may seem an esoteric pursuit, but in the hands of John Winthrop it became an important research project. Tom, through his father's friendship with the professor, became quite familiar with Winthrop's career. In June 1761 Winthrop, like many astronomers around the world, set out to chart the path of Venus across the face of the sun. He planned a trek to Newfoundland for optimal viewing and asked the governor for funding. Winthrop convinced Governor Bernard of the expedition's practical applications, namely its importance for more accurate data on the position of the planets relative to the sun. The governor put the matter similarly to the House of Representatives, arguing: "This Phenomenon, which has been observed but once before since the Creation of the World, will, in all Probability, settle some Questions in Astronomy which may ultimately be very serviceable to Navigation."[72] Winthrop and Bernard won them over and the legislature provided transportation in the form of the Province Sloop. Harvard College also pitched in, allowing Winthrop the use of two telescopes, a timepiece, and an octant. The expedition was a success and Winthrop became a fellow of the Royal Society in London. The Society published his findings in *Philosophical Transactions*. Tom cannot have been oblivious to this prime example of cooperation between college, community, and government for the purposes of applied science. The Venus expedition typified the importance of science not only in New England, but

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[71] Cohen, *Early Tools of American Science*, 15.

[72] *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, IX: 253.

throughout colonial America. Historians have long noted the pronounced Baconian influence among American men of science such as Benjamin Franklin who saw in applied science the power to "multiply the conveniences or pleasures of life."[73] Colonial science was less concerned with pure theory and its advancement than engineering and practical applications of empirical research. Such views may have made folk-heroes of men like Franklin and Rittenhouse, but they failed to produce any great theoretician in the vein of Newton.[74]

The practical science in colonial America was the science of Winthrop and Harvard, and ultimately it became the science of Tom Bernard. Accordingly when Bernard later opened the Royal Institution of Great Britain, its focus was engineering rather than 'pure' science. While Bernard left no personal reflections on Winthrop, we can detect his lasting influence on Thomas in this institution for it had a program similar to Winthrop's work in New England.[75] The London-based Royal Institution hosted public lectures on "such new and useful inventions and improvements, *as are applicable to the common purposes of life*; and especially those which tend to increase the conveniences and comforts of mankind." It also maintained an extensive library and laboratory where it conducted experiments and put on public exhibitions. Inventions were judged and chosen for "*the degree of public utility*; and particularly as they might benefit the general mass of the people."[76] Winthrop had used his post at the college and its facilities to conduct public experiments on practical applications of science, too. The Royal Institution's concept of science replicated the one popularized by Americans such as Franklin and, of course, Winthrop. Certainly there were potential English sources to explain these similarities, but Bernard was not the only co-founder with

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[73] Hindle, *Science in Revolutionary America*, 1.

[74] David Rittenhouse (1732-1796). Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The Colonial Experience* (New York: vintage Books, 1958), 243-59; Ernest Cassara, *The Enlightenment in America* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975), 58-65..

[75] Studies of this body include Henry Bence Jones, *The Royal Institution: Its Founder and Its First Professors* (New York: Arno Press, Reprint 1976, 1871), Gwendy Caroe, *The Royal Institution: An Informal History* (London: John Murray, 1985), and Morris Berman, *Social Change and Scientific Organization: The Royal Institution,* 1799-1844 (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978).

[76] T. Bernard, "Extract from an account of an Institution, for applying science to the common purposes of life, so far as it may be expected to affect the poor," *The Reports* II:144-5. Italics added.

ties to New England, and Winthrop in particular. Count Rumford, previously known as Benjamin Thompson, was the conceptual author of the Royal Institution. Rumford never matriculated at Harvard, but from 1770-1771 attended Winthrop's lectures. Decades later, when Rumford penned his memoirs, he remembered his professor fondly as "that happy teacher."[77] The fact that two former colonials and students of John Winthrop cooperated to form a scientific society in London, one that espoused the same type of practical science that the professor had helped popularize in New England, suggests a direct connection between the Old and New World. More specifically, it indicates that Tom's scientific tuition at Harvard made a lasting impression on the future philanthropist.

Bernard's master's thesis, an affirmative response to the question: *Is a government tyrannical in which the rulers consult their own interest more than that of their subjects?* (1770) provides a sense of what other subjects Thomas pursued while at Harvard.[78] His interest in politics and public service had its roots in many sources, but fundamental was his study of the classics. "The emphasis on Greek and Roman authors and ancient history meant," according to historian Linda Colley, "a constant diet of stories of war, empire, bravery, and sacrifice for the state."[79] Many eighteenth-century Britons drew parallels and political lessons from classical sources. An author for *Monthly Review* provided an excellent example:

> It is certain, that a thorough acquaintance with the Roman government must afford the most useful information to the subjects of a free state, and more especially to our own: for there is undoubtedly a very strong resemblance between the general forms of each; both being a mixed nature, compounded of royalty, aristocracy, and democracy ... many profitable conclusions may be drawn ... from the fatal effects of party zeal, public corruption, and

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[77] S. Brown, *Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford*, 11.

[78] For a list of all the topics from 1770 see Edward J. Young, "Subjects for Masters Degree in Harvard College from 1655 to 1791," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 18 (June 1880): 119-51.

[79] Colley, *Britons*, 167.

popular licentiousness.[80]

That Tom was forming similar notions of statesmanship and disinterested public service based on these classical models may be inferred from the premise of his thesis. His notes have not survived, but his subsequent publications are littered with classical allusions. In his biography of his father, for example, Tom criticized parliament's refusal to introduce American members based on the example of Rome. "Not content to imitate the policy of Rome, and to extend the limits of empire by extending the rights of citizenship, the inhabitants of England, transferred," he argued, "the idea of the supremacy of the British empire to themselves individually; and talked of their American subjects, as if the rights and liberties of Englishmen were not the same on the eastern and western shore of the Atlantic."[81]

Bernard's familiarity with the Latin and Greek traditions were complemented by a study of modern social and political philosophers. An earlier reference, unflattering as it was, indicated that Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* was part of the Harvard curriculum in the 1760s. Bernard's adult writings demonstrate a working knowledge of Locke, but also of the great French political theorists Voltaire, Rousseau, and Montesquieu. Of these, Bernard probably studied Montesquieu at Harvard since *Spirit of the Laws* was a staple at several colonial colleges.[82] These works, too, may have found their way into Tom's first political thesis.

Tom's interest and understanding of politics and public service cannot be reduced to his formal training, especially since college students in the 1760s were politically active. Literary and debating societies at colleges throughout the colonies became obsessed with political matters in the aftermath of the Stamp Act crisis, culminating in several student protests in the late sixties. At the College of

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[80] Frank M. Turner, "British Politics and the Demise of the Roman Republic: 1700-1939," *Historical Journal* 29 (1986): 578.

[81] T. Bernard, *Life of Sir Francis Bernard*, 50-51.

[82] Cremin, *American Education: The Colonial Experience*, 383.

New Jersey's 1765 commencement, students defied customs duties and mother England by donning American homespun.[83] Harvard students were equally politicized. In 1766 and 1768 students rebelled against the authorities of the college. During the latter year, students, according to lieutenant governor and chief justice Thomas Hutchinson, rallied around their liberty tree, then traversed the campus breaking windows and declaring the attendance policy of the tutors to be "unconstitutional."[84] Tom actually participated in the protest of 1766, a fact that indicated strong influence of his peers in such a charged atmosphere.

Politics was also a very personal subject for Tom Bernard. Despite the politically charged atmosphere of Cambridge in the sixties, only Tom and one other candidate presented a thesis on a political subject, the remainder broaching topics in science or theology.[85] American revolutionary politics were very personal for Tom Bernard, a fact that must have figured in his choice of thesis. From 1766 to his withdrawal from school in August 1769, there may not have been a more hated figure in the colonies, and certainly not in New England, than his father.[86] The governor was commonly portrayed as an arrogant, money-grubbing, self-interested, aristocratic tyrant. From January to May 1767, the *Boston Gazette*, Bernard's most vicious detractor, published more than twenty derogatory articles on the governor, several accusing him of abusing his power to enrich himself by £22,000.[87] In April 1769 this newspaper also acquired and published stolen letters from the governor's official correspondence in attempt to prove that Bernard had been misrepresenting colonial matters to authorities in England.[88] Even before the letters were published the governor had been labeled a "Snake in the Grass" and "a Ministerial Canker Worm." After they went to press, the House of

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[83] *Ibid*, 467.

[84] Bernard Bailyn, *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1974), 137.

[85] Young, "Subjects for Masters Degree," 119-51.

[86] Bernard Bailyn might argue that Thomas Hutchinson was more hated, and he may be right. See Bailyn, *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson* (1974).

[87] Philip Davidson, *Propaganda and the American Revolution 1763-1785* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 145-46.

[88] Francis G. Wallett, "Governor Bernard's Undoing: An Earlier Hutchinson Letters Affair," *New England Quarterly*, 38 (1965): 217-26.

Representatives and the Massachusetts Council called for Bernard's removal from office.[89] The constant public vilification must have taken its toll on Francis Bernard's third son, who, just prior to the affair of stolen letters, had become his father's private secretary.[90] Tom's formal education at Harvard, in fact, ended abruptly because of this political turmoil. Under these circumstances, Tom's thesis contained a touch of irony. Why would the son of a governor whose father was accused of tyranny and self-interest, compose a public dissertation indicting the very behavior associated with his father? Was it to add insult or to publicly defend him? The close relationship between the two suggests the latter proposition to be closer to the truth, but the question remains open. Tom's notes are not extant and since he took his second degree in absentia no one ever heard the argument that would have formally ended his education in America.

Tom Bernard's education during his first nineteen years had a profound impact on his later philanthropic career. At home, where Amelia Bernard presided, he learned an appreciation of modern literature and the fine arts, as well as a sense of piety that entailed performing acts of benevolence toward the less fortunate. His mother's instruction contributed to the development of his philanthropic disposition. In grammar schools in New Jersey and Boston, Tom encountered tales of classical Greek and Roman military and political heroes whose noble and patriotic exploits inspired his own desire to place country above self. The classical influence continued at Harvard College, but Tom also benefitted from John Winthrop's lectures on the practical applications of science. Bernard's early socialization in elements of Christian duty, disinterested patriotism, the application of science to social problems, and the social significance of the fine arts

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[89] Wallett, "Governor Bernard's Undoing," 219.

[90] Bernard's biographer is vague on this move. On the one hand he maintained that it occurred at the first sign of unrest in Boston, around 1765-6. He also intimated that Tom's study at Harvard was cut short by this removal. Elsewhere, Baker dated Tom's transition to private secretary after the stolen letter incident, no later than April 1769. The earlier date seems unlikely because Tom participated in a student protest in the fall of 1766 and spoke at Harvard commencement in 1767. The latter date seems more probable because it would have allowed Tom to read enough to qualify for the A.M. degree that he took in 1770. Governor Bernard's correspondence with Lord Barrington, moreover, first mentions Tom as amanuensis in February 1769, more than a month before the governor;s letters were stolen. Baker, *Life of Sir Thomas Bernard,* 4.

ultimately encouraged him to apply these traits to his mature philanthropy. If Tom Bernard's school days laid a firm foundation for his later work, so too did the close relationship he had with his father. The next chapter explores the importance of that paternal influence.

CHAPTER TWO:
GOVERNOR'S AMANUENSIS, 1769-1772

After leaving Harvard in 1769 Thomas became his father's private secretary, a position he held until his entry to the Middle Temple in October 1772. Thomas helped the governor through what may have been the most discouraging years of the newly created baronet's life.[1] Sir Francis and his third son spent much of 1769 dealing with the Townsend boycotts, the publication of the governor's stolen letters, and a recall to England. After arriving in England in September, the next six months were consumed preparing a defense against impeachment proceedings brought by the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Even though the impeachment was dismissed in March 1770, these good tidings were spoiled later that year by news that the governor's eldest son, Frank, had died. This was the second son lost in two years as Shute, the governor's fourth son, passed on 5 April 1768 while at Harvard "after an illness of four days."[2] Spurred by a combination of personal grief and political fatigue, Sir Francis resigned the governorship in 1771 and returned to Lincoln where Thomas assisted his father's efforts to secure a government pension.[3] During these years, Thomas developed an intimacy with his father that none of his siblings experienced. He gained an intimate appreciation of his father's work, character, and principles. Doubtless, governor Bernard became a paternal and professional role model for his third son before, during, and after Thomas assumed his secretarial duties in 1769.

Although Amelia Bernard supervised her children's education within the home, Francis held sway over their instruction outside the domestic sphere. This was especially true of Thomas and his brothers who needed formal schooling to

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[1] In 1768 George III conferred a baronetcy on Francis for his service as colonial governor.

[2] Both sons were interred in a Cambridge cemetery and their respective obituaries appeared in *Boston Gazette*, 11 April 1768 and 12 November 1770.

[3] Francis Bernard's modern biographer suggest that the death of Frank hastened the governor's retirement. Colin Nicolson, *The 'Infamas Govener', Francis Bernard and the Origins of the American Revolution.* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2001), 210.

prepare them for future careers. The Bernard daughters, Julia, Fanny, and Amelia, became well-read and accomplished women far beyond the social graces expected of gentlewomen; however, they attended school primarily to enhance their domestic management skills. As time allowed Francis participated in his daughters' instruction at home, but his primary educational focus was sending his sons to the best schools available. One reason that Bernard sought the Massachusetts governorship was, in fact, "the greater Opportunities I shall have of educating, and providing for my children" in Boston.[4]

The governor's attention to his sons' formal education typified a distinctive sexism among elite families in both colonial America and rural England, so too was the special regard with which Bernard held his eldest son.[5] Frank's privileged place was established before the family's move to America. He followed in his father's educational footsteps, entering the elite public school at Westminister in 1757 as a King's Scholar at St. Peter's College. Later, Frank attended Christ Church, Oxford on a Westminister scholarship.[6] Governor Bernard had been King's Scholar in 1725 and attended Christ Church in 1729 before entering the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple in 1733. Frank received the best education available to an English gentleman because his father held lofty aspirations for him. He had eyes on a premier civil post for Frank, which of course necessitated the connections that flowed from attendance at Westminster and Oxford. The governor's plans for John, his second son, were more prosaic. Unlike Frank, John was no scholar; therefore, Bernard explored a mercantile career for his second son. When John was 16, the Governor wrote Lord Barrington of his plans "to put [John] to an accountant in this town [Boston], having given him as much school learning as the way of life he is destined for will require."[7] Accordingly John attended grammar school but never entered a public school or

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[4] F. Bernard to Lord Barrington, 19 April, 1760, *Barrington-Bernard Correspondence*, 11-12.

[5] G.E. Mingay, *English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), 131.

[6] Lord Barrington helped secure Frank's scholarship by an a appeal to the Duke of Newcastle. Nicolson, *Infamas Govener*, 46.

[7] Francis Bernard to Lord Barrington, 3 March 1761. FBP I: 299-302.

university. The governor's plans for Thomas's career included education at a colonial college. Such a move offered a more economical alternative to Oxford and would be sufficient to further Thomas's career if his third son remained in America. In 1764 Bernard considered three years at college all that Tom would need, but by 1767 he approved his son's pursuit of an advanced degree.[8]

While he sent his eldest son to all the right schools, governor Bernard seems to have expected more of him than the typically lax gentleman's education. In England as well as the colonies, elite sons who attended university might take a degree, but the primary goal was to produce a cultured and refined gentleman well versed in the classics.[9] Bernard too hoped Frank would gain "the finishing polish at Oxford," but he also encouraged his son to study practical subjects in addition to classics and literature.[10] He knew that knowledge of math and science would be good preparation for a career in government or politics. Francis's utilitarian approach to education frequently ran counter to Frank's impractical preference for the fine arts and travel. "I intend at present," he wrote to Lord Barrington in 1760, "to indulge his [Frank's] uncommon taste for literature; & for that purpose would have him pursue his studies at Oxford for 3 or 4 years."[11] However, when two years at Oxford brought Frank no closer to a career, the governor called his eldest to Boston for a serious discussion in 1762. Bernard explained his plans for the multi-talented but poorly focused Frank to his patron: "Ports he by no means wants, but judgement in choosing his walk of life & steadiness in keeping it he still has to gain." "To settle this and to initiate him into Mathematicks & Natural Philosophy, so as to make these studies pleasing to him," he continued, "will be our business."[12] The Governor engaged Professor John Winthrop to assist in his son's study while at Boston.

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[8] Francis Bernard to Benjamin Franklin, 13 December 1763. FBP III: 11-3.

[9] Mingay, *English Landed Society*, 137; Grevin, *The Protestant Temperament*, 286-8.

[10] Francis Bernard to Lord Barrington, 24 May 1762. FBP II: 190-92.

[11] Francis Bernard to Lord Barrington, 7 August 1760. FBP I: 272-74.

[12] Francis Bernard to Lord Barrington, 30 October 1762, FBP II: 221-3.

Paternal Discipline

A closer examination of how the governor dealt with Frank's rebellion provides insight into paternal discipline in the Bernard household, discipline that later influenced Thomas's approach to philanthropy. In October 1762 Frank arrived in Boston for his "interview," where his father proposed several possible career paths for his eldest. Frank rejected every suggestion, including the post of Naval Officer for the harbor of Boston. The holder of this office oversaw shipping records and could profit from the persecution of smugglers above and beyond the annual salary of £30; it was in the governor's estimation, " "an handsome provision for a person that executes it himself." In 1761 Bernard had called on Lord Barrington to secure this post for Frank upon the retirement of Benjamin Pemberton, the incumbent officer.[13] At the time Pemberton's retirement was a few years off and so was Frank's coming of age, but the governor made clear to his son that this was not a post to be rejected casually. Frank's disinterest in this and other employments left his father frustrated. The frazzled governor ultimately determined that his son should return to Oxford to complete a degree. Frank "will have better opportunities of acquiring that kind of knowledge, which his present time of Life requires," he wrote to his friend James Gilpin, adding, "even idleness there is more creditable & less dangerous than elsewhere."[14] Accordingly Bernard made plans for Frank to return to England in October 1763.

Given what transpired prior to Frank's departure, the governor and Winthrop's math and science tutoring was just as fruitful as the aforementioned interview between father and son. In July Frank, having received his father's approval, set out for one last adventure before sailing to England – a trip to New York and Pennsylvania. What was scheduled as a brief sojourn became a seven-month ordeal for the governor and his prodigal son. In October Bernard heard news that Frank had traveled to Bellhaven along the Chesapeake Bay, that his

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[13] This description of the duties of the naval office is borrowed from Nicolson, *Infamas Govener*, 251n; Francis Bernard to Lord Barrington, 3 March 1761, FBP I: 299-302.

[14] This letter, dated 26 November 1763 bears no address, but several allusions to Oxford affairs suggests that the recipient may have been James Gilpin. The governor had written Gilpin on other affairs regarding Frank's studies at university. FBP X: 147-9.

money was spent, and that he had settled finally at Sebastian's tavern in Alexandria, Virginia. Bernard called on Benjamin Franklin to arrange credit for Frank and safe passage on a ship to Boston. He also forwarded through Franklin instructions for Frank to come home immediately. The prodigal managed, however, to thwart his father's plans for more than a month by dodging the mail. "Tho I have had several letters from him," the governor wrote to Franklin in January, "I cannot find that any of my letters (from Aug. 30, when I sent a letter to Mr. Dunlap to be forwarded, to the present time) have reached him."[15] Franklin must have guessed the game Frank was playing so he hired a messenger to personally contact the governor's son in Alexandria. Frank finally returned to Boston in February and was on a boat to England by April. Since Franklin had been so helpful, Bernard felt compelled to explain his son's behavior "lest my son should suffer in your opinion." "His present misfortune," he wrote Franklin, "is that having been worked too much (by Himself) in litteral (sic) learning, he now runs riot at the entrance of Science, altho abundant curiosity is among his chief faults."[16] The governor's explanation may have been simplistic, but it gave clear indication that Frank bristled at his father's attempt to regiment his studies. The confrontation was by no means over.

An angry father, Bernard, saw fit to punish his son with a period of probation upon Frank's return to Oxford. He laid out probationary terms in a seven-page summary of 'instructions.' Frank was to continually reside at university, except during the summer break when he might visit his father's friends. Under no circumstance was he to roam to London without consulting his father first. Bernard feared the temptations of the city would be too great for Frank, especially given his son's "disposition to refine & explain away the principles of religion & consequently of true morality." Other terms required Frank to maintain a tight budget, £70 per annum, to keep a detailed account of his expenditures, and to report on his studies and extracurricular activities in a bimonthly letter home. Lest in the future Frank claim ignorance of his father's

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[15] Francis Bernard to Benjamin Franklin, 23 January 1764, FBP III: 19-20.

[16] Francis Bernard to Benjamin Franklin, 13 December 1763, FBP III: 11-3.

wishes, Bernard required his son to keep the instructions along with all future letters and "to have them ready to show me upon demand." This last demand was most probably a response to Frank's dodging of letters in Alexandria. The terms of Frank's probation ended on a positive note as the governor encouraged his eldest: "you will have it in your power to put an end to it in a very short time."[17]

Anxious as Bernard was about his son's future, he tried to master his own frustration over Frank's seven-month jaunt in order to reason with his son. The tone of Frank's instructions was authoritative and firm but in no way spiteful. "I find it necessary to dictate to you with the authority of a father," he declared, "instead of concerting with you, as I have much desired." The governor warned Frank: "if you should turn out vitious, irreligious, & immoral, all my hopes of you & all my power to serve you will be destroyed at once." Rather than issue additional threats, Bernard treated with his son: "I had rather you should be incited to do right by a prospect of rewards, & much more by a due sense of your duty." Of the former the governor promised his son "some genteel appointment" with a "handsome & independent settlement," while of the latter he asked Frank "to consider what you owe to your parents, to your patrons & friends, to the society you belong to, & above all to yourself." Bernard concluded his sermon with a clear statement of his ultimate goal for Frank: "I want to see you your own master with an *independent* income which you can call your own, & not remain a perpetual *pensioner* upon my little stock . . . for if you will not assist in your own advancement, it will be impracticable for me to bring it about alone, tho I am ever so much your affectionate Father."[18]

Frank failed to fulfill the terms of his probation – his correspondence, for example, was less than regular –; however, the governor continued to hope that his son "would make use of that time [on probation]" to "recover his credit" at Oxford.[19] By December 1765, Bernard's hopes had been dashed by several "extremely disagreeable" reports of Frank's "misconduct," which threatened to

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[17] "Instructions to Frank," n.d. [1764]. FBP X: 151-7.

[18] "Instructions," FBP X: 151-7.

[19] Francis Bernard to James Gilpin, 4 January 1766, FBP IV: 97-8.

have him sent down. Bernard's frustration was obvious in his letter to Frank the following January. "I will not complain or expostulate," the governor wrote, "but only desire you seriously to consider what is to become of you." No longer confident that his eldest "was capable of a civil office," the governor desperately appealed to the one thing he knew Frank enjoyed, travel. Bernard proposed an army commission to Frank, preferably one in India or some other distant post that would require lengthy sojourns in exotic locales. This apparently was the last positive reward that the governor was willing to offer because he warned Frank that rejection of the commission would result in no further opportunities. The governor promised to send Frank an annual allowance of £60 and that was all. Frank would be on his own to find residence on such terms, or to find a career; however, in either case, he was not to return to Boston. The governor apparently feared that if Frank came to Boston his younger children might be corrupted by the dissolute behavior of his eldest. In that case "I shall be content," Bernard concluded, "to have one dead weight in my family, hoping it will be only one."[20] Frank did manage to complete his Oxford degree in 1766, but showed little interest in his father's plans for him.

When news came of Frank's rejection of the commission in the summer of 1766, Bernard's frustration and anguish reached fever pitch, especially since his son's written response accused the governor of being unfairly harsh. So incensed was Bernard that he delayed responding, as he told Frank, "till the impressions your letter made upon me had lost their force." The governor's fury was understandable considering how long and how hard he and Lord Barrington had worked on Frank's behalf. Since 1761 the governor had fought off several competitors for the Naval Office. He had negotiated a contract with the current officeholder, Pemberton, and had enlisted Lord Barrington's help with several different ministries over the next five years. Although Barrington never complained, he hinted at the lengths to which he had gone for his cousin. When writing to Bernard about his solicitation of Lord Halifax in 1764, Barrington noted

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[20] Francis Bernard to Frank Bernard, 4 January 1766, FBP IV: 95-6.

how he had apologized to the minister "for breaking, or rather seeming to break, the vow I had taken when I became treasurer of the Navy; which was to ask no favours of any body, since I was no longer in a Situation to make a return."[21] The governor certainly felt the weight of his patron's statement. Trying to avoid further inconvenience of his patron, Bernard ascertained Frank's wishes before even approaching Lord Barrington about an army commission. The governor also sought the advice of George Lewis, Shute Barrington, and James Gilpin on how to handle the army commission subject with Lord Barrington and with Frank. To complicate matters, by the time the governor learned of his eldest son's rejection of the Naval Office and the proposed army commission, Frank had already been appointed to the Naval Office in March. Apparently when Bernard first proposed the army commission he had basically given up all hope for the Naval Office. Now, when four years of politicking had finally paid off, the news came as a mixed blessing. The governor knew Frank did not want the post; moreover, he knew that if Frank turned down the Naval Office it would take considerably more maneuvering to transfer the post to a second son. Worse yet, the office might be lost to his family forever.

All of these factors conspired to enrage the governor at his son's suggestion that he had been treated unfairly. "I have now for upwards of 3 years been diverting my solicitations & wearing out my interest for your benefit only," he wrote in December 1766 in response to Frank. "All the rest of my children," he added, "altho' not one of <u>them</u> has been deficient in duty & respect to me, have been neglected & set by untill [sic] your fortune should be made." Repeatedly the governor appealed to Frank's sense of duty. "I can't suppose," he implored, "it is your intention by your refusal to let my family lose entirely this valuable acquisition."[22] Bernard then urged his son to quit England for Boston in order to claim the Naval Office until a transfer could be arranged.

Although the rift between father and son was wide, it came to some resolution when in January 1767 Bernard received a second letter from his son,

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[21] Lord Barrington to Governor Bernard, 7 September 1764, *Barrington Bernard Correspondence,* 79.
[22] Francis Bernard to Frank Bernard, 2 December 1766, FBP IV: 100-1.

dated 9 September. This letter, which is not extant, may have been more contrite or the governor may simply have wearied of fighting with his son. In either case Bernard's return letter was conciliatory. He renewed his plea that Frank return to Boston, conceding "whether we are to agree or disagree, things shall be settled in the best manner they can."[23] Bernard added, in a most heartfelt manner, "I will not live in continual altercation with one I love." Frank arrived in Boston in June 1767 and assumed the Naval Office, although indications were that he never actually did the work because of a nondescript "illness." Family tradition held that Frank's malady and his untimely death three years later stemmed from a head injury incurred while at Westminster School in 1758. Some of the circumstances surround Frank's return and his final years in Boston suggest another possibility. Frank, for example, did not live with his parents but rented an apartment while serving as Boston's naval officer. Surely if he were ill or disabled, his loving parents would have welcomed their eldest into their home and cared for him. Recalling the governor's earlier warning that Frank might be a bad example to his younger siblings, it may have been the case that Frank suffered from alcoholism or some similar ailment that was deemed a vice at the time. Frank ultimately died of his 'illness' on 5 November 1770 at which time the Naval Office fell to his brother John.

Bernard's struggle with his eldest revealed a lot about the governor's values and how he used discipline to transmit those values to his children. He told Frank to be "honest, religious, and moral," but also dutiful to his family, friends, society, and ultimately to himself. One of Frank's primary duties was "to be his own master," by which Bernard hoped his son might achieve economic independence as well as general control over his wants and desires. The governor saw self-discipline and focus as keys to productivity, and productivity as a foundation for success measured broadly in utilitarian terms. He summed his feelings best when complementing the prosperity and impact of Lord Barrington's family. "If the political estimate of the value of a Family be reckoned by a combined proportion of

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[23] Francis Bernard to Frank Bernard, 15 January 1767, FBP IV: 101.

the number & usefulness of the persons produced by it, I hope my children," he wrote his patron, "will hereafter be reckoned in the estimate of the family of your Lordship's Grand father."[24] Frank represented a potential liability in this equation since he obviously lacked focus and discipline, and therefore was, from his father's point of view, less likely to be productive and more susceptible to vice. "I must not rob my *deserving children*, in favor of those who are not so," the governor wrote to a friend on the occasion of Frank's probation.[25] The diction of Bernard's missive calls to mind the distinctions that late century philanthropists made between the disabled poor who were deserving of poor relief and the able-bodied paupers who were not. Doubtless Thomas heeded his father's lessons as a dutiful son; however, the future philanthropist also adopted elements of Francis's disciplinary approach when organizing charitable projects.

Bernard first tried to reform Frank through positive incentives. The governor, for example, offered the prospect of a "gentleman's appointment" if Frank completed his degree and remained an upright and religious man. He had made similar approaches to his other sons. Sir Francis offered positive encouragement to Scrope in the form of extracts from a good report that Dr. Bentham, a governor of Christ Church, had written about the Governor's youngest son.[26] When inducements failed, as in Frank's case, Bernard opted for direct punishment, specifically a term of probation and confinement to Oxford. He anticipated that the wayfaring Frank would find a prohibition against travel unbearable. He assumed, therefore, that his son would quickly amend his ways, if only to remove this restriction. As further punishment, the governor appealed to Frank's conscience by labeling him a "dead weight" and "pensioner," while praising the rest of his "deserving children" who had remained obedient and dutiful. Even when expressing such harsh disappointment and reproof, the governor always offered Frank assurances that he was loved by his "affectionate father."

Although with Frank the governor found it necessary to "dictate ... with the

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[24] Francis Bernard to Lord Barrington, 20 February 1762, FBP II: 27-8.

[25] Francis Bernard to James Gilpin, 4 January 1766. FBP IV: 97-8. Italics added.

[26] Sir Francis Bernard to Scrope Bernard, 8 March 1776, quoted in Higgins, *The Bernards*, II: 291.

authority of a father," he preferred to raise his children in such a way as to obviate the need for such discipline. His primary objective was that his children's obedience and performance of duty be voluntary and not forced. One method by which Bernard (and his wife) encouraged such an attitude was through personal example. The Bernard children observed early on that their parents had their own duties and obligations which they diligently performed. Amelia Bernard, as mentioned before, set an example of Christian piety and charity that made a lasting impact on her children, especially Julia. The Bernard children learned about piety, civic duty, patriotism, and family from their father, too. Julia, for instance, noted her father's character and determination in the face of fierce opposition. He "was not popular" and "came in for a pretty good share of abuse" from the American patriots, but, she noted with pride, he "firmly and steadily put in execution the mandates of the [British] Government."[27] Julia's admiration for her parents grew in large part from just such examples. "I think to this day with pleasure," she confided in her memoir, "on the constant respect and attention we were in the habit of showing to my father and mother; their comfort and happiness seemed the first object of all."[28] She, and all the Bernard children, drew many lessons from their father's public and private life.

Paternal Role Model

In his official capacity, the governor performed many functions that might be labeled public service, but he also did volunteer work with religious societies including the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (hereafter SPG). Established in 1701 by a combination of lay and ecclesiastical leaders in the Church of England, the SPG was a society of subscribers whose funds sponsored Anglican missionaries primarily to the colonies of North America. SPG evangelists spread Anglicanism in the heterodox colonies in order to strengthen

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[27] Quoted in Higgins, *The Bernards*, II:78.

[28] Quoted in Higgins, *The Bernards*, II:240.

social and cultural ties with mother England.[29] As a devoted Anglican and royal official, Bernard had a natural interest in the Society's missionary work, but he also supported their educational projects. In 1759 he contacted the Society about establishing a grammar school in New Jersey and for commissioning a missionary to the Delaware Indian tribes. After being reassigned to Boston, Bernard continued his correspondence with the SPG. In 1764 the governor wrote on behalf of Harvard College to request financial assistance, specifically SPG funds to replace the school's philosophical apparatus that had perished in a devastating fire.[30] Bernard also approached the Society to send a missionary to the Passamaquoddy Indians. Another Anglican society with which Bernard worked was the Boston Episcopal Charity Society. Members of Boston's King's Chapel, including Bernard, made up the primary membership of this charity. Subscribers met monthly and distributed funds to the Anglican poor, no more than 40 shillings to non-subscribers and as much as £5 for subscribers who had fallen on hard times.[31] The governor's participation with the SPG and through his local church offered his children a living example of Christian piety and duty, one that entailed voluntary and active work to help those less fortunate spiritually and materially. He certainly expected his children to follow in his footsteps.

Another example that Francis Bernard presented to his children was religious tolerance. The governor's support of the SPG and King's Chapel drew criticism from some of his Congregationalist enemies in Boston; however, Bernard was never a rigid sectarian nor did he encourage his children to be intolerant. Bernard, though loyal to the established Church, was not ignorant to its faults. The governor, for example, when requesting the SPG send a minister to New Jersey, insisted that "whatever minister is sent here, he must be quite inoffensive in his manners," warning, "I cannot overlook a notorious breach of morality in a

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[29] H. P. Thompson, *Into All Lands: The History of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts 1701-1950* (London: SPCK, 1951), 18. For the "Americanization" of the colonial Anglican Church by means of SPG activity, see Benton Earl Gates, *'Anglican Frontiersmen': The Lives and Ministries of Missionaries serving the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Eighteenth Century New England* (PhD Dissertation, The University of Tennessee, 1997).

[30] Francis Bernard to the Archbishop of Canterbury, 18 August 1764, FBP III: 247.

[31] Nicolson, *Infamas Govener*, 53; *Laws of the Boston Episcopal Charitable Society* (Boston: 1795), 3.

minister."[32] The moral laxity of some clergy within the Church of England was common knowledge. The SPG, however, earned a reputation for setting high standards for its ministers and examining each applicant's temperament, zealousness, sobriety, and loyalty to the government.[33] Even though Bernard knew of their high standards, he still stressed that the man sent to New Jersey be above reproach. The governor's insistence reflected his concern for the Presbyterians and other dissenters who, lacking a colonial church of their own, would have to attend Anglican meetings led by this new minister. He wanted to make sure that even though these dissenters might be ill at ease with the ceremony of the Anglican service, they would at least draw comfort from their minister's unquestioned piety and moral character. The governor's sensitivity to nonconformity was equally evident when he rejected the request of an Anglican divine to evict a dissenting congregation from Newbury chapel in Boston. While in New Jersey, too, his official tolerance of Quakers was exceptional.[34] Bernard "waved the question of form and ceremony" and "indulged their [Quakers'] peculiarities" and, according to Thomas Bernard, "recommended one of their body to a seat at the council board."[35]

Bernard's relationship with native American tribes further demonstrated his religious tolerance. To meet the needs of the French-Catholic Passamaquoddy Indians the governor wrote Secretary of State Lord Halifax to request a French-speaking missionary be sent to the tribe. Bernard specifically requested an Anglican priest because the Indians "distinguish between the Church of England and independent worship; and have an too high an opinion of the priestly character to receive a self-constituted minister as an ordained priest." The governor even floated the prospect of sending them a Catholic priest since "with the Indians, who are not capable of abstract reasoning, the utility of their religion is to be consulted rather than the truth of it." In the case of a Catholic missionary,

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[32] Francis Bernard to the Bishop of Bristol, 24 March 1759, FBP I:169-71.

[33] H. P. Thompson, *Into All Lands*, 26.

[34] Nicolson, *Infamas Govener*, 75-6.

[35] T. Bernard, *Life of Sir Francis Bernard*, 9. For another illustration of Francis's regard for the Quakers, see F. Bernard to John Taylor, Sheriff of Monmouthshire, undated, FBP I: 212.

he expressed his preference for an Irishman rather than a French Canadian. Bernard's condescending attitude aside, he did respect the faith of the Passamaquoddy whom he called "very religious & great zealots of the church of Rome."[36] A few years later the governor supported the formation of an Indian college "to teach the Purity of the Christian religion," offering several tracts of his own land for the purpose.[37] The college project, combined with the governor's concern that the SPG send a minister who would be acceptable to the religious preferences of the Passamaquoddy, demonstrated that Bernard respected different religious ideas and practices, and that he preferred to 'correct' non-Anglican views through education rather than force.

While Bernard's treatment of native Americans and religious dissenters could be dismissed as playing politics or pragmatism, the governor's personal Christian convictions were also at work. Even Thomas recognized that his father's toleration of and respect for the Quakers of New Jersey "succeeded at *fixing them as the most zealous supporters of his administration,*" a very important step in stabilizing Bernard's government during the French and Indian (Seven Years') War.[38] The governor, too, admitted his own pragmatism in matters of religious tolerance. Bernard anticipated that a Anglican cleric, who could minister to both the Indians and nearby English settlers, "would be of great use not only as a minister of religion but also as a civil mediator between the Indians and the English."[39] Despite his own remarks, the rationale of politics or pragmatism cannot fully account for governor Bernard's religious tolerance. His refusal to evict a dissenting congregation from a Boston chapel, for instance, was impolitic and made enemies of some of his traditional supporters. More importantly, Bernard had personal reasons for his religious stance. His wife Amelia came from a Presbyterian family. There was no indication, however, that church doctrine ever caused friction between the couple. On the contrary, the governor privately

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[36] Francis Bernard to Lord Halifax, 18 August 1764, FBP III: 168-71.

[37] Francis Bernard to Oliver Partridge, 11 August, 1768, FBP V:276-78. Ruth Owen Jones, "Governor Bernard and his Land Acquisitions," *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* 16(1988): 138.

[38] T. Bernard, *Life of Sir Francis Bernard*, 6-10. Added emphasis.

[39] Francis Bernard to Lord Halifax, 18 August 1764, FBP III: 168-71.

and publicly advocated 'religious liberty' by which he meant toleration of nonconformity and freedom of worship.[40] Bernard's religious intolerance was reserved for people he considered irreligious, including his son Frank. "You need not wonder at my being alarmed," he once chided his eldest son, "at your disposition to refine and explain away the principles of religious & consequently of true morality or what is the same thing, to endeavour to break the natural connections which joins them together."[41] Francis may have had little patience for disbelief, but he held an inherent respect for fellow Protestants, and to a certain degree even Catholics. His sensitivity to the beliefs of Quakers and Indians was genuine, and cannot be dismissed merely as a governor's pragmatism.

During his colonial service Bernard supported another voluntary organization, the Society of Arts, also known to contemporaries as "The Premium Society" because it sponsored cash prizes and premiums for innovations in painting, commerce, or manufacturing, mainly to encourage potash, hemp, and other materials necessary for the war effort against France during the Seven Years' War. In the mid-sixties, the governor enlisted Penobscot Indians to grow hemp for the Society, hemp being the base material for the sails and cordage used by the British navy.[42] While this effort failed, Bernard and the Society more successfully encouraged the production of potash, a chemical compound used for bleaching and as a base ingredient for hard soap. European deforestation meant the timber to make potash was increasingly scarce. The forests of the North American colonies seemed endless, so, beginning in 1758, the Society of Arts ordered premiums for imported colonial potash. The Society offered the following premium in 1759:

> The Money paid to Foreigners, for large Quantities of *Pot-ash* used in our Manufactures, being very considerable, the Society promised to give to the Person who shall, on or before the Second

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[40] Nicolson, *Infamas Govener*, 37.

[41] "Instructions," FBP X: 151-7.

[42] Francis Bernard to Peter Templeman (Secretary of the Society of Arts), 28 August 1767. FBP VI: 38-40

> *Wednesday* in *December* 1760, import into any one Port in *England*, from any of his Majesty's Colonies in *America*, the greatest Quantity of *Pot-ash*, the Produce of the said Colonies, not less than Fifty Ton, nearest in Goodness to the best Foreign Pot-ash: the Quantity landed to be ascertained by Certificate under the Hands of the Collector and Comptroller of the Customs, and the Quality to be ascertained in such Manner as the Society shall direct, £100.[43]

The £100 premiums for bulk deliveries lasted until 1762 when the Society opted for bounties of £4 per ton of potash imported to London. The bounty system remained in effect until 1766 after which potash premiums were discontinued altogether. Although the Society claimed to have succeeded in its mission to increase potash production in these years, historians have given equal credit to technical advances that had no connection to the Society's premiums.[44] Bernard assisted several colonial manufacturers in their premium applications. In 1763 he contacted the Society on behalf of Levi Willard's superior procedure for producing potash. Four years later the governor forwarded samples of hard soap and potash produced by an original process developed by William Frobisher in 1753. Frobisher had sought a government subsidy in 1754 by transporting two tons of potash to London as collateral, but Westminister denied his application. Upon hearing of the Society of Art's premiums and learning of Governor Bernard's support, Frobisher chose to restart his potash manufacture with the assistance of this privately-funded organization. Bernard's cooperation with yet another potash manufacturer named Harrison, earned the partners a premium of £80 in 1763.[45]

Bernard's support of the Society of Arts presented his children a model of patriotic service from which Thomas and his siblings learned. In supporting the

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[43] *Premiums by the Society Established at London for the Encouragement of Arts, manufactures and Commerce*, (London: 1758), 38; Hudson and Lockhurst, *Royal Society of Arts*, 90-1, 161-63.

[44] William I. Roberts, "American Potash Manufacture before the American Revolution," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 116 (October 1972): 383-95; Hudson and Lockhurst, *Royal Society of Arts*, 157-162.

[45] Francis Bernard to William Fitzherbert (Vice President of the Society of Arts), 13 September 1763, FBP III: 97-8; Francis Bernard to Peter Templeman, 28 August 1767, FBP VI: 38-40; *Register of Premium Awards 1754-1776*, 38.

spread of potash production in New England, the governor argued that "the making of good hard soap out of the American potash will be a National acquisition."[46] Bernard's assessment matched the patriotic nature of the Society of Arts and similarly focused groups such as the Laudable Society of Anti-Gallicans (1745) and the Marine Society (1756). Each of these organizations attempted to promote British national interests. The Anti-Gallicans and the Society of Arts, for example, took it upon themselves to strengthen the British economy, while the Marine Society provided 10,000 men and boys, mainly vagrants, paupers and orphans, for the Royal Navy during the Seven Years War.[47] Mercantilist governments had traditionally tried to stimulate their national economies through tariffs and monopolies, and military recruiting had customarily been a first priority of state officials; yet, private groups such as the Society of Arts chose to help the state meet these responsibilities. The experience of the potash manufacturer William Frobisher was illustrative. In the 1750s he had unsuccessfully applied for state backing. Had the Society of Arts not offered its premiums for potash production, Frobisher likely would never have resumed his manufacture and his expert contributions to the British national economy would have been lost. However, with the assistance of this private society, he reopened his potash business and became a key New England producer. By helping men like Frobisher, Bernard and the other Society of Arts subscribers took initiative and made contributions to matters of national public interest. Through his actions and support of this organization, Bernard demonstrated that one need not wear a uniform, or hold an office, to serve one's country. This was a lesson not lost on his children, least of all Thomas, who joined the governor's staff in 1769 and was thus better situated than any of his siblings to benefit from their father's example.

A Son's Portrsit of His Father

None of Thomas Bernard's writings explicitly stated 'I learned this from my father,' or 'my papa taught me this;' however, readers of his *The Life of Sir Francis*

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[46] Francis Bernard to P. Templeman, 28 August 1767, FBP VI:38-40.

[47] Colley, *Britons*, 87-92.

Bernard, Baronet (1790) cannot avoid being impressed by the strong paternal influence. He wrote this biography in defense of "a revered and injured father," which partly explained why this memorial focused less on the personal than the public life of the governor. New England colonials repeatedly besmirched their governor's character and some of the King's ministers criticized Bernard's administration, too. Opposition from both parties hindered Sir Francis's request for a government pension, and his application for compensation for the real estate that the colonials confiscated during the Revolutionary War and after. Thomas sought to set the record straight, to defend his father's public service. More personally, he hoped to provide comfort to his siblings who, because of their youth or geographic distance, were not in a position to observe their father's actions as governor. Specifically, *Life of Sir Francis Bernard* encouraged the governor's children to "contemplate with pleasure and confidence the talents and probity of their father," so that they may "by retracing the events of his life, strengthen and fortify their minds; that, if ever they should be called to such a trial as he underwent, they may imitate him, in the conscientious and honourable discharge of their duty, and in integrity of life!"[48] Specifically, Thomas highlighted Sir Francis's dutiful performance of his responsibilities as governor, as Briton, and as father and family man. Composed as a lesson in duty and integrity, this biography opened a unique window into the values and character traits that Thomas attributed to his father.

Thomas portrayed his father's tenure as governor as a lesson in disinterested public service amid constant administrative pressure from Westminster, and public pressure from disgruntled colonials. Francis tried, according to his son, to balance these conflicting obligations. On the one hand, the governor's "unwearied labour and assiduity, in promoting the welfare of the province" led him to order the development of waste lands, to foster hemp and potash production, and to support tax relief as a stimulant to commerce.[49] Bernard's views on taxation did not always accord with the laws he was bound to

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[48] T. Bernard, *Life of Sir Francis Bernard*, 210-11.

[49] *Ibid*, 38.

enforce as governor, however. He did not, for example, favor the provisions of the Stamp Act. In fact, he privately appealed to the ministry to reconsider its policy. Unlike other governors who, according to Thomas, "ministered to the opposition of the people" and "varied their objects of homage, according to the momentary appearance of superiority," Bernard set aside his personal misgivings and faithfully enforced the stamp taxes in 1765.[50] His actions drew the ire of colonials who pressed for the governor's removal from office. The King's ministry ultimately did recall Sir Francis in 1769, a few years after which he retired from public office altogether. Bernard remained, however, a firm advocate of colonial administrative reform, even after he had no direct interest in the matter. In 1770 he acted as a consultant to the government, hoping to initiate reforms that would standardize what had been a rather ad-hoc system of colonial administration. Four years later, he published his reform plans in *Select Letters on the Trade and Government of America; and the Principles of Law and Polity, applied to the American Colonies*.[51] Apparently the humiliation of removal had not deterred the former governor from performing what he saw as his public service, a lesson not lost on Thomas.

Thomas essentially held his father up as a martyr, a man who sacrificed personal health and reputation to fulfill his duties to the citizens of Massachusetts and the government in London. In the mid 1770s governor Bernard's "mind and body gradually sunk under chagrin and vexation," but his sense of duty, according to Thomas, never waned. In fact, Thomas wrote that the only matter that postponed Bernard's "paralytic stroke," was the governor's "anxiety, before he quitted political life, to omit nothing, that was due to the service of the public, or to his own character."[52] Thomas's portrayal accords very much with Francis's self-assessment. "I cannot but consider myself as a Martyrr [sic] to the cause of Great Britain," he wrote to Lord Barrington. "For if Parliament had not taxed the Colonies, or if I had not in the height of my Zeal for my Mother Country, and the

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[50] *Ibid*, 68-9.

[51] Nicolson, *Infamas Govener*, 93-6, 208-10.

[52] T. Bernard, *Life of Sir Francis Bernard*, 192.

Service of the King tho't it my Duty to support the Authority of Parliament; or if Parliament had thought it their Business to support their own Authority, I should probably at this time have been in Ease, affluence, and should have attained many more Years than I am now like [sic] to see."[53] In making his father a martyr, Thomas presented an ideal of public service and self-sacrifice reminiscent of what historian Linda Colley described as a 'cult of heroism.' This cult was manifest in new historical genre paintings such as Benjamin West's *Death of Wolfe* (1770) that combined modern figures with classical themes and poses.[54] Believing themselves to be "heroes of a national and imperial epic," members of the British elite began to live lives of "relentless hard work, complete professionalism, an uncompromising private virtue and an ostentatious patriotism."[55] Thomas projected these values onto the memory of his father, but he also applied them to his own life. Just as the governor persisted in his duties despite failing health, Thomas would ignore his own physical well-being, literally working himself to death for the cause of his many philanthropies from 1815 to 1818.

Bernard's leadership and service to his family was another attribute that Thomas stressed in his biography. The governor considered family first when making career decisions, such as the move from New Jersey to Massachusetts. "Whatever personal disinclination he might have to quit a province where he was much beloved, and to which he was most attached," the governor, according to Thomas, "felt as a father, and received the appointment with pleasure and gratitude."[56] At the end of his career, Bernard swallowed his pride and accepted a pension that was half the sum promised by his ministerial superiors. When friends advised him to retire and reject the insulting offer, the ex-governor replied: "YOU FORGET THAT I HAVE NINE CHILDREN."[57] As governor Bernard set aside his own considerations to fulfill obligations to King and colony; now as father

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[53] Francis Bernard to Lord Barrington, 4 January 1774, *Barrington-Bernard Correspondence*, 218-9.
[54] Colley, *Britons*, 182.
[55] *Ibid*, 192.
[56] T. Bernard, *Life of Sir Francis Bernard*. 11.
[57] *Ibid*, 190.

he denied selfish pride to insure the well-being of his children. Thomas clearly admired this aspect of his father's character, which explains why he included such account in this biography. He wanted his siblings, especially the younger ones, to remember the many sacrifices made on their behalf.

In *Life of Sir Francis Bernard*, Thomas also highlighted his father's public service as a private citizen. He cited, for example, the governor's volunteer contributions to the SPG and the Society of Arts as part of his father's "unwearied labour and assiduity, in promoting the welfare of the province."[58] Thomas doubtless grew to appreciate men like his father whose voluntary support of private societies effected change in areas that the state was either unwilling or unable to act. In 1803 he wrote a public letter to prime minister Henry Addington, stressing the potential power of individual Britons working together for a common cause. Thomas asserted that "attentions, which in my private and retired walk of life may be approved as directed to an appropriate object, might in your situation be a neglect of office and a dereliction of duty." "A mind dwelling frequently and anxiously," he added, "on one object, and devoting *all its power* to a practical and experimental investigation of its bearings, its motives, and effects, –however inferior in original strength and acuteness, – may still hope to produce those fruits of *persevering industry*, which seldom fail."[59] In short, Thomas proclaimed the power of a publicly-minded individual or group of individuals, and justified their assistance of the state in matters of national import. Governor Bernard's contributions to the SPG and Society of Arts provided a model of voluntarism that Thomas and his siblings earnestly followed as adults.

Religious tolerance was yet another trait Thomas admired in his father. In *Life of Sir Francis Bernard*, he clearly presented the governor's fair treatment of New Jersey Quakers as a positive example of what he called "a well-established truth," namely "justice as to the rights of others."[60] The governor's third son applied similar principles in his own philanthropic work. At the turn of the

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[58] T. Bernard, *Life of Sir Francis Bernard*, 38.

[59] T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to Addington," *The Reports* IV: 2.

[60] T. Bernard, *Life of Sir Francis Bernard*, 6.

century, Andrew Bell, an Anglican, and Joseph Lancaster, a Quaker, put forth remarkably similar plans for a new type of school. Evangelical Anglicans touted Bell's schools, but openly criticized Lancaster's system for what they deemed inadequate religious instruction. Thomas, while a proponent of an Anglican-directed national school system and despite an intimacy with the powerful Clapham Sect headed by William Wilberforce, argued that "To deal out EDUCATION TO THE POOR only on the terms of *religious conformity*, is a species of persecution."[61] In an even more controversial statement, Thomas offered moderate praise for Lancaster and added: "I shall be most happy, if half of the ignorant poor of this kingdom should have the benefit of one mode, and the other half, of the other." His comments angered many conservative churchmen who charged this "philanthropic baronet" with encouraging a "mixture of the sectaries."[62] Thomas drew similar accusations after he praised the work of the Cork Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor. The Cork Society's directors included an Anglican bishop, a Roman Catholic bishop, and a dissenting minister. Bernard remarked: "Christian charity is not *less zealous*, because it is *more tolerating*."[63] Thomas, like his father, was a devoted member of the Church of England; however, he also, like his father, recognized freedom of religion.

Tom's Independence

This impassioned defense of governor Bernard's personal character and government administration attested to the strong paternal influence that Thomas felt; however, Bernard's third son also demonstrated an independent streak in *Life of Sir Francis Bernard*. Specifically, Thomas expressed political and social opinions that would have surprised, and perhaps hurt his 'injured' father. He openly sympathized, for instance, with the cause of the governor's most ardent detractors, the New England colonials. Thomas romantically described New

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[61] T. Bernard, *Of the Education of the Poor; being the first part of a digest of the Reports of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor* (London: 1809), 53n.

[62] T. Bernard, *The New School: being an attempt to illustrate its principles, detail, and advantages.* (London: 1809), 103; *Anti-Jacobin Review* 35(Jan-Apr 1810): 429-30.

[63] T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to Addington," *The Reports* IV: 25-26n.

Englanders as descendants of "men, who had abandoned their native country during the civil wars of the last century, and, braving the dangers of sea and land, had taken refuge in a desert wilderness, on account of their political opinions; and of their apprehensions of civil and religious tyranny." His account of colonial society was equally idealistic. "The European system of elevating a few individuals at the expense of the multitude, and of erecting an aristocratic fabric of wealth and luxury on the labour and servitude of the many, was" Thomas observed, "happily unknown in New England: instead of it there was a confident spirit and enjoyment of independence, that renewed memory of the original equality of mankind."[64] Thomas's political observations were just as flattering to the Americans, particularly his praise of the popular sovereignty that set the American constitution apart from its English counterpart. The executive, legislative, and judicial authority of the state "derived from and [was] controuled [sic] by the people; not theoretically, or by supposition of a possible original compact; but" he noted, "really and effectually, by annual elections; where the right of voting was not confined to a combination of a very few individuals, as in our corporations; nor annexed to the soil, as in burgage tenures; nor absorbed in one sole proprietor, as in some English boroughs; but always the same, and was extended to the people at large."[65]

Although a sympathetic portrait of the governor's enemies served a rhetorical purpose in this biography, Thomas's pro-American statements were genuine. On the one hand, portraying New Englanders as freedom-loving republicans whose constitution obviated the use of patronage and prerogative made the governor's exploits all the more heroic. However, Thomas's response to news of Shays's Rebellion suggested that his affection for America was more than literary convention. In August and September 1786 Daniel Shays, a former captain in the colonial army, led a mob of indebted western Massachusetts farmers to stop court proceedings against debtors. The rebels even broke up the Massachusetts supreme court fearing that it would charge them as traitors.

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[64] T. Bernard, *Life of Sir Francis Bernard*, 17-21.

[65] *Ibid*, 13.

Thomas heard of the revolt from his friend and college roommate, Isaac Smith Jr. "Your Countrymen are not aware," he responded to Smith, "how much the Generality of us are sorry for your Situation." "[I] had always a good deal of the Republican about me," Thomas reminded his friend, adding "[I] consoled myself for the Losses of my Family and Friends by the Events in America, in the hopes that a free and respectable Country was preparing in the West as an Asylum for all those who were weary of the Taxes, Tyranny, and Inequality of Station which have long been increasing Evils of Europe." "But," Thomas concluded, "judging by the present Prospects of this Country and the distracted State of yours, it will at least be some Time before those who are fond of Quiet and Freedom will seek that *Quietem placida sub Libertate* in America."[66] The fear and disappointment that Bernard expressed over the violence of Shays's Rebellion could not erase his hope that America would continue to afford opportunities that Europe's corrupt *ancien regime* could not. Thomas's republican sympathies and his positive view of America were definitely his own. His father was no republican and certainly had no great love for his colonial enemies. As strong a paternal influence as Thomas felt, he was his own man and displayed the independence of his mind even in his biography of his father.

Thomas first demonstrated his independent spirit while studying at Harvard. During the fall term of his senior year, Thomas joined in the notorious 'Butter Rebellion,' a student protest brought about by the spoiled butter repeatedly served to students dining in commons. The underlying issue of this revolt had been the college's recent redefinition of what constituted an excused absence form college exercises. The rules passed by the corporation on 10 September 1765 limited affluent students' ability to take meals off campus or to visit nearby relatives. Eating in commons was bad enough, but having to suffer through rancid butter was more than they could stand.[67] On 23 September 1766, Asa Dunbar led

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[66] Thomas Bernard to Isaac Smith Jr. 3 January 1787, Massachusetts Historical Society, Smith-Townsend Family Papers.

[67] For a full account of this protest, see William C. Lane, "The Rebellion of 1766 in Harvard College," *Transactions of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* 10 (1904-6): 33-59.

a group of underclassmen in the uprising for which President Edward Holyoke and the faculty threatened to demote him to the last rank in his class. In an act of solidarity, some upperclassmen, including Thomas, marched to the president's house to voice their concern. Holyoke denied them a hearing and the crowd dispersed. When the students found the same rancid butter at breakfast the next day, the protest continued; this time, according to Professor of Theology Edward Wigglesworth, the students "huzzaed in such a way that they could be heard in the town."[68] Two days later the president rounded up the ringleaders and presented them with a prepared confession to sign and to distribute to the other participants. The students refused, and in the meantime the college investigated the conditions of the dining commons. The corporation met after this inquiry on 7 October. The Board of Overseers, over which governor Bernard presided, also convened that day. The two bodies agreed that the college must enforce the full letter of the law and expel those rebellious students who failed to proffer a full confession and apology. When the Board reconvened three days later, it heard two petitions, one a general apology drafted by a student committee and signed by 43 of the participants, the second a document entitled *The Arguments in Defense of the Proceedings of the Scholars*. Given the style and content of the latter petition, Thomas Bernard, whose name headed the drafting committee, was probably its chief author. His name, incidentally, was not among the confession's drafting committee. Thomas's actions were bold given that his father stood on the opposite side of the issue. The defense he penned was equally defiant, asserting students' customary rights, questioning the logic of the tutors' policy and the justice of their inaction, and shamelessly refusing to apologize for what Thomas and his co-conspirators considered an act of justice in response to irrational oppression and fear.[69] The Board rejected the students' defense as well as their apology, so they drafted a new version of the confession that all student participants, including Thomas, signed on 11 October. Thus the Butter Rebellion of 1766 came to a close. Although it achieved no real concessions from the corporation, this student protest

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[68] Lane, "Rebellion of 1766," 46.

[69] The entire document appeared in Lane, "Rebellion of 1766," 50-54.

gave voice to an independent spirit who, for a time, defied both the Board of Overseers and his father.

Thomas's free thinking was by no means quashed when two years later he left college to join his father's staff, a fact that proved to be a mixed blessing for the governor. Bernard, who had had to beg and even threaten his eldest son into choosing a career, had a different problem with Thomas. After Frank's death John settled into the Naval Office in Boston, and the ex-governor directed his attention to his third son's career in 1771. Bernard once again called on connections to win a government post for his son, but Thomas was determined, according to his biographer, "to pursue a more independent line of life," the law. This "displeased" the former governor, who asked Lord Barrington to dissuade Thomas. According to Thomas's biographer, the Bernard patron, who was then Secretary of War, chose rather to congratulate the retired governor "on having a son of so independent a spirit."[70] Bernard was not so easily deterred and eventually convinced Barrington to help. Thomas's maternal cousin appointed him to the Commissary of Musters in the War Office on 29 January 1772. The £200 per annum sinecure seems to have appeased both parties. Francis, comforted that his son now had an independent income, supported Thomas's study of the law, while Thomas graciously accepted the assistance of his father and cousin.[71]

A year before Thomas's career was settled, he clashed with his father over a proposed trip to Paris with Isaac Smith Jr., Thomas's college roommate and friend. Smith's plan was to master the French language and he asked Thomas to accompany him. When Thomas broached the subject with his father, the governor questioned the necessity of traveling as far as Paris for "an Affair of Language," especially considering Thomas's recent poor health – "an illness pronounced by two Physicians to be consumption."[72] Sir Francis's reluctance to send his third son on

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[70] Baker, *Life of Sir Thomas Bernard*, 4.

[71] Barrington first informed Sir Francis of the vacancy at Musters by a letter of 7 January 1772. A second letter, dated 29 January, confirmed Thomas's appointment to the post. *Barrington-Bernard Correspondence*, 211-12, Higgins, *The Bernards*, II: 268, 271-72.

[72] Higgins, *The Bernards*, II:230-31. Thomas dismissed the disease as "a Cough & some little of a feveret." Thomas Bernard to Isaac Smith Jr. 28 February 1771.

an extended vacation was understandable given his previous ordeal with the prodigal Frank, and considering the governor had already lost two sons, Frank and Shute. Thomas was determined, however. He convinced his father that it was Smith who was set on going to Paris and the retired governor relented. Thomas could not contain his excitement as he informed his traveling companion that "after some little Talk, he [Sir Francis] appeared very well reconciled to our going to Paris." He also playfully told Smith of his plan "to travel in the Character of un pauvre philosophe."[73] After two years as amanuensis during very troubling times, Thomas must have relished this escape more than can be known.

Although the trip was originally scheduled for early March, Thomas had to delay his departure until May because of illness in the Bernard household. His mother and his younger siblings arrived in England only after seeing to the funeral arrangements for Frank. When they got to the governor's new home in Hampstead, tragically, they brought measles with them. According to Julia's account, the "sick house" lasted until late April and one of their traveling companions actually died from the disease.[74] Once the household's health was restored, the Bernard family visited relatives in Lincoln while Thomas and Smith departed for France by way of Dover. The summer of 1771 was a politically contentious one as Louis XV battled with the parlements through much of the year. Although the young travelers likely had more pressing matters of amusement, Smith's letters home indicate that they were in no way oblivious to the political situation. Smith specifically mentioned Louis's arbitrary use of the *lit de justice* to override opposition from the parlement of Paris, as well as the king's dismissal of one parlement in favor of a new one. "If violence used against a single m'r of the British H. of Commons [Wilkes] could raise such a clamour in our nation, what w'd," Smith asked his father, "a proceeding of this nature, & not only the dissolution, but the exile of a whole body for denying their assent to an arbitrary mandate, awaken?!" Thomas left no comparable observations from the trip, but subsequent statements that "Taxes, Tyranny, and Inequality of station"

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[73] Thomas Bernard to Isaac Smith, 28 February 1771, Smith-Townsend Papers.

[74] Higgins, *The Bernards*, II:231.

were part of the "Evils of Europe" suggest that Thomas, too, detested what he saw in Paris. Smith returned to England late in August, but Thomas remained in Paris for an extended stay, returning later that year.[75]

As Thomas grew to manhood, he negotiated a balance between the loyalty he felt to his father and his own independent thoughts. He shared many of his father's views on religion, personal responsibility, and public service, while formulating his own point of view, for example, on America. Ironically, the values that Thomas equated with American society – freedom, independence, opportunity and industry – were attributes that the governor tried to pass to his sons. Francis worked to open doors for his children so that they might become independent through their own industry and attention to duty. The governor arranged educational and career opportunities for Frank in hope that he would "be incited to do right by a prospect of rewards, & much more by a sense of [his] duty." Thomas benefitted from similar lessons and he saw their fulfillment in America where "the means of subsistence were easy and open to all," not just to privileged sons like Frank. In America "the virtuous confidence of industry and liberty left no citizen to ask alms; hardly any, to accept donations." "There were fewer lesser offences;" Thomas continued, "and very few, if any, great crimes known among them," offering proof "that liberty, while it constitutes the happiness, increases and confirms the virtue of mankind.[76] Liberty and opportunity fostered industry, independence and ultimately virtue in society as a whole, just as it had in his own familial experience. Thomas considered himself living proof that his father's lesson were true and if applied generally, as he thought they were in America, society would be greatly improved.

The relationship between governor Bernard and his third son was remarkably dynamic. Thomas observed his father's actions and interpreted them in his own unique and independent fashion. Thomas became the dutiful and independent son that his father hoped for and when the retired governor died in

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[75] Isaac Smith Jr. to Isaac Smith Sr. 12 August 1771; Thomas Bernard to Isaac Smith Jr. 3 January 1787; Isaac Smith Jr. to Isaac Smith Sr. 29 August 1771, Smith-Townsend Papers.

[76] T. Bernard, *Life of Sir Francis Bernard*, 20-1.

1779, it was his third son who became patriarch since his mother had died the year before. John, the eldest surviving brother, inherited the governor's baronetcy, but he remained in America and never provided direction for his younger siblings. Thomas, however, performed this duty with unflinching courage. It was Thomas who applied to Lord Hillsborough for a pension for his younger siblings; it was Thomas who sent money to his younger brother Scrope during his studies at Oxford; and it was Thomas who took it upon himself to honor and defend their deceased father's career by writing a biography in 1790.[77] Just as Thomas assumed his father's familial responsibilities, so too he adopted many of his father's basic principles. Thomas idealized his father and formulated his own ideas against the benchmark of the family patriarch. As such the influence of the Governor on his son is essential to better understanding the mind of Thomas Bernard.

Thomas Bernard did not begin his philanthropic career in earnest until the closing decade of the eighteenth century; however, by the early 1770s he clearly had discovered many of the fundamental principles and organizational models that would guide his work. Bernard's charitable house stood upon firm foundations provided by a stable and intellectually challenging home life, by a superior formal education in the classics, mathematics, and natural philosophy, and finally by a loving, disciplinarian and occasionally contentious relationship with his father. From an early age he had been taught his duties to society, to family, to God, to state, and even to himself, but ultimately it was Thomas who defined his own existence. Unconsciously drawing upon his socialization, Thomas declared that his primary obligation was to be USEFUL "as that the Blessings of existence should not have been thrown away on an idle and useless Creature." This was how he explained the life-changing decision he made to retire from the law to become a full-time philanthropist. That decision and his future career were truly built on firm foundations.

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[77] Thomas Bernard to the Earl of Hillsborough, 1 July 1779, FBP XII:319-20, Thomas Bernard to Lord North, 1 July 1779, FBP XII:311-2; Thomas Bernard to Scrope Bernard, 23 June 1778, Spencer Bernard Papers.

CHAPTER THREE:
COMMISSARY, CONVEYANCER AND COUNTRY SQUIRE, 1772-1800

On 5 October 1772, Thomas Bernard followed in his father's footsteps by entering the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple in London.[1] Earlier that year Thomas assumed a post at the War Office as Commissary of Musters that brought with it an annual salary of £200.[2] Given the many demands on his father's fortune, Thomas's salary facilitated greatly his legal education, which consumed the better part of eight years. Near the completion of his studies Thomas took an extended vacation to the Lake District during which he kept a journal that he considered publishing. By the end of 1780 Thomas settled into more serious matters, particularly his legal career. Although he was called to the Bar, Thomas chose to specialize in conveyancing, or real estate law. He made important personal and professional contacts in these years, including serjeant James Adair, who introduced Thomas to his niece, Margaret. Thomas married Miss Adair in 1782 and the couple inherited a small fortune shortly after the nuptials upon the death of her father Patrick, a wealthy London merchant. This windfall enabled the Bernards to maintain a residence at Bloomsbury Place in London as well as a country estate at Iver in southern Buckinghamshire. During extended stays in the country, Thomas became quite the country squire, participating in the local administration of the poor laws and instigating several reforms at the Iver workhouse from the early 1790s. The Bernards sold their country home in 1800 as Thomas became more involved in London philanthropy, especially as Treasurer of the London Foundling Hospital. From 1795 to 1806 the Foundling estate became the Bernards primary residence. Each of these experiences was formative. Bernard's parochial service, his legal career and service in two civil posts afforded valuable organizational and administrative

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[1] Francis Bernard had entered the Society of the Middle Temple in 1733 and was called to the Bar in 1737.

[2] Higgins, *The Bernards*, II: 268, 272. Channing, *Barrington-Bernard Correspondence*, 211.

experience. Bernard's marriage, moreover, strengthened his resolve to use his wealth and talent on behalf of those less fortunate. On a broader scale, Thomas continued to profit from the support and assistance of his extended family, especially from his siblings and their spouses who were also very active in charitable projects.

Legal Education: Honourable Society of the Middle Temple

Few particulars of Thomas's legal education survive save what little can be pieced together from his scant correspondence and the administrative records of the Society of the Middle Temple. Thomas was one of 75 students admitted to the Middle Temple in 1772.[3] Typically a student spent his first 2 or 3 years 'reading' law, that is studying a canon of texts and commentaries that included Thomas Littleton's *Tenures*, a fifteenth-century text that was still in use, and the new standard work, William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765).[4] The Inns offered no lectures, moots, or really any formal instruction. It was the responsibility of individual students to compile a personal commonplace book, an annotated index of legal headings with relevant statutes and precedents subjoined. In his second year of study, Thomas wrote Isaac Smith about his 'reading' of copyright law and particularly the issue over how long an author's rights lasted. At the time Bernard was reviewing a recent decision by the Court of King's Bench in favor of authors' rights in perpetuity. He complained to Smith that the work "contains 130 Large Quarto Pages, & one of the Council told me the Extracts he had made from different Books to furnish Arguments would have filled a folio Book."[5] Thomas's comments suggested that the process of reading law was

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[3] All statistics graciously supplied by Lesley Whitelaw, Archivist of the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple. Thomas paid student fees for 33 terms from Michaelmas 1772 to Michaelmas 1780, after which he was called to the Bar and subsequently paid barrister's fees. *Register of Admissions to House and Chambers, 1758-1775*. Ref.MT.3/AHC/4.

[4] The following description of legal training is drawn from: Alan Harding, *A Social History of English Law*. Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books Inc., 1966; David Lemmings, *Gentlemen and Barristers: The Inns of Court and the English Bar 1680-1730*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990; and Brian Abel-Smith and Robert Stevens, *Lawyers and the Courts: A Sociological Study of the English Legal System 1750-1965*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967. For other texts in this legal canon, see Harding, *Social History of English Law*, 285-7; and Lemming, *Gentlemen and Barristers*, 101-2.

[5] T. Bernard to I. Smith Jr. 12 February 1774, Smith-Townsend Papers.

often tedious and a solitary project. Not all legal study was so colorless. In his letters to Smith Thomas mentioned attending Westminister Hall, a practice common among the students of the Inns. Groups gathered in mass to observe court proceedings at Westminister or at the Guildhall. They also held informal moot courts in the taverns and coffeehouses about London, but Thomas never mentioned participating in such.[6] Perhaps Thomas attended moots but watched silently, or avoided such public displays altogether because of his stutter. Bernard's nephew biographer claimed that the speech impediment continued to be a source of personal insecurity and dictated Thomas's choice to specialize in real estate contract law. Conveyancers, it would seem, had much less need to speak in open court than was typical for a practicing barrister.[7]

Thomas spent only part of his legal tuition in London. "I have been so little stationary," he joked to Smith in 1774, "that I am not clear whether I do not come within the vagrant Act, alternatively in Town to keep my Terms & attend Westminister Hall, & by fits in different parts of the Country, where People would take me in."[8] His duties as Commissary of Musters required travel throughout the country , but Thomas also made several trips to see his extended family. Bernard's letters mentioned visits to his birthplace in Lincoln where sister Jane had settled with her husband Charles White or to Aylesbury to see his parents. In 1775, Thomas spent three months of the Michaelmas term at his parents' house and may have done so more frequently as their health steadily declined.[9] Lady Amelia died in May 1778 after an illness of several months and Sir Francis suffered several epileptic fits in the years before his death in June 1779. Thomas attended his father in his final days and gave the following account: "His death was easy, and in one respect happy, as he expired without a groan in the arms of four of his children.[10]

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[6] Lemmings, *Gentlemen and Barristers*, 106-7.

[7] Baker *Life of Sir Thomas Bernard*, 5.

[8] T. Bernard to I. Smith Jr. 12 February 1774, Smith-Townsend Papers.

[9] T. Bernard to I. Smith Jr. 27 September 1775, Smith-Townsend Papers.

[10] T. Bernard, *Life of Sir Francis Bernard*, 208. Cf. Thomas Bernard to Scrope Bernard [1 May] 1779, Spencer Bernard Papers.

Thomas's frequent absence from London was not unusual for a student of law, but it may have postponed his entry to the Bar. The loose standards of the eighteenth-century Inns of Court were such that students were only required to take a few meals in residence each term. Many students, in fact, managed to attend one of London's Inns of Court while also enrolled at Oxford or Cambridge. Thomas's tuition dragged on for eight years which, though not unusual, certainly exceeded the five years that was typical for a student entering an inn with a Bachelor of Arts. Although Thomas took his time, he could boast that he was one of just 20 students called to the Bar from the 75 who had entered the Middle Temple in 1772. On 24 October Thomas became an official member of the Bar, taking his oaths in the Court of King's Bench. The ceremonial beginning of Bernard's career was anything but auspicious because Thomas arrived, as an amused family friend observed, having forgotten to bring his peruke.[11] Thomas Bernard thus unceremoniously embraced his future with no formal cover for his head.

Travel Writer

Before immersing himself in the mundane world of deeds and contracts, Bernard took a summer trip to the English Lake District. His reading of Thomas Gray's *Journal in the Lakes* (1775) seems to have been a primary motivation.[12] Gray had captured with words the natural beauty of the region and Bernard chose to retrace the poet's steps through the Cheviot Hills, beneath the shadow of Skiddaw peak, into Saint John's Vale and by its surrounding lakes. The young conveyancer also followed Gray's example by keeping a journal. Although he never published it, Bernard may have considered the prospect because he bothered to title it, *A Holiday Tour*; moreover, the memoir possessed a literary quality often

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[11] William Wyndham Grenville to Scrope Bernard, 30 November 1771. Letter quoted in Higgins, *The Bernards*, III: 13.

[12] Bernard had also recently read Thomas West's *Guide to the Lakes* (London, 1778). Gray's and West's work reflected growing tourism in the Lake District. For more on tourism and travel books, see Ian Ousby, *The Englishman's England: Taste, Travel and the Rise of Tourism* (Cambridge University Press, 1990) and Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape, Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1989).

absent in private journals. There is, for example, a definite structure to the narrative and a flair to its anecdotes that suggests planning and deliberation. In short, *A Holiday Tour* was much more than a simple vacation diary, it was Bernard's attempt to compose an eighteenth-century travel book.

Travel literature, as distinct from a private journal or a published travel guide of useful information for travelers, was an extremely popular literary genre of the eighteenth century – one that maintained fairly specific narrative and descriptive conventions.[13] Travel books were less encyclopedic than guides, less personal than diaries, and more entertaining than either. The need to entertain meant that writers employed narrative structures and styles typical of fiction. Travel writers, for instance, sensationalized characters or scenes for dramatic or comic effect, or assumed narrative personae – the philosophical traveler, the splenetic traveler, the sentimental, or the picturesque – in order to pique the reader's interest. If a travel book contained too much fiction, it risked losing credibility with the audience; therefore, most authors tried to steer a middle path between travel guide and novel. Travel writers placed lively anecdotes within a narrative framework that invoked the trust of their audience, usually adopting an epistolary or journal format. These narrative structures provided the sense, whether true or not, that the book's observations were accurate and had been recorded while fresh in the author's memory. Besides narrative conventions, travel literature also adhered to descriptive forms, including observations, the specific details that a traveler saw, and reflections, "the philosophical, aesthetic, moral or political thoughts these sights occasioned."[14] In deciding what to record, Bishop Tucker's *Instructions for Travellers* (1757) encouraged travelers to catalog details such as "the Looks, Numbers, and Behaviour of the People, their general Clothing, Food, and Dwelling, their Attainments in Agriculture, Manufacture, Arts and Sciences," or more specifically "Whether Tenants in the Country usually pay

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[13] For a general definition of this genre, see Charles L. Batten, Jr., *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 31-46. On narrative techniques see 47-81, and for descriptive conventions, 82-115.

[14] Batton, *Pleasurable Instruction,* 82.

their Rents in Money, or in Produce," and "Whether the Generality of Inhabitants decorate, or keep neat the Outside of their Houses."[15] How and how often one reflected on these observations was another matter of convention. In general an author's essays should not be so numerous as to detract from the narrative and should flow naturally from the place being described. Reviewers were often harsh on travel writers who used only the slightest pretext for a lengthy diatribe.

When Thomas penned *A Holiday Tour* in 1780, he drew upon the general conventions described above, but also from the individual style of specific authors who had enriched the travel genre considerably, namely Laurence Sterne, Thomas Gray, and Arthur Young. Gray and Young had produced specialized travel books in response to the glut of encyclopedic travel accounts that appeared from the mid-century. Young established his niche by describing agriculture and husbandry, while Gray's romantic observations of natural beauty pointed the direction, unintentionally perhaps since his journal was not meant for publication, for picturesque specialists such as William Gilpin.[16] Sterne's impact grew primarily from his caricature of the travel genre in his novel *Tristram Shandy* (1759-67) and in the fictionalized travel book *A Sentimental Journey* (1768).

Bernard demonstrated these eclectic influences throughout his travel journal. At times Bernard played the philosophical traveler, recording the styles and conditions of cottages, the terms of land tenure, the state of employment, and other conditions in the locales through which he passed. Bishop Tucker's *Instructions* may have affected this aspect of Bernard's work, but there is more evidence of the influence of Arthur Young's *A Six Months' Tour through the North of England* (1770). For example, Bernard, when passing through Cumberland, commented on the political dominance of the coal magnate Sir James Lowther. Young had made similar observations in his own work about Lowther's dominance

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[15] Quoted in Batton, *Pleasurable Instruction,* 90-91

[16] Gray's *Journal in the Lakes* was published posthumously. It began as a personal memoir inserted into his letters to a friend Thomas Wharton who was to make the trip with Gray but had to decline at the last minute. William Gilpin, *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1772, on several Parts of England; Particularly the Mountains, and Lakes of Cumberland, and Westmoreland.* 2 vols. London, 1786.

of Whitehaven.[17] In segments of the journal, Bernard also exhibited an appreciation for picturesque scenery. In language reminiscent of Gray, he proclaimed Saint John's Vale "the Region of Romance" and praised "the little Lake of Grassmere; decked as it is with every Beauty which the boundless Hand of Nature could bestow on its valley of the richest Verdure incircled with the wildest mountains."[18] Bernard the humble observer of nature soon gave way, however, to Bernard the satirist when he invoked the wit of Sterne to make light of fashionable society, parliamentary elections, and, as in the following excerpt, picturesque travelers and their awe of sublime nature. "I walked down to Crow Park & enjoyed the Contemplation of the Lake [Keswick], while the Beams of the Sun," he observed, "were dispersing the Mists & Clouds from every Part of the surrounding Scene, except from the Summit of the Majestic Skiddaw. Here was a Scope for Meditation of the Littleness of Art & the Grandeur of Nature, – but I returned home to Breakfast."[19] Bernard's rather abrupt punctuation of this scene was vintage Sterne, who often critiqued travel books and travelers in similar fashion. The fusion of disparate influences made *A Holiday Tour* an interesting read, but more importantly it foreshadowed an informative yet satirical style that Bernard would later employ in promoting his social projects.

Bernard's specific impressions of northern England, the core content of his journal, revealed just as much of the author as did his mercurial style. He devoted several entries, for example, to local agricultural conditions. Bernard was quite impressed by "the Spirit & Wisdom of Improvement" in Northumberland, where "Luxuriant Plantations, neat Hedges, rich Crops of Corn, comfortable Farm houses & elegant Mansions" had replaced the "barren Moor, dearly rented at 18 Pence an Acre; about 30 Years ago; when Cultivation & Building were ranked either among their natural or artificial Curiosities."[20] He admired similar improvements by Robert Graham near Carlisle on the Cumberland border. Graham had "converted

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[17] G. E. Mingay, *English Landed Society in the 18th Century* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), 195-6.

[18] Bernard-Baker, *Pleasure and Pain*, 22.

[19] *Ibid*, 19.

[20] *Ibid*, 9.

wild & barren land into beautiful fields & rich meadows" and built his farmhouses and cottages "with Taste and Meaning."[21] In stark contrast, Bernard described Shropshire as "a fertile Country by Nature, but very little assisted by Art." "The Common People of this County seem," he observed "content & satisfied with hard Fare and hard Labour" adding that "in the inventions which have adorned & benefitted human Life, they are many Years behind the Neighbouring Countries." His description of Northumberland against the relief of Shropshire facilitated Bernard's public endorsement of the spread of scientific improvements in agriculture throughout Britain. Bernard playfully proposed that a migration of Northumberland farmers "would be of great Service in quickening the Wits of the honest farmers of Salop," and added the hope that "the Arts & Sciences *may* penetrate even into Salopia."[22] Bernard's jest underscored a real faith in applied science, one that echoed the works of Arthur Young. Young's work culminated in the formation of the Board of Agriculture in 1792. This board promoted scientific improvements in agriculture and husbandry. Not coincidentally, Bernard's faith in applied science brought about the SBCP four years later. The SBCP not only shared many members with the Board of Agriculture, it also endorsed agricultural improvements as a remedy for rural poverty.[23]

Bernard also reflected on local government and elections in *A Holiday Tour.* In the Forest of Deane the roads, in Bernard's estimation, were "execrable" despite the abundance of good building materials locally, an apparent paradox he attributed to local corruption. "Upon a Certificate of the Badness of the Roads a Treasury Warrant issues for a Fall of Timber to answer the Expence of mending them; so that" Bernard observed, "it is the Interest of the Persons employed, to *preserve the Badness of the Roads*, which they do very faithfully.[24] The young conveyancer also noted abuses in the election process. In Cumberland, he wryly described the pocket borough of Cockermouth where "Sir James Lowther *is seised*

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[21] *Ibid*, 15.

[22] *Ibid*, 38.

[23] On the overlap in membership, see Morris Berman, *Science and Social Organization, 1-6.*

[24] Bernard-Baker, *Pleasure and Pain*, 43.

in his Demesne as of Fee; having purchased the Majority of Freehold Houses (in which is vested the Right of Voting)." These, according to Bernard, Lowther "grants out to his Dependents, at the time & for the Purpose of the Election; to be reconveyed to him, as soon as the Election is over."[25] Bernard became more satirical when describing an election for Leominster where he and a traveling companion "were asked, nay requested & intreated to Stand." Although assured by the electors that "the *Expence* wo'd be *trifling* & the *Success certain*," Bernard "declined the Honor." Dismayed by his response, the local voters interpreted their inability to attract a third candidate as a sign that their borough had been "omitted in the Borough-hunter's-Calendar." "What no third Man?" Bernard facetiously asked, adding: "Cruel! Like the old Dame, who kept living & living till She feared that Death had forgot her."[26]

Through the ruse of a innocent account of Furness Abbey, Bernard directed his most elaborate social commentary at the hedonistic lifestyle of the British elite. The ruins of the abbey drew many eighteenth-century tourists because the abbey had a storied past. It opened in 1123 as a Savigniac house under the patronage of Stephen Count of Blois, the future King of England. Furness became quite wealthy from its extensive land and mining interests in Ireland as well as the Isle of Man; it was, in fact, the second richest Cistercian house in England when it was dissolved in 1537.[27] Like many travelers Bernard was impressed by the abbey, deeming it "the noblest Monastic monument of Antiquity in this Kingdom." Despite Thomas's admiration for the abbey edifice, his account of the ruin focused primarily on the monastery's opulence and its peculiar penitential system. Since it was impossible "to Banish Luxury from a Convent," the monks determined "to use the Blessings of Life as to derive no Pleasure from them," resulting in a most unusual way of life. "At an Early Age," Bernard noted, "the Novicate was plunged

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[25] *Ibid*, 17.

[26] *Ibid*, 39.

[27] The Savigniacs were absorbed by the Cistercian order in 1147. Bryan Little, *Abbeys and Priories in England and Wales* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1979), 117-18; Lionel Butler and Chris Given-Wilson, *Medieval Monasteries of Great Britain* (London: Michael Joseph, 1979), 243-47; Jane Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders 1000-1300* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 63-77.

in Sensuality, in Order that ... he might extinguish the Capacity & Preclude the Possibility of Happiness." The monastic regimen of sensuality began with an inversion of what they perceived as the natural order. Since "'*Happiness consists in Obedience to the Laws of Nature,*'" and as natural law had "appropriated the Day to Action & the Night to Repose, the Statutes of this Abbey," the monks, according to Bernard, "directed the Day to be wasted in broken slumbers on a downy Bed, & the Night to be lingered out in the Weariness of sumptuous Tables & magnificent Entertainments." They embraced gluttony, debauchery, and gambling "which exhausted their Time, until the Revolution of Hours restored them to the Table." Bernard called these unusual monkish pleasures vices "of those who have no heart," meaning vices that numbed the debauchee to any feeling for his fellow man. By embracing "every malignant Passion, that wages War with Human kind," the monks eschewed "those exquisite Gratifications, which the Heart of Man derives from the Exercise of the social Virtues: – Courage, Wit, Beauty," and especially "Benevolence."[28] The monks apparently discerned that concern for others would nullify their attempt to satiate their desires through indulgent sensuality. Consequently social virtues were unknown at Furness and instead quite contrary lessons devolved from this system. The abbey became the antithesis of positive social values and was, at best, a school of vice.

Although his disgust for the abbey's system was evident, Bernard saved the true object of his scorn for the conclusion of this tale by comparing the behavior of these 12th century monks with the lifestyles of his own contemporaries. "*[R]ather* extraordinary" was the Furness system in its day, but in contemplating how his eighteenth-century audience would receive the behavior of these medieval monks, Bernard thought they would find it "VERY FAMILIAR" since "we have so many similar Establishments among Persons of Fashion in London."[29] This simple declaration altered entirely the meaning of Bernard's story. What began as a quaint history of a peculiar but decidedly dead institution morphed into a scathing indictment of Bernard's own society. The young conveyancer was openly accusing

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[28] Bernard-Baker, *Pleasure and Pain*, 24.

[29] *Ibid*, 26.

his elite contemporaries of being self-indulgent hedonists whose concern for their fellow man had been obliterated by their own gluttonous and debauched habits.

Not content to simply notice the ill, Bernard challenged his audience by dedicating the fable of Furness "to those undecided characters who (like Montaigne's old woman wishing to secure a friend on either side) lights one candle to St. Michael & another to the Dragon," a twofold allusion, first, to the battle for heaven recorded in Revelations 12 between the archangel Michael and Satan in the form of a ten-headed red dragon, and second, Michel de Montaigne's essay "On the useful and honourable." The essayist used the image of these warring figures to comment on the dangers of a moderate stance on issues of good and evil. "If only I could, I would readily follow that old crone's plan and offer a candle to St Michael and another to his dragon," Montaigne observed, "But I find that to remain vacillating and mongrel, or to keep one's affections in check, unmoved by civil strife in one's country and having no preference when the State is divided, is neither beautiful nor honourable."[30] The poignant nature of Bernard's dedication would not have been lost on his readers. They knew that this travel writer wanted them to take a stand and to make a choice between a self-indulgent lifestyle and one of virtue that entailed concern and caring for others. This critique of decadent privilege anticipated by some years the challenges Bernard would level at the British aristocracy through his philanthropy.

Four days after penning his journal entry about Furness, Bernard appended a retraction, stating: "I have been imposed on by the pretended History of Furness Abbey: Not a Word of Truth in it." His audience must have found this revelation somewhat surprising, but even more so given Bernard's apparent lack of concern at being duped. "How often," he observed, "are such Tricks played on the Editors of Travels! Alas! That Knowledge & Wisdom should only be gradations of Error & Folly!"[31] Bernard poked fun at his own gullibility but

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[30] John Calvin employed the fable of the old crone before Montaigne, but Bernard made no mention of the earlier reference. Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*. Translated and edited by M.A. Screech (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 894.

[31] Bernard-Baker, *Pleasure and Pain*, 28-9.

indirectly he was doing the same to his audience. He warned them to not believe everything you read, especially from the authors of travels. In an ironic twist he was cautioning them to take his own words with a grain of salt, leaving them uncertain about how much of *A Holiday Tour* was fact and how much fiction, a question Bernard only could answer.

In the fable of Furness Abbey, Bernard's self-effacing and humorous retraction seemed incongruent with his passionate and satirical diatribe against fashionable sensuality, but not when considering the conventions of eighteenth-century travel literature. Travel writers often used satire and novelization to make social comments and *A Holiday Tour* was no different. Bernard's record of the Leominister elections provided a prime example. Pocket boroughs and borough-mongering were well documented in pre-Reform Bill Britain, but that fact alone did not free the eighteenth-century reader to accept Bernard's witty account at face value. Bernard's accounts were not simple reportage, rather they were carefully crafted, witty, yet pointed anecdotes designed to elicit a reaction from readers. The repeated use of satire in his travel chronicle suggests that several anecdotes were sensationalized, if not completely fabricated. Certainly such had been the case with Bernard's story of Furness. His initial account was steeped in satire of the fashionable elite. Then came the retraction. The cunning of Bernard's disavowal was that it assuaged some of the sting of his arrow without bringing its mark into question. Bernard appeared the dupe and he let his audience in on the joke, but he never retracted a bit of his critique of the self-indulgent lifestyle of Britain's aristocracy. The jibe remained while he distracted his readers with humor.

Bernard's tactics were in keeping with those of other travel writers who were rarely shy about making pointed statements, but who also knew that politics was not their primary function. Good travel accounts sought to inform and entertain, but not to preach. Accordingly, Bernard, like most travel writers of his day, knew better than to be heavy-handed in his social observations and reflections. Travel literature, after all, was first and foremost about entertainment. In mastering the tricks of the trade, Bernard learned volumes

about being a keen social observer, about analyzing what he saw, and giving expression to those reflections in an informative yet entertaining manner. Since so many of his social projects and philanthropy depended upon written accounts and observations, Bernard's literary influences from *A Holiday Tour* help account for his future success as a philanthropist and social reformer.

Legal Career and Civil Service

A month after his excursion to northern England, Bernard began his legal career in earnest. Although a barrister, Thomas chose a non-traditional path by specializing in conveyancing, that is "the activity of the legal profession concerned with the framing of deeds by which property is 'conveyed' from one person to another."[32] Barristers customarily left such pedestrian matters to scriveners but this situation gradually changed after several late eighteenth-century taxes and statutes were levied on conveyancing. Heightened expense and regulation forced many scriveners out of the practice and led to greater professionalization as well as a noticeable rise in the social status of contract lawyers.[33] Although conveyancers still lacked the prestige of barristers, Bernard, according to Baker, found contract law lucrative but also rewarding, particularly since lingering insecurities over his speech impediment made litigating in open court a daunting prospect. The less public nature of conveyancing must have held an inherent appeal for Bernard.

During his legal training and throughout his professional career Bernard held posts in the War Office. His first appointment, Commissary-General of Musters, or Musters-Master, entailed touring army regiments stationed throughout the country in order to monitor the funds that were distributed from the Paymaster-General of the Army. As Commissary, Bernard would have required each regiment to muster. He would then make an account and certify the number of regimental officers and soldiers. The reports of Muster-Masters such as Bernard provided vital information about regimental strength but also acted to

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[32] Harding, *A Social History of English Law*, 25.

[33] Abel-Smith and Stevens, *Lawyers and the Courts*, 22-24.

prevent colonels from inflating their regimental rolls. The Commissary's job was to confirm that every soldier and officer who appeared on the roll was present and accounted for. Although this was a sinecure that he could have hired out, Thomas chose to perform the duty himself and seems to have enjoyed the travel it entailed.[34]

In 1782 Bernard actively pursued a position with the Ordnance Office in Cornwall. That year he wrote to his younger brother Scrope inquiring about the rumored resignation of the Duke of Richmond, Master-General of the Ordnance under the Rockingham government. When Rockingham died on 1 July 1782, Lord Shelburne formed a new government and speculation arose as to whether Richmond would keep his office. Since Scrope held a minor post in this new administration,[35] Bernard wanted to know if his brother had any private information on the subject. He also wanted to inform Scrope of his interest in a post with the Ordnance Office should Richmond indeed resign. Specifically Thomas had his eye on Cornwall where he anticipated that Richmond's retirement would lead the current Cornish officeholder, a man named Adair, to vacate his post as well. Likely Thomas had inside information in this matter because the Adair in question may have been Serjeant James Adair, uncle to Thomas's wife of two months, Margaret Bernard, née Adair. Bernard left no question of his wishes in this letter, informing his brother, "it is £300 a year, subject to taxes: the Business entirely in my way; that is the Conveyancing line." "I wish you to enquire," as "I know nothing else I should wish for, but this wo'd be useful to me beyond the salary, & I sho'd much wish it."[36] Bernard failed to elaborate on what non-financial benefits he anticipated, but his letter, nonetheless, attested to the eagerness with which he pursued his early legal career.

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[34] Hampden Gordon, *The War Office* (London: Putnam, 1935), 100-1 and C.G.T. Dean, *The Royal Hospital Chelsea* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1950), 132; T. Bernard to I. Smith Jr. 12 February 1774, Smith-Townsend Papers.

[35] Shelburne's Lord Lieutenant of Ireland was Earl Temple, whose younger brother was William Windham Grenville, Scrope Bernard's Oxford chum. Temple appointed Grenville as public secretary, and Grenville in turn offered Scrope a place as his own private secretary. Higgins, *The Bernards*, III: 43-52.

[36] Thomas Bernard to Scrope Bernard, undated, Spencer-Bernard Papers.

It is unclear whether or not Bernard gained the Cornish Ordnance post, but he was appointed joint Agent and Solicitor of Invalids in 1785. The Invalid Companies were army units composed of disabled soldiers. Although physically limited, the Invalid Companies provided "inexpensive garrisons at key points throughout the country."[37] As agent Thomas became in effect paymaster to approximately 10 such companies and was entitled to the "pickings" or processing fees of 6*d* per pound of pay dispersed. For much of the eighteenth century army agencies were notorious for corruption and mismanagement.[38] Scrope Bernard had briefly held the office but since it was "not compatible with Parliament" he passed the agency to Thomas who had no parliamentary aspirations. The elder Bernard served for twenty-one years before passing the post to Scrope's son Francis in 1806.[39]

Bernard's tenure as Musters-Master must have served him well when he entered the disheveled Office of Invalids in 1785. "The Office," he observed, "was in a more extraordinary state of neglect and confusion that can be imagined. The Accounts had not been balanced or entered for years back." As for his predecessors, Bernard remarked "Two paymasters had successfully put an end to their own existence and the third, Sir Henry Smith, "was in a degree of mental derangement, aggravated by his feelings as to the situation of the Office."[40] Bernard and his co-agent, Augustus Phipps, set out to put the office in order, a task, according to Bernard, "of some years, with a considerable expence of Establishment, and with a serious loss on neglected balances and overdue accounts." The pair effected such an house-cleaning that years later Bernard could boast to the Home Secretary, Lord Sidmouth, that "The Invalid Office is one of the

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[37] Ascoli, *A Village in Chelsea*, 102.

[38] Wheeler, *The War Office* 101-9.

[39] James J. Sack, *The Grenvillites 1801-29 Party Politics and Factionalism in the Age of Pitt and Liverpool* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1979), 43. By incompatible, Sack presumably alluded to the 1782 reform that prohibited revenue officers and beneficiaries of government contracts from admission to Parliament. Eric J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State: Early Industrial Britain 1783-1870* (London: Longman, 1983), 26.

[40] "Observations on the Correspondence &c respecting the Invalid Office" British Library. Liverpool Papers, volume CLXXVII, Add MSS 38366 ff. 49-54. The 'survivor was Sir Henry Smith.

efficient offices of Government; referred to by other offices, and very frequently by the War Office, an attendance on which makes no considerable a part of the Employment of their clerks."[41]

Bernard's fiscal reforms and bureaucratic efficiency as Agent of the Invalids must have been appreciated by the reform-minded William Pitt; however, Thomas eventually eschewed political life for full-time philanthropy. Bernard's tenure at the War Office may well have fostered this charitable impulse, especially since the Invalid Office oversaw payments to the disabled soldiers at the Royal Military Asylum at Chelsea. As agent, Bernard became well acquainted with the plight of veteran soldiers, a familiarity that manifested itself in later philanthropic projects. While treasurer of the London Foundling Hospital, for example, Bernard supported open admissions for children of soldiers who died in action. During the Napoleonic Wars, he served as Vice President of the Naval and Military Bible Society, which distributed bibles to British military personnel. Bernard also pushed for government action in support of British fisheries, justifying the plans, in part, because he considered fisheries to be natural employers for those soldiers and sailors who were demobilized between 1815-16. In short, a career as a civil servant not only honed Bernard's administrative leadership qualities, it served to motivate his journey into philanthropy.

Iver: Family Ties & Parochial Reform

In the late 1780s Thomas and his wife purchased a country home near Iver in southern Buckinghamshire.[42] Thomas knew the area well because his father had retired near Aylesbury in 1771 after inheriting the estate of Nether Winchendon from a dear cousin, Jane Beresford. Even after the governor's death the estate remained in the family, passing eventually to Scrope who purchased the

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[41] T. Bernard to Lord Sidmouth, 8 March 1815, 11 May 1815; Liverpool Papers, Add MSS 38261 ff. 88, 145; "Observations" Add MSS 38366, f.49-54.

[42] I have no record of the specific purchase, but Thomas mentioned the residence in a letter from 1788. Thomas Bernard to Scrope Bernard, 23 September 1788, Spencer Bernard Papers. Thomas sold the house to John Sullivan in 1800. Higgins, *The Bernards* III: 306.

manor and lived there with his wife, Harriet.[43] Another of Thomas's siblings, Julia, had also settled in Bucks, although not at Aylesbury. She lived at Wendover where her husband, the Reverend Joseph Smith, was vicar. These family ties and history led Thomas and his wife to purchase the Iver retreat where they spent several months each year visiting and interacting with their extended kin.

Thomas Bernard was fortunate to have a sizeable supporting family network, one that would probably not have existed without the charitable example that Sir Francis and Amelia passed to their children. Thomas's close contact with this support network proved instrumental to his subsequent philanthropic work because so many of his relatives were devoted to charitable causes themselves. Julia's husband Joseph sponsored the formation of a friendly society in Wendover and together the couple worked at a charity school at Melksham.[44] Jane White, neé Bernard, and her husband Charles, for example, sponsored parish spinning schools in Lincoln under the direction of the Reverend R. G. Bowyer.[45] Another sister, Fanny, assisted her husband, the Reverend Richard King, in establishing Sunday schools at Worthen in Salopshire. The Kings also founded several lending libraries that specialized in SPCK publications –Richard was a member – as well as Hannah More's popular *Cheap Repository Tracts*. When Thomas's wife Margaret heard of the Kings' exploits, she published an account of their new library at Steeple Morden in Cambridgeshire.[46] Citing Margaret's charitable interests, the Bernard family historian called her and Thomas 'like-minded.' The same could be said of Thomas's siblings in general because not only were Fanny and Jane involved in poor relief, so too was Scrope. In the 1780s he collected information on various relief measures as Parliament debated poor-law reform. Scrope generally agreed with the assessment of one of his informants who

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[43] Harriet Morland, daughter of William Morland. Thomas, who was executor of the governor's estate, facilitated the sale to Scrope. Higgins, *The Bernards*, III:70-73.

[44] Joseph Smith, "Extract from an account of a society at Wendover, for encouraging prudence and industry," *The Reports*, II: 165–70; Higgins, *The Bernards*, IV:11-12.

[45] Jane White to Scrope Bernard, 8 November 1785, Spencer-Bernard Papers.

[46] See letters from Reverend and Mrs. King to Scrope Bernard in Higgins, *The Bernards*, III: 294-306, and Margaret Bernard, "Extract from an account of a parish library for the poor," *The Reports* III: 132-4.

suggested that

> voluntary contributions in every parish under the direction of the Parson & the principal Inhabitants would be infinitely preferable to a tax imposed by the Government, as in the former case everyone would be interested to prevent improper persons from being on the list.[47]

Accordingly, the young Bernard supported plans for more localized control and greater discrimination in poor relief – a position that echoed the spirit of Gilbert's Act (1782) that attempted to discriminate between the able-bodied poor who were to receive outdoor relief, and the aged and infirm, who were to receive benefits indoor at a poorhouse or workhouse. Scrope also showed keen interest when his sister Jane acquainted him with Bowyer's spinning schools in Lincoln. Afterward he corresponded extensively with the schoolmaster. When Parliament abruptly ended their poor-law debate of 1785, Bowyer offered Scrope solace:

> Allow me to express my regret that so necessary a step as the revision and amendment of the Poor Laws should be for the present laid aside, and to indulge a hope that your abilities will yet be efficaciously exalted in a cause to which your inclination seems to point so strongly.[48]

The politically ambitious Bernard hardly needed comfort as his interests changed smoothly with parliamentary weather. Still, it would be overly cynical to reduce Scrope's charitable impulse to political expedience. Long after legislative buzz died down, he and Thomas corresponded about reforms at the Iver workhouse over which the elder Bernard held administration. Thomas not only kept Scrope informed about Iver, but also about reforms broached by other magistrates in other counties.[49] Years later Scrope informed Thomas about a parish fuel charity

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[47] R. Browne to Scrope Bernard, 20 January 1785 in Higgins, *The Bernards* III: 67-8.

[48] Reverend Bowyer to Scrope Bernard, 16 August 1785, in Higgins, *The Bernards,* III: 84-88.

[49] T. Bernard to Scrope Bernard, 21-22 October 1792, Spencer-Bernard Papers.

in Lower Winchendon by which loads of coal and kindling were purchased from Oxford for resale at a significantly reduced price to the poor of Bucks. The parish assumed most of the financial burden for this project but at Christmas, as coal prices rose, private donations augmented parochial funds. Scrope praised this "instance of uniting parish relief with private subscription, so as to lighten the weight of both" and added his conviction that "it may sometimes be convenient that they (private and public) should go hand in hand."[50]

Scrope's sentiments were not only genuine, but indicative that Thomas was only one part of an extended family that truly was "like minded". The Bernard family culture reinforced Thomas's personal inclinations and stimulated the country squire to become more active in the local affairs of Buckinghamshire. As Thomas visited his siblings in Bucks or as he rode his horse through the countryside, he could not have helped coming across reminders of his father who devoted his last years to "the improvement of the country roads and in benevolent attentions to the poor at Aylesbury."[51] The governor had always been a role model for his family and now Thomas found himself surrounded by examples of his father's benevolence. The effect of such and environment, coupled with the letters that Thomas shared with his charitably active siblings, inspired Thomas to do what he could for his new neighbors. Accordingly he served as a local magistrate, directing several changes in the administration of poor relief at Iver. In October of 1792 Bernard and John Sullivan engaged "in improving the internal discipline, decency, and cleanliness of the Iver Workhouse, as well as its external appearance."[52] What specific changes the pair ordered is not recorded but by 1795, amid the dearth of that season, Bernard directed additional reforms at Iver, specifically prohibiting the farming-out of workhouse labor, ordering the division of workhouse residents into disparate classes of poor, and arranging the removal of

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[50] Scrope Bernard, "Extract from an account of a provision of fuel made for the poor at Lower Winchendon," *The Reports*, II: 233.

[51] T. Bernard, *Life of Sir Francis Bernard*, 207.

[52] Baker, *Life of Sir Thomas Bernard*, 32; T. Bernard to Scrope Bernard, 21 October 1792, Spencer-Bernard Papers.

children from the house for the purpose of educating them.[53]

The thrust of Bernard's reforms was greater discrimination. Frequently parish officers made little or no distinction between the infirm and able-bodied or between the perpetually dependent and temporarily needy. Bernard asserted that such indiscriminate relief was particularly insulting to industrious laborers whose needs were temporary and due to unusually high inflation. These laborers resented being lumped together with idle paupers. In order to make "a proper distinction and separation between the honest and industrious who are driven thither by age, infirmity, or misfortune, and the idle and profligate, whose loose and vicious habits of life have made them a burthen and a disgrace to their parish,"[54] Bernard set up standardized questionnaires that reduced "the examination of the pauper to the essential points": the applicant's name; the parish of residence; the number, age, and circumstances of his children; weekly earnings; and the specific amount of relief requested. Applicants' responses were recorded in charts where the magistrate might also record the type of relief, if any, granted, and whether the applicant's responses had been verified independently.[55] Completed charts were indexed and could be referenced by magistrates seeking to review any applicant's personal history before issuing any further relief.

Bernard's attempts "to put the relief given to the poor on a more regular system" were among several similar experiments throughout England designed to address either rising poor rates or periods of extreme dearth such as in 1795-6 and again in 1800-1. Many measures focused on the working, or able-bodied poor who either had jobs or were physically capable of finding employment. By the popular Speenhamland system developed by neighboring Berkshire magistrates in the mid 1790s, the parish supplemented workers' wages by granting them cash allowances

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[53] T. Bernard, "Extract from an account of the mode adopted as to parochial relief, in the hundred of Stoke, Bucks," *The Reports* I: 58-65; Margaret Bernard, "Extract from an account of a village soup shop, at Iver in the county of Bucks," *The Reports* I: 124-30; and T. Bernard, "Charge to overseers of the Hundred of Stoke in the county of Bucks," *The Reports* I: 271-81. See also Higgins, *The Bernards,* III: 246-63.

[54] T. Bernard, "Charge to Overseers," *The Reports* I: 272.

[55] T. Bernard, "Parochial Relief in the Hundred of Stoke," *The Reports* I: 59.

based on the price of bread and the number of dependents an applicant had.[56] Granting outdoor relief to these workers, that is not forcing all applicants to take their aid "in" a workhouse or poorhouse, was precisely the type of discrimination Bernard tried to incorporate at Iver; however, Bernard was less approving of the Berkshire bread tables which created a "*fixed* income" that might encourage dependence. Bernard's issue with Speenhamland was not so much its use of cash allowances in aid of wages, but that it had reduced their use to an impersonal formula that ignored individual circumstances. "Neither increase of wages merely, nor donations in charity, nor *any* advantages to *any* extent," he argued, "can effectually improve the condition of the poor, unless inducement be added for industry and economy." Money, in short, could not solve the problem, no matter what form it took, wages or alms. Only through close and personal investigation could a magistrate, according to Bernard, tailor relief so as to provide a positive reinforcement for industry and thrift, values that would enable the working poor to either maintain, or achieve their independence. Bernard echoed the sentiment of Frederick Eden that "the best relief that the poor can receive *must come from themselves.* It must be derived from their own exertions aided by the voluntary and disinterested encouragement of the other classes of society."[57]

Soup kitchens were one alternative form of relief that Bernard endorsed at this time, in part based on his affiliation with Count Rumford. Rumford was known for his advocacy of soup kitchens as well as his design of more efficient stoves for the purpose. During Bernard's tenure as treasurer of the London Foundling Hospital (see Chapter 4), Rumford directed the establishment of a soup shop on the orphanage's estate. Based on the success of the Foundling shop, Bernard and his wife introduced a similar plan at Iver in October 1796.[58] The

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[56] On Speenhamland, see Poynter, *Society and Pauperism*, 76-85.

[57] T. Bernard, "Parochial Relief in the Hundred of Stoke," *The Reports* I: 62-4. Further support for Bernard's notion of self-help appeared in his "Charge to Overseers" in which he encouraged them to take membership in friendly societies as a possible exemption from contributing to the poor rates. The same may be said of his advocacy of outdoor relief in the home as preferable to forcing applicants to enter a workhouse on the grounds that it might break the social bonds and thus hinder self-help and preservation.

[58] M. Bernard, "Soup shop at Iver," *The Reports*, I: 124-30.

Bernards collected subscriptions, hired Mrs. Richard Learner to run the shop, and provided her and her invalid husband the necessary utensils and receipts to open for business. Throughout the winter, the Learners distributed pea soup twice a week to ticket holders – each week subscribers of 1*s* per week recommended four persons for soup tickets – or to cash customers at 3*p* per quart or 1½*p* a pint. Soup kitchens proved very popular throughout Britain during the dearth of the 1790s. At Birmingham, 6000 quarts were sold weekly, and as many as 1,232,254 pints were distributed by four shops in London.[59]

Bernard initially endorsed soup kitchens because of their 'self-help' aspect. The advantage of soup shops over alms or other monetary assistance was, as Thomas's wife wrote, that "everything that was given went substantially to the support and maintenance of the persons for whom it was intended." Cash relief, however, could be misused and might contribute to "the increase of vice and beggary." Thomas held out high hopes too that the introduction of soup shops throughout Britain might truly improve the 'condition' of the poor by fostering "the gradual prevalence of a better system of diet among the poor." For Bernard changing "the *condition* of the poor" required more than simply augmenting material well-being through better wages or more alms. Pecuniary considerations were part of the improved 'condition;' but, more fundamental was alteration of the poor's habits and thinking. Only then would the true 'condition' of the poor be altered as they, armed with their new-found values and habits, were enabled to face future obstacles independently. The key merit of soup kitchens for Bernard was the positive example of thrift they held out to the poor.

The fact that these soups were inexpensive yet tasty and nutritious would according to Bernard, inspire the poor to fix similar fare in their own homes. Although sanguine in this belief, Bernard stressed that soups and soup receipts should never be forced on the poor. "The engaging of the poor," he wrote, "to take the benefit of a similar system in their own cottages, must be a work of time; and should be the result of their own experience and conviction, rather than of the

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[59] Kirkman Gray, *History of English Philanthropy*, 249-60.

suggestion and recommendation of others." Novel foods should be presented to the impoverished as an option, but never as a compulsory item. In making these recommendations, Thomas made a basic appeal for Britons to empathize with their less fortunate brethren.

> Let us place ourselves in their situation, and consider, whether we should give much value to any favours, bestowed with circumstances of *humiliation*, *inattention*, or *compulsion*: and whether the smallest service is not acceptable, when conferred with that kindness, which allows for the effect of prejudice, and leaves the freedom of choice.[60]

Bernard knew that no permanent relief, no improvement in diet or any other condition of the poor, could be effected contrary to the will of those in receipt of that relief. This principle supported his assistance to the Iver soup shop, which he hoped might set an example for local workhouses, but ultimately for the poor themselves.

Systematic, discriminatory relief based upon self-help accurately described Bernard's work at Iver in the 1790s. An equally important part of Bernard's tenure as a magistrate was his thirst for feedback and additional information about alternative measures. He shared ideas with his siblings and also learned from them about actions being tried in other parts of England. This exchange, informal as it was, may have been the seed for what became Bernard's most significant philanthropic contribution, the SBCP (see chapter 5). The SBCP, as a clearinghouse of ideas on poor relief, was, in many respects, a formalization and expansion of the type of discussions that Bernard held with his family and local parish magistrates. Support for this connection rests in the fact that several of the SBCP's reports were, in fact, written by Bernard's extended family. Fanny King not only penned reports on Sunday schools and female charity schools, she

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[60] T. Bernard, *The Reports* I: 122n. In trying to alter the diet of the poor, Bernard insisted that the food meant for the poor be of good taste and quality. Never, he warned, offer something that you would not gladly eat as well.

became, in 1805, a founding member of the SBCP's Ladies Committee.[61] Julia's husband, the Reverend Joseph Smith, also submitted two entries about local measures at Wendover, while James Baker, the son of Amelia Baker, *nee* Bernard, published three accounts pertaining to free chapels and schools for the poor. Scrope Bernard only contributed one account of a parish fuel charity, but Thomas's wife Margaret submitted four reports on various subjects, including soup kitchens, Sunday schools, and parish libraries. Although not an author herself, Jane White's letters to Scrope and other family members brought Bowyer's spinning schools to the attention of Thomas and ultimately *The Reports*– the schoolmaster's account appearing in the SBCP's first volume.[62]

The reforms that he oversaw in Buckinghamshire marked an important step in Bernard's progression from conveyancer and civil servant to full-time philanthropist. In his memoir, Bernard wrote of this transition:

> I have often reflected on the leading Incidents of my Life, –my entering into my Profession with eagerness, my following it with extreme assiduity for twenty years, & quitting it as soon as it's Profits were no longer necessary to me: –& I have never regretted or repented, particularly as to the latter, in which my early determination has always been a matter of gratification to me.[63]

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[61] Frances King, ""Extract from an account of a Sunday School, kept by some Colliers, at Gateshead," *The Reports* VII: 20-3, and "Extract from an account of a plan adopted for supplying a Female Charity School with needle-work, at Bishop Wearmouth," *The Reports* VII: 131-5. On the Ladies Committee, see, e.g., T. Bernard, "Extract from an account of the Ladies Committee for promoting the education and employment of the Female Poor," *The Reports* IV: 137-44; "Copy of the Address sent round to the Lady Subscriber," *The Reports* IV: 53-7; "Detail of some of the proposed objects of the Ladies Committee," *The Reports* IV: 58-62.

[62] J. Smith, "Society and Wendover," *The Reports* II: 165-70 and "Extract from an account of the mode of parochial relief at, and near, Wendover," *The Reports* III:147-52; James Baker, "Extract from an account of the Evening Schools for the Poor, at Brighton Free Chapel," *The Reports* VI: 174-9, "Extract from an account of a School at Bridgend in Glamorganshire," *The Reports* VI: 190-94, and "Extract from an account of the further progress of the Oswestry Society for bettering the condition of the Poor," *The Reports* VII: 85-92; R. G. Bouyer, "Extract from an account of a school of industry fro sixty girls, at Bamburgh Castle," *The Reports* I: 224-30; Scrope Bernard, "Fuel for the poor of Lower Winchendon," *The Reports,* II: 231-6; Margaret Bernard, "Soup shop at Iver," *The Reports* I: 118-23, "Extract from an account of the Bath repository for the benefit of the poor," *The Reports* II: 222-5, "Parish library for the Poor," *The Reports* III: 132-4, and "Extract from an account of the Sunday Schools at Worsbrough," *The Reports* VI: 94-9.

[63] Bernard Baker, *Pleasure and Pain*, 50.

Although here Bernard compartmentalized his life into professional and philanthropic, the truth is that the latter grew quite naturally from the former. Bernard's professional career actually prepared Thomas for the administrative and organizational demands of his charitable pursuits. The travel it entailed, too, opened Bernard's eyes as a social observer. Also important was the familial support that he enjoyed from his wife, his brothers and sisters, and from their spouses. Unknowingly, Bernard's legal career, his personal and familial contacts, even his travel plans, prepared him for what was to come.

CHAPTER FOUR:
GOVERNOR AND TREASURER OF THE LONDON FOUNDLING HOSPITAL, 1787-1806

Thomas Bernard's charitable endeavors in the 1780s and '90s were not limited to the county of Buckingham. Concurrent with his parochial reforms, Thomas subscribed to the Philanthropic Society in London and became increasingly involved and active at London's premier orphanage, the Foundling Hospital.[1] While there is no indication that Bernard assumed a leadership role at the Philanthropic, he had become an active governor of the Foundling in 1787.[2] The proximity of the Bernards' London residence to the Foundling Hospital proved to be fortuitous for Thomas's philanthropic career. Eight years after becoming governor, Bernard was elected treasurer which entailed directly supervising the orphanage and living in specially designated apartments on the estate. During his tenure, Bernard set the hospital on firm financial footing and rehabilitated its public image in line with the changing climate of late eighteenth-century philanthropy.

Several factors drew Thomas Bernard into the orbit of the London Foundling Hospital. For one, he and his wife lived at Bloomsbury Place on Great Russell Street, less than a half mile from the hospital grounds. While Bernard's biographer makes much of this geographic proximity, Thomas and Margaret's interest in this charity likely had more to do with its focus on children.[3] While location may have been a factor, the fact that this charity targeted children

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[1] The Philanthropic Society sought to rehabilitate juvenile delinquents by removing them from the corruptive influence of their family environment. Standard works on the hospital are R. H. Nichols and F. A. Wray, *The History of the Foundling Hospital* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935) and Ruth McClure, *Coram's Children: The London Foundling Hospital in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981). For the hospital in a broader context, see Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, especially 57-65, 98-102, 156-8, and 181.

[2] Nichols and Wray, *History of the Foundling*, 313, 387. There is a discrepancy in dating Bernard's appointment as governor. In the text these authors cite 1785, but in an appendix titled "Official Register of Governors" Bernard was entered on 26 December 1787. I think the latter date more likely given the construction plans that began then.

[3] Baker, *Life of Sir Thomas Bernard*, 11.

probably figured in Bernard's decision. The Bernards' union had produced no issue and while this may have been by choice, circumstances suggest otherwise. The couple loved being around children as may be seen by their interaction with their nephews and nieces. They cared for Scrope's firstborn shortly after his birth, and their care made a lasting impression on their nephews and nieces. James Baker, Amelia's son, spoke of "the paternal affection which he [Thomas] manifested towards me from my earliest years," while Thomas Tyringham Bernard cherished until his dying days a Bible that Margaret had given him as a child. Frances Smith, Julia's daughter, adored her uncle Thomas, confiding to her diary that it was her "heart's desire" to "imitate such an example" as his "noble and benevolent heart."[4] The affection that they lavished on their kin was extended to the orphans of London as well. The Bernards' attachment to the orphans took many forms, perhaps the most conspicuous being their habit of taking midday meals with the children-- Mrs. Bernard supervising the girls' dining table, and the treasurer performing the same service for the boys', although in separate facilities. Previous governors had made no such gesture.[5] Their intimacy with the institution and its children proved to be a durable one as well. Even though Bernard resigned as treasurer in 1806, he and Margaret both, per their wishes, were interred in the Foundling chapel's vault.[6]

Cutting Costs and Raising Revenues

Bernard's first contact with the Foundling in the mid-eighties coincided with a transitional period for the charity. When Thomas Coram founded the orphanage in 1739, the Foundling profited from a climate of war in which an increased in population was seen as an absolute national asset. By saving and instructing abandoned children and thereby supplying Britain with future soldiers and laborers, the Foundling could justify its existence despite moral critiques that its work encouraged sexual licence by removing the poor's responsibilities to raise

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[4] *Ibid*, viii; Higgins *The Bernards*, IV: 6-7.

[5] McClure, *Coram's Children*, 174.

[6] Lady Bernard died on 6 June 1813 and Sir Thomas on 1 July 1818.

their children. During this initial period, the hospital's annual benefactions and subscriptions averaged £2700.[7] By the 1750s plans were made to expand charities such as the Foundling, or at least to fund them with public monies. For the Foundling, which was often in the public eye, expansion came after the outbreak of war in 1756. That year Parliament voted £10,000 to the orphanage, but stipulated that it open its doors indiscriminately to all orphans under two months of age.[8] While the money was welcome, the hospital was overwhelmed by the influx of 15,000 children in the span of four years. After two-thirds of these infants died, the hospital returned to limited admissions in 1760. Mortality rates dropped to 33 percent but public confidence had been severely shaken by the memory of 10,000 infant deaths in four short years. The public's lack of faith was manifest in the hospital's annual donations which fell to an average of £590 in the 1760s.[9] In the 1770s and '80s social theorists assumed positions that threatened the very existence of the Foundling. Reformers openly questioned the intrinsic value of encouraging population growth; moreover, they debated the conventional wisdom of institutionalized relief, arguing that its surety and long-term nature encouraged dependence among recipients of relief.[10] Although beset on several sides, the Foundling made important steps to re-invent itself in the 1780s and '90s. Thomas Bernard not only participated in this transition, he directed and orchestrated much of this institutional make-over.

In the spring of 1787 the governors of the Foundling proposed to develop the charity's fifty-six acre estate, only 9¼ acres of which were covered by existing hospital buildings. They advertised their intentions and solicited development proposals in local newspapers. The development of the estate brought with it some legal problems. The governors faced opposition from its neighbors along Gray's Inn Road, as well as from the Trustees of the Rugby School Charity, whose

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[7] Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, 58-61.

[8] This first grant was only the beginning. By the end of parliamentary support in 1771 the hospital had received almost £550,000 in public funds. Owen, *English Philanthropy*, 56; Nichols and Wray, *History of the Foundling*, 80.

[9] Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, 129.

[10] *Ibid*, 156.

land bordered the Foundling.[11] This new direction also met internal opposition from John Holliday, a barrister and governor of the charity, who published two pamphlets appealing for the hospital to reconsider.[12] Given his legal expertise as a conveyancer and given the public attention that surround the Foundling's plans, Bernard may have first taken an active interest in the hospital at this time. There is no doubt that his professional experience proved invaluable to the Foundling's cause once he became involved. Opposition slowed progress but in June 1790 the hospital's General Committee, a group of 50 governors elected annually to oversee the charity's business, created a five-member Building Committee, whose task it was to scrutinize various plans for the estate's development. Bernard naturally became a most useful member of this committee and he served it for many years. The Building Committee preserved approximately 9 acres for future hospital expansion and use, but took measures to develop the remaining 36 acres along the lines suggested by Thomas Merryweather, the secretary of the orphanage.

When these plans were made, the Foundling estate rested in a mostly rural neighborhood, possessing no direct thoroughfares to the western portions of London. The isolated nature of the estate acted as a serious obstacle to any development plan; however, in 1794, the Duke of Bedford, whose uncle had been President of the hospital from 1739-1771, granted permission to the Building Committee for it to cut four roads into his private thoroughfare which, incidentally, formed the northern portion of Southampton Row. The completion of these four streets supplied the estate with direct access to London's west side, as did the connections on the opposite side of the estate, which opened into Gray's Inn Road, another thoroughfare with access to London's western side. That Bernard played a crucial role in these negotiations and in the overall development of the estate may be surmised from the nomenclature of these four paths: Tavistock Place, Great Coram Street, Guilford Street, and Bernard Street. Bernard's was

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[11] McClure, *Coram's Children*, 160-62.

[12] John Holliday, *An Appeal to the Governors of the Foundling Hospital on the probable consequence of covering Hospital Lands with buildings* (London, 1787), and *A further Appeal to the Governors of the Foundling Hospital, and a justification of their conduct in not having covered the Hospital lands with buildings, since the institution of the charity* (London, 1788)

the only street named for a living honoree, the others paying homage to the late John Russell, the Fourth Duke of Bedford and the hospital's first president, Thomas Coram, founder of the Foundling, and, the Earl of Guilford, its second president.[13]

These new roads and the resulting leases brought a financial windfall to the charity. The few leases granted before 1789 yielded a meager £81 3*s* per annum; however, by 1796, just a few years after the Building Committee began operations, the leases brought in £2,089 17*s* and in another three years the figure had grown to £3,045 12*s* 4*d*.[14] It is little wonder that Ruth McClure, reflecting upon the Foundling's miraculous reversal of fortune, claimed that "in the last decade of the century its land proved to be its financial salvation."[15] The windfall continued as rental revenues grew to £42,000 per annum by 1926 at which time the governors sold the London estate for £1,650,000. The proceeds from this sale, according to Ruth McClure, assured "the continuance of the institution's work with children down to the present day."[16]

While acting to raise revenues, the hospital's governors also tried to limit the expenses of the charity. In 1795 a newly formed Finance Committee presented a report on the orphanage's income and expenditure to the General Court, a quarterly meeting open to all governors of the hospital. The Court ordered a committee to investigate the management of the institution, noting, among other things, that, in the period from 1790 to 1795, costs per child had grown steadily despite fewer admissions to the hospital. Insulted by a lack of confidence from the governors, Reverend Dr. Stephen White, the treasurer of four years, resigned his post. At the charity's annual meeting in May the governors voted 56 to 14 to elect

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[13] Tavistock was the Devon seat of the Dukes of Bedford. John Russell, 4th Duke of Bedford (1710-1771), President 1739-1771; Thomas Coram (1668-1751); and Lord North (1732-1792), President 1771-1792.

[14] Nichols and Wray, *History of the Foundling*, 281, 283.

[15] McClure, *Coram's Children*, 155.

[16] McClure, *Coram's Children*, 164, Nichols and Wray, *History of the Foundling*, 284. After the sale the hospital was relocated to Berkhamstead where a new school was founded. The Foundling school closed in 1954, the charity thereafter taking the name Thomas Coram Foundation for Children.

Thomas Bernard over William Harrison as the next treasurer.[17] Bernard's election reflected his popularity and acted as reward for service he had given the Foundling for the preceding five years.

Since the presidents of the hospital "did little more than lend the prestige of their names to clothe the institution in respectability and preside at courts on occasions of great moment," management of the Foundling rested with the fifty-member General Committee. Of that body only about 10 to 12 governors regularly attended weekly meetings. The real manager, or executive director of the hospital, was the treasurer. Not only was he the only governor to reside on the estate, he supervised its daily maintenance, and liaised with various committees.[18] Of his new duties, Bernard casually remarked that they "seemed to enlarge very much the Scope of my Operations."[19]

As treasurer, Bernard followed the tone set by the economy-minded governors by cutting costs in areas that he considered particularly wasteful, namely diet and food preparation. Almost immediately Bernard and the charity's governors responded to Britain's grain crisis of summer 1795. In July they replaced flour puddings with those made of rice, which, during a period of inflated grain prices, saved the orphanage over £200 in one year, not to mention the saving in grain consumption, which the matron of the Foundling estimated as 17,472 lbs.[20] Rice puddings were hardly novel to the foundlings, whose diet had included them since 1739. However, the governors, and Bernard in particular, promoted rice as a "wholesome and nutritious food" that was a healthy and cost-effective alternative to wheat.

Bernard's interest in economic wheat alternatives naturally led him to Count Rumford, a premier authority on food and its preparation, who during his service to the King of Bavaria, had experimented with various diets in Munich

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[17] Nichols and Wray, *History of the Foundling*, 304; *The Times* 14 May 1795.

[18] McClure, *Coram's Children*, 173-74.

[19] Bernard-Baker, *Pleasure and Pain*, 50-1.

[20] Nichols and Wray, *History of the Foundling*, 144-5; "extract from an account of the benefit of the use of rice," *The Reports* I: 154; and *Supplement to the First Report from the Committee Appointed to Consider the High Price of Provisions* (1801).

workhouses. Bernard knew of Rumford from the several essays the minster had published promoting "*the investigation of the science of nutrition.*" In his essay "On Food, And Particularly of Feeding the Poor," Rumford copiously discussed the benefits of specific foods (*e.g.* Indian corn and macaroni) as well as proper methods for preparing and eating them. In terms of cooking, Rumford was best known for innovative stove and oven designs as well as a prototype pressure cooker which were described in his "On the Construction of Kitchen Fire-places and Kitchen Utensils." He also espoused influential ideas on nutrition, including a proposal that water, in a combined state with solid food, was the basic element of nutrition. This theory led him to promote soups, the very definition of water mixed with solid foods, as the perfect food to improve the diet of the poor. In addition to dietary observations, Rumford investigated the manner in which heat was lost in fireplaces. In his essay, "Of the Management of Fire and the Economy of Fuel," he called, not quite originally, for a more narrow flue.[21] Although British reactions to Rumford were mixed – some thought him a quack – Bernard welcomed the Bavarian minister's ideas.[22] "A similarity of pursuits [had] produced," as the treasurer wrote, "a considerable Intimacy between us," which helps explain why he consulted Rumford's plans for guidance at the Hospital.[23] Bernard's confidence may also have stemmed from their common mentor, that is Professor John Winthrop of Harvard. Given their common training and interests, it is hardly surprising that these two men were drawn together during Rumford's visit to Britain in 1795.

Bernard and Rumford's collaboration took many forms. In the spring of 1796, the Foundling governors asked Rumford to supervise personally a

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[21] Count Rumford, "Of Food, And Particularly of Feeding the Poor," in *Collected Works of Count Rumford*, edited by Sanborn C. Brown (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press, 1970) 5 vols. V: 167-362; "On the Construction of Kitchen Fire-places and Kitchen Utensils," III: 55-384, and "Of the Management of Fire and the Economy of Fuel," II: 309-477; S. Brown, *Benjamin Thompson*, 159-62.

[22] Historians have been equally skewed in their opinion of Rumford. Contrast HBJ and Berman.

[23] Bernard-Baker, *Pleasure and Pain*, 51.

renovation of the estate's kitchen.[24] Updating the kitchen entailed purchasing a built-in Rumford roasting oven capable of holding up to 112 lbs of beef, a steamer with a 200-lb capacity for potatoes, and a series of boilers/pressure-cookers for boiling meat, greens, or porridge – all at a cost of £150 including installation.[25] The chimneys at the orphanage, too, were restructured with more narrow flues as prescribed by Rumford. The £150 investment paid immediate dividends as the institution's fuel consumption dropped by over 70 percent.[26] Furthermore, labor costs were cut. The work that formerly busied two cooks, now fell to one woman who, according to Bernard, "finds it an easy duty."[27]

Bernard and Rumford also joined forces to promote soup kitchens for the poor. Rumford supervised and the Foundling governors funded the installation of a roaster oven and two boilers in the nearby shop of William Hillyer.[28] Bernard, who arranged the entire matter, saw in Hillyer's shop a way to serve the specific needs of the hospital as well as those of the local poor. The shop supplied the local poor "with food at a cheaper rate and in more plenty than they had been able to obtain it;" however, Hillyer's primary customers were Irish construction workers who were developing the lands leased out by the hospital. Providing these crews with a convenient place to eat was part of a mutually beneficial relationship that Bernard carefully fostered. The workers, as he observed, "have been encouraged and promoted by every assistance and attention on the part of the governors, who have fully felt how much the essential interests of the charity are connected with the welfare of the builders."[29] While the estate benefitted from Hillyer's, it was never a coercive relationship and when construction on the estate stalled during the war, Hillyer relocated his shop. Overall the collaboration between Hillyer,

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[24] "Extract from an account of the kitchen, fitted up at the Foundling, under the direction of Count Rumford," *The Reports* I: 79-85.

[25] McClure, *Coram's Children*, 203.

[26] *Ibid*, 203; "Kitchen at the Foundling," *The Reports* I: 79.

[27] Thomas Bernard, *An Account of the Foundling Hospital in London, for the maintenance and education of exposed and deserted young children* 2d. edition. (London: Thomas Jones, 1799), 43-44n. Bernard also noted that the governors reduced the servant labor force in the Hospital from 50 to 32.

[28] William Hillyer, "Extract from an account of a London soup shop," *The Reports* I: 167-71.

[29] T. Bernard, *Account of the Foundling*, 60.

Rumford, and Bernard proved successful and Bernard later presented this soup shop as a model.[30]

Despite their similarities, Bernard did not always follow Rumford's direction. Doubtless he knew well Rumford's essay "On Food" (1795) and its compelling 'scientific' evidence that Indian corn was superior to rice as a wheat substitute. He was aware of the claims of negro slaves, cited by Rumford, that "'*rice turns to water in their bellies, and runs off* but '*Indian corn stays with them, and makes strong to work,*'"[31] Nevertheless, the Foundling treasurer chose to use rice as the hospital's primary wheat substitute. On 13 December 1800, Bernard, as the head of a newly formed Diet Committee, began inquiries into expanding the use of rice-based meals at the hospital. The existing diet included rice puddings for the midday dinner meal two days a week; however, Bernard's job was to evaluate the possible benefit of inserting rice dishes into the evening supper meals on the remaining five days.[32] Bernard's investigation and the governor's eventual adoption of rice may have stemmed from a desire to cut costs, but, to their credit, only "without prejudice to the health of the children."[33]

Based on his own research Bernard was convinced that rice contained, "a great deal of nutriment in a small compass, and does not pass so quickly off the stomach, as some other substitutes for wheat flour do," which made it "a cheap, pleasant, and nutritious dish" that was "particularly proper for, and palatable to, the aged, the infirm, and the young."[34] Moreover, "experimental observations on rice" proved that the staple acted as "a preservative against those putrid and epidemical disorders, which are always to be apprehended from the inferior quality of corn and potatoes, in a wet and unfavourable season."[35] Many of these

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[30] Thomas Bernard viewed this shop as fundamentally different from that of a subscriber-variety which he and his wife had supported at Iver. Charity shops of the Iver type required constant support; whereas, Hillyer's paid its own way.

[31] "On Food," *Collected Works of Count Rumford*, 219.

[32] 13 December 1800, Diet Committee Minutes, London Metropolitan Archives, Papers of the London Foundling Hospital.

[33] Nichols and Wray, *History of the Foundling*, 148.

[34] "Benefit of Rice," *The Reports* I: 156.

[35] "The Bishop of Durham's circular letter to the magistrates of the county palatine of Durham," *The Reports* II: 262-3.

arguments Bernard presented before the House of Commons' Committee on the High Price of Provisions in 1800. He offered statistical evidence from the London Foundling Hospital and anecdotal support from the Bishop of Durham, who had directed that rice be fed to local laborers at Durham, Bishop Auckland, and Mongewell. Bernard also included a receipt for making bread with a rice-flour mixture that had been successfully tried at Wendover in Buckinghamshire, and another, submitted by the chairman of the East-India Company, on mixing rice with beef drippings.[36] In this report and elsewhere Bernard infused his defense of rice with scientific terminology such as 'nutrition' and 'experimental observations,' and he documented it with empirical observations, if not objective facts. Bernard may have ignored Rumford's endorsement of corn, but in doing so he actually followed the count's example by justifying his point of view empirically and scientifically.

Bernard's search for wheat substitutes and his empirical defense of rice marked a general trend among London philanthropists. The stated purpose was to make poor relief as scientific and as objective as possible. Despite Bernard's earnest efforts, Donna Andrew somewhat sarcastically called his and other reformers's approach a "vogue for science," presenting, as an example, the Foundling Hospital's cutback of meat consumption during the 1790s. In a case of "'scientific' substitution," the governors reduced meals with meat in favor of "the far more 'healthful' and cheap rice pudding or gruel," going so far as to eliminate meat entirely from their diet by 1800.[37] She added with irony, "It was a 'scientific' discovery, providentially timed, that those foods that were the most expensive, that is beef and cheese, were the worst for the delicate stomach of the child."[38] With respect to Bernard and the Foundling, Andrew's facts are inaccurate, while

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[36] Bernard cited savings in 1796 of 35*s* per child or £300 per annum, adding that while rice prices had risen faster than those for grain, the savings had not diminished and in fact would "be much greater at the present moment [1800]." *Supplement to the First Report from the Committee Appointed to Consider the High Price of Provisions* (1801).

[37] I have found no source supporting Andrew. McClure, whom she cites but without page numbers, maintained that meat consumption increased after mid-century, *Coram's Children*, 195-7, while Nichols and Wray, Andrew's other source, asserted only that rice was used for supper virtually every night, *History of the Foundling*, 148.

[38] Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, 181.

her indictment of their integrity is unfounded. While there was an institution-wide cutback in meat dinners during the 1790s from 5 days to 4, that figure still surpassed the 3 days of meat dinners from the 1740s. Meat was never removed wholly from the orphans' diet and on the whole meat consumption at the hospital increased from the mid-century and despite rising prices. "The Governors did not," as McClure argued, "sacrifice the children's health to expense."[39] Admittedly Bernard endorsed the use of more rice during times of dearth, but when grain prices fell, as they did in 1802, he and the governors ordered that "the children have Bread and Cheese for supper 6 days a week."[40] In sum, when Bernard looked to cut costs at the Foundling, he approached the problem from the 'scientific' system suggested by Rumford whereby attention was paid not merely to cost and 'cheapness' but also to the nutrition and health of the orphans. Andrew's irony, while perhaps appropriate to other philanthropists or charities, fails to capture the spirit of retrenchment at the Foundling during Bernard's treasurership.

Selective Admissions

In a period of declining donations, raising rental revenue and cutting costs helped the Foundling survive, so did the hospital's progressively more selective admissions policies. In 1760 open admissions ceased because of unacceptably high mortality rates and three years later the hospital discontinued its blind lottery admission whereby mother's identities were kept secret from the public and from the governors who determined acceptance. From 1763 governors required a formal, written petition from each applicant, including detailed personal background information. The spirit behind this change was captured in the wording of an institutional resolution passed in 1790 that "care was to be taken that the children received should be proper objects of the Charity, viz., foundlings or exposed and deserted children who there is the greatest reason to think would not be taken care of and supported unless it was for the humane interposition of this charity." Many petitioners were, like Mary Cole, deserted unwed mothers,

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[39] McClure, *Coram's Children*, 195-7.

[40] Nichols and Wray, *History of the Foundling*, 150.

whose plea read as follows:

> The most humble petition of Mary Cole, seduc'd & reduc'd and the Person who is the Cause of my Misfortunes has deceiv'd me and is gone abroad, by the best Intelligence I can have. He made me a promise of Marriage, with many Vows and Protestations, before I unhappily yielded to his Solicitations, by which I am now brought to this Miserable Condition, depriv'd of the Esteem and regard of my friends, and relations, destitute of many Necessaries, Supported only thro' small Donations, and Benefactions of a few charitable Persons, who have Compassion towards me in my unhappy Condition; Having no dependance (when able to work) by my daily Labour, and not able to provide for my Child. Therefore, I humbly pray your Honours will have pity upon my unfortunate Case, and take my Child under your Protection, which will be means of preserving us both, for which Act of great Charity I shall ever in Duty be bound to pray. I am
>
> Your Honours most unworthy and poor
> Distress'd hble. Servt.
> Mary Cole[41]

After receiving a petition such as Cole's, a governor or a member of the hospital staff, would seek to verify its contents. If everything checked out the child was then admitted.

The Foundling's background checks limited abuses of the system while also silencing critics who argued that open admissions removed incentives for the poor to work. Rather than laboring harder to meet their new demands, impoverished parents were, according to these commentators, pawning their responsibilities off on the hospital. The surety of the hospital also removed disincentives to having more children and thus fostered population growth. During the Seven Years War, population was valued for its own sake, but by the 1760s and '70s conventional wisdom saw demographic increases more as a burden than a blessing. The hospital anticipated that its more restrictive policies would also enhance its ability

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[41] Quoted from McClure, *Coram's Children*, 140.

to raise funds from private donors. Other mid-century charities in London tailored their practices to this same call for greater discrimination. The Magdalen Charity, for example, screened the prostitutes it aided, helping only those under 30 years of age, new to the trade, not pregnant, and the 'truly penitent.' The governors assumed that women meeting these criteria had the best chance for successful rehabilitation. They also knew that the public would be more generous in supporting an institution whose aid was not doled out indiscriminately.

As the eighteenth century drew to a close, the Foundling, the Magdalene, and other institutional charities were affected by the increasingly moral tone that debates over rising poverty and crime rates in Britain assumed. Would-be reformers, in their desire to ascertain root causes for social ills, placed the poor and the institutions that supported them under a microscope.[42] The quickly-emerging evangelical movement assigned blame to the moral degradation of the poor; therefore, these churchmen tried to reform popular manners and morals by way of the Proclamation Society (1787) and the Society for the Suppression of Vice (1802). The former attacked immoral amusements among the poor, including theatrical productions. Although not evangelical in its orientation, the Philanthropic Society (1788) also emphasized moral instruction and a virtuous education as a remedy for juvenile delinquents who were removed from their parents for this purpose. This new moral tone also was manifest in the increasing popularity of charities targeting prostitution. Between 1787-1817 several such organizations cropped up in London, including the Lock Asylum, the London Female Penitentiary, the Refuge for the Destitute at Cuper's Bridge, the Refuge for the Destitute at Hackney Road, the Guardian Society, and Robert Young's Refuge for Industry.[43] Reformers saw prostitution as a particularly insidious menace since it threatened that bastion of virtue, the family. Reformers feared that when men and women engaged in licentious sex they weakened the very underpinnings of the family unit and, once the familial order broke down, respect

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[42] The following portrait of London philanthropy is drawn from Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, 163-96.

[43] Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, 191n.

for the state and the social order would soon follow. Moreover, the allure of seductive women stood in the way of the best made plans of moral instruction. Increasingly, prostitutes were portrayed as a 'contagion' or as a 'disease' from which society needed protection.[44] Failure to deal with prostitution would, in short, hamper the impact of other charities such as the Philanthropic or Proclamation societies. The common denominator for each of these organizations was their emphasis on moral solutions for Britain's social ills, as well as their assumption that the poor were primarily to blame.

Since the Foundling ministered to unwed mothers, it was open to criticism on moral grounds, specifically that by taking in illegitimate infants the hospital encouraged licentiousness. Similar arguments were leveled against charities for prostitutes; therefore, it is hardly surprising that the London Foundling Hospital developed policies based on moral considerations and more specifically the fight against prostitution. From its inception the hospital had sought first and foremost to save and educate abandoned infants. Doubtless its anonymous admissions policy contributed to concerns that London prostitutes were among the charity's beneficiaries. Even after the more selective petition system was implemented the main qualification for admittance was need. In 1795, however, the hospital's General Committee ordered that:

> in all future enquiry into the merits of any petition for the admission of children into the Hospital, that it be always enquired whether in a recommendation to this charity from the witness of a servant, whether the child is received in consequence of such recommendation, the Mistress or any other proper person will take the Petitioner into service again.

More succinctly, the governors hoped first and foremost "to restore the mothers to a course of Industry and Virtue."[45] Henceforth, preference would be given to

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[44] Even the Magdalen, which had set its goal on rehabilitation, began to take this stance. Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, 191.

[45] McClure, *Coram's Children*, 143.

petitioners whose employers would avow that if the charity accepted the child, the mother could return to work. The emphasis was no longer on the verifiable need of the child, but on the good character and future prospect of the mother. During his second year as treasurer, Bernard related this shift in policy specifically to the problem of prostitution:

> By the present practice of the hospital, something more than the mere necessity of the mother and desertion of the father is requisite. The previous good character of the mother is enquired into, and this important circumstance is ascertained, that the reception of the child ... will be attended by the probable consequence of restoring her to a course of virtue ... By these precautions an evil consequence is prevented, which, it must be allowed, ... did attend the indiscriminate admission of children into the hospital; – the increase of prostitution, by the extreme facility of providing for the produce of it.[46]

Bernard's comments dovetailed with the anti-prostitution sentiments that dominated moral concerns of late eighteenth-century London charity. He left critics little doubt that the Foundling was taking measures to assist only the virtuous and that it was avoiding the "evil consequence" of prostitution.

The hospital's new direction led to even more selective admissions policies at the turn of the century. In 1801 the governors declared that they preferred to admit illegitimate children rather than the orphaned. When five years later, Samuel Cox, Bernard's successor as treasurer, responded to a petition from the Duke of Portland on behalf of twin orphans, he explained the hospital's new position. He informed the duke that only when the mother was living could the charity have "the opportunity of saving the Mother from shame, and of enabling her to return to her proper Situation in life," adding "that in a Case where the Mother was living, the Committee had an opportunity of inquiring into the circumstances of the Case, from herself; who as to many particulars, was alone

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[46] Bernard, *Account of the Foundling Hospital*, 30-1.

competent to give that information on the subject."[47] Absent any chance to rehabilitate the mother or to verify the circumstance of her children, the Foundling governors refused to grant acceptance. This more selective policy led to the termination of a 55-year tradition of admitting children, regardless of circumstances, upon the donation of £100 for the child's care.[48] Such a move would have been inconceivable in the 1780s when enrollments and revenues had fallen and only 10 children entered the hospital annually. There were, in fact, only 285 children in residence when Bernard assumed the treasurership in 1795.[49] But the new rental revenues brought in by the development of the estate had improved the hospital's fortunes, allowing it to reject an offer of £100.

The hospital's new policies grew from several developing principles that were common among contemporary London charities, many of which not only shared members but directors, as well. Pragmatic considerations were not unimportant to this transition. Improved finances doubtless made it easier to be selective in admissions. In turn, greater scrutiny provided governors "exact knowledge about the situation of each mother" that "enabled them to see for the first time how often the burden of an illegitimate child precluded women from obtaining employment." However, the fact that the hospital's "individual casework [was] directed as much toward providing constructive help for the unfortunate woman as for the child" cannot wholly be attributed to "an accidental product of the new methods [of admission] used after 1763."[50] There was more than inertia at work in the charity's latest objectives; there was carefully coordinated planning about the role that the hospital would play in resolving the apparent moral crisis among poor Britons. The governors were cognizant of the public debates, but, as so many of them served on the boards of other charities, they also knew what measures London charities were taking in general. John Thornton, Vice-President of the Foundling 1769-70, served as treasurer at both the Magdalen Charity and

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[47] Nichols and Wray, *History of the Foundling*, 94-5.

[48] *Ibid*, 92-3.

[49] *Ibid*, 90-94, 184; McClure, *Coram's Children*, 139-40; Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, 100-1, 119-27, 158.

[50] McClure, *Coram's Children*, 143-5.

the Marine Society. Jonas Hanway, "the most prolific and passionate," according to one historian, "of all early humanitarians," served as Foundling governor from 1756 and as Vice-President from 1772 until his death in 1787; however, he was also the principal director of the Magdalen Charity's rehabilitation program during the 1750s and '60s.[51] Thomas Bernard held prominent positions at more than a dozen charities in the metropolis in addition to his duties as treasurer of the Foundling. This overlap meant that the directors of the Foundling were not only aware of what reforms were underway at other charities, especially those targeting prostitutes, they were actually coordinating those efforts, too. Although never formally stated, the governors must have used their knowledge to carve out a niche for the hospital in the struggle against prostitution. In London the Magdalen Charity tried to rehabilitate practicing prostitutes, or fallen women, and the Lambeth Asylum offered moral education to girls as a safeguard against 'the fall.' The Foundling Hospital, in catering to the needs of unwed mothers who might fall prey to prostitution, filled a void between the Lambeth's early education and the Magdalen's ministering to those already in the trade. The Foundling's somewhat unique approach seems more than coincidental.

More than any other leader at the Foundling, Bernard established and implemented the hospital's new course and articulated its operating principles. Even before the hospital adopted its emphasis on the moral well-being of petitioning mothers, Bernard had instituted parochial reforms at Iver that set out to systematize relief in order for overseers to better screen the conditions and moral character of the local poor. Bernard's parochial work also reflected his deep concern to preserve the dignity of hard-working laborers who, because of temporary conditions, had to apply to the parish. To this purpose he advocated that parish officials establish distinctions in the treatment of industrious versus profligate residents of poorhouses and workhouses. How near to this in principle then were his pronouncements regarding unwed mothers whose dignity he also

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[51] *Ibid*, 170-71; An excellent biography of Hanway is James Stephen Taylor, *Jonas Hanway Founder of the Marine Society, Charity and Policy in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Scolar Press, 1985).

chose to protect by removing the ill-effects of a temporary indiscretion and thereby returning a woman to her productive future. As the treasurer put it:

> The preserving the mere vital functions of an infant cannot be put in competition with saving from vice, misery, and infamy, a young woman, in the bloom of life, whose crime may have been a *single* and solitary act of indiscretion. Many extraordinary cases of repentance, followed by restoration to peace, comfort, and reputation, have come within the knowledge of the writer of this note. Some cases have occurred, within his observation, of wives happily placed, the mothers of thriving families, who, but for the saving aid of this institution, might have become the most noxious and abandoned prostitutes.[52]

As treasurer, Bernard also established a subscription fund (to which he and his wife made private donations) "for affording occasional relief to those poor women who apply for the admission of their children, and who are in peculiar circumstances of distress, from having been compelled to part with, or pawn their clothes on account of the Maintenance of their children, and other unavoidable expences; and thereby being prevented from getting into service or obtaining other means of Livelyhood."[53] Just as Bernard aspired in the parish to preserve the independence of the laboring poor, he aimed at the Foundling to do the same for working women of previously good moral character who, with the charity's assistance, could return to work and maintain their autonomy and become productive members of society. Bernard, leading by example and through heading committees, greatly influenced the direction of the hospital as it entered the nineteenth century.

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[52] "Advice to the Foundling apprentices on the termination of their apprenticeships," *The Reports* IV: 38n.

[53] 12 June 1805, Minutes of the Education Committee, Foundling Hospital Papers. The couple assisted Ann Harris on 18 December 1799, Jane Burton on 16 April 1800, and a Ms. White on 12 June 1805.

Public Relations

Thomas Bernard played a crucial role in all aspects of the London Foundling Hospital's institutional make-over, from its revenue-raising land development to its cost cutting in heating and cooking, from its more selective admissions policy to its attention to the moral rehabilitation of 'fallen' women. He also was chief architect of the charity's public relations. For an institution that depended largely on private donations and benefactions, it was imperative to advertise, to let potential donors know exactly what they could expect from their investment. In the 1760s hospital collections plummeted precisely as donors lost faith in the institution because of horrifying infant mortality rates and because Parliament funded the charity. The Foundling of the 1790s had evolved into a very different institution, one that no longer received public funds, and had changed its admissions policies, educational practices, and its overall mission. In order to win the confidence of potential donors, the hospital needed to inform the public of these changes. Unfortunately, the governors could not wait for London newspapers to take notice; it had to sing its own praises, to produce, in short, its own public relations work. Bernard's prior literary experience – his travel journal, a biography of his father, and two little-known tracts: *Observations on the Proceedings of the Friends of the Liberty of the Press* (1793) and *A New Dialogue between Monsieur Francois and John English* (1793) – provided him the confidence needed to assume this important undertaking. In 1796 he published *Account of the Foundling Hospital in London*, adding an expanded second edition three years later. This history presented the hospital in a positive light by outlining each major reform and policy change, while articulating the institution's new principles. The writing of *Account of the Foundling* proved crucial to the rehabilitation of the public image of the hospital and it also honed the rhetorical skills of one of the most dynamic philanthropists of the early nineteenth century.

Crafting a new image for the Foundling would not be easy, especially given the damaging publicity of the open-admissions era. "The assertion of general abuses, in the management of a public trust [charity]," is, Bernard observed, "not repelled *without trouble and detail*, even if the public attention can be drawn into

it." An accusation of corruption may be, he added, "very willingly advanced, or credited, by many, who too easily admit private motives to influence the conduct of public concerns."[54] The treasurer took on that 'trouble' and presented a public 'detail' of "the measures which have, at different periods, either been adopted or rejected by the founders and friends of the charity."[55] Bernard's basic strategy was to admit the hospital's mistakes, especially during the Seven Years War, and then demonstrate how the charity had recovered and corrected its previous blunders. He also planned to extol the virtues of privately funded charity as opposed to state-directed operations in hope of winning new subscriptions.

In *Account of the Foundling*, Bernard presented the era of open admissions at the hospital as an aberration, a period when the governors strayed from the charity's "first principles." First, according to the treasurer, they violated the hospital's constitution as a privately funded and directed charity. Parliamentary funds came with strings attached and it was the British legislature that ordered the opening of admissions to all orphans under age two months. In ceding its autonomy, the Foundling was forced to open branch hospitals throughout Britain to accommodate the influx of children, many of whom were sent by parish officials taking the opportunity to unload all their orphan charges. "The *zeal* of the acting guardians of the hospital, and their *desire* of making it at that early period extensively useful," marked, for Bernard, a second transgression, one that risked "the permanent welfare of the institution."[56] The good intentions of the governors –their desire to be 'useful'– was admirable, as Bernard expressed rhetorically, "Is man then to weep in silence over the sufferings of his fellow creatures, or to withdraw the eye from the observation of that misery, which he must despair to relieve?" The treasurer's answer to this question was 'no;' but he maintained that the governors' specific actions were 'imprudent' and led to dire consequences for the hospital.

Bernard outlined three major consequences of the hospital losing its focus.

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[54] Bernard, *Account of the Foundling*, 36. Emphasis mine.

[55] *Ibid*, 44.

[56] *Ibid*, 25-6. Emphasis mine.

First and most horrifying, "The scite of the hospital was in many instances converted into a burying ground," as thousands died some of whom were so sick that they died between the estate gate and the hospital's wards.[57] Second, Bernard, argued, "indiscriminate admission" led to an increase in prostitution "by the extreme facility of providing for the produce of it." Finally, he ruefully acknowledged that during the period of parliamentary grants, which lasted eleven years after the end of open admissions, private donations to the hospital plummeted. In a clever spin of the facts, Bernard attributed this fallout to "parliamentary interference" – a curious choice of words given that it was the hospital governors who petitioned Parliament for aid and not vice versa. Bernard deliberately tried to deflect this responsibility from the hospital.

Bernard next described the institution that he piloted in the nineties as financially self-sufficient, selective, and effective in its mission, the very antithesis of the mid-century Foundling. He attributed the strength of the charity to its retrenchment, selective admission, and the implementation of new revenue schemes in the '80s and 90s, offering anecdotal and statistical information in support. When noted new revenues, for example, the treasurer demonstrated how collections at the Foundling chapel had contributed to the "gradual restoration of the finances of the hospital."[58] The success of the chapel depended on its musical program that included children choirs accompanied by organists, some of whom were blind orphans who had received musical instruction at the hospital. From the 1760's when the musical program began to flourish, revenues grew steadily from a mere 37*l* 14*s* 1*d* in 1766 to 340*l* 15*s* 3*d* in 1776, 881*l* 4*s* 1*d* in 1786 and 584*l* 1*s* 3*d* by 1795 "to which," Bernard claimed, "by the united labour and attention of some of the governors, a considerable addition is expected still to be made."[59] The treasurer also presented statistics to show how selective admissions and institutional renovations had positively affected infant mortality rates. The Foundling had, according to Bernard, greatly improved its care by making

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[57] *Ibid*, 29.

[58] *Ibid*, 61.

[59] *Ibid*, 39-42.

facilities cleaner, relocating the infirmary for sanitary reasons, and improving the diet and exercise of the children. As a result, infant mortality rates, that for much of the century had hovered at 33 percent and spiked to 67 percent during open admissions, fell to 17 percent between 1787 and 1797, and had dropped further still by the end of the century. By comparison, similarly situated French orphanages suffered mortality rate of near 80 percent in the 1770s and a shocking 95 percent by 1797.[60] Bernard was not simply painting a pretty portrait of the hospital, he was documenting his argument with facts. This was precisely the type of information that discriminating donors needed before deciding to support a charity or not.

Declining infant mortality was an excellent selling point for the hospital because it suggested the effectiveness of the charity; however, preserving surplus population was not viewed favorably by social critics of the 1790s. Bernard, who was attuned to this view, informed his audience that the hospital not only saved more children, it created more productive and useful apprentices. Educational reforms and greater scrutiny over apprentices had contributed to the hospital's success. Education had, of course, always formed an integral part of the Foundling, but Bernard focused on the charity's new curriculum in which children learned to read and write, as well as basic accounting skills. While some critics might fault the institution for providing these orphans more education than was appropriate to their station, Bernard assured his readers that the curriculum was most practical. In the past, the hospital taught its boys skills such as spinning wool into yarn, but found that these pupils "were not so much in request as apprentices, and were not placed out so speedily, or so well, as those whose writing, reading, and accounts had been more attended to." During Bernard's tenure the hospital shifted its educational emphasis to teaching the three r's in order to make their charges more employable. The treasurer acknowledged that the London hospital's curriculum might be less useful outside of the metropolis. Failure to teach manufacturing skills, for example, would "not apply to the

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[60] Bernard, *Account of the Foundling*, 64n, 71-2; McClure, *Coram's Children*, 142.

situation of parish children in manufacturing towns; for there," as Bernard observed, "manufacture is the general object of their destination." The London Foundling encouraged reading, writing, and arithmetic because its primary market was London shopkeepers who valued those skills; however, Bernard believed that "the best occupation for young persons" is that "which fits them most completely and effectively for their duties in society." As to rural parishes, the treasurer added, "it is much to be wished, that those who are anxious to introduce manufactures into *all* country poor houses, would consider how far that kind of domestic employment may unfit them for *husbandry*, the great and necessary occupation for which they should be prepared."[61] The key, according to Bernard, was that education be useful, practical, and appropriate to local conditions.

For potential donors whose primary concern was Britain's apparent moral crisis, the treasurer stressed that the hospital's charges received religious and moral instruction. They learned to sing hymns and were required to master their catechism. The governors also took care to keep the boys and girls separate during their hospital tutelage. Some moralists feared that a mingling of the sexes, even at this early age, could lead to immoral behaviors and habits later in life. When girls were put out to apprentice, the hospital also took precautions that they be placed only with married men whose wives had seen the girl and approved of the contract."[62] These measures obviously tried to protect girl apprentices from unwanted sexual advances and to insure against any domestic friction between the husband and wife in the home where the child was placed. Once girls were apprenticed, the matron and schoolmaster of the hospital periodically inquired into their well-being. To document the effect of this oversight, Bernard inserted additional statistics from an institutional report of 1798. Of 252 hospital apprentices, only 15 "have turned out ill" and 21 "not free from blame, but requiring judicious management," meaning often these kids had been in trouble early in their apprenticeship but had been better behaved with time. Overall the treasurer could boast that "the proportion of good servants in place, and of

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[61] Bernard, *Account of the Foundling*, 66-7.

[62] *Ibid*, 69.

industrious apprentices in trade, among the children of the Foundling, appears to be as great as from any other class of young persons." "The few, who have turned out ill," he added, "have attracted more attention, than the many, who act so as to do credit to the charity: there being many respectable persons at present in London, married and settled in business, who have been educated and apprenticed by this charity."[63] Bernard's report reiterated the success of the hospital's supervision of its charges and the institution's dedication to their moral character.

In defending the moral record of the Foundling, Bernard could not resist reminding his readers once more how much the hospital of the nineties differed from its mid-century predecessor. During open admissions the hospital had, he argued, actually contributed to moral decline of young women by extending them assistance indiscriminately. In the charity that Bernard piloted, the governors looked at more than "the necessity of the mother and the desertion of the father," they examined "the previous good character of the mother."[64] No longer could it be said that the charity assisted prostitutes and other unsavory characters. "It may be questioned," Bernard explained, "whether even the preservation of the helpless and unoffending infant is so meritorious and beneficial an act of charity, as the rescuing the wretched mother from a course of infamy and prostitution, and restoring her to character and the means of honest industry." As the treasurer's statement made clear, the hospital's primary goal had become saving 'deserving' unwed mothers. Bernard claimed success in the endeavor with assurances that "no instance has come to the knowledge of the committee ... of any woman so relieved, who has not been thereby saved from, what she would in all probability have been involved in, a course of vice and prostitution."[65] Ultimately, the treasurer's account answered moralistic critics, while trying to distance the charity from all memory of its darkened past.

A recurrent motif of *Account of the Foundling* was the charity's "first principles." In summarizing these guidelines, Bernard explained that those

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[63] *Ibid*, 70-1n.

[64] *Ibid*, 30.

[65] *Ibid*, 8-10.

problems beyond the resources of charitable individuals "may be corrected by co-operation and united efforts; which, excluding the petty motives of self interest and personal favor, are conducted by impartial kindness, *and instructed by experience*."[66] The treasurer's praise of private, associated philanthropy came with warning that the desire to do good was not enough. Emotion might move people to act, but it had to be tempered by an objective and rational examination of proper practices. These were the very precepts Bernard applied when seeking economic alternative to wheat during the dearth of the 1790s. As before, he endorsed an empirical, scientific approach to all future ventures of the hospital.

Bernard tried to bring the discussion full circle by demonstrating how many of these qualities were manifest in the person of Thomas Coram, the retired sea captain who founded the charity. Coram had spent most of his personal fortune on charitable projects, including a school for Indian girls in North America. "His life," Bernard declared, "had been so totally devoid of self interest that he left behind him property hardly sufficient to discharge the expences of his funeral." Although he died with few material riches, Coram, left behind a legacy, *viz.*, the hospital, that was, in Bernard's estimation, "a monument more noble and dignified, than ever wealth or pride obtained."[67] By his own request Coram was buried in the vault of the Foundling chapel, the governors marking his tomb with a proper memorial to his life's work. Bernard inserted the entire inscription in *Account of the Foundling*, including its very poignant final address:

> READER,
> Thy actions will show whether thou art sincere,
> in the praises thou mayst bestow on him;
> and if thou hast virtue enough to commend his virtues,
> forget not to add also the imitation of them.[68]

The strategic inclusion of this memorial served dual purposes. First, it

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[66] *Ibid*, vi.

[67] *Ibid*, 22-3.

[68] *Ibid*, 24-5n.

demonstrated a continuity in the workings of the hospital. The charity may have made imprudent decisions but the disinterested values of Coram persevered throughout. Secondly, Bernard used the inscription as a direct request that his audience invoke the spirit of Coram and support his charity.

For readers who had not been convinced by the Foundling's utility, its morality, its efficiency, and its lasting principles, Bernard appealed to their sense of patriotism during a time of war. To begin with, he virtually declared private cooperative charity as a British invention. "This principle of association is," he noted in the preface, "one of the most honorable and characteristic traits, which distinguishes the British nation; a nation affording examples of a variety of noble and useful establishments, in their object philanthropic, and in their nature purely disinterested."[69] By implication to participate in disinterested associated charities, such as the Foundling, was to revel in British ingenuity. But Bernard did not stop there. "At a period when the martial spirit of this country was excited, and a firm and impregnable barrier formed against the enemies of our free constitution," the treasurer wrote, "it has been a subject of no small satisfaction to the Governors of the Foundling, that they have been able to afford accommodation to two associated corps."[70] The hospital's token contribution to the war effort was yet another selling point to potential donors.

Bernard's attempt at rehabilitating the public image of the hospital was not without effect. The percentage of donors from the mercantile interest, for example, increased at the turn of the century. Merchant donors would have been particularly receptive to the treasurer's emphasis on retrenchment and practical education.[71] Overall, however, the Foundling's donations never matched their pre-1756 levels. Fortunately for the hospital it had found new revenues through its estate development. As for negative publicity, *Account of the Foundling* may have silenced critics briefly but it did not immunize the charity from future scandals. In 1809, for example, the governors were forced to file a suit of libel against the

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[69] *Ibid*, viii.

[70] *Ibid*, 72.

[71] Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, 157-58.

National Register for charging that the hospital admitted the children of the wealthy at the expense of the needy.[72] Bernard himself became the target of a messy public relations fiasco over a disputed pew in the Foundling chapel. Dr. Thomas Willan complained to the governors that his pew neighbor, Elizabeth Sayers, had brought company with her on several occasions. He requested that she be removed to another pew. When she refused, he proposed that a bar be put up to separate the two parties and to guarantee the doctor and his wife their space. The bar was put in place but Sayers refused to be confined and sat in Willan's part of the pew. He tried unsuccessfully to physically remove her and then stormed out of the chapel. Although Bernard and the Chapel Committee tried to find a compromise, they ultimately sided with Willan, a decision that elicited two illustrated lampoons of the affair, *The Foundling-Chapel Brawl: A Non-Heroic Ballad; with notes critical and explanatory* (1804) and *The Second Part, or Sequel; of the Foundling-Chapel Brawl* (1805). The anonymous author accused the treasurer of breaking faith with the basic principles of the charity, claiming that the ghost of Coram leapt out from a portrait on the committee room wall and gave Bernard quite a scare.[73] Fortunately for the hospital, these pamphlets were privately published and received only minor publicity.

Although Bernard wrote *Account of the Foundling* primarily for positive publicity, he also played internal politics with this work. The treasurer had several plans for the future of the hospital and he used this pamphlet to promote them. He expressed his desire "to remind the governors of the necessity of frequently recurring to first principles, and of correcting, with temper and attention, the defects and abuses which will attend the progress of every human establish-ment."[74] The governors were, in short, to heed the lessons evident in the wise and unwise acts of their predecessors, making *Account of the Foundling* a reference work for present and future governors. Not content to remind them of

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[72] *The Times*, 31 July, 1809.

[73] *The Foundling-Chapel Brawl: A Non-Heroic Ballad; with notes critical and explanatory* (London: C. Roworth, 1804), 32. 17 March 1804, 15 December 1804, 29 December 1804, 12 January 1805, and 19 January 1805, Chapel Committee Minutes, Foundling Hospital Papers.

[74] Bernard, *Account of the Foundling*, 44-5.

the institution's past, the treasurer presumed to outline his vision of the Foundling's future. Bernard's plan to improve the hospital's utility was quite specific and included two projects, based of course upon "first principles," a music school for blind children, and a haven for children of soldiers and sailors to protect them from vice.

Bernard was not the first to propose a music school at the Foundling, but became its most ardent proponent at the turn of the century. The first mention of musical instruction at the hospital was in 1758 when the governors ordered that Tom Grenville, a blind orphan, be taught to play music. Grenville later became the organist for the parochial church at Ross in Hertfordshire.[75] The treasurer cited two other instances of similarly placed children, adding mention of a failed proposal for a public music school at the hospital from 1774. The governors at the time did not consider work as a musician as real employment, so they determined that it was not within the scope of the charity's parliamentary charter. Bernard, however, hoped to revive the plan. A music school, he claimed, would be "a source of inestimable charity" by "giving comfort and independence" to "children incapable of any other means of livelihood," namely the blind. While the treasurer's appeal failed to win over the governors, Bernard pursued his plans outside the hospital. At the SBCP, he publicized a school for the blind at Liverpool which included music as part of its curriculum. This SBCP account inspired the formation in 1799 of a similar establishment in London at St. George's Fields. Although the Foundling never established its own school, in 1801 the governors, probably under the influence of Bernard, offered the London school a 999 year lease at "a peppercorn rent" on a half-acre lot of the Foundling estate along Gray's-Inn-Lane.[76] Complications prevented the London school from actually moving to the estate; nevertheless, Bernard continued to promote projects that offered the blind useful occupations including musical employment. With the music school as

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[75] *Ibid*, 40-1n.

[76] T. Bernard, "Extract from an account of the asylum (or school of instruction) for the blind at Liverpool," *The Reports* II: 60-70; Bishop of Durham, "Account of the London School for the indigent blind," *The Reports* III:216-22.

with other projects, *Account of the Foundling* gave the treasurer a forum in which to express his ideas to the public even when the governors of the Foundling proved to be reluctant supporters.

Rescuing the orphaned and endangered children of the British military was the second plan Bernard promoted in *Account of the Foundling*. There were precedents for making special exemptions from admissions policies for the children of soldiers. In 1794, for example, the governors opened the doors, as far as finances allowed, to military children under age 5. Bernard applauded this action but suggested that "this wise and benevolent resolution could be carried to a greater extent." He proposed that "a part of the benefit of the increasing funds of the hospital (so far as may be done without injustice to the other objects) should be permanently fixed as the peculiar right of the children of the defenders of their country."[77] What Bernard envisioned was basically open admissions for these children to protect them from the extremely high mortality rates among military personnel, and, more importantly, from the "nursing of the camp" which, "can have little or no advantage of example or instruction; but unfortunately is contaminated by the vices of a soldier."[78] Instead of growing up in an atmosphere of vice, these children would receive a "virtuous and religious education." This plan shared some characteristics with the Philanthropic Society to which Bernard subscribed. The Philanthropic removed juvenile delinquents from the bad influence of their criminal parents and supplied them moral instruction, while the hospital, according to this proposal, would protect and remove children from the corruptive influence of reprobate soldiers and sailors.[79] Bernard anticipated that some of the governors might disapprove of his plan because of its expense and its indiscriminate admission. He tried to deflect that criticism with an appeal to patriotic conscience. "For the child whose father – or perhaps *both his parents*

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[77] Bernard, *Account of the Foundling*, 56.

[78] *Ibid*, 57.

[79] One possible distinction between the two plans may be the element of coercion. Whereas the Philanthropic often seized the children, Bernard is less clear on this aspect. Given his disdain for compulsory measures, it likely would have been voluntary, especially since he did provide that children be reunited with their parent or parents when the war ceased or on other positive developments.

have perished in the field – his settlement and connections distant or unknown; where," Bernard asked," can the poor orphan look for preservation and instruction, but to some national establishment, like the Foundling Hospital?"[80] As for the potential expense of yet anther version of open admissions, the treasurer suggested "if the whole cannot be done, let it be done in part."[81] Veterans held a special place in Bernard's heart and while the hospital did not significantly extend its aid to their orphans, the treasurer continued to fight on their behalf in his other philanthropic work.

Bernard's tenure at the Foundling was an important one for many reasons, both personal and in terms of his philanthropy. First of all it filled a personal void in the Bernards' childless marriage. Being surrounded by children offered some consolation to both husband and wife. More importantly, Thomas explored at this charity many of the ideas on the practical applications of science that he had first developed in his youth. The specific needs of the Foundling as well as their expressed aims attracted Bernard and indeed stimulated his energy into new directions, leading at one point to his introduction to the internationally famous reformer, Count Rumford. Cooperation with Rumford certainly influenced the future work of Thomas Bernard if only by confirming the treasurer's already deeply held convictions about charitable reform. He reaffirmed his faith in private associated philanthropy, while exploring the potential of publicity in initiating reform, both in image and content. Finally Bernard's experience at London's premier orphanage exposed him to the charity's own rich history. He may have tried to remake the hospital, but Bernard also gleaned many lessons from his predecessors, especially Thomas Coram, who would serve as a role model for the treasurer.

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[80] *Ibid*, 58.

[81] *Ibid*, 59.

PART TWO:

'ITINERANT INSTITUTOR' 1796-1818

> There is a Sir Thomas Bernard – a sort of itinerant institutor whom I daresay you remember at the Foundling – who wants to establish a chapel here, independent of the Bishop and of all Church authorities. He has engaged as minister a M[r] Marsh from Reading – a son of a banker – to whom the Vicar objected on the score of non-orthodoxy ... there is no doubt that the plan was to establish a Methodist chapel under the guise of a Church of England one – a wolf in sheep's clothing and a much more dangerous one than even a Roman Catholic establishment.[1]

Mr. Jackson's letter to his brother, Sir George Jackson, alluded to Bernard's attempt to promote free chapels, those that did not charge pew rentals, in order to increase church attendance among the urban poor. Bernard had traveled to Brighton in 1812 because the sea air was recommended for his wife's health. During their stay, the restless philanthropist made himself useful by trying to open a free chapel based on a similar establishment at St. Giles in London. Free chapels were one of many projects that he championed, along with fever hospitals, friendly societies, schools for the blind, soup kitchens, and savings banks, just to name a few. He encouraged Britons to organize locally and nationally for these projects, thus Jackson's description of Bernard as an 'itinerant institutor' was right on target.

Bernard earned this reputation while serving as Secretary of the SBCP, the Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor. Chapter Five explores the innovative nature of this national clearing house for charitable plans and projects, but focuses primarily on Bernard as its creator, chief organizer and driving force. He conceived the society primarily as a publicity vehicle for tried and true forms of relief, plans that could be empirically documented, and whose tactics could be reproduced as experiments elsewhere. He had in mind nothing less than a science of philanthropy. The SBCP's periodical

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[1] Quoted in Higgins, *The Bernards*, IV:190-1.

publication, *The Reports*, was envisioned as a scientific journal of philanthropy and Bernard, as the Society's secretary. became its chief editor and contributor. Through his editorial duties Bernard inspired, and in some cases directly supervised, the formation of numerous friendly societies, schools, soup-kitchens, free chapels, fever hospitals, and provincial chapters of the SBCP. The growth of this 'associational world' served as an integrating force, bringing together rich and poor, Anglican and Presbyterian, Scot and English for common cause and thus contributed to the formulation of British identity.

The itinerant institutor was also a workaholic and an ardent patriot and he encourage his fellow Britons to do much the same, especially his socially privileged peers. At the SBCP Bernard repeatedly stressed the social responsibilities of the British elite to work for the general welfare of Britain. Chapter Six examines three related projects: the British Institution for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in the United Kingdom, the Alfred Club, and the literary review, *The Director*. Through this triad Bernard attempted to revolutionize art patronage along patriotic lines, to promote British artists, and to reform the leisure habits of the British ruling elite. His patronage plans ultimately laid the foundation for the creation of a British National Gallery of Art in London in 1824, while elite contributions to the British Institution and its promotion of British artists helped the newly created British elite rehabilitate their public image while promoting the values of hard work, disinterested service, and patriotism.

During his career as a full-time philanthropist Bernard contributed to many organizations other than the British Institution and the SBCP; however, these two represent his core values and methods. Both relied extensively on publicity and the printed word, both relied on a mixture of private and public funding, both called on British elite to assume the responsibilities of their position, and both espoused a patriotic desire to use cooperation to bring Britons together during a time of social and economic unrest as well as warfare. Upon the firm foundation of his youth, his education, and his career, Bernard built many sturdy philanthropic institutions of which these were but two.

CHAPTER FIVE:
FOUNDER OF THE SOCIETY FOR BETTERING THE CONDITION OF THE POOR, 1796-1818

Bernard's attempt to improve the prospects of the London Foundling Hospital's children and their unwed mothers marked only the beginning of his philanthropic ambition. Bernard soon became involved in an ever-expanding circle of charitable enterprises and ideas through the creation of the Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor, the SBCP. Bernard's vision gave life to this innovative society which acted as a clearing house for information regarding charitable projects throughout Great Britain and, to a lesser extent, the empire. The Society's preference for nonmaterial or intelligence-based relief was without parallel; however, the ideas and methods disseminated by the SBCP echoed several general themes of late eighteenth-century philanthropy. The Society's publications, *The Reports*,[1] commonly championed self-help, noninstitutional charities (those without expensive facilities and buildings), and greater discrimination in the distribution of relief. To achieve these ends the SBCP pioneered visitation societies, but more importantly Bernard articulated a 'new philosophy' which aspired to make relief a science. At the heart of this 'scientific' approach to philanthropy was the collection and public promotion of proven charitable experiments by way of *The Reports*. Would-be philanthropists who read the Society's reports were encouraged to imitate what they read about, or to conduct experiments of their own and submit them to the editor of *The Reports*, Bernard. The commerce of ideas between the SBCP and its audience stimulated new research and novel experiments and ultimately gave birth to a national charitable network. This network was defined not only by the distribution of print media, but also by an expansion of philanthropic societies, including the SBCP, into branch chapters throughout Britain. Charitable Britons

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[1] Harvard's Kress Library has six complete volumes of *The Reports* (vols 1-2 are 4th editions, 3-6 are 1st editions). HOLLIS No. 007314342. The British Library holds the four individual reports of the incomplete *Volume VII*, Shelfmarks, 1027.h.7.(3.), 1027.i.4, and 8289.11.

cooperated on an unprecedented scale, contributing thereby to British nationalism and political modernization.

While a comprehensive history of the SBCP is needed, this study focuses on the society's creator, Thomas Bernard. In an organization that once boasted more than 600 subscribers and many influential figures -- *e.g.,* MP's William Wilberforce and William Morton Pitt, cabinet ministers Henry Addington and Nicholas Vansittart, churchmen Beilby Porteus (bishop of London) and Shute Barrington (bishop of Durham), industrial entrepreneurs Sir Robert Peel and Richard Arkwright – it may seem presumptuous to single out Bernard. Nevertheless, strong support can be offered for historian David Owen's claim that "in some of its activities the Society was hardly more than Bernard under another name," or for the observation of F.K. Prochaska that "the Society became synonymous with Bernard."[2] No man is an island and neither was Bernard whose primary concern at the SBCP, as elsewhere, was to foster collaboration. There had to be a focal point of cooperation, however, and B. Kirkman Gray was right to call Bernard the Society's "mainspring of energy" because he served as chief editor and author of SBCP publications.[3] The threefold aim of this chapter is first, to explore what led to Bernard's founding the SBCP; second, to illustrate how that society was consistent with his social philosophy; and finally, to assess the general impact of Bernard's work at the Society. How did a treasurer of the London Foundling Hospital conceive the idea of an information society? How did Bernard translate his aims and concepts into action and did the SBCP fulfill that vision? These and other fundamental questions are addressed in the following account as I explore Bernard's intellectual influences, his methods and operations, and ultimately his impact on the SBCP, its new philosophy, and the national network it helped forge.

Founding a New Society

In his memoirs, Bernard noted that his preliminary vision for the future SBCP came in 1796 during extensive discussions with the Bishop of Durham.

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[2] Owen, *English Philanthropy*, 106. Prochaska, *Voluntary Impulse*, 31.

[3] B. Kirkman Gray, *History of English Philanthropy*, 248.

Unfortunately, the philanthropist did not record the content of these conversations, nor did he offer much explanation for what specifically led to this vision.[4] Partial inspiration must have come, as the previous chapters suggest, from Bernard's family socialization, his education, his legal and professional experience, as well as his volunteer work at the London Foundling Hospital and Iver workhouse. Bernard learned early in life the value of lively discourse on public issues. As he matured and assumed administrative responsibilities in Buckinghamshire and at London's premier orphanage, Bernard better appreciated the positive effect of publicity and more systematic approaches to relief. Since the distinctive features of the SBCP –its endorsement of systematic philanthropy, its emphasis on publicity, and its dedication to self-help – all appeared, to one degree or another, in Bernard's previous projects, his personal background obviously provided some basis for this innovative charitable society.

Bernard drew ideas from many sources, but the most direct stimulus for the formation of the SBCP may have come from his interaction with Count Rumford. Rumford traveled to London from Munich in October 1795 and immediately began working on *Essays, Political, Economical, and Philosophical*, which was published in January. Rumford's essays included "An Account of an Establishment for the Poor at Munich, "Of Food; and Particularly of Feeding the Poor," and "'Of the Fundamental Principles on which General Establishments for the Relief of the Poor may be formed in All Countries." Bernard must have met the count about this time and may have been one of the "most worthy and benevolent Characters" about whom Rumford wrote Lady Palmerston in February.[5] There is no doubt that he had read the count's essays because the Foundling Hospital treasurer made plans in the spring of 1796 to renovate the charity's kitchen based on Rumford's plans.

In April Bernard and Rumford completed the changes at the hospital and further collaborated in the establishment of a soup kitchen near the charity's

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[4] Bernard Baker, *Pleasure and Pain*, 51-2.

[5] Brown, *Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford*, 166. Rumford's three essays appear in Brown, ed., *Collected Works of Count Rumford*, V:99-262.

estate. Bernard was so taken by the count's technological improvements that he established another soup shop at Rippon in Yorkshire.[6] Later that month the pair hammered out an ambitious plan to remodel the Marylebone workhouse with the count's heating and cooking implements. The new and improved London facility would then serve as a model for similar renovation all over Britain. In the Yorkshire soup shop as with this workhouse scheme, Bernard emerged as the real mover and shaker of this tandem. Rumford had many grandiose ideas but, according to one historian, "the most consistent feature" of the count's personality was "his inability to commit himself to a project for any length of time."[7] Bernard, on the other hand, was developing a knack for tackling administrative challenges and getting things done. It was the treasurer of the Foundling, therefore, who, on 20 April, approached the Proclamation Society[8] for financial backing on the workhouse plan. Although the chief aim of this evangelical society was to encourage church attendance as proper observance of the Christian Sabbath, several members, including the future founders of the SBCP – William Wilberforce, E. J. Eliot, Shute Barrington (bishop of Durham), and Bernard – generously pledged £100 each. Bernard presented the fully-funded proposal to the Marylebone officials, but they rejected it. Bernard's simultaneous attempt to convert a tavern, the *Dog and Duck* in St. George's Fields, into a Munich-style poorhouse based on Rumford's plans met with similar failure.[9]

In addition to setbacks at Marylebone and St. George's Fields, Bernard encountered opposition when introducing Rumford improvements at one of London's oldest orphanages, Christ's Hospital. Impressed by the Foundling's new kitchen, the hospital governors asked Bernard to arrange for similar facilities at their orphanage. Bernard proposed that he personally supervise the kitchen

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[6] W. Hillyer, "Account of a London soup shop," *The Reports* I: 167-71. For Rumford's plan for a model soup kitchen, see Brown, *Collected Works of Count Rumford, V:* 133-45; Baker Bernard, *Pleasure and Pain*, 52.

[7] Berman, *Social Change and Scientific Organization*, 12.

[8] Its full name was Society for Enforcing the King's Proclamation against Immorality and Profaneness. It was founded in 1787 by William Wilberforce.

[9] Bernard Baker, *Pleasure and Pain*, 51-4; Baker, *Life of Sir Thomas Bernard*, 12-22.

renovations and that the governors create a kitchen management committee to oversee the new facility. His concern stemmed from the fact that the orphanage's cook "had the perquisites of the dripping" and her husband "the perquisite of the Cinders." "As a considerable saving was to be made in these two articles," Bernard "saw little chance of success beyond the period of the personal Attendance of our [Foundling] Cook" without proper supervision. The hospital's governors resented the presumptuousness of Bernard and assured him that "their Officers were persons of such respectable Character as to not require any interference of that kind." Bernard had the last laugh in this matter, however, because "the new kitchen spoilt & wasted the meat, & increased the consumption of coals" as a result of mismanagement.[10] Parish officials often resented direct interference, no matter how well intentioned, and, although Bernard never cites this as the case, there is evidence that he deduced as much from his dealings with Christ's Hospital in London.

Bernard gleaned important lessons from these early failures. He knew that the defensive response of the governors of Christ's Hospital stemmed from their resentment of outside interference. Bernard may have drawn the same conclusion when Marylebone overseers rejected a fully-funded renovation plan that called for Rumford to personally direct the operation. Bernard became increasingly aware that dealing with parish officials or charity directors required persuasive political skills. The challenge was to convince overseers to welcome outside assistance and, when necessary, supervision. Before Rumford left for Dublin on 30 April, Bernard shared his concerns with the count as well as his solution, a rough concept for what became the SBCP. Specifically, he proposed that channels of communication with charity directors and parochial officers might be opened by "the formation of a Society for promoting and disseminating all Improvements as to the Poor."[11] If a forum existed where these men and women could read about innovations, such as Rumford's, they could implement changes without coercion. They could make their own choice to adopt new kitchen plans, or any other improvement, without

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[10] Bernard Baker, *Pleasure and Pain*, 54-5.

[11] *Ibid*, 52.

being forced to accept direction from an interloper. Bernard had discussed his plans with the Bishop of Durham, but apparently sought the opinion of Rumford whose essay "Fundamental Principles of General Establishments for the Relief of the Poor" included a plan for "a grand repository of all kinds of *useful mechanical inventions*, and particularly of such as relate to the furnishing of houses and are calculated to promote domestic economy." Such an institution "will doubtless contribute," he wrote, "to the introduction of many essential improvements."[12] Although Bernard's vision was fundamentally different from what the count proposed, the two shared a common goal of spreading knowledge of life-improving technology and ideas. It is natural, therefore, that he used the count as a sounding board. Unfortunately, neither man recorded any detail of this exchange.

While Rumford departed Dublin for Munich in July, Bernard shaped his general ideas into a working plan, the antecedent of which appeared in his *Account of the Foundling* (March 1796). "To a great and extended kingdom, it is of infinite benefit that its members should be habituated to co-operate for these purposes, and," as he asserted, "to devote a part of their time and attentions to the well-being of their fellow subjects." "The best and purest species of public spirit may be generated and preserved in a great country," Bernard added, by "uniting the opinion, and concentrating the confidence of many."[13] At the time, the treasurer applied this principle to the specific needs of the London Foundling Hospital; however, by November his objectives had broadened. At a party hosted by Wilberforce and attended by Eliot and other interested guests, Bernard proposed a "Society of Benevolent Individuals," whose object would be "promoting and disseminating all improvements and proceedings relative to the poor." By "drawing to a centre every information of this nature," this society would render the work of charitable innovators "more public, and more extensive, than could be

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[12] Brown, ed., *Collected Works of Count Rumford, V:* 139. Rumford expanded his ideas in *Proposals for forming by subscription in the Metropolis of the British Empire a Public Institution for Diffusing the knowledge and facilitating the general introduction of Mechanical Inventions and Improvements, and for teaching, by courses of Philosophical Lectures and Experiments, the Application of Science to the Common Purposes of Life* (1799). His plan for a science and technology museum culminated in the Royal Institution of Great Britain, a society that Bernard managed for some time.

[13] T. Bernard, *Account of the Foundling*, vii.

done by private individuals."[14] Information would be the primary media through which the disparate interests of Britons would be united. His audience expressed doubts about the feasibility of such an organization, but Bernard was intrepid. In fact, their slightest encouragement, a suggestion that he formalize his plans into a public letter, stirred the treasurer into a fit of activity. Within days he announced an organizational meeting for "a society for bettering the condition and increasing the comforts of the poor." His draft marked the first public notice of the body's eventual name. On 17 December 1796, the signatories of the circular, Wilberforce, Eliot, and Bernard, issued the invitation "to a few friends, who, it was conceived, would interest themselves in the measure."[15] Almost all attended.

This announcement outlined the broad parameters of the fledgling organization and articulated fundamental ideas of Bernard, its primary author. He believed the Society's purview should encompass nothing less than "every thing that concerns the happiness of the poor – every thing by which their comforts can be increased." With this declaration, the founders took aim at a host of complex and complicated issues, including parochial relief, urban housing, public health, price inflation, and education. As means to these ends, Bernard and his colleagues proclaimed that "much may be done by the union of liberal and benevolent minds -- much by the circulation of information, and by personal assistance and influence." Although the poor were the chief beneficiaries, Bernard added his belief that the SBCP's "improvements and experiments will be more or less applicable to farms, manufactories, private families, and to every situation of life.[16] These stated aims became specific strategies as the SBCP brought philanthropic minds together and circulated their ideas in *The Reports*. Eventually, the Society also gave 'personal assistance' by parenting auxiliary associations that distributed relief directly -- organizations such as the Royal Institution, the London Fever Institution, and the London Mendicity Society. Bernard's invitation may have

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[14] Baker, *Life of Sir Thomas Bernard*, 14.

[15] "Account of the Society, its object, subject of inquiry, regulations, etc," *The Reports* I: 282-3.

[16] For the full text of the original circular, see Baker, *Life of Sir Thomas Bernard*, 15-9; or "Account of the Society," *The Reports* I: 282-4.

only been extended to a few friends; however, its target audience, from the start, was all Britain.

Additional elements of this fledgling society emerged in the closing months of 1796. After the organizational meeting of 21 December, members of the Society sought and won the patronage of His Majesty George III. A select committee also drafted a charter, detailing the Society's corporate by-laws, clarifying its objects, and outlining its proposed methods.[17] The SBCP constitution was typical of other 'subscriber-democracies' in being run by a General Committee of fifty members who managed the Society's business and elected officers annually.[18] Once the committee settled on its governing structure and procedures, it restated the SBCP's primary objective of collecting "information respecting the circumstances and situation of the poor, and the most effectual means of meliorating their condition; in order that any comforts and advantages which the poor do now actually enjoy in any part of England, may eventually be extended to every part of it." In an amplification and clarification of its position, they added that the intelligence would be scientific, or, as they phrased it, "*useful* and *practical* information, derived from experience, and stated *briefly* and *plainly*, so as to be generally read and understood."[19] In short, the new SBCP was set up to be a clearing house for scientific philanthropy, one that would forge a national charitable network.

Because several of the SBCP's initial reports promoted the culinary and heating improvements of Count Rumford and land allotments schemes embraced by agricultural improvers in England, the originality of Bernard and his creation has been underappreciated. Historian Fritz Redlich presented the Foundling treasurer as a disciple of the Bavarian minister, "second only to [Patrick] Colquhoun in spreading the Rumford gospel in England." Morris Berman portrayed the SBCP as propaganda tool for the Board of Agriculture's 'Winchilsea

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[17] Although the SBCP minute books are not extant, excerpts are scattered throughout *The Reports*.

[18] R.J. Morris, "Chapter 8: Clubs, Societies and Associations," *The Cambridge Social History of Great Britain, 1750-1850*, 5 vols. III: 412-13.

[19] "Account of the Society," *The Reports* I: 285.

system' whereby cottagers were given a plot of land and a few cows for their survival amid the enclosure movement.[20] While Bernard may have benefitted from his dialogue with the count, "much that Rumford wrote about indigence was," as J.R. Poynter observed, "commonplace, at least in terms of common English assumptions of the time."[21] The SBCP founder tried to popularize Rumford's inventions, but he never became a puppet for the count's proposals or theories. In fact, Bernard often adopted stances that conflicted with the Bavarian minister. Berman's claims seem even more ridiculous given that only a handful of the SBCP's reports promoted land allotments or any related schemes. In founding the SBCP and guiding its direction over the next twenty years, Bernard doubtless drew ideas from Rumford, Winchilsea, and numerous other sources. It was, however, his unique vision that gave birth to this unique society, which is why a closer examination of his social philosophy is in order.

Bernard's Social Philosophy

Since the SBCP's primary focus was the 'poor,' Bernard's basic concept of poverty is crucial to understanding the organization he created. Even though the poor had for centuries been perceived as an intrinsic part of human society (the 'Biblical poor' who are always with us), Bernard did not accept as natural the coexistence in Britain of rising poor rates and unemployment with advances in science and technology, or with an expanding economy. How could a prosperous nation be so encumbered? Bernard never witnessed such widespread poverty in colonial New England whose mercantile wealth rivaled Great Britain, so why had prosperity eluded the most numerous members of the island nation? He had observed the poor enough to know that traditionalists were not justified in blaming the matter on the idle and lazy nature of the poor. Bernard, and many contemporary reformers, believed that deeper root causes were yet to be discovered. The late century search for fundamental causes of poverty contributed to a more complex comprehension of the word 'poor.' Patrick Colquhoun,

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[20] Redlich statement was quoted in Berman, *Social Change and Scientific Organization*, 8.

[21] Poynter, *Society and Pauperism*, 89.

Bernard's contemporary and fellow philanthropist, distinguished between poverty and indigence, the former being an unavoidable fact of human society and the latter, a product of moral failing. "Poverty," as J.R. Poynter summarized Colquhoun's position, "was a necessity of working for a living, and indigence inability to make a living even by working."[22] Colquhoun was one of many, Bernard included, who attempted to present a more thoughtful understanding of the problem of poverty in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. After 1760, as Gertrude Himmelfarb noted, "the 'annals of the poor' ceased to be 'short and simple' and became long and complicated. In the period of only a century, circumstances conspired to create a highly differentiated poor, with different groups, at different times, in different conditions, with different characteristics, emerging as 'the social problem'."[23] Bernard's attempt to address this problem led him to three basic conclusions: that environmental conditions were a contributing factor; that poverty was both a moral and material issue; and that the problem was societal and not simply a dysfunction of one group within society, namely the poor.

Regarding the environment, Bernard saw much room for improvement and change in Great Britain. "The vices and faults of the poor must be deemed," he argued, "the vices and faults of an unfavourable situation rather than of individual delinquency. Remove those disadvantages, and you add as much to moral character as to personal conduct."[24] As he looked around his homeland, Bernard saw major problems. He noted, for example, that in rural counties the poor "have been deprived of many of their resources" by short-sighted landlords who cleared their estates of cottages or enclosed commons with no thought of the effect it might have on local workers. The rural poor had also fallen victims to local monopolies in grain markets, creating in the process inflation. In country hovels and urban apartments, unsanitary housing conditions exposed the poor to various diseases,

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[22] Poynter, *Society and Pauperism*, 201.

[23] Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 18; cf. Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, 164-9.

[24] T. Bernard, "Prefatory Introduction to the Second Volume," *The Reports* II: 13.

especially typhus and small pox. Such a dangerous environment greatly inhibited the poor's ability to fend for themselves. To this litany of social ills, Bernard added the inefficient and often misguided system of statutory poor relief that included parish workhouses where no attempt was made to distinguish 'poor' from 'pauper.'[25] By treating alike paupers, the able-bodied but perpetually dependent poor, and the laboring poor, those who applied to the poor laws for temporary assistance during periods of inflation, dearth, or widespread unemployment, these institutions created an unhealthy environment that discouraged independence.

Bernard's distinction between pauper and poor demonstrated that he, like Colquhoun, perceived a moral component to the problem of poverty. "I use the term 'poor,'" Bernard wrote, "as a general and known term, and not as the subject of any odious or invidious distinction." "There is no disgrace attached," he added, "either to poverty or wealth, whatever there is, and I trust ever will be, to vice and idleness."[26] For the SBCP founder the problem of poverty was not solely a question of meager material wealth. On the other hand, prosperity and national welfare could not be measured by calculating riches and power, what Bernard called "*comparative* advantages." The true well-being of a nation, or an individual, depended on material conditions *and* the "*real* blessings" of contentment, or 'happiness,' which grew from virtuous living.[27] "In proportion as we act in our duty with energy and effect, we attain," he wrote, "an elevated degree of existence and happiness."[28] Bernard's understanding of virtue was twofold. On the one hand, human beings were social creatures who assumed obligations when they entered society. The fulfillment of those duties he deemed virtuous, or moral. Even though each member's duty varied according to rank within the social hierarchy, a healthy society required, in Bernard's estimation, that every group accept their part. If any failed, rich or poor, society suffered as a whole. On the

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[25] T. Bernard, "Prefatory Introduction," *The Reports* II: 17-21.

[26] T. Bernard, "Prefatory Introduction," *The Reports* II: 7.

[27] T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to the Third Volume, Addressed to the Lord Bishop of Durham," *The Reports* III:16-17. For a discussion of the prevalence of this understanding of welfare and poverty, see Himmelfarb, *Idea of Poverty*, 12.

[28] T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to Durham," *The Reports* III: 37.

other hand, Bernard viewed charity and other social virtues as essentially Christian. Of the four "pagan virtues" of the pre-Christian world, PRUDENCE and TEMPERANCE were," according to Bernard, "merely selfish," while "FORTITUDE and JUSTICE were in practice confined to the narrow limits of their own peculiar community." In contrast, the moral precepts of Christianity directed members "'to add to our faith, virtue; – to virtue, knowledge; – to knowledge, temperance; – to temperance, patience; – to patience, godliness; – to godliness, brotherly kindness; – and to brotherly kindness, CHARITY.'" "These are qualities, calculated," Bernard added, "to promote THE GENERAL AND ESSENTIAL HAPPINESS OF MANKIND."[29] In sum, the philanthropist thought that the problem of poverty was exacerbated by Britons failing to accept their social duties, and by too few Britons practicing the type of charity and brotherly kindness born out of the Christian faith.

Although his phrases seem banal, Bernard and many of his contemporaries considered Great Britain's moral decline to be a very real and complex social problem. When he expressed concern about the environment's negative impact on the poor, Bernard did not mean just housing, public health, and other material conditions. For the SBCP founder Britain's moral environment was equally diseased. He noted, for instance, the lack of proper educational opportunities for British youth, the Church of England's abdication of its duty to minister to the spiritual and material needs of the urban poor, and, more frequently, the poor moral example set by the British aristocracy. "Before we give judgement ... upon the crimes of the poor," he once told his readers, "it will be prudence, at least, to examine how far we have, in any degree, been accessories."[30] "The contagion of bad example," he explained in a telling use of disease imagery, "is generally caught by the lower orders from the higher orders."[31] By implicating the rich in the situation of the poor the philanthropist reached the conclusion that poverty was a

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[29] T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to the Fifth Volume, Addressed to William Wilberforce," *The Reports* V: 42-3n.

[30] T. Bernard, "Preliminary Address," *The Reports* I: 6.

[31] T. Bernard, "Prefatory Introduction," *The Reports* II: 12.

societal problem that could only be alleviated by healing society as a whole. Significantly, the opening line of the SBCP's *Preliminary Address to the Public* (1797) echoed this sentiment: "The interests of the poorer classes of society are so interwoven with those of every part of the community, that there is no subject more deserving of general attention."[32]

Diagnosis of the disease was just the beginning for Bernard who still needed to conceive of a physic for the negative influence of Britain's physical and moral environment. His ultimate prescription lay in connecting self interest with self help in accord with his basic understanding of human psychology. "In dealing with rational and accountable creatures, *inducement* may do much to improve them, but *compulsion* can only produce apparent conformity, and systematic hypocrisy. THE DIVINE AUTHOR OF THE UNIVERSE," Bernard wrote, "has given us abundant motive and inducement to seek our own happiness; but *force* and *necessity* would have been inconsistent with the privileges of a *free* and intellectual being."[33] The key to altering human behavior then was providing them positive incentives, or "giv[ing] effect to that master-spring of action" that Bernard described as "THE DESIRE IMPLANTED IN THE HUMAN BREAST OF BETTERING ITS CONDITION."[34] Of course, each individual's perception of his own 'happiness' and 'condition' varied and, as Bernard anticipated, if self interest became focused solely on selfish pleasure the effect would be devastating to society. If, however, self interest could be aligned with social virtues by encouraging Britons to welcome their social duties and practice Christian charity toward one another, improvements could be made. "No plan for the improvement of the condition of the poor" could be successful, according to Bernard, "UNLESS THE FOUNDATION BE LAID IN THE MELIORATION OF THEIR MORAL AND RELIGIOUS CHARACTER."[35]

As for how melioration would occur, Bernard advocated a narrowly targeted

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[32] T. Bernard, "Preliminary Address," *The Reports* I:1.

[33] T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to Wilberforce," *The Reports* V: 52, 56-7.

[34] T. Bernard, "Preliminary Address," *The Reports* I: 3.

[35] T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to the Fourth Volume, Addressed to the Right Honourable Henry Addington," *The Reports* IV: 44-5.

paternalism guided by experience or 'science.' "It is," he observed, "indeed conformable, not only to the principles of Christianity, but also to those of created nature, that the most potent means of exciting moral habits, should be *judicious and discriminating kindness and benevolence*."[36] While at first the SBCP founder appears to suggest simply being nice, there is more substance to his trite expressions, especially considering his meaning of 'judicious and discriminating.' Kindness was never enough to effect change in Bernard's mind. The "good effect" of two centuries of charity "originating in benevolence" had been "limited and uncertain" because it had been based "not in fact, but in speculation." "Let us therefore," Bernard wrote in his oft-quoted phrase, "make an enquiry into all that concerns the POOR, and the promotion of their happiness, a SCIENCE, let us investigate *practically*, and upon *system*."[37] Just as at the Foundling, relief needed the guidance of more than emotion, it required science to find the way and to discern how reformers could use self interest as the tool to heal Britain's social problems. The confidence Bernard exuded that self-interest could be channeled to the betterment of society echoed the providential 'Invisible Hand' of Adam Smith. The SBCP secretary trusted that his organization could help create a more positive environment and provide the type of incentives that might rehabilitate the poor whose prospects seemed limited to a life of crime, perpetual residence at the poorhouse, or street begging.[38] Throughout his career Bernard believed that material and moral improvement went hand in hand in bettering the condition of the poor.

Some historians have argued that this curious mixture of enlightened science and evangelical Christianity marked independent and separate phases in Bernard's development, that the former marked his early SBCP work and the latter his later projects. "In 1798 Bernard," according to Donna Andrew, "felt that the poor were not poor because they were immoral; they were so because of circumstances largely not of their own making." Accordingly "Bernard hoped to

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[36] T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to Wilberforce," *The Reports* V: 56.

[37] T. Bernard, "Preliminary Address," *The Reports* I: 1-2.

[38] T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to Wilberforce," *The Reports* V: 41.

make the poor virtuous by making them happy," or through the satisfaction that came with improved material conditions. "By 1804 he had changed his mind" and rejected that Smithian position in favor of a more evangelical one, meaning by evangelicalism "that variety of Anglicanism that both acknowledged the utter depravity of man and the ubiquity of palpable evil and misery, and the necessity for individual moral reform and conversion before social improvement could take place." She cited as proof Bernard's aforementioned statement about the welfare of the poor depending on the "melioration of their moral and religious character," adding her sense that more and more SBCP projects "came to contain a kernel of moral reform."[39] J.R. Poynter observed a similar shift in the activities of the SBCP after 1802 at which point education became a near obsession of Bernard and the Society at the expense of material relief. Poynter presented two explanations of this change in tack. First, Britain's improved economic conditions meant that immediate material relief was less necessary. Second, Bernard had had a change of heart. The Society's founder "had not begun his work with the poor with the assumption that the chief assistance they needed was intellectual and spiritual, but," according to Poynter, "reached that conclusion in due course."[40] Poynter based his case on a statement Bernard made in *The Barrington School* (1812): "'in the progress of our investigations it became evident that nothing essential or permanent could be done for *bettering the condition of the poor*, without the improvement of their moral and religious character, by an increase of places of worship for their sacred duties, and of schools for the *education* of their children.'"[41] In sum, both Andrew and Poynter maintained that the early SBCP was primarily about material relief and only later did moral reform and an emphasis on education creep into its agenda.

Educational plans and moral/religious reforms doubtless were more visible in later volumes of *The Reports*; however, Poynter and Andrew misinterpreted this as a shift in basic philosophy. The thirty-nine reports of the first volume of *The*

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[39] Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, 165, 176-77.

[40] Poynter, *Society and Pauperism*, 196.

[41] Quoted in Poynter, *Society and Pauperism*, 196.

Reports included at least eight that supplemented material aid by championing moral discrimination in the distribution of that relief. Surely such reports typified the "kernel of moral reform" that Andrew claimed appeared much later. She even seemed to acknowledge the tenuous nature of her conclusion in a footnote: "even in these early reports, one can see the seeds of the theme that was to overshadow this confidence, the intimation that more than ambition was needed to make the poor better and happier."[42] Bernard, moreover, demonstrated a concern over moral reform much earlier than 1802 or 1804. In January 1799 when, according to Andrew, Bernard was in his Smithian phase, the philanthropist observed that "no reform of the poor can be *completely* brought about, without the aid of RELIGION. –This must be the *foundation* of every thing effectual, to be done for them."[43] In another of the Society's publications, *Information for Cottagers* (1800), Bernard listed five basic objects for poor relief (distribution of subsistence, gardens or livestock as supplemental income, provision of employment, medical aid, and guidelines for domestic economy), after which he warned that "these are mere worldly matters, and at best but imperfect services to the cottager; unless accompanied, on the part of the Society, by an anxious care to encourage the education of youth, by an earnest endeavour to promote the virtue and piety of all ages and orders of life."[44] While these excerpts contradict Andrew's and Poynter's position, their own anecdotes are not as strong as first appeared. Bernard's statement about the need for poor relief to include "melioration of their moral and religious character" was used by Andrew to show the philanthropist's rejection of a Smithian philosophy. Her conclusion, however, seems erroneous when reading the rest of Bernard's essay. "Let us now try," he wrote, "the influence of the RELIGIOUS MOTIVE, the consequence of MELIORATION OF CHARACTER, and the effects of IMPROVEMENT OF CONDITION. Let us endeavor to operate by individual kindness and encouragement, by the prospect of acquiring property,

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[42] Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, 177n.

[43] T. Bernard, "Extract from an account of the late Improvements in the House of Industry, at Dublin," *The Reports* II: 103-4.

[44] T. Bernard, *Information for Cottagers* (London: 1800), 6.

and by every other incitement to industry and prudence."[45] Although religious motives were prominent, so too was the Smithian position that 'the prospect of acquiring property' was a valuable inducement for the poor. As for Poynter, when trying to make a case that Bernard's plans evolved from material to intellectual relief, he made much of the philanthropist's claim in 1812 that "it became evident" that "*bettering the condition of the poor*" could not be achieved "without the improvement of their moral and religious character, by an increase of places of worship for their sacred duties, and of schools for the *education* of their children."'[46] Poynter's conclusion, however, ignored the final two clauses of the sentence that qualified the previous declaration. A closer reading of the sentence reveals that what "became evident" was not a need for moral and intellectual improvement, but for more churches and new schools to help accomplish that objective.

The most compelling reason to conclude that Bernard had intellectual, moral, and material aid in mind from the beginning may be the SBCP itself. The creation of this society as a clearing house for information reflected its creator's conviction that material relief alone could never heal Britain's diseased social and moral environment. "Let useful and practical information be offered to them [the poor]," he proposed in the Society's *Preliminary Address to the Public*, "give them time to understand; and the choice of adopting it; and I am mistaken, if they do not show as much good sense on the subject, as any other class of men in the kingdom."[47] Educating the poor through recipes, directions for white-washing, and the like was clearly a founding principle of the SBCP. The Society also sought to awaken the British elite to their social responsibilities. If Bernard had not understood poverty as more than a material condition, he might logically have goaded the elite into increasing their financial backing of the poor. Instead, the philanthropist encouraged them to set positive moral examples and to use their education and wealth to develop or support new and more efficient means of relief

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[45] T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to Wilberforce," *The Reports* V: 30.

[46] Quoted in Poynter, *Society and Pauperism*, 196.

[47] T. Bernard, "Preliminary Address," *The Reports* I:5.

based on scientific principles. From the outset, Bernard saw the mind, that center of virtue and happiness, as a key battleground in the struggle for true national welfare. Accordingly a primary philanthropic goal became a reform of the minds of Britons, rich and poor. The philanthropy of the SBCP, as Bernard would observe years later, was one of "those mental occupations which promote social union, check frivolous pursuits, and civilize the Mind."[48] His strategy tellingly targeted 'mental occupations,' that is the willful and conscious acts of Britons. The key for Bernard was to reform Britons' minds, to convince them to work together to solve Britain's myriad social problems, which were, of course, exacerbated at this time by war with France, population growth, and industrialization.

Bernard was a child of the Enlightenment but at the same time he practiced an evangelical form of Christianity, giving him a rather unusual social philosophy. Contrary to some historiography his views remained fairly consistent throughout his life. If at times he could be seen to endorse a more Smithian stance of providing positive incentives to the poor to help them overcome their "unfavourable situation," it was never to the exclusion of moral and religious considerations. Bernard accepted as true the scientific approach and the pessimistic prospects put forth in the population theories of Thomas Malthus and Joseph Townsend; however, he refused to become fatalistic.[49] "The impotence of man, and the incompetency of the most powerful and best directed exertions of human industry, *entirely* to remove *all* the aggregate of human misery, have too frequently," Bernard wrote, deterred the charitable "from the strenuous application of their talents, for the benefit of their fellow creatures." "Before we can be persuaded that no exertions will be effectual to *increase* the moral character and essential welfare of a people, the converse of the proposition must be maintained. It must be proved," he added, "that no neglect, or inattention, can *diminish* the virtue and happiness of a country," and that could not be done.[50]

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[48] Bernard Baker, *Pleasure and Pain*, 68.

[49] Thomas Malthus, *Essay on Population* (1798) and Joseph Townsend, *A Dissertation on the Poor Laws* (1795).

[50] T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to Durham," *The Reports* III: 4-8.

Bernard's optimism typified that of late eighteenth-century evangelicals who thought real improvement could be made on an individual basis, but poverty and vice would never be completely eliminated on a social scale. Despite the fatalistic implications of such a stance, evangelicals did not, as Andrew observed, "throw up their hands and abandon philanthropic activities in despair," but were spurred into action by the prospect of "living a life of usefulness in imitation of the life of Christ."[51] The juxtaposition of evangelical Christianity and faith in science that characterized Bernard's way of thinking seems paradoxical, especially when thinking of Voltaire's famous cry "*écrasez l'infâme*." In the late eighteenth century, the French philosophe's rabid anti-religion was largely absent on the opposite side of the English Channel. Enlightened Britons, as Roy Porter observed, commonly argued that science and religion complemented rather than refuted one another during the eighteenth century.[52] In short, Bernard's position was not atypical among the enlightened English public. This helps explain the coexistence of Smithian and evangelical elements in his thought. From the outset his goal was to alter the material and moral environment of the poor and to employ positive incentives to that purpose. For Bernard, his Christian duty meshed perfectly with the general tenets of Smith's version of political economy.

From Philosophy to Plan

Putting general principles into a specific plan or project was the primary challenge facing Bernard and other social reformers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The SBCP would be Bernard's attempt to fundamentally change British philanthropy based on his understanding of the problem of poverty, the workings of the human mind, and scientific methods of relief. Since the poor were 'free and intellectual beings" philanthropists should

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[51] Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, 166; cf. Prochaska's comparison of the values of evangelicalism and nineteenth-century liberalism, *Voluntary Impulse*, 21-5.

[52] Roy Porter, *The Creation of the Modern World: The Untold World of the British Enlightenment* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000), 96-155; Jeremy Gregory, "Christianity and Culture: Religion, the Arts and the Sciences in England, 1660-1800," in Jeremy Black, ed. *Culture and Society in Britain 1660-1800* (Manchester University Press, 1997), 102-7.

treat them as such. "We all know, in our own instances," Bernard wrote, "how little is to be effected by compulsion; that where force begins, inclination ceases."[53] Attempts to improve the condition of the poor, whether by providing midwives or soup kitchens, should be voluntary on the recipient's part. This voluntary principle dictated that many of the SBCP plans would advocate self-help. The poor were not to be passive recipients of relief, but were expected to help themselves by hard work, discipline, and thrift, and by taking advantage of the material, educational, medicinal, and other opportunities presented by the Society. This directive applied primarily to the able-bodied, or 'laboring poor' who, in Bernards's estimation, had a moral obligation to work toward their independence. The SBCP, however, also asked the infirm, specifically the blind, to pull their weight, too, by attending days schools to learn yarn spinning, basket making, or even musical skills such as playing the organ. As Bernard once wrote, "each does his duty in his station, each is, reciprocally, a support and a blessing to the other."[54] In offering the poor opportunities to help themselves material assistance often went hand in hand with instruction. Soup kitchens, for example, distributed assistance in the form of a hot meal; however, they also sought to alter the poor's diet permanently by teaching them to make the soup for themselves. Individually, of course this may have been impractical, after all, cooking utensils were not inexpensive. However in such cases, Bernard encouraged self-help by cooperation. Self-help did not always mean one person saving himself, or even one family trying to do the same. The SBCP supported friendly societies and other forms of collective action whereby the poor could help one another as a group.[55] From Bernard's perspective, such collective and individual self-help epitomized social virtue; therefore the poor would benefit not only materially but emotionally and morally.

Self-help philanthropy based on voluntary participation marked only part

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[53] T. Bernard, "Preliminary Address," *The Reports* I: 3.

[54] T. Bernard, "Extract from an account of an asylum (or school of instruction) for the blind at Liverpool," *The Reports* II: 58-68; T. Bernard, "Preliminary Address," *The Reports* I:25.

[55] Rowland Burdon, "Extract from an account of a friendly society at Castle-Eden, in the county of Durham," *The Reports* I: 23-26.

of the SBCP plan. The problem of poverty was societal and could not be cured by any plan that focused only on the poor. Bernard firmly agreed with Hannah More's observation that "to attempt to reform the poor while the opulent are corrupt is to throw odours into the spring while the springs are poisoned."[56] As a result the SBCP plans went beyond encouraging self-help among the poor; they included calls for the British elite to assume the social responsibilities that accompanied their rank. Specifically, Bernard charged them to set a positive moral example and to take a more active role in promoting the welfare of their fellow Britons. The elite needed to clean up their entertainments and general lifestyle, while researching and implementing the most innovative and scientifically sound methods of relief. Both poor and wealthy had to work to change society, but they had to do so willingly because neither responded well to coercion. The key then was for the SBCP to provide positive incentives to poor and wealthy alike, to "give effect to that master-spring of action ... THE DESIRE IMPLANTED IN THE HUMAN BREAST OF BETTERING ITS CONDITION."[57] This Smithian position translated into specific measures from soup kitchens to friendly societies, from fever hospitals to small pox vaccinations.

Bernard's plan for the SBCP grew logically from his social philosophy and the result was, as Frank Prochaska observed, "one of the most innovative institutions of its day, or any other."[58] It may not have inaugurated every significant reform of British philanthropy from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but one would have difficulty finding a reform in which the Society did not have a hand. Beyond that, no society or organization did more than the SBCP to propagate the charitable innovations of that era. The SBCP championed greater discrimination in relief, self-help charity, visitation societies, and out-relief, just to name a few of its activities. The comprehensive scope of the SBCP combined with the limited parameters of this study prevent a complete examination of every groundbreaking feature of this Society. The focus here is

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[56] Quoted in Colley, *Britons*, 154.

[57] T. Bernard, "Preliminary Address," *The Reports* I: 3.

[58] Prochaska, *The Voluntary Impulse*, 31.

Bernard, and what follows concentrates on two of the most unique aspects of the SBCP for which Bernard deserved the primary credit, namely its scientific philanthropy and intelligence-based relief. These characteristics were intimately entwined in Bernard's social philosophy; therefore, they illuminate his approach to philanthropy.

Intelligence as Relief

"Bearing out the Baconian dictum that knowledge is power, print proved the great engine," according to Roy Porter, "for the spread of enlightened views and values." This historian's deft phrase described eighteenth century Britain well as economic prosperity and relatively high literacy rates permitted British print culture to come of age in the form of newspapers, the periodical press, and novels. Eighteenth-century clubs and societies contributed to this burgeoning print culture by advertizing their activities in the newspaper and periodical press to attract greater revenues and public participation. While clubs and societies used newspapers for publicity, they also developed their own literary genre, the most common forms of which were histories, transactions, sermons, songs and poems, and administrative records.[59] These special literary forms, many of which dated from the late seventeenth century, formed a strong tradition upon which Bernard and the SBCP built.

Publicity was vital to British clubs in general and philanthropic societies were no exception. In the early eighteenth century, for example, Robert Nelson published *An Address to Persons of Quality and Estate, Ways and Methods of Doing Good* (1715) as a means to publicize particular projects. He assumed that if elite Britons were provided "'actual knowledge of the misery that affected the lowest classes,'" they would donate funds to relieve that suffering.[60] Robert Young, secretary and publicist for the Philanthropic Society (1788) in London, shared Nelson's enthusiasm, declaring that "'printing is the medium of communication to

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[59] Porter, *Creation of the Modern World*, 91; Clark, *British Clubs*, 262-272.

[60] Quotation is from Kirkman Gray, *History of English Philanthropy*, 94.

the public and almost the only instrument of informing or interesting them.'"[61] Bernard's colleague, Count Rumford, provided further proof of a developing tradition of philanthropy and print. Since volunteer charity had to be carefully cultivated, the Bavarian minister advised that "in the introduction of every scheme for forming an establishment for the poor, it will be proper, for the authors or promoters of the measure to address the public upon the subject; to inform them of the nature of the measures proposed; of their tendency to promote the public welfare; and to point out the various ways in which individuals may give their assistance to render the scheme successful."[62] This would win, according to Rumford, the public confidence and augur well for the future success of the project.

Although long a part of the philanthropic tradition in Britain, charities' use of the printed word changed significantly over the course of the century. Early on public appeals were fairly crude, simple pleas for material assistance based upon the practical needs of a specific charity. A pamphlet of three or four pages commonly contained only a few lines that explained the more general concerns of the philanthropy and how its work might affect society as a whole.[63] Nelson's *Ways and Methods of Doing Good* typified this genre by targeting the ego and financial resources of his elite audience. His primary goal was convincing readers that monetary gifts would be rewarded in the next world, but here, too, in "'an unexpected inheritance, the determination of a lawsuit in our favour, the success of a great adventure,'" or, for daughters and their anxious fathers, "'an advantageous match.'"[64] The failure of Nelson's work to mention the positive impact donations had on the poor strikes a modern reader as out of place, as does his near obsessive concern with their effect on each donor. In part, this short-sighted omission grew from contemporary conventional wisdom that poverty was little more than a providential imperative that afforded the affluent with objects for their charity. Why devote much script to a debate of the importance of

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[61] Quoted in Clark, *British Clubs*, 173.

[62] Quoted in Clark, *British Clubs*, 108.

[63] Kirkman Gray, *History of English Philanthropy*, 274-5.

[64] Nelson quoted in Kirkman Gray, *History of English Philanthropy*, 99.

charity's impact on the poor and society if poverty was merely a providential excuse for *noblesse oblige*.

By the late eighteenth century philanthropists publicly argued that their charity wold make a specific contribution to solving the 'social problem' of poverty. At the same time, they continued to appeal to donors' self-interest. Robert Young's publicity on behalf of the Philanthropic Society in the 1780s marked a key transition from the curt and uncomplicated appeals of the early 1700s. While Young included a modicum of basic information about the specific charity, he spent most of his time relating the Society's aims to the well-being of British society. As Kirkman Gray put it: "Under the form of a report upon this work, Young has composed an essay on the doctrine of society and of education."[65] Late-century publicists dealt with an increasingly sophisticated and enlightened audience and thus had to make their appeals more sophisticated.

Bernard played a crucial role in the evolution of philanthropic publishing at the close of the century. He was one of the most prolific publicists of his day. "His publications connected with the societies were," according to a contemporary, "at once numerous and incessant" since "nothing escaped his notice." This observer, the bibliographer Thomas Dibdin, went on to note "with as ready pen, his printed addresses, which might reach thousands to whom he could personally never be known – schools, chapels, hospitals, dispensaries, infirmaries – to how many of these was he known by his exertions and literal patronage! The blind, the fevered, the destitute – all became objects of his care. And what he touched he improved."[66] Dibdin's remarks testify to the ubiquity of Bernard's work but more important still was the SBCP founder's contribution to the emergence of a "new philosophy" of philanthropy in which the scope of philanthropic publication became "no longer an institution, but a philosophy." "Others had collected information," but Bernard, according to Kirkman Gray, "did so as part of his philosophical aim."[67] Bernard joined reformers such as Jonas Hanway and John Coakley Lettsom in breaking

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[65] Kirkman Gray, *History of English Philanthropy*, 275.

[66] Thomas Frognall Dibdin, *Reminiscences of a Literary Life* (London, 1838), 230-1.

[67] Kirkman Gray, *History of English Philanthropy*, 278.

new ground toward an "enlightened alliance of science, utility and philanthropy under the banner of improvement."[68] Hanway, founder of the Marine Society, published more than 80 pamphlets in support of specific charities and as part of his lobby to protect infant poor in London by a parliamentary Act of 1767. Lettsom, best known for his three volume *Hints designed to promote Beneficence, Temperance, and Medical Science* (1801), followed the SBCP closely and included excerpts from *The Reports* in his own work. In their publications, both Hanway and Lettsom, like Bernard, included minute detail and factual reportage designed to meet the practical and immediate needs of specific projects; however, their primary objective was to promote a more enlightened and scientific view of charitable practice and theory. Bernard summed it best when he wrote, "Let us therefore make the enquiry into all that concerns the POOR, and the promotion of their happiness, a SCIENCE; let us investigate *practically* and upon *system*, the nature and consequences, and let us unite in the extension and improvement, of those things which experience hath ascertained to be beneficial to the poor."[69] Presenting the details and explaining the theories behind more systematic and scientific improvements required philanthropic writers to compose longer, more comprehensive essays than ever before. If some kind of scientific journal of philanthropy could be created to bring many essays into one common forum, new ideas could be circulated even faster and with more effect. Bernard's conception of the SBCP reports largely filled this need.

A report of the SBCP was a periodical that contained 4-7 articles, or 'accounts,' followed by a separate section of appendices. The main authors of these accounts, parish officials, clergy, physicians, and philanthropists from all over Britain, did not necessarily have an affiliation with the SBCP, but they were all expected to comply with the specific guidelines established by the Society. "All communications published by the society in their reports, shall," they ordered,

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[68] Porter, *Creation of the Modern World*, 145. For more on Hanway and Lettsom, see James Stephen Taylor, *Jonas Hanway Founder of the Marine Society: Charity and Policy in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Scolar Press, 1985) and James Johnston Abraham, *Lettsom, His Life, Times, Friends and Descendants* (1933).

[69] T. Bernard, "Preliminary Address," *The Reports* I: 1-2.

"consist of, first, a concise and correct statement of the fact which is the subject of the communication; and, secondly, practical observations and deductions arising out of that fact, and applicable, either to the particular object, or to the poor generally."[70] Documents submitted in support of communications, it was further decided, would be inserted into separate appendices. With only minor alterations, the SBCP employed this general format for its 184 accounts and 132 appendices, the last of which appeared in 1817. The first SBCP report appeared in May 1797 and by June of the following year five more had gone to press. Although in this first year a report appeared almost every other month, the Society never imposed a regular schedule on its periodical, opting rather to allow the rhythm of its correspondence to dictate when a new report was needed. Initially, the Society solicited accounts on parish relief, friendly societies, parish workhouses, cottages, cottage gardens, parish mills for corn, village shops, village kitchens, cottage fire-places, fuel, apprentices, county jails, beggars, and public rooms. After the first six reports had been published, the Society produced a collective volume that they called *The Reports*. This volume contained reprints of every account from the first six reports. The Society repeated this pattern with every six new reports that went to press so that by 1817 seven collective volumes had been published. On occasion the SBCP produced topical compilations of its accounts separate from *The Reports*. The first of these, *Information for Overseers* was published in 1799 and was followed up by *Information for Cottagers* (1800), *The Cottager's Religious Meditations* (1803), and *On the Education of the Poor* (1809).

As was typical with many charitable and social organizations, a core leadership performed the lion's share of duties.[71] Bernard and a handful of other active governors made up this core at the SBCP. As secretary, Bernard assumed primary responsibility for *The Reports*. He served as the publications' chief editor and was its most prolific contributor. The secretary wrote at least 62 accounts, while his co-founders, the bishop of Durham, William Wilberforce, and E.J. Eliot produced five, one, and none respectively. While Eliot made no written

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[70] "Account of the Society," *The Reports* I: 289.

[71] Clark, *British Clubs*, 255-7.

contribution he may be forgiven because he died shortly after the Society's formation.[72] If statements made by Thomas Dibdin are accurate, Bernard may have composed, or at least co-authored a few accounts that do not bear his name. In rebutting critics who called Bernard a vain, philanthropic braggart, the bibliographer remarked, "no man appears to have less desired fame as a return on the expense and exertion attending his projects. He generally put other persons forward as the nominal promoters of his schemes, while he was furnishing them in most cases with ideas, and doing by far the larger portion of the work, besides contributing liberally to the funds."[73] Dibdin was admittedly a biased observer, but he was also one of the few persons in a position to hold such privileged information. Dibdin, after all, worked at the British Institution for promoting the Fine Arts and regularly lectured at the Royal Institution, in both instances collaborating closely with Bernard. Aside from Dibdin's remarks, at least one historian, J.R. Poynter, credited Bernard with writing all or most of the 'Observations' that appeared at the end of each SBCP account.[74] Much of the confusion over authorship may have stemmed from Bernard's being chief editor of *The Reports*. As editor Bernard screened the Society's correspondence, selecting those missives that he thought worthy of publication. He then had to condense the selections into manageable length, and append explanatory notes and commentary. Naturally in shortening these submissions Bernard's style and ideas came to the forefront. Bernard also composed an introductory essay for each collective volume in which he summarized and clarified the recurrent motifs that bound the individual accounts together.[75] These editorial tasks put Bernard's unique stamp of all of the Society's publications, even those he had not originally

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[72] Bernard offered the following eulogy in 1798: "The Hon. Edward James Eliot; – a man, whose singular modesty had the effect of concealing from all, but those who were intimately aquainted with him, the superiority of his understanding and the rare qualities of his mind; –in whom a spirit of warm and active benevolence, heightened and regulated by the most elevated principles of action, received a peculiar grace from a disposition naturally the most generous, amiable, and engaging." *The Reports* I: 282.

[73] Dibdin, *Reminiscences of a Literary Life*, 230-1.

[74] Poynter, *Society and Poverty*, 93.

[75] Volume VI of *The Reports* was the exception; it had no introductory essay.

authored.

The Reports lived and unfortunately died with Bernard. When the *Fortieth Report* appeared in May 1817 Volume VII of *The Reports* was two reports shy of completion. Bernard was ill for much of that year and could not keep up his previous workload. The Society suspended its reports temporarily. In 1818 that interruption became permanent as Bernard died. After his death the SBCP circulated its earlier reports but produced little new save *Free Chapel for the Poor in West Street, Seven Dials* (May 1824), an obscure pamphlet in support of the chapel that Bernard had helped establish in 1800.[76] A similar suspension of *The Reports* had occurred between 1807 and 1811 when Bernard headed publicity efforts for the British Institution and Andrew Bell's new schools. In 1807 he wrote and edited a literary and art journal that was loosely affiliated with that art society, *The Director*. Beginning in 1809 Bernard made a compilation of all SBCP reports on education and published it as *On the Education of the Poor*. That same year he authored a comprehensive report of the new teacher's college at Bishop Auckland under the patronage of the bishop of Durham, *The New School: being and attempt to illustrate its principles, detail, and advantages.* Bernard expanded this work and republished it as *The Barrington School* in 1812. While he continued to support these projects, Bernard resumed his primary duties as SBCP secretary and editor of *The Reports* in 1811. The coincidence of Bernard's absence and ill health with the suspension and demise of *The Reports* suggests that David Owen was right on target when he wrote "that in some of its activities the Society was hardly more than Bernard under another name."[77]

While SBCP decisions were made by committee, Bernard was the figure who gave shape to *The Reports*. When the Society first considered how to structure its publication, most of the governors agreed that adopted submissions should be published unedited. The secretary, however, prevailed upon them to take the liberty of publishing abbreviated extracts rather than full-length letters. "I conceived," Bernard explained in his autobiography, "the interest & credit of our

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[76] SBCP, *Free Chapel for the Poor in West Street, Seven Dials* (London: 1824). BL 1865.c.13.(11.)

[77] Owen, *English Philanthropy*, 106.

publications could not otherwise be kept up."[78] If the Society's accounts were going to succeed in changing charitable practice in Britain, they needed to be of a length and style to hold readers' attention. Equally important the accounts had to be credible. For an enlightened British reading public whose faith in natural philosophy was profound, science had "stak[ed] a claim to be the gold standard of positive knowledge" and not only in explaining the physical universe. As Roy Porter observed of enlightened Britons, "the conviction grew that social no less than natural events were fundamentally governed by natural law – and hence were in principle answerable to scientific enumeration, explanation, and control."[79] There is little wonder then why Bernard naturally turned to science and an empirical approach to give the SBCP's publications credibility. *The Reports* would include only accounts based on experience, demonstrated by fact, and built upon a system. The secretary hoped to add further credibility by basing *The Reports* on model scientific publications such as the Royal Society's *Philosophical Transactions*. The result was a ready-reference for British and continental philanthropists that pioneered a scientific approach to philanthropy.[80]

In order to maintain the attention of his audience, Bernard employed a variety of editorial techniques. He whittled correspondence into tight essays, rarely more than ten octavo pages in total length, and more commonly between five to seven pages, including the 'observations' that concluded each extract. It is impossible to evaluate the exact editorial process since all that remains of these missives are the published, edited versions. The finished product is virtually seamless with no obvious gaps in information, or in train of thought. The fluid nature of these reports reflected Bernard's minimalist approach. He once observed of charitable trusts that "the execution of charities should be made as simple and as easy as possible, otherwise attention will be wearied, and the trust be eventually neglected."[81] Although applied to trusts, this same principle guided

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[78] Bernard Baker, *Pleasure and Pain*, 53-4.

[79] Porter, *Making of the Modern World*, 152-53, 149.

[80] The first volume of *The Reports* was translated into French and published in 1798. I have no information on how it was received in France.

[81] *The Reports* I: 237n.

most of Bernard's work, including *The Reports*, which were to be "stated *briefly* and *plainly*, so as to be generally read and understood."

The attempt to make *The Reports* brief yet interesting reflected an imperative of all charities dependent upon private subscriptions, namely to "merge philanthropy and fashion" in promoting themselves.[82] As Count Rumford acknowledged in *On the Fundamental Principles of Establishments for the Poor* (1796), demonstrating the utility of a charity may not "overcome the indolence of the public." A project needed to be, he added, "so interesting as to awaken the *curiosity* and fix the attention of the public."[83] Bernard obviously took Rumford's advice to heart, and, according to Dibdin was largely successful. "Under his influence," the bibliographer said of Bernard, "benevolence may be said to have become *fashionable*."[84] In his introductory essays, the SBCP secretary tried to reel readers in with various rhetorical hooks designed to tease the casual reader into delving more deeply into the pages of *The Reports*. "To the patriot, who wishes to deserve well of his country, I could prove, Bernard wrote, "that, from the increase of resources and virtues of the poor, the kingdom would derive prosperity, – the different classes, union, – and the constitution, stability." Elsewhere the philanthropist offered an appeal: "To the rich, who have leisure, and have unsuccessfully attempted to fill up their time with objects, I could offer a permanent source of amusement; – that of encouraging the virtues and industry of the poor."[85] In similar fashion he once compared philanthropy to the amusing habit of gambling. "There are disappointments," he admitted, "but they are trivial & soon forgotten. This system is that of the gaming Table without its Horrors.[86] Bernard's rhetorical and satirical hooks served to lure the audience into reading further and hopefully supporting the work of the SBCP. Bernard's position was basically this: help the less fortunate for Britain's sake or for your own, but just

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[82] Prochaska, *Voluntary Impulse*, 16.

[83] Rumford, *Collected Works*, V: 131-2.

[84] Dibdin, *Reminiscences of a Literary Life*, 230-1.

[85] T. Bernard, "Prefatory Introduction," *The Reports* II: 26.

[86] Bernard Baker, *Pleasure and Pain*, 55; cf. T. Bernard *Comforts of Old Age*, 169-70.

help. Admittedly, his first priority was the effect of charity on the recipient, but the SBCP founder knew that the minds of the elite needed inducement to awaken them from their stupor. If comparing philanthropy to games of chance served that purpose, so be it as long as helping the less fortunate became more popular than gambling.

As further enticement Bernard catered to the ego of his audience. The SBCP, like many organizations, publicized its connection to famous and prestigious persons in hope of elevating its own position, and, of course, bringing in new subscribers.[87] For his part Bernard addressed the introductory essays of *The Reports* to prominent SBCP members who were well-recognized public figures. Beginning with *Volume III* the secretary's next few opening essays took the form of open letters to the bishop of Durham, Prime Minister Henry Addington, William Wilberforce, and Chancellor of the Exchequer Nicholas Vansittart respectively. These epistles reminded readers who some of the leading members of the Society were, while highlighting the body's link to the inner circle of British political power. The SBCP also published the names of its officers, subscribers, and, of course, its patron, the King. Bernard encouraged his readers to participate, too. The heading for each extract in *The Reports* featured an italicized title and the contributing author's name in block letters. Readers who submitted comments or updates on a specific project could also expect to see their names in print as Bernard added footnotes with each new editions of *The Reports*. Thomas Gisborne's *Extract from an account of a mode adopted in Staffordshire, for supplying the poor with milk,* for example, first went to press in December 1797 but by April of the following year Bernard needed to note new information he had received on the project. "I have the authority of Mr. Mansel, of Lathbury Hall near Newport Pagnell," he wrote, "that, in his neighbourhood, cows may be kept with more advantage and less expence, than in that of Mr. Gisborne." "This information," the secretary continued, "is of importance, as it has shown Mr. Gisborne's example may be imitated with great advantage in other parts of

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[87] Prochaska, *Voluntary Impulse*, 16.

England."[88] Through editorial acknowledgment, Mansel and readers like him became active participants in *The Reports*; moreover, they drew satisfaction from having their personal suggestions and comments circulated in a national periodical alongside the Society's more famous contributors. When their work was noticed in *The Reports*, the members of the regional SBCP in Liverpool considered it "flattering testimony" to have been duly recognized by "a Society whose labours and whose efforts have been so long and so successfully exerted in the best interests of humanity."[89]

While Bernard preferred to offer readers incentives, he never shied from using negative motivation. The SBCP secretary told his audience that some of them neglected their social responsibilities because of a litany of excuses that boiled down to "'want of knowing what good *may* be done within their own sphere and *how*.'" He gave notice, however, that the 'I don't know what to do' excuse would no longer serve because the SBCP planned "to remove this difficulty, to supply the public with details on every subject respecting the poor, to suggest the mode of active and useful charity."[90] Bernard not only disarmed their defensive rationalizations, he set out to shame them into philanthropic action, especially the affluent. "If the rich (I except those to whom health and ability, and not the will is wanting), are *selfish, indolent, and* NEGLECTFUL OF THE CONDITIONS ON WHICH THEY HOLD SUPERIORITY OF RANK AND FORTUNE, they sink," the secretary warned, "into a situation worse than that of being *gratuitously maintained by the poor*. They become PAUPERS, *of an elevated and distinguished class*, in no way contributing to the general stock, but subsisting upon the labour of the industrious cottager."[91] This barb was particularly caustic since it equated the well-to-do with the term 'pauper' – a derision customarily reserved for the poor who had become completely dependent on alms. The shame projected by Bernard

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[88] *The Reports* I:148n. For similar notes, see *The Reports* I: 183, 192, and 254.

[89] *The Second Report of the Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor in the Town and Neighbourhood of Liverpool* (1813), 14.

[90] T. Bernard, "Prefatory Introduction," *The Reports* II: 14. The first excerpt was Bernard's quotation from the bishop of Durham's address to his see.

[91] T. Bernard, "Prefatory Introduction," *The Reports* II: 26.

implied that many elite Britons had become just as burdensome to the health of British society as unapologetic beggars. Bernard normally focused on inducement but knew that shame could motivate, too. Apparently he discussed this topic before with Count Rumford who wrote in a letter to Bernard: "When you have rendered it perfectly ridiculous for a man of fashion and fortune *to have the appearance* of being insensible to the most noble and most delightful of human enjoyments – that which results from doing good – you will have done more for the relief of the poor than all that the Poor Laws can ever effected."[92] Bernard anticipated that *The Reports* could do just that.

For Bernard the Society's attempt to make philanthropy a science and to put it on a system did not mean de-humanizing the subject; therefore when appealing to the audience, he tried to emphasize the human cost of the general problem of poverty. His accounts commonly included personal information that brought, as one historian put it, "the face to face charity of the country village to city slums."[93] To highlight the plight of apprentice chimney sweeps, climbing boys as they were called, Bernard informed his readers of Charles Richmond, a youth convicted of stealing a bundle of women's clothes for his master's wife. The trial testimony revealed that Richmond "took the clothes to prevent his being beat." It also indicated that when the apprentice was unemployed at sweeping the master sent him out to beg. "On one Sunday" Richmond, according to the trial transcript, "had begged eight shillings which his master took from him; another time he brought home a new pair of shoes, that some charitable person had given him, they were taken off his feet, and pawned for a few pence." Richmond's was by no means an isolated case but Bernard hoped his example would make Londoners aware that their "convenience" came at a severe cost, namely "the annual sacrifice of both the *temporal* and *eternal welfare* of many of our fellow creatures."[94] His specific aim was to win support for a new Society for the Protection of Climbing

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[92] This correspondence was reproduced in Henry Bence Jones, *The Royal Institution: Its Founder and Its First Professors* (New York: Arno Press, Reprint 1976, 1871), 46-49.

[93] Prochaska, *Voluntary Impulse*, 43.

[94] T. Bernard, "Extract from an account of a chimney-sweeper's boy, with observations and a proposal for the relief of chimney sweepers," *The Reports* I: 124-25, 129.

Boys that had been conceived by David Porter, a master sweep who knew well the horrors of his profession. Bernard's account of a fever hospital in Manchester provided another example of his attempt to humanize projects. The secretary commented on the general problem of disease in urban areas, but zoomed in on specific fever victims in Manchester, including "Mary Parkinson, aged 20, the second daughter of Ann Parkinson," and "Mary West, the wife of a soldier belonging to the Manks Fencibles."[95] The intimate details of these victims – their age, gender, name, occupation – reduced a broad social problem to its individual impact. The SBCP audience did not read about hundreds of anonymous casualties, but a handful of individuals, people with families and jobs, people with which the audience could empathize. By cultivating reader empathy Bernard could hold the attention of his readers which, after all, was a primary objective.

At least one of Bernard's human interest stories focused on providing a positive role model for the poor. The SBCP first published *An Account of a Cottage and Garden near Tadcaster* as an individual pamphlet in July 1797 but later included it as an appendix to *Volume II* of *The Reports*. This tale told the story of Britton Abbot, a sixty seven year old Yorkshire cottager whose immaculate house and garden caught Bernard's attention when traveling to York. The SBCP secretary was so impressed he called on the cottager to learn more about him. Abbott, Bernard learned, had married and had six children when after nine years residence at Poppleton, he was forced to vacate his home because of an enclosure act. The cottager then appealed to a neighbor squire for a piece of land, promising the landlord to "show him the *fashions* on it" by which Abbot presumably meant building improvements. With the help of neighbors, the cottager built a home and garden that so impressed the squire that he proposed that Abbot remain there rent-free. Telling his readers that it "deserves to be remembered," Bernard recorded the cottager's response in full:

> Now, Sir, you have a pleasure in seeing my cottage and garden

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[95] T. Bernard, "Extract from an account of the House of Recovery established by the Board of Health, at Manchester," *The Reports* I: 90-1.

> neat: and why should not other squires have the same pleasure, in seeing the cottages and gardens as nice about them? The poor, would then be happy; and would love them, and the place where they lived: but now every nook of land is to be let to the great farmers; and nothing left to the poor, but to go to the parish.[96]

When Bernard inquired about the secret to Abbot's prosperity, so that other poor Britons might learn from it, the cottager replied, "nothing would make poor folks more happy, than finding *that great folks thought of them.*" Abbot added a wish that others could be as comfortable as he, but, according to Bernard, also stated his fear that "there might be a *few thriftless fellows*, who would not do good in it."[97] If Britton Abbot appeared too good to be true then he probably was. The responses that the SBCP secretary attributed to this cottager were obviously contrived in whole or in part. The tale of Britton Abbot, in fact, read much like the lively anecdotes that Bernard inserted in his *A Holiday Tour*, serving, too, much the same purpose. Attracting the interest of readers for the purpose of social commentary was just as much a part of philanthropic literature as it was of the travel genre. In this case, Bernard wanted to promote land allotments to homeless cottagers and Britton Abbot offered anecdotal evidence that these schemes would do much to alleviate rural poverty.

Although an entertaining author, Bernard's primary purpose was to reform the philanthropic mindset of Britons, a task that required reports to be credible and ultimately useful. Conveniently, the personal details that added interest to accounts also furthered this cause. However, the SBCP secretary produced more than intimate details of human interest; he craved objective facts, empirical information on the systematic relief of the poor. His ultimate objective, it would seem, was the creation of a charitable reference work, a scientific journal of charity. Accordingly, *The Reports* adopted the language of science. Aside from Bernard's specific pronouncements that a science of charity was his goal, the

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[96] T. Bernard, "An Account of a Cottage and Garden near Tadcaster," *The Reports* II: 295.

[97] T. Bernard, "Cottage and Garden near Tadcaster," *The Reports* II: 296.

philanthropist employed scientific diction. In *Extract from a further Account of the Advantages of Cottagers Keeping a Cow,* Bernard opened by writing: "In preparing this detail, I have endeavored to give every circumstance as coldly and correctly as I could; being aware that, in practical information, precision is of the utmost importance."[98] In William Pulteney's *Extract from an Account of a Cottager's Cultivation in Shropshire,* Bernard added a note claiming that the essay's contents were "not vague and unsupported theory; but practical and experimental truth; for the evidence of which we may refer not only to this account of the family of Richard Millward, but to a succession and variety of facts, stated in the four preceding volumes of the Society's Reports."[99] In addition to such declarations, SBCP reports inserted relevant data on mortality rates, number relieved, operational costs, and actuary tables for benefit clubs. These charts and statistics reinforced the empirical and scientific tone set by the Society.

The insertion of empirical information was more than affectation; it was also functional. Empirical data informed readers precisely how to reproduce an experiment, what results could be anticipated, and what costs were involved. Once readers tried their own hand at a charitable experiment, they could compare their own results to the account contained in *The Reports.* Often new trials led to new results that were submitted to the Society. With each new edition that went to press, the SBCP secretary added updated information to individual accounts. To make these updates more accessible, Bernard introduced a system for cross-referencing notes. If an account had a counterpart -- a second work by the same author, a follow-up report on the same specific experiment, or simply another account on the same general subject – the secretary cited account numbers that might also be of interest to the reader. Bernard's reference system extended beyond the scope of *The Reports* to include non-SBCP publications that could be consulted for additional information. The updated intelligence contained in these editorial notes enhanced the utility of *The Reports* as a charitable reference work;

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[98] T. Bernard, "Extract from a further account of the advantages of cottagers keeping cows," *The Reports* II: 179.

[99] *The Reports* V: 78n.

so too did the indexes that the secretary placed at the end of each collective volume. Indexes were organized by subject as well as geographic location, allowing readers to quickly find articles on education, workhouses, soup kitchens, or whatever topic they wished to investigate. In *short,* Bernard created a user-friendly periodical that functioned as a philanthropist's ready reference. His adoption of the language of science, an empirical organization of data, and finally a scholarly system of reference was more than window dressing; it made SBCP publications concise and clear, convincing, and imminently useful. Form and function were in harmony.

If the SBCP's diction, data, and reference system were scientific, so too was the general format of its accounts. Bernard adopted literary models that he knew readers would associate with a scientific society, genres such as the associational history. Thomas Sprat's *History of the Royal Society* (1667) was the seminal associational history in Britain. Sprat garnered support for the society by emphasizing its utility and stabilizing influence despite its origins during the tumult of the English Revolution.[100] Although he never published a formal history of the Society, Bernard reviewed the first eight years of the SBCP and its achievements in the introductory essay to *Volume V* of *The Reports.* By the time of the SBCP's founding, the associational history had fallen into general use, and was not strictly affiliated with the Royal Society or any other scientific society. The same could not be said of the other literary convention Bernard borrowed from the scientific societies, the transaction.

Published transactions served three main purposes: to publish science, to bring into being the scholarly community that, as Thomas Kuhn tells us, is the keeper of the paradigm of that science, and in both instances, to establish the credibility of the society. The Royal Society's first issue of *Philosophical Transactions* appeared in 1665 and established, in effect, an new publishing genre – one focused around correspondence from scientists and scholars from throughout Europe and their colonies. Transactions served, according to historian Peter

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[100] Clark, *British Clubs*, 262.

Clark, "to advance knowledge, and to promote the scholarly standing of the fellowship and society in the national and international community."[101] In order to establish credibility, the Royal Society adopted submissions based on the scholarly reputation of the correspondent as well as the readability of his prose. "The ideal report," as one historian described, "was to be expressed in such a way that an ordinary reader could see and understand it as well as believe that the action that the report described had actually been carried out."[102]

Like the *Philosophical Transactions*, the reports of the SBCP depended upon the social and professional reputation of its correspondents. For Bernard's philanthropic society this task was complicated by the need to create something from nothing, to impanel a body of charitable experts/scientists rather than merely soliciting a pre-established group. Bernard, as editor, played the key role in this formation of a web of credibility for the correspondents of the SBCP, much in the manner Henry Oldenberg had first done for the Royal Society.[103] On the one hand, Bernard solicited contributions from men of social, political, moral, or professional stature, whose work would be accepted without serious debate. Contributions from Frederick Morton Eden, William Wilberforce, the bishops of Durham and London, cabinet ministers Thomas Pelham and Nicholas Vansittart, and the Earl of Winchilsea of the Board of Agriculture, were interspersed with accounts from relatively anonymous authors.[104] The mixture added credence to the whole body of *The Reports*. Beyond that Bernard cemented these disparate contributors by inserting notes and observations to each account. His editorial message – including the introductory essays for each volume – established a thematic unity that convince readers that accounts, whether by unknowns like William Hillyer or by reputable men like Frederic Eden, contained the same basic principles of

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[101] Clark, *British Clubs*, 263.

[102] Robert Iliffe, "Author-mongering: The 'editor' between producer and consumer," in Ann Bermingham and John Brewer, eds., *The Consumption of Culture 1600-1800; Image, Object, Text* (London: Routledge, 1995), 173.

[103] Oldenberg was editor of the *Philosophical Transactions* from 1665-1677. Iliffe, "Author-mongering," 172-5.

[104] Pelham, Second Earl of Chichester (1756-1826), statesman; George Finch, Ninth Earl of Winchilsea (1752-1826); Nicholas Vansittart (1768-1851), Beilby Porteus, bishop of London.

promoting self-help, extolling the value of providing positive incentives to the poor, and giving due attention to both the moral and material well-being of Britons. In the reader's mind the credibility of an account did not always depend on the prestige of the author. Bernard directed the reader's attention to the unifying themes of *The Reports* rather than the authorial personae.

Bernard further built credibility for SBCP correspondents by comparing their work to the best known thinkers and writers of his day. In *"Introductory Letter to the Third Volume, Addressed to the Lord Bishop of Durham,"* Bernard cited an eclectic list of authors, including Cicero, Thomas Malthus, Adam Smith, Casabon, Horace Walpole, Sir William Jones, Joseph Townsend, and the prison reformer John Howard. As this litany suggests, Bernard added erudition to the SBCP's work with references to contemporary and classical scholarship. By presenting a local magistrate's narrative about a spinning school as a lesson in the political economy of Adam Smith, Bernard helped forge a quasi-professional discourse on science and philanthropy. He tried to give substance to this discourse by educating his audience in contemporary social theories in hope of creating a new legion of scientific philanthropists. One major instructional tool was Bernard's *A short View of different Proposals which have been made respecting the Poor, during the two preceding Centuries* (1804), a digest of two hundred years of British philanthropy divided into three categories of relief: benefit clubs or friendly societies, employment schemes, and workhouses. This review contained brief synopses and commentaries on basic proposals from Baron Maseres, Joseph Townsend, Sir Josiah Child, Sir Matthew Hale, Henry Fielding, Thomas Gilbert, Daniel Defoe, and Bernard Mandeville. Summaries frequently included cross-references to current SBCP accounts in attempt to put the Society's work in broader context. Bernard particularly prompted his readers to learn from Frederic Eden's *History of the State of the Poor* (1797).

> It has been a principle of Sir Frederic Eden, that enquiries respecting the state of the Poor should precede any great alteration in the system; the result of those enquiries being formed into well abstracted and perspicuous Reports; and that the

> establishment of a Board, the existence whereof should depend on its continuing useful, would form the best chain of communication between Parish Officer and the Legislature. The returns lately made with respect to the expence and maintenance of the poor, under Mr. Rose's act, contain a great deal of material information, and offer a favourable basis for a plan of operation.[105]

In a real sense, Eden's call for concise, clear and useful intelligence captured the essence of the SBCP reports in general, and of this specific review. That is why Bernard highly recommended his readers peruse Eden's *State of the Poor* as it would be "useful for abridging labour, and for directing enquiry."[106] By pointing his audience to Eden and other scholars, Bernard hoped to elevate the sophistication of the Society's discourse. This objective required bringing them up to speed not only on SBCP projects but on what earlier philanthropists had attempted and with what result. There was no sense reproducing experiments that had been tried unsuccessfully in previous generations. This review, in short, served an educational function.

On some subjects, particularly public health measures, the SBCP depended on and cultivated the expertise of innovators in the British scientific and medical community. The Society, for example, forged a mutually beneficial relationship with Edward Jenner, discoverer of vaccination for small pox. Many doctors who practiced inoculation were skeptical of Jenner's discovery and in 1798 the Royal Society considered his work too controversial to publish in *Philosophical Transactions*. Bernard, who was quite convinced of vaccination's public utility, subscribed to and became Vice President of the Royal Jennerian Society to vaccinate the poor; moreover, he used *The Reports* as a promotional vehicle for Jenner's ideas.[107] SBCP accounts in support of vaccination included committee

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[105] T. Bernard, "A short View of different Proposals which have been made respecting the Poor, during the two preceding Centuries," *The Reports*, IV: A84-100. *Volume IV* and *V* of *The Reports* restarted page numbers at 1 for the appendices; therefore, I have added an 'A' to indicate that the document appeared among the appendices rather than within the body of accounts.

[106] T. Bernard, "A short view of Proposals," *The Reports*, IV: 99.

[107] Wellcome Library for the History of Medicine, Western Manuscripts (WMS) 4302-4306. Minutes of the Royal Jennerian Society.

reports of the Jennerian Society, observations from the Royal College of Physicians of both Ireland and Britain, a government report from Spain, and several testimonials from individual physicians such as William Hassey from South Africa, Dr. Grey from Chichester, and Gilbert Blane.[108] Bernard personally helped Jenner secure a parliamentary stipend in 1807 by testifying on his behalf. Jenner obviously welcomed this support, but the SBCP benefitted, too, because it was publicly linked to an important scientific discovery.

The Society drew on similar innovation when promoting the spread of fever hospitals. In November 1797 the Society published Bernard's *"Extract from an account of the House of Recovery, established by the Board of Health at Manchester,"* the first of many accounts and appendices on the prevention of fever epidemics.[109] Bernard added a follow-up account of the Manchester fever hospital

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[108] J.T.A. Reed, "Extract from an account of Vaccine Inoculation in the neighbourhood of Buckingham," *The Reports* V: 151-5; "Report of the Medical Committee of the Jennerian Society," *The Reports* V: A59-65; "Report made by a select committee, in consequence of a reference from the Board of Directors of the Royal Jennerian Society" *The Reports* V: A69-73; "Resolutions of the physicians and medical gentlemen of Liverpool, on the subject of Vaccine Inoculation," *The Reports* V: A94-7; "Extract from an account of the measures taken by the Spanish Government, to extend the benefits of Vaccination to their foreign dominions, and to other countries," *The Reports* V: A100-5; "The Report of the Royal College of Physicians of London on Vaccination: with the opinions of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of Dublin and Edinburgh; and of the Royal Colleges of Surgeons of London, Edinburgh, and Dublin," *The Reports* V: A142-68; T. Bernard, "Extract from an account of the Dublin Cow Pock Institution," *The Reports* VI: 132-8; "Instructions as to Vaccination," *The Reports* VI: 242-51; "Extract from a review of the Pamphlets on Vaccination, containing a Statement of the Controversy respecting the Cow-pock," *The Reports* VI: 252-73; "Resolutions of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland as to Vaccination," *The Reports* VI: 281-2 "Case of the small pox, after variolous Inoculation. In a letter from Dr. Grey, of Chichester, dated June 24th, 1811," *The Reports* VI: 290-1; Sir Gilbert Blane, M.D., "On the Practice of Vaccination," *The Reports* VI: 305-10; "The Report of the National Vaccine Establishment: dated 22d April, 1813; made to the Right Honourable Viscount Sidmouth, Principal Secretary of State, Home Department, &c. &c.," *The Reports* VI: 339-47; "Resolutions of the Gloucestershire Vaccine Association," *The Reports* VI: 348-52; "Extract from a letter on Vaccination, from William Hussey, M.D. dated Cape of Good Hope, 1st September, 1812," *The Reports* VI: 379-82; "Notice as to vaccination at Reading," *The Reports* VII: 51-2; "Extract of a letter from a Brahmin to Dr. Anderson at madras, on vaccine inoculation," *The Reports* VII: 144-5.

[109] T. Bernard, "Extract from an account of the house of recovery, established by the Board of health at Manchester," *The Reports* I: 86-97; Dr. Glasse, "Extract from an account of the Samaritan society, for the convalescents from the London hospital, and for cases not within the provisions of public hospitals," *The Reports* II: 71-8; T. Bernard, "Extract from a further account of the house of recovery at Manchester," *The Reports* II: 158-64; "Dr. Haygarth's rules for the prevention of infectious fevers," *The Reports* II: 265-6; T. Bernard, "Extract from an account of the institution to prevent the progress of contagious fever in the metropolis," *The Reports* III: 202-15; T. Bernard, "Extract from an account of the institution for investigating the nature and cure of cancer," *The Reports* III: 259-64; "Three reports of the sub-committee, appointed by the Fever Institution, to direct the whitewashing, with quick lime, of those dwellings of the poor, in which infection has lately subsisted," *The Reports* III: 276-86; "Certificate of several physicians of hospitals and dispensaries in London, as to the

in 1799 along with a brief tract, "*Dr. Haygarth's Rules to Prevent Infectious Fevers*." John Haygarth was a pioneer of the fever hospital movement outside London and only one of many experts cited by *The Reports*. The SBCP did more than just publicize the work of others; its members were the primary backers behind the formation of the London Fever Institution in May 1801. The London Fever Hospital, as it became known, was an innovative institution that broke with the tradition of the general or all-purpose hospital, focusing instead on patients with infectious fevers. Although much of its governing body was made up of laymen from the SBCP, the hospital's medical personnel controlled most policies, including admissions. The hospital enjoyed the backing of eminent physicians such as William Babbington, Robert Willan, and Thomas Murray. One of its medical officers, Sir William Jenner, later distinguished typhus from typhoid fever based on his experience at the London Fever Hospital.[110] After the Institution opened its doors, the SBCP helped publicize its work. The medical staff of the London Fever also contributed accounts to *The Reports*. The relationship between the SBCP and the London Fever Hospital, like its connection with Jenner, benefitted both parties. Once again the Society appeared to be on the cutting edge of medical advancements that pertained to the poor. Small pox and infectious

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prevalence of the infectious fever in the metropolis," *The Reports* III: 307-9; "Regulations proposed by Dr. Haygarth, for the prevention of infectious fever in the metropolis, by means of fever-wards in hospitals, at the expence, and under the direction, of a society, or board of health," *The Reports* III: 310-3; Miss Horner, "Extract from an account of a Contagious Fever at Kingston upon Hull," *The Reports* IV: 96-110; T. Bernard, "Extract from a further account of the London Fever Institution," *The Reports* V: 138-50; "Report to the SBCP from the select committee for preventing the spreading of Contagious Malignant Fevers in the metropolis," *The Reports* V: A25-8; Thomas Bateman M.D., "Statement of the medical reports of the London House of Recovery, for the year 1805," *The Reports* V: A74-80; "Account of some cases of Typhus in the House of Recovery at Dublin," *The Reports* V: A81-7; W.P. Dimsdale, M.D., "Cases of Typhus Fever, in which the Affusion of cold water has been applied in the London House of Recovery," *The Reports* V: A169-77; T. Bernard, "Extract from an account of the further progress of the Fever Institution," *The Reports* VI: 1-9; T. Bernard, "Extract from an account of the progress of the Dublin House of Recovery," *The Reports* VI: 147-56; "Statement of the Practice adopted in the London House of Recovery," *The Reports* VI: 237-41; "Copy of a letter from the committee for preventing infectious fevers in the metropolis to the Secretary of the Treasury, on the subject of the erection of an House of Recovery in Cold bath fields," *The Reports* VI: 283-9; "Facts respecting the Institution for the prevention of infectious and malignant fevers in the metropolis," *The Reports* VI: 377-8.

[110] Royal Free Hospital Archives Centre, Minutes of the London Fever Institution. The seminal history is William Bynum, "Hospital, Disease, and Community: the London Fever Hospital, 1801-1850," in Charles E. Rosenberg, ed., *Healing and History: Essays for George Rosen* (Dawson, 1979), 97-115.

fevers affected all Britons, but they hit hardest the urban poor who lived in wretched and filthy apartments. Ultimately, te Society's use of practical science forwarded its attempt to improve the material environment of the poor.

Although *The Reports* borrowed from existing publishing methods and models, the finished product was unique. Like the Royal Society's *Philosophical Transactions*, SBCP accounts depended upon a scientific scholarly correspondence; however, Bernard's extensive introductory essays for the collective volumes gave *The Reports* a thematic coherence that was lacking at the Royal Society. Frederic Eden's *State of the Poor* (1797) possessed a coherence of thought and depended on empirical reports from all over Britain; however, its exhaustive statistics and copious detail doubtless deterred casual readers. Moreover, Eden captured a static picture of the condition of England during the crisis of the mid-1790s, but never conceived his work as an ongoing project, or a constantly evolving periodical. By contrast *The Reports* were imminently readable. Bernard's succinct 'observations' and simple reference system created an ultimately more user-friendly publication than either *State of the Poor* or *Philosophical Transactions*. The accounts found in *The Reports* were fresh and continuously updated to reflect the latest innovations; they were, in short, much more fluid than contemporary publications. Bernard truly had created a unique and innovative work and it became very popular. The SBCP's Annual Report for 1809 indicated that the Society distributed 24,000 publications nationwide, many to the new schools established by Andrew Bell.[111]

As a publicist Bernard had no equal, even when compared with a prolific contemporary like Count Rumford. Rumford shared Bernard's aim to make philanthropy more systematic, and his appreciation for publicity. While publicity was important for Rumford, it remained primarily a means to an end. Bernard, on the other hand, viewed publicizing information and intelligence as a form of philanthropy in itself. Bernard knew that the best way to reach people's minds was through the power of the written word and his correspondence with Rumford illustrated that on this topic they did not see eye to eye. On 24 February 1797,

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[111] SBCP, *Report of the Society for 1810* (London: 1810).

just two months after the formation of the SBCP, Bernard wrote Rumford to notify him of the existence of the Society. This letter also informed the count of his being made a lifetime member and that the Society had reserved him a permanent seat on their general committee. Rumford's response, while formally gracious and congratulatory, was tinged with disappointment. "I am very sanguine in my expectations of the good which will be done by this Society; they will, however," he told Bernard, "be able to do much more by examples– by *models* that can be seen and felt– than by anything that can be said or written."[112] Rumford's disappointment grew from his waning influence in Britain, and on Bernard in particular. After the failure of the Marylebone workhouse plan, neither Bernard or the new SBCP promoted any workhouse plan for London. Since Rumford's plans depended upon a remodeled London workhouse, he only half-heartedly supported the SBCP's new direction. When he wrote Bernard the following summer (1798), his tone had become almost patronizing.

> I am anxious to hear of the execution of your plan with regard to Bridewell. A well arranged House of Industry is much wanted in London. It is indeed absolutely necessary to the success of your undertaking, for there must be something *to see* and *to touch*, if I may use the expression, otherwise people in general will have but very faint, imperfect, and transitory ideas of those important and highly interesting objects with which you must make them acquainted in order to their becoming zealous converts to our new philosophy, and useful members of our community. Pray read once more the 'Proposals,' published in my second essay. I really think that a public establishment like that there described might easily be formed in London, and that it would produce infinite good. I will come to London to assist you in its execution whenever you

[112] Count Rumford to Thomas Bernard, Esq., dated Munich, 28 April 1797, in Bence Jones, *The Royal Institution*, 47.

will in good earnest undertake it.[113]

Bernard, of course, had no need to review Rumford's essays; he knew them quite well but had determined against their proposed course of action, at least as concerned workhouses. Based on the SBCP's early success Bernard had no intention of abandoning it, and certainly not in favor of a workhouse system. The SBCP founder had, in fact, developed a distinct prejudice against workhouses, stating once "that there is something in the name, the air, the situation, or in the *system* of them, that palsies the power of human industry."[114] Bernard's anti-workhouse position troubled Rumford but he was unable to convince the SBCP secretary to change his mind. The Bavarian minister's mention of earlier 'Proposals' carried with it further indication of his displeasure. The SBCP did not conform to Rumford's plan for "a grand repository of all kinds of *useful mechanical inventions*, and particularly of such as relate to the furnishings of the houses and one calculated to promote domestic comfort and economy."[115] From the count's perspective, the SBCP's work was too intangible because there was nothing "*to see* and *to touch*."

Ultimately, Bernard and the SBCP collaborated to make Rumford's dream of a scientific society a reality. In January 1799, a select committee of the SBCP laid the foundation for a scientific society based on Rumford's ideas, the Royal Institution of Great Britain. It housed a museum or working-model room, as well as a lecture hall complete with a state of the art laboratory.[116] Although Rumford

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[113] Rumford alluded to an attempt to assist patients who had been discharged from London's Bridewell Hospital but needed temporary relief until they returned to work. Bence Jones, *The Royal Institution*, 48-9; Reverend Dr. Glasse, "Extract from an account of the Samaritan Society, for convalescents from the London Hospital, and for cases not within the provisions of public hospitals," *The Reports* II: 69-76.

[114] *The Reports*, I: 54n.

[115] S. Brown, ed., *Collected Works of Count Rumford*, V: 139.

[116] T. Bernard, "Extract from an account of the institution, for applying science to the common purposes of life, so far as may be expected to affect the poor," *The Reports*, II: 145-50; S. Brown, ed., *Collected Works*, V: 439-85. Histories of the Royal Institution included Bence Jones, *The Royal Institution* (1871), Gwendy Caroe, *The Royal Institution: An Informal History* (London: John Murray, 1985), and M. Berman, *Social Change and Scientific Organization: The Royal Institution, 1799-1844* (Ithaca, M.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978).

assumed that the existence of the Royal Institution would render nugatory the SBCP, Bernard and the Society's membership did not share this view. The leaders of the SBCP supported and in some instances became officers at the Royal Institution, but they guarded the independence of their society. The Royal Institution remained completely separate from the SBCP. The unique nature of each organization reflected the unparalleled vision its creator, the Royal Institution, Rumford, and the SBCP, Bernard.

Itinerant Institutor and Political Publicist

The SBCP's primary function, according to J.R. Poynter, "was not to conduct experiments, but to report on them;" however, the Society's involvement with Jenner, the London Fever Hospital, and the Royal Institution indicated that it did not always restrict its activities to publicity.[117] The London Mendicity Society, a pioneer of police measures in the city, and the Association for the Relief of the Manufacturing and Labouring Poor were other London organizations that had SBCP roots.[118] On the one hand the creation of these new societies highlighted the enormity of the task that the SBCP had set for itself, "every thing that concerns the happiness of the poor – every thing by which their comforts can be increased." On the other hand they demonstrated the effect of the SBCP's publicity machine. The formation of the London Fever Hospital in 1800, for example, was inspired by a specific account from *The Reports*, namely Bernard's *"Extract from an account of the House of Recovery, established by the Board of Health at Manchester"* (1797). In spawning more specialized relief organizations, the SBCP made good a promise made in the Society's "Preliminary Address," that is to offer 'personal service.' Publicity remained its bread and butter, but the SBCP also offered tangible relief when possible and, more importantly, when prudent.

Although the SBCP was headquartered in London, its impact was felt far

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[117] Poynter, *Society and Pauperism*, 92.

[118] M.G.D. Roberts, "Reshaping the Gift Relationship: The London Mendicity Society, 1818-1869," *International Review of Social History* XXXVI (1991): 201-31.

beyond. Readers of *The Reports* formed their own local versions of the SBCP all over Britain, beginning in 1799. The British landscape became littered with regional bettering societies at Clapham (1799), Sheffield, Kimbolton, and Liverpool (1809) in England, Oswestry (1811) in Wales, Edinburgh (1801) in Scotland, and Cork (1799), Dublin (1799), Sligo, Carrick, Kilkenny, Donamyne, and New Ross in Ireland. No two societies were identical. At Kimbolton, the organization's activity centered around funding of a local mill and bakery for the poor, while the charitable at Oswestry supported a friendly society, a savings bank, and the construction of schools.[119] Members of the Cork society supported a lying-in-hospital, while at Dublin they collected and published philanthropic accounts modeled after *The Reports* of the London SBCP. The first volume of the Dublin Society's reports included observations on friendly societies, a Sunday school, a farmers society, and an attempt to assist the female poor in the county of Tipperary.[120]

The connection between these societies and the parent society in London remained informal. Each new society credited the SBCP London for their own formation and some favored Bernard and other London officers with honorary memberships. For its part the London Society encouraged its provincial partners by sending them free copies of *The Reports*, and, of course, by publicizing their work. London never tried to interfere or direct the work of these regional bodies beyond the advice they offered to all Britons in *The Reports*. The ideas and principles in *The Reports*, however, provided a thematic glue that bound the SBCP London to its offshoots. Extant publications from local bettering societies, for example, show that self-help guided their work. Arguing that "the best relief the Poor can receive is that which comes from themselves," the tone of reports from Cork, Liverpool, and Dublin sounds remarkably similar to that set by Bernard when he boldly challenged readers of *The Reports* to "let useful and practical

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[119] T. Bernard, "Extract from an account of the society for bettering the condition of the poor in the Hundred of Oswestry," *The Reports*, VI: 168-70; T. Bernard, "Extract from an account of what is doing, to prevent scarcity, and to restore plenty in this country," *The Reports* III: 63.

[120] *The First Number of the Reports of the Society in Dublin for Promoting the Comforts of the Poor,* Volume I (London, 1800), 1-65.

information be offered to them [the poor]; give them time to understand; and the choice of adopting it; and," he confidently asserted, "I am mistaken, if they do not show as much good sense on the subject, as any other class of men in the kingdom."[121] Self-help rhetoric gained substance as many regional SBCP's sponsored friendly societies and schools that would increase the opportunities for advancement among the poor. The tone of moral reform set by *The Reports* also made its way into the provinces. The societies at Cork and Oswestry, for instance, offered 'good conduct' premiums to cottagers and servants for cleanliness, sobriety, or honest service.[122] The school sponsored by the Oswestry society, moreoever, awarded monetary prizes to students who mastered their catechism, writing, drawing, and 'mechanical ingenuity.'[123] Moral and material self improvement by way of positive incentives characterized SBCP work whether in Oswestry or London, providing a clear unity of purpose and method between the London society and its provincial partners. No formal administrative framework ever developed but that did not hinder widespread cooperation.

Those regional societies that chose "to collect information respecting the circumstances of the poor" did so in a variety of different manners.[124] While the Dublin Society mimicked London by publishing original reports, Oswestry opted to circulate moral books and tracts from the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge (SPCK).[125] The SBCP at Sheffield, on the other hand, produced *Tales of the Poor, or, Infant Sufferings* (1813), an edited collage of four morality tales: *Sally Brown, the Cotton Spinner*, *The Chimney Sweeper's Boy*, as well as *The*

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[121] *First Report of the SBCP in Liverpool* (1811), xv; and *Address to the Publick from the Committee of the Cork Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor* (1799), 11, 19. Cf. *The Reports*, II: 138, 195 and VI: 103. *The Reports*, I:5.

[122] T. Bernard, "Extract from a further account of the Cork society for bettering the condition of the poor," *The Reports*, III: 49; T. Bernard, "Account of the society at Oswestry," *The Reports* VI: 169-70.

[123] T. Bernard, "Account of the society at Oswestry," *The Reports*, VI: 169-70.

[124] *First Report of the SBCP Liverpool*, xv; *Address from the Cork Society*, 19. Cf. *The Reports* II: 138, 195, and VI: 168.

[125] *The First Number of the Dublin Society*, I: 1-65; On Oswestry see *The Reports*, VI: 168. Tracts included: *Zekiel Jobson; or, the Dangers of Drunkenness, set forth by a Fearful Example* (Oswestry: T. Edwards, 1813), and *The Family Receipt Book, or, the Cottager's Cook, Doctor, and Friend* (Oswestry, 1817).

Orphans, and *Mary Davis*.[126] The Liverpool and Clapham societies decided to forego the role of publishers clearing house, relying instead on home visitation to learn more about he conditions of their local poor. Each society divided its town into visitation districts and sent teams of subscribers out to collect intelligence about impoverished families.[127] The information so gathered allowed them to tailor their relief efforts to the specific needs of the community, and to be more discriminating in its distribution.

The divergent paths taken in the provinces were anticipated and encouraged by Bernard who once commented that the bettering society in Liverpool accepted direction from London only "so far as it was compatible with their views, and sphere of action." The Liverpool society, like its provincial counterparts, had to deal with its unique local circumstances. Its tasks were to ascertain the circumstances of the local poor, to support the local friendly society, or to fund the local school. Their use for information from *The Reports* extended, according to Bernard, "only so far as it may promote their measures." On the other hand, "the acquisition of every species of information relative to the poor, has been deemed by us [London SBCP] the grand object, which we should keep in view." The goal of the London SBCP was broader than that of its regional partners; its aim was not "to dispense alms, or to relieve the indigent by our direct action; but to reduce charity to a science."[128] Bernard viewed the different goals between center and province as complementary. While *The Reports* presented options to provincials, the independence of regional bettering societies led to new experiments and submissions for the London SBCP publications. The exchange of ideas between center and periphery flowed in both directions and Bernard and the SBCP provided an important nexus in the whole process.

Incessant work at the SBCP and the several organizations it spawned

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[126] Samuel Roberts, ed., *Tales of the Poor, or Infant Sufferings* (Sheffield, 1813).

[127] For more details on these plans, see T. Bernard, "Extract from an account of a society for bettering the condition of the poor, at Clapham," *The Reports*, II: 237-49; John Kingston, Jr., "Extract form an account of a society for bettering the condition and improving the comforts of the poor, in the Town and Neighbourhood of Liverpool," *The Reports* VI: 100-10; Mrs. Kilham, "Extract from an account of the Sheffield Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor," *The Reports* VI: 139-46.

[128] J. Kingston, "Account of Society of Liverpool," *The Reports*, VI: 107.

earned Bernard a reputation as "a sort of itinerant institutor;" however, the philanthropist also made an impression on British parliamentary politics.[129] Although he championed many voluntary societies, Bernard saw the need for cooperation between public and private bodies when addressing key social problems. Child labor in factories provided one such example. As a volunteer organization the SBCP had no authority to regulate factory owners, but they could publicize the problem in hopes that the state might act. Bernard drew attention to factory children with his "*Extract from an account of Mr. Dale's cotton mills at New Lanerk, in Scotland*"(1799). Although the SBCP secretary praised Dale's mills, he presented them as truly exceptional. Focusing on the moral degradation that, according to Bernard, accompanied most factories, he recommended an outline of government regulations that included educational provisions for children, weekly limits on work hours, and the elimination of night work. He further proposed periodical factory inspections by magistrates who would be authorized to order white-washing, ventilation, and/or the heating of facilities. It would be incumbent on employers, too, to keep records of the age, health, and number of its employees for monthly review by inspectors.[130] While he did not wish to see state regulation inhibit an entrepreneur's right to profit, Bernard was convinced that "the manufacturer will on his part concede that it is *the duty of the state* to watch over his extended speculations – and to ascertain that his mills and factories are not converted into *seminaries of disease, of misery, and profligacy.*"[131] The publicity afforded by *The Reports* played a minor part in the passage of the Factory Act of 1802, but it had a more intimate connection, too. The parliamentary committee that framed the law came primarily from members who were also SBCP subscribers.[132] Bernard published the law in its entirety, and a

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[129] Higgins, *The Bernards*, IV:189-91.

[130] T. Bernard, "Extract from an account of Mr. Dale's cotton mills at New Lanerk, in Scotland," *The Reports*, II: 69, and Poynter, *Society and Pauperism*, 95.

[131] T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to Addington," *The Reports*, IV: 18.

[132] Prochaska, *Voluntary Impulse*, 34.

report of a select committee of the SBCP on the same.[133] Even with the Act in effect, Bernard kept up the public pressure.

The Society used its publicity machine to push for poor law reform, or at least parochial reforms in their application. As an experienced magistrate from Buckinghamshire, Bernard promoted greater discrimination in relief, and when possible, the relief of able-bodied laborers in their own homes. Bernard also promoted making the system more efficient and systematic in order to prevent the laboring poor from falling into dependent pauperism. The ideas that he had implemented at Iver in the early nineties echoed the sentiments of a contemporary Buckinghamshire figure, David Davies. His *Case of Labourers in Husbandry* (1795) suggested that poor relief should encourage self reliance by offering children education, making savings societies available, and offering land allotments as reward for thrift.[134] Bernard tried to promote these ideas in *The Reports* and in more specialized publication, *Information for Overseers* (1799), a compilation of all SBCP accounts that Bernard deemed useful for parochial officers. On a more national level, the SBCP secretary composed *A Letter to the Bishop of Durham* (1807) to comment about Samuel Whitbread's Bill to completely overhaul the Elizabethan poor law system. Bernard's pamphlet was well reviewed in literary journals and probably contributed to the failure of Whitbread's bill.[135]

Bernard and the SBCP proved more successful in dealing with parliament on public health issues. Bernard's publicity about Jenner and small pox vaccination in *The Reports* played no small role in winning a parliamentary stipend for the physician. Bringing the need for fever hospitals to public attention and demonstrating the utility of the London Fever Hospital culminated in a state grant to the SBCP £3000 in 1804.[136] Bernard did not just look to parliament for financial support for his private initiatives; he advocated the state's use of revenue

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[133] "Report of a Select Committee of the Society upon some observations on the late Act respecting Cotton Mills, and on the account of Mr. Hey's visit to a cotton Mill at Burley," *The Reports*, IV: A1-19.

[134] Poynter, *Society and Pauperism*, 31-2.

[135] *Ibid*, 220-1.

[136] *Report on the Petition respecting the Fever Institution,* 5 July 1804; Minutes of the London Fever Hospital, 16 August 1804.

bills to alter destructive behavior such as alcoholism. The SBCP founder cited seventeenth-century precedents to suggest that parliament attack alcoholism by regulating the consumption of 'ardent spirits' by raising taxes on alcohol.[137] Given his aforementioned endorsement of statutory factory regulations, it is clear that Bernard saw the state as a potential and powerful ally in fighting social problems. He knew what voluntary societies could accomplish and how the state could assist those efforts. "It would be difficult," as Frank Prochaska observed, "to turn Bernard into a forerunner of the Welfare State, but he recognized that there was room for public as well as private initiative in softening the hardships associated with the nation's transition from an agricultural economy to an urban and industrial one."[138]

Through the society that he created, Bernard made a difference in the lives of many Britons, although one that is hard to measure. Undoubtedly, fewer Britons died of small pox and infectious fevers because of the publicity afforded public health by the SBCP. The precedent established by the Factory Act of 1802, moreover, meant that future generations of children could benefit from the protective hand of the state. It would be impossible to calculate the number of poor who received a hot meal, or how many cottagers received land allotments from their landlords, or who took advantage of the friendly societies and savings banks that Bernard popularized in *The Reports*. In any given year, the SBCP could, according to its internal records, reach as many as 20,000 readers. But access to SBCP accounts did not depend on direct purchases. SBCP accounts, or excerpts of them, appeared in literary reviews such as *Monthly Review* and in philanthropic compilations by Lettsom, Highmore, and Trimmer. In short, the Society's readership may have been even greater than the its distribution numbers suggest. The achievements of the SBCP were not Bernard's alone and it would be wrong to credit him with all this activity. Still, it is a testament to his call for Britons to cooperate in addressing social problems that British philanthropy was so dynamic and innovative in the early nineteenth century. Bernard may never

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[137] T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to Addington," *The Reports*, IV: 11-2.

[138] Prochaska, *Voluntary Impulse*, 34.

have created a 'science' of philanthropy but he started reformers in that direction and through *The Reports* he succeeded in forging, if only for a while, a 'centre of action' that had no precedent. From the city of London, the SBCP inspired the formation of the London Fever Institution, the Association for the Relief of the Manufacturing Poor, and more than a dozen provincial bettering societies. A remnant of the Society lasted until the 1830s, but after Bernard's death its influence waned.[139]

Although the heyday of the SBCP was coterminous with Bernard, British reformers from the 19th and 20th centuries continued to view the Society as revolutionary. In the 1860s, George Jacob Holyoake, leader of the British secular cooperative movement, credited Bernard as being the first "to use the term 'science' in connection with social arrangements." "Thirty years later Robert Owen, who, as we shall show, had doubtless read these papers [*The Reports*], began to write upon the 'Science of Society.'"[140] One of the postwar architects of the British welfare state, William Beveridge, also praised the work of Bernard and the SBCP. In each instance Bernard's main legacy seemed to be *The Reports*, that groundbreaking model for the philanthropic publications of the Victorians. Its clearing house format anticipated the formation of the Charity Organization Society, or COS, in 1869.[141] This Victorian body espoused 'scientific charity' just as Bernard had seventy years before; moreover, it methods of collecting charitable information and making that intelligence available to prospective philanthropists echoed the fundamentals of *The Reports*. By putting researchers in touch with the proper people or groups, the COS hoped to interject a system into private relief without dictating policies to the benevolent.[142] As a reference tool, the COS published the *Charity Organization Review* monthly and, after 1882, a reference work entitled *Charities Register and Digest*. Like *The Reports* from the late eighteenth century, the COS publicized articles from the London headquarters as

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[139] Bernard's co-founders, the bishop of Durham and William Wilberforce, died respectively in 1826 and 1833.

[140] Holyoake, *Self-Help a Hundred Years Ago*, 37.

[141] For more on the COS, see Owen, *English Philanthropy*, chapter viii.

[142] *Ibid*, 221.

well as its provincial affiliates. The *Register and Digest* became a massive thousand-page annual on London charities to which the editor added an introductory review of significant alterations from year to year.[143] While the COS boasted more extensive resources and intelligence, the spirit of its work may be seen at the end of the eighteenth century in the work of Thomas Bernard and the SBCP.[144]

As central as Bernard's work at the SBCP was to his legacy, his achievements by no means ended there. In fact, his broad social philosophy and his general concept of the problem of poverty dictated that philanthropy could accomplish only so much. After all, Bernard cited philanthropy as only one of those 'mental occupations' which either 'promote social union,' or 'civilize the mind.' Since poverty was as much about social breakdown as the inequitable distribution of wealth, its relief had to involve more than poor relief; it had to be supplemented by more general social reforms. In particular, Bernard turned his attention to reforming Britain's elite and their culture. He had broached this issue at the SBCP, but knew that more specific action would be necessary. Bernard had established an arsenal of weapons at the Society that may best be described as scientific intelligence and self-help philanthropy. To a degree, he used these very methods in his new project of art patronage at the British Institution (chapter 6), as shall be seen.

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[143] *Ibid*, 235.

[144] *Ibid*, 106; Prochaska, *The Voluntary Impulse*, 31; M. E. Jersey, "Charity a Hundred Years Ago," 668; and Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, 174.

CHAPTER SIX:
PHILANTHROPIST, PATRON AND PATRIOT, 1805-1818

In the preceding chapters I have outlined the broad evolution of Bernard's comprehension of poverty and its relief from modest poorhouse reform in Buckinghamshire to national projects at the SBCP. The contours of that sketch describe a man open to new ideas, a philanthropist willing to vigorously support plans that had never occurred to him prior to their submission to *The Reports*. As Bernard adopted new schemes the scope of his philanthropy grew ever broader. By 1805 his original plan to meet impoverished Britons' dietary needs had been complemented by public health measures (small pox vaccination, fever hospitals), educational reforms such as the monitorial schools developed by Andrew Bell, as well as Anglican church-building, the latter of which was designed to meet the spiritual needs of the urban poor. One of the last complements to Bernard's philanthropic arsenal took shape in the form of three culturally-based projects: The British Institution for the Promotion of Fine Arts in the United Kingdom (1805), *The Director* (1807), and The Alfred Club (1809). The first, a society of art patrons, Bernard designed as a corporate sponsor of British art, especially history painting, but also as the seed organization for a national gallery of art in London. *The Director*, a literary magazine and review, appeared briefly in 1807, lasting only from January to July; it served to promote the British Institution, and to publicize Bernard's and other like-minded critics' ideas on the social functions of British painting, literature, and drama. The last of the group, The Alfred, was a gentleman's club that Lord Byron, one of its most famous members, described as "'pleasant, a little too sober and literary ... but one met Rich, Ward, and Valentia, and other pleasant or known people.'"[1] The Alfred's defining trait, as alluded to by Byron, was its injunction against members discussing any topics not of a literary, artistic, or scientific nature, especially taboo were party politics and gambling. Bernard envisioned his new club as a model of gentlemanly behavior and an

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[1] Arthur Griffiths, *Clubs and Clubmen* (London: Hutchison & Co., 1907), 75-6.

alternative to other clubs where less sober activities prevailed.

Although art patronage, art criticism, and club-going seem distant subjects for a serious philanthropist, Bernard saw these activities as logical extensions of his charitable work, serving in many instances identical purposes. In his philanthropy Bernard constantly enjoined Britain's social and political elite to accept their social responsibilities to care for unfortunate Britons; he had followed Hannah More's dictum that "to attempt to reform the poor while the opulent are corrupt is to throw odours into the spring while the springs are poisoned."[2] Bernard's interest in art patronage, social clubs, and other patrician pastimes reflected a similar point of view. Bernard assumed that by reforming elite Britons' leisure, he could make them more socially conscious, which meant assuming the leadership role that accompanied their status. If British patricians accepted these responsibilities, including taking seriously the patronage of the arts, society as a whole would benefit. The philanthropist pinned his hopes on several basic assumptions about the social utility of the fine arts. Specifically, he argued that British commercial might depended upon "that degree of taste and elegance of design, which are to be exclusively derived from the cultivation of the Fine Arts" and that neglect of those arts would cede British supremacy to Napoleonic France.[3] He elsewhere maintained that the fine arts "can awaken and purify the disinterested virtue, that gives security and happiness to nations."[4] In short, Bernard was convinced that support generated for the arts by his new plans would foster British economic prosperity, inspire public spirit and patriotism, and ultimately provide moral compass for Britons. He ascribed similar benefits to scientific philanthropy when he wrote, "the kingdom would derive prosperity, – the different classes, union, – and the constitution, stability."[5] The parallel between these two statements was not chance. To Bernard the fine arts and philanthropy were kindred pursuits; they were, in his own words, "among those mental

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[2] Quoted in Colley, *Britons*, 154.

[3] [T. Bernard], *An Account of the British Institution for Promoting the Fine Arts in the United Kingdom.* (London: 1805), 3

[4] T. Bernard, "Introductory Essay," *The Director: A Weekly Literary Journal*, 1 (24 January 1807):15.

[5] T. Bernard, "Prefatory Introduction," *The Reports*, II:26.

occupations which promote social union, check frivolous pursuits, & civilize the mind."[6] The British Institution, *The Director*, and the Alfred Club were designed to contribute to the remaking and general public reformation of the British ruling order that occurred between 1780 and 1820.[7]

Philanthropy and the Arts

When Bernard first pondered the significance of the arts in society, he must have reflected on his personal experience. Thomas's parents tried to instill an appreciation of the arts in all their children. They hosted musical concerts in their home; they encouraged their children to write poetry, to paint, and, most of all, to read and appreciate literature. At a tender age, Thomas cut his teeth on Shakespeare, Milton, Addison and Steele. He and his siblings discussed these authors with their parents. The exchange of ideas that took place in the Bernard's salon would be recreated by Thomas in the charitable, religious, and literary associations that he parented. The love of reading that he also learned at home appears in the diverse literary references that inform Bernard's body of writing. He was well read in economics, law, philosophy, religion, the classics, not to mention literature and history. His adult reading habits and his penchant for writing suggest that the philanthropist took his parents' lessons to heart. Thomas and Margaret surrounded themselves with art, literature, and music. In addition to frequenting London theaters, the couple adorned their home with paintings by Mortimer and Reynolds, as well as portraits commissioned from such well-known artists as John Opie.[8] Though the couple was childless, Bernard's biographer speaks of the parental affection that the couple directed toward their nephews and nieces. They hosted musical practices for the children, and Thomas exchanged

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[6] J. Baker, *Life of Sir Thomas Bernard*, 76; Bernard-Baker, *Pleasure and Pain*, 68.

[7] The chronological framework used here draws from David Cannadine, *Aspects of Aristocracy*.

[8] John Opie's study of Thomas, in fact, appeared in the 1806 exhibit of the Royal Academy.

and discussed pamphlets with his nieces and nephews.[9] It is apparent that the Bernards created a cultured domestic environment reminiscent of what Thomas had known in Boston.

Although the arts formed an integral part of Thomas Bernard's domestic life, both as a child and an adult, his involvement with the London Foundling Hospital truly shaped his mature opinion of the relationship between art and society. At the Foundling Bernard daily witnessed the vestiges of a pioneering partnership between charity and the fine arts that dated from the mid eighteenth century. During the 1740s William Hogarth's paintings and those of other artists had begun to grace its Court Room. By 1746 Hogarth and 15 other artist donors organized a committee to consider future additions to the collection. This committee, which met annually at the Foundling on the 5th of November; formed the basis of what became the Royal Academy.[10] The contributions of Hogarth and this committee inaugurated a symbiotic relationship between painters, patrons, and philanthropists. Eighteenth-century British painters possessed few opportunities to show their wares in public, so they jumped at the chance to donate their art to a charity that doubled as "London's first truly public gallery."[11] While painters profited from the exposure, so too did those affluent Britons who visited the Foundling in search of a new cause, or to check on charitable investments already made. A call at the Court Room might result in the discovery of a talented portraitist or landscape painter; it almost always led to good conversation as the spot became "the most fashionable morning lounge of the reign of George II."[12] The commerce between painters and wealthy Londoners obviously served the aims of each; however, the Foundling also benefitted. Many painters

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[9] Julia Smith née Bernard's daughter Frances spoke affectionately of her uncle's charitable tracts and reports which he had sent to her. Higgins, *The Bernards*, IV: 6. Scrope Bernard's son Francis recorded that his mother and sisters attended Thomas at his house on Wimpole Street in 1814 for the purpose of a music practice. Higgins suggests that this was not a singular episode. Higgins, *The Bernards*, IV: 193.

[10] Sidney C. Hutchison, *The History of the Royal Academy 1768-1968*, (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1968), 34-6.

[11] Michael Cohen, "Addison, Blake, Coram, and the London Foundling Hospital: Rhetoric as Philanthropy and Art," *Centennial Review* 34 (1990): 546.

[12] Nichols and Wray, *History of the Foundling Hospital*, 252.

who exhibited at the Court Room became, in effect, publicists for the charity. They immortalized major benefactors in heroic fashion, or sketched "scenes depicting the suffering and relief of distressed, abandoned, sick, or otherwise pathos-evoking children."[13] Portraits glorified the great men behind the charity, while the historical pieces evoked sympathy for the youthful objects of the hospital. In both instances, the public image as well as the finances of the orphanage were enhanced as these exhibits attracted wealthy art patrons to the Court Room gallery. Visiting art patrons commonly became major financial backers of the charity. In a real sense, the Foundling Hospital successfully fused the fine arts (especially painting) with philanthropy; it served as a nexus between painter and patron, but also as shaper of a rather utilitarian style of British painting in the eighteenth century, what Ellis Kirkman Waterhouse termed a "bourgeois ideal" in which art was made subservient to the aims of this bourgeois charity. If the mercantile directors of the Foundling wanted pathos then painters willingly obliged.[14]

The artistic importance of the Foundling had faded by the 1780s, but its memory affected the young conveyancer who was drawn into its orbit. Aspiring painters no longer flocked to the charity because the Royal Academy's annual exhibitions had made the gallery at the Foundling Court Room passe. After the fevered activity of the 1740s and '50s, additions to the Foundling's art collection were rare. Still, the charity boasted an extensive gallery which made a lasting impression on Bernard, who tried to reinvigorate the Foundling's artistic legacy during his tenure as treasurer. In *A History of the Foundling* (1796) he highlighted the charity's artistic treasures in hopes that they once again might enhance the prestige of the orphanage. He praised the singular contributions of Hogarth and Handel, and cataloged each of the major paintings held by the

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[13] Cohen, "Rhetoric and Philanthropy as Art," 549-50.

[14] Waterhouse's position is stated by Cohen in "'Rhetoric and Philanthropy as Art," 551.

charity.[15] Bernard maintained close ties with some of Britain's premier painters, especially Royal Academy President, Benjamin West, thereby was able to add to the charity's already handsome collection. In 1801, Bernard and three other governors commissioned West's *Christ Presenting a Little Child*, which, when completed, adorned the wall above the altar-piece in the Foundling chapel.[16] West's painting, like earlier donations from Hogarth, Hayman, and Highmore, embodied the Foundling ideal; it depicted the Christian savior setting the perfect example of service and protection of innocent children. Its purpose was to inspire similar acts from its viewers. The collaboration between Bernard and West ensured that the Foundling's artistic tradition would endure; moreover, the charitable and political purpose of West's work epitomized a utilitarian view of art that influenced the philanthropist long after he left the Foundling. Bernard and West worked together again in 1805 on the organization of the British Institution, an art patronage society in which Bernard applied the example of the London Foundling Hospital on a more extensive scale. Bernard's tenure at the orphanage was crucial to his later cultural projects.

In the early nineteenth century, the lessons culled from the Foundling experience increasingly infiltrated Bernard's SBCP writings. The fine arts formed an integral part of the social agenda he outlined in his *Introductory Letter to the Fourth Volume, Addressed to the Right Honourable Henry Addington* (1803). In this essay, the SBCP editor identified three basic entitlements of the poor: the prevention of vice and contagion, the promotion of virtue and industry, and the diffusion of moral and religious education. The fine arts, specifically drama, figured prominently in the first of these amorphous rights since Bernard listed "*profane and immoral representations on the stage*" among those vice-promoting maladies from which the poor deserved protection. Although Bernard counted neglect of the Sabbath, the availability of cheap liquor, and the indiscriminate

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[15] George Frederick Handel also supported the charity in the mid eighteenth century. He donated an organ to the Foundling Chapel and conducted annual choral productions of his *Messiah* until his death in 1759. He raised more than £6700 for the thousand-seat facility. Bernard, *Account of the Foundling*, 22.

[16] Nichols and Wray, *History of the Foundling*, 206.

distribution of parochial relief, among the corruptive influences on impoverished and uneducated Britons, he considered the poor particularly defenseless against the wiles of irresponsible playwrights. Immoral works, according to Bernard, "inevitably corrupted" the poor's "principles, their language, and their habits of life."[17] Bernard's assumption led him to conclude that any effort to protect the poor from vice must account for the influence of the arts; otherwise, the good accomplished by the SBCP and other charities might be partly undone. This conclusion provided the basic justification for Bernard's foray into cultural projects.

Bernard's essay left no doubt that the potentially corruptive influence of the arts had to be addressed, and it also suggested who should take the lead. In his public epistle, Bernard laid responsibility squarely on the shoulders of "the paternal and superintending care of government" and "the brotherly and individual efforts of other members of society."[18] He called on government, for example, to curtail alcoholism, especially 'dram drinking,' by raising taxes on liquor so that laborers would opt for less potent libations such as ale or malt liquor. As for profanation of the Sabbath, Bernard assigned more responsibility to private citizens, especially the British elite, whom he challenged to set a positive example. If the patriciate stopped hosting parties and exhibitions on Sunday, more would be accomplished, according to Bernard, than by any punitive actions that might be implemented by the state or even by private organizations such as the Proclamation Society. Bernard's position was clear. The poor had a right to live in a healthful moral environment and it rested with the British state and its privileged citizenry to foster and protect that environment. The stance Bernard took here ultimately shaped both the scope and the agenda of his three cultural projects.

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[17] T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to Addington," *The Reports* IV: 4, 14-5.

[18] *Ibid,* 4.

The British Institution

In the spring of 1805, roughly two years after his public letter to Addington, Bernard made plans for a new type of art society. Although his design was novel, his was not the first such proposal in recent years. Several artists and art patrons had presented plans to the public with mixed results. In 1802 the Society of Engravers appeared as an alternative outlet to the Royal Academy, which had categorically denied engravers admission. Water colorists were another group that experienced discrimination. The Academy's relegation of their work to obscure corners of the annual exhibits led them to organize the Society of Painters in Water Colours in 1805. Another upstart, the British School 'for the Advancement of Fine Arts, and the perpetual exhibition and sale of original paintings, sculpture, drawings, and engravings, by the most eminent living and departed artists, opened in 1802 with the support of the Prince of Wales and some Academicians. The project failed utterly, and closed the following year.[19] Each of these groups had in common some grievance with the Royal Academy. For engravers and water colorists it was either a perceived or real slight, while the patrons behind the British School criticized the Academy's limited exhibition opportunities. Bernard's own plans echoed these and other considerations. He feared, for one thing, the factionalism that ruled the Academy. On different occasions, infighting over the placement of exhibition paintings and the appropriation of funds culminated in the firing of the body's Professor of Painting, as well as the resignation of its President. Equally troubling was the society's failure to create the "'repository for the great examples of the Art'"[20] envisioned by the Academy's first president, Sir Joshua Reynolds,[21] especially since the oversight was not a matter of inadequate funds or a dearth of opportunity. Absent a British national gallery and considering the existence and success of similar establishments on the Continent,

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[19] Peter Fullerton, "Patronage and Pedagogy: The British Institution in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Art History* 5(March 1982): 59-60, and William T. Whitley, *Art in England, Volume I 1800-1820* (Cambridge University Press, 1928, reissued by New York: Hacker Art Books, 1973), 45-6.

[20] Sir Walter R. M. Lamb, *The Royal Academy: A Short History of its Foundation and Development* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1951); 12.

[21] See Reynolds' *First Discourse* (1769).

the Academy's refusal to purchase Reynolds' collection in 1791 and Udney's in 1802 seemed unconscionable to Bernard.[22] Others shared Bernard's concern, including James Barry, Professor of Painting at the Academy, who used his lectures as a forum to question the Academy's wisdom in funding pensions rather than building a national collection and repository. The Academy fired Barry and eventually expelled him from the body altogether. Another area of concern for Bernard and other critics was the structure of the Academy's annual exhibitions. A reviewer for *Monthly Magazine* took dead aim at "the overbearing majority of insipid and uninteresting portraits of insipid and uninteresting individuals, which usurp the best situations in the rooms."[23] This seemingly trivial observation contained a very serious charge. Within the painterly genres of the time portraiture was viewed as inferior to history painting. This reviewer's accusation that even in this secondary genre the Academy was ineffective implied that the institution itself was of secondary importance, especially during an era when "great national establishments" on the Continent such as the Louvre were producing and supporting internationally famous history painters such as David.[24]

The contours of Bernard's novel plan catered to these perceived limitations of the Royal Academy. To begin with, he envisioned his latest project "not as a Society of Artists, but for their benefit." Direction of the new society would be invested in men like himself, men of wealth, power, and taste "whose situation distinguishe[d] them as the proper patrons of the higher and intellectual order of the Fine Arts in this country."[25] Bernard assumed that he and his fellow patrons could instigate change without becoming mired in the competitive factions of artists. Next, the philanthropist proposed that his new institution champion

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[22] In 1791, the Academy refused an offer to purchase the personal collection of Sir Joshua Reynolds. The Academy also failed to acquire Robert Udney's collection in 1802, see Fullerton, "Patronage and Pedagogy," 59-60.

[23] *Monthly Magazine*, 21 (1806): 253.

[24] *Account of the British Institution*, 17.

[25] *Ibid*, 4. "Report from Committee of Directors," General Meeting of the Governors, 6 February 1806, Victorian and Albert Museum, London, English MSS, Minutes of the British Institution for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in the United Kingdom, 1805-1870 (hereafter, British Institution Minutes).

historical painting. "We ask," he and his co-author Lord Dartmouth wrote in a circular, "that professional taste and talent, and national patronage, be no longer confined to inferior objects; but that our artists may be encouraged to direct their attention to higher and nobler attainments; – to paint the mind and passions of man, to depict his sympathies and affections, and to illustrate the great events which have been recorded in the history of the world."[26] It was clear that the Academy's penchant for portraiture would not infect Bernard's new society. Finally, he provided for "a PUBLIC GALLERY of the work of *British Artists*, with a few select specimens of each of the great schools."[27] Reynolds' vision would come to pass, though not during his lifetime and not at the Royal Academy.

Though keenly aware of its flaws, Bernard recognized the Academy was strong. Its endowment, £16,000 in 1796, was impressive enough to fund pensions for Academicians and their spouses, and, during the Napoleonic Wars, to spare a donation of £500 to the government for "exigencies of the State."[28] More important than its fiscal wealth, the Academy had, since 1768, provided a focal point for the British art world through its annual spring exhibitions, its academies of living models, and its respected art faculty in painting, perspective, anatomy, and architecture (chemistry and sculpture were added later). It also enjoyed the protection of the King, a fact of considerable consequence. This strength and influence inspired caution in Bernard. He conveyed his belief that his work would not diminish the Academy, but would "extend and increase the beneficial effects" of that established body.[29] Accordingly, Bernard initially avoided any appearance of competition with the Academy. On the contrary, he actively pursued the cooperation of its members, especially Benjamin West with whom Bernard discussed his plans for the future British Institution. West was a logical ally since the two had collaborated years before at the London Foundling Hospital. On 24 April 1805, the pair arranged a meeting of several major art patrons, including Sir

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[26] *Account of the British Institution*, 23-4.

[27] *Ibid*, 4.

[28] Hutchison, *History of the Royal Academy*, 74-5; Lamb, *The Royal Academy*, 11.

[29] *Account of the British Institution*, 4.

George Beaumont, J. J. Angerstein, and Richard Payne Knight, and a handful of painters. Among the artists in attendance was Joseph Farington, a Academician painter who, like West, welcomed Bernard's proposal "for the establishing a National Gallery of painting & for encouraging Historical Painting."[30] Farrington and West's attendance boded well for the project since they represented the two major factions within the Academy. Their backing, in short, would likely translate into fairly unified support from the influential Academy.[31]

After hearing the general outline, the attendees encouraged Bernard to prepare a formal public address and proposal for this new society, a task the philanthropist had performed more than once before. When he submitted a draft to the next meeting, certain members of his audience were offended by Bernard's candid commentary on aristocratic patronage. "I unluckily insisted rather too much," he confided to his journal, "on the caprice & injustice of some persons in this Country, in giving an exclusive preference to ancient and foreign Pictures." Bernard's stance obviously hit too near the mark for some of the wealthy patrons in attendance. While the politic philanthropist toned down his public rhetoric, privately he observed "a Libel is most offensive when most true."[32] Plans proceeded and Lord Dartmouth, chairman of the organizing committee and a Trustee of the British Museum, successfully petitioned King George III for royal patronage on 27 May. A week later on 4 June 1805, the King's sixty-seventh birthday, the group officially constituted themselves 'The British Institution for Promoting the Fine Arts in the United Kingdom.' Bernard's novel patronage society was a reality. By 15 July 1805 they had purchased Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery in Pall Mall, after which they fitted it up as the Institution's British Gallery, home of their future art exhibitions.

While Bernard envisioned the British Institution as a complement and corrective to the Royal Academy, he also hoped it would address general problems

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[30] Joseph Farington, *The Farington Diary*. Edited by James Greig. 8 vols. (London: Hutchinson & Co. 1922-24), III(1804-1806):73.

[31] Fullerton, "Patronage and Pedagogy," 59-60.

[32] Bernard-Baker, *Pleasure and Pain*, 69.

in the British art market that were not of the Academy's making. "The powers of the GRAPHIC MUSE have never been fairly appreciated in this country," Bernard once noted, adding that "the general patronage which has been afforded, if patronage like that deserve the name, has been indiscriminate, degrading, and selfish."[33] This strongly-worded statement alluded British patrons' preference for foreign or Old Masters, and for portraiture. Bernard viewed the love of foreign painting as 'indiscriminate' because for many collectors it had reached the level of blind obsession. "The influx of worthless pictures, the noxious inundation of damaged or wretched originals and fabricated copies, which, like French principles, have infested our coasts since the calamitous period of the French Revolution" testified that some patrons purchased foreign pieces simply because they were foreign. Such as situation was degrading for the patron and patriot, Bernard. It "must awaken and call forth the indignation and hostility of every friend to the arts, or to his country,"[34] he argued, because "our countrymen are capable of the same excellence in the arts, as they have attained in every branch of science and literature."[35] As for the accusation of selfishness, Bernard focused on the bull market for portraits. Bernard portrayed patronage of portrait painting as ultimately selfish because the only true beneficiary was the patron who was able to decorate his country mansion with a flattering image of himself or another member of his family. Society rarely benefitted from such patronage for two primary reasons. First, portraiture itself was inferior to history painting, especially in its social benefits. Portraiture might be, Bernard observed, "one of the interesting occupations of the pencil;" but it "is not calculated, without the study of Historical Painting, to enable the British Artist to contend with those of other countries in the higher departments of art."[36] In short, portraiture was not regarded as a 'higher department' of art. Therefore, it did not possess "the power

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[33] T. Bernard, "Introductory Essay," *The Director* I:9-10.

[34] *Ibid*, 11-2.

[35] *Account of the British Institution*, 23.

[36] Quote is from a preliminary draft of a petition for public funds presented to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and co-authored by Bernard and Lord Dartmouth. 26 January 1810, British Institution Minutes.

of nourishing every principle of piety and charity, and of impressing and consecrating the most exalted feelings and habits of virtue and religion," nor could it, like history painting, "awaken and purify the disinterested virtue, that gives security and happiness to nations, and protects the innocent and defenceless from the savage inroads of ambition."[37] Considering that British history painters struggled to earn a living, Bernard's attacked as vain any patron would knowingly devote his primary patronage for a flattering portrait when he might otherwise commission an inspirational work such as West's *The Death of Wolfe*.[38]

Yet another habit among British art patrons struck Bernard as 'selfish,' namely their proprietary attitude toward their collections. Lacking a national gallery, Britain had only private collections and Bernard scorned those collectors who refused to share their holdings with the public, and with art students in particular. He placed this injustice in stark relief by publicly praising "those opulent and distinguished characters, who have lately added to our national possessions some of the noblest specimens of antient art," especially the Marquis of Stafford, who set the fine example "of opening his collection to the public, and of making it the source of improvement to the artist, and of gratification to the lover of art."[39] If Stafford's actions were patriotic, then by implication, those who did not do likewise were unpatriotic and selfish. Bernard's new society planned to extend Stafford's example to an institutional level and in the process attack the indiscriminate, degrading, and selfish patronage that existed in Britain.

Translating vision into practice began with the British Institution's exhibition of modern artists in the spring of 1806. In direct contrast to the Royal Academy, the Institution excluded portraits from its show. Most exhibitors were contestants for the prizes and premiums that the Institution sponsored that year. Initially the Institution's modest award program targeted a wide array of subjects; however, prizes soon became more lucrative and exclusive to 'higher departments'

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[37] T. Bernard, "Introductory Essay," *The Director* I:13-4.

[38] For a melodramatic and propagandistic account of a starving artist, see Thomas Bernard, "The Life of Thomas Proctor," *The Director* 7(7 March 1807):193-205.

[39] T. Bernard, "Introductory Essay," *The Director* I: 11.

of art such as history painting. In 1808 the Institution awarded £50 to the best submission in four categories: Historical or Poetical Composition, familial life, landscape, and model (sculpted) in Heroic or Poetic composition, but two years later it had narrowed its prizes to three, all in the category of Historical or Poetic Composition. In addition to being more narrowly defined, the 1810 awards had grown to £300 for first place, £200 for second and £100 for third.[40]

Contrary to the Institution's hopes, larger premiums did not often translate into better submissions – a fact that led the Institution, in 1811, to award only its third-place premium of £100 on grounds that the overall quality of entries was poor.[41] By the end of the Napoleonic wars, the British Institution developed slightly new strategies for its award system. In 1815, the Institution announced that instead of set premiums in the broad category of historical painting, it would allot £1000 "to be applied at their discretion" on the singular subject of "finished sketches, illustrative of, or connected with the success of the British army in Spain, Portugal, and France."[42] Capitalizing on Wellington's final victory over Napoleon in June 1815, the Institution extended its deadline past July so that sketches "representing the Battle of Waterloo, or the entry of British and Prussian armies into Paris" might be included.[43] The Institution obviously inspired some worthy submissions because the society's awards for the following year were most generous. In 1816, the society granted two premiums of £150 each to Abraham Cooper and L. Clennell for their sketches of Waterloo, and an additional £1500 to commission a larger, 9' X 13 ' version of the two superior entries by George Jones and James Ward (1769-1859).[44] The Institution's temporary change of tack away from set premiums became permanent policy in the ensuing years. Thereafter, the British Institution used its grants solely to purchase worthy works from the exhibitions, or, to commission larger versions of the same.[45]

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[40] 9 May 1808, 15 January 1811, British Institution Minutes.

[41] 6 June 1812, British Institution Minutes.

[42] 20 February 1815, British Institution Minutes.

[43] 18 July 1815, British Institution Minutes.

[44] 8 April, 25 April, and 2 May 1816, British Institution Minutes.

[45] 7 June 1816, British Institution Minutes.

Although the Institution's efforts did not effect a sea change in British painting, its impact on the art market was significant. From 1805 to 1825, the Institution sold no fewer than 10,000 tickets to each of its annual spring exhibitions. More importantly, sales of history paintings from these shows ranged from £11,000 in 1806 to over £20,000 in 1810.[46] Wealthy patrons of the Institution accounted for many of these sales individually; however, the Institution also entered the market corporately in order to purchase works for its British Gallery.[47] In 1811 Thomas Bernard spearheaded the most noteworthy instance of this type of patronage when he organized a subscription drive to acquire Benjamin West's *Our Saviour Healing the Sick in the Temple*.[48] What better support could the Institution give to British historical painting than to handsomely reward its premier figure? Bernard justified the unprecedented £3000 expense on the grounds that the acquisition and exhibition of the West would draw publicity and financial contributions to the Institution. More importantly, he predicted that public displays of the West would inspire young artists to excellence, more "than by the like sum expended in premiums."[49] By March members had subscribed £1200 and the sale was soon completed. The steep cost proved to be a wise investment for the Institution as its show of the West sold more than 78,000 tickets and raised £3700 by June 1812.[50] The West had more than paid for itself.

In addition to financial contributions, the British Institution promoted British historical painting by creating an Old Masters school to rival the French school in Paris. David and the French history painters enjoyed free access to ancient masterpieces at the Louvre, but the same could not be said in Britain. Britain not only lacked a national gallery of art, it possessed a proprietary and selfish group of collectors who refused to open their Old Master paintings to the public or to art students. The Institution responded by opening their gallery in the

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[46] Fullerton, "Patronage and Pedagogy," 64, 71n.

[47] Initial subscriptions amounted to £7,100; Fullerton, "Patronage and Pedagogy," 63.

[48] See Bernard's letter to the Marquis of Stafford recorded in *Minutes*, 13 February, 1811; Whitley, *Art in England*, 189.

[49] 13 February 1811, British Institution Minutes.

[50] "Annual Meeting of the Governors," 2 June 1812, British Institution Minutes.

summer months as the British School of Painting. After the spring exhibit of modern art had closed, collectors, primarily Institution members, loaned Old Masters from their personal galleries to the society. The Institution's school offered no formal instruction beyond what students could glean from painting partial copies or companion pieces to the masterpieces on display. It was the antithesis of instruction at the Royal Academy where professors lectured and students painted from live models and from nature, but not by studying Old Masters. Because of its unique approach the British School attracted amateur applicants but also distinguished artists, including Academicians such as David Wilkie and John Constable.[51] In opening their collections, Bernard and his associates not only met the needs of British history painters; they set a public example for those irresponsible collectors among the ruling elite who hoarded their masterpieces in their stately homes, never to be seen by the public, or by art students. The Institution induced these selfish patrons to accept their patriotic duty to make their holdings public because only then could the British nation receive the social benefits of the fine arts.

While the British School helped British history painters compete with their French counterparts, Bernard and his fellow patrons knew that there was no substitute for a national gallery of art. To that end, the Directors petitioned the Chancellor of Exchequer in 1810 for an annual stipend of £5000 "to lay the foundations for a national collection of paintings, which ... might supply the noblest and most interesting means, of commemorating those patriotic achievements, which are at once the glory and protection of the British Empire."[52] Bernard and Dartmouth collaborated to write and edit the appeal. The pair framed their request in practical terms, noting the timely issues of war and particularly the effects of Napoleon's Continental System.

> The present flourishing state of the manufactures and Export trade of the United Kingdom, & the supplies which have been

[51] Fullerton, "Patronage and Pedagogy," 65.

[52] 26 January 1810, British Institution Minutes.

> thereby afforded towards carrying on the present just & necessary war are in great degree owing to the progress of the Fine Arts, under His Majesty's judicious patronage; & that in Hardware, cottons, & porcelain, & in every other article to which the industry & attention of the British artisan has been applied, superior beauty of Form, & refined elegance of ornament, have made the British manufactures coveted throughout the world, in despite of political warfare & penal prohibition.
> ... the skill and talent of the inferior artists employed in the manufactures must, in a great degree, depend on the relative excellence of the most distinguished artists, whose exertions in the higher departments of art, it is therefore of importance to encourage; & that this becomes more necessary at the present time, when the French Government (looking to political & financial advantages) bestows annually very large sums of money in the promotion of the fine arts in France; the effect of which ... may otherwise be to give the French artists a supremacy over those of the united kingdom.[53]

Their petition failed, but the Institution continued to use its resources to purchase, in addition to the aforementioned West, several pieces by modern British artists as well as two works by sixteenth-century Italian Masters, one by Paulo Veronese and the other by Parmigianino.[54] Bernard and his associates viewed these purchases as a counterbalance to the state-supported galleries on the Continent, especially the Louvre (the Musée Napoléon) in Paris. Though a private body, the Institution fully anticipated the day in which its holdings would be housed in a publicly funded and truly national gallery. Until that day, the West, as Bernard proposed "shall be the property of the British Institution, in trust to be presented to the National Gallery, when Established; & in the meantime to be hung in the British Gallery."[55] What Bernard said of the West held true for all the Institution's

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[53] 19 January 1810, British Institution Minutes.

[54] Veronese's *Consecration of St. Nicholas* was purchased for £1500 in August 1811, and the Institution acquired Parmigianino's *Vision of St. Jerome* in 1823. 17 August 1811, British Institution Minutes; and Fullerton, "Patronage and Pedagogy," 66.

[55] 13 February 1811, British Institution Minutes.

corporate purchases which eventually were passed on to the National Gallery after its founding in 1824.

In their capacity as a surrogate national gallery, the Directors of the British Institution took steps to open British collections to the public on an unprecedented scale. Members, as mentioned earlier, loaned masterpieces to the Institution for the British School; they also donated works for public display. Beginning in 1813, the Institution followed its spring exhibition of modern artists with a summer show of British Masters, including Sir Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough, and William Hogarth. By focusing on British genius, these exhibits transcended traditional biases against domestic talent, but they also served, according to Directors, to instruct "'the Collector what to value, and the Artist what to follow.'"[56] The reformative purpose of the Institution had been extended through these shows to the general public in order to prove the basic premise of the society, that British artists could and would compete favorably with Continental artists if given the chance. If patrons and Britons in general were ever to appreciate their domestic Masters, then publicity was the key. Two years later the Institution held the first public exhibition of Old Masters in Great Britain, when they showed a collection of Dutch and Flemish works borrowed from members' holdings. These, too, served a pedagogical function, not just for artists and collectors, but for the general public.

Once the British National Gallery opened in 1824, the British Institution waned in importance. It survived until 1870, but its major achievements occurred during its first two decades. The vitality of the early Institution caught the attention of *The Times* which heralded it a "noble Institution," adding that "British genius is here seen to take its true and legitimate turn."[57] While the press documented much of the early activity of the British Institution, Bernard as author of the society received little public notice. Behind the scenes, Bernard filled

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[56] Quote is from Fullerton, "patronage and Pedagogy," 68; it refers to a catalogue published by the Institution for the first exhibit of the works of Reynolds.

[57] Fullerton, "Patronage and Pedagogy," 64; James Northcote, "On Originality; Imitators; and Collectors," *The Artist* II(21 March 1807):9.

several key positions that attracted the notice of Thomas Lawrence (later Sir), President of the Royal Academy from 1820 to 1830. He credited Bernard with "having done more for the Arts than any other man."[58] Lawrence's words, no matter how exaggerated, reiterate one conspicuous point: Bernard's vision stood behind the planning, and ultimately the early progress of the British Institution. Bernard arranged the purchase of Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery in Pall Mall for the British Gallery, served as Keeper of the Institution's collection, judged submissions for premiums and prizes, and endorsed opening the gallery's annual exhibitions to the general public. His vision contributed to the direction of the British Institution and in the process stimulated significant changes in art patronage and instruction. The British School of Old Masters, for example, set precedents for art instruction not only at the British Institution but also at the Royal Academy, which, after 1815, taught by study of masterpieces. The British Gallery itself was groundbreaking. It served as a national treasury of the Institution's modest collection, but also as a type of clearinghouse through which members circulated their private collections for public display in the summer months. The example of the British Gallery undoubtedly influenced the policy of the British National Gallery when it finally opened.

The Director

Two years after creating the British Institution Bernard, assisted by his close friend, the bibliographer Thomas Frognall Dibdin, founded *The Director: A Literary and Scientific Journal.* This new review reported activities of artistic and scientific associations such as the Royal Academy and Royal Society; however, its principal function, as the periodical's name hinted, was editorial. Bernard chose 'Director' because, as he noted in an introductory number, "I offer myself to the public as a mere *guide post*, to *direct* the course of others to moral and intellectual

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[58] Quote of Lawrence's comments is a paraphrase written by Joseph Farington in his diary entry, dated 11 April 1811. Lawrence had relayed the details of his meeting and conversation with Bernard. *Farington Diary* VI(1811-1815):258.

excellence."[59] Primary 'guidance' and 'direction' came in the form of essays penned by Bernard, Dibdin, and noted scientific and artistic figures such as Humphry Davy (later Sir) and Sir George Beaumont.[60] *The Director*'s commentary, along with its reportage, pointed the way of reform for British fine arts and their patronage, much as the SBCP had done for British philanthropy.

In following the British artistic and scientific community, *The Director* focused on six London-based organizations: the Royal Society, the Royal Academy, the Royal Institution, the London Institution, the Society of Antiquaries, and the British Institution. Although Bernard's review praised and promoted each of the six, two, the British and Royal Institutions, received disproportionate attention. On the one hand, *The Director* devoted considerable space to art reviews of works exhibited at the British Gallery, especially those submitted for annual prize competitions. It also recorded the Institution's major resolutions while including occasional accounts of annual exhibitions. As for the Royal Institution, a novel scientific society devoted to propagating practical inventions by hosting lectures and laboratory experiments, *The Director* published abridged versions of its lectures, including Reverend Crowe's 15-part series "On Poetry" and another multi-volume set by Douglas Guest, "On the State of the Fine Arts in Spain, and other Parts of the Continent." The privileged position enjoyed by these two institutions is easily explained; both owed their existence to the philanthropist. He not only authored the British Institution, as was documented earlier in this chapter, but he also helped organize the Royal Institution in 1801. Count Rumford may have been the undisputed author of this scientific society, but Bernard played a much more critical role in its management, especially when Rumford left England and the fledgling Institution a few months after its inception. Given Bernard's vested interest in the British and Royal Institutions, *The Director* served during its brief run as a public voice for two of his own projects, a service

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[59] *Ibid*, 7.

[60] Davy (1778-1829) submitted three essays including "Parallels between Art and Science," and Sir George Beaumont (1753-1827), a collector and celebrated patron who produced insightful commentaries such as "On the Moral Effects of Music," and "Connexion between Genius and Patronage."

that both bodies needed since neither possessed their own publication or journal.

A basic element of *The Director*'s publicity of the British Institution was its promotion of the works exhibited at the British Gallery. Dibdin, the primary reviewer, shared Bernard's desire to publicize the Institution and accordingly selected carefully the objects of his scrutiny. As he rarely offered negative commentary, it appears that Dibdin picked only those works of a superior quality. Occasionally some critical statements made the copy, but usually with several mitigating qualifiers. In his review of Richard Westhall's (1756-1836) *Christ Appearing to Mary Magdalen on the morning of his resurrection*, Dibdin observed, "perhaps a rigid critic might observe that the countenance and form of Mary are perhaps a little too youthful for the matured character of Christ," but then added, "The whole composition is, however, highly creditable to the British School, and to the justly acquired fame of the artist."[61] More typically *The Director's* reviews, in keeping with Bernard's desire to promote, were overwhelmingly positive. Take, for example, the review of James Northcote's (1746-1831) five-part series on the effects of good and bad conduct. Dibdin heralded *No. 59 The good girl in her chamber at her devotions* as the best, adding "When the pencil is employed on such subjects, the connoisseur readily assents to the sacrifice of the higher departments of the art, is conscious of the extensive good which such representations seldom fail to produce. One immoral character converted is worth a thousand rapturous exclamations of knowing!"[62] The complementary and didactic nature of this critique reminds the reader that *The Director*'s mission was not simply 'to promote' but also 'to direct.' Praising the British Institution's patronage and publicity of high quality British art was not enough, Bernard hoped to foster talented British art of a moral nature capable, no less, of improving its audience. Art should be, he once wrote, "of a nature and quality proper to instruct

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[61] *The Director* I: 223. Similar equivocation may be seen in the review of James Ward's (1769-1859) *Thatching a Mill*. "This a very spirited little picture, touched in a forcible and scientific manner, but *too much* is attempted in so small a compass. The splendid sunset might have been judiciously omitted. The purple and yellow preponderate too much." *The Director* II: 124

[62] *The Director* I: 256.

and amend, and not to debase and corrupt, the mind."[63]

In its mission to promote the British Institution, *The Director* used the publication of what may be labeled 'patronage lists' to reward patrons and to elicit more. Specifically, Bernard's review kept careful records of each painting on loan to the Institution either for the British School or for special exhibition, noting always the name of each generous donor.[64] These patronage lists call to mind the subscriber lists that adorn virtually every tract and pamphlet produced by the SBCP and other charitable associations. As with subscription lists, the notices found in *The Director* drew attention to the British Institution and especially to its wealthy patrons. Similar attention to patrons appeared in *The Director's* art reviews. Dibden meticulously noted the purchaser of each piece under review, and, on one occasion, even alluded to the 'scientific eye' of the buyer without which "this beautiful cabinet picture would have been overlooked."[65] Dibden was joined in his praise of the Institution's patrons by Bernard who held these men up for emulation, observing, in his opening essay, that "while they have embellished their own princely mansions," they have "honoured, adorned, and enriched their country." Bernard reserved special accolades for the Marquis of Stafford, who, in addition to purchasing pieces from the Institution, had opened his home collection to art students and to the public. Stafford epitomized the model art patron and had, in Bernard's mind, become "the source of inspiration to the artist, and of gratification to the lover of art."[66] By praising Stafford, Bernard defined what he expected from other members of the British elite, namely that they buy British, that they patronize 'moral' pieces such as displayed at the British Institution, and finally, that they be willing to share their purchases with fellow Britons. Bernard's presentation of Stafford and others as models was a practical tool for change that he had developed early in his career as treasurer of the London Foundling Hospital and perfected at the SBCP; it proved effective once again in

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[63] T. Bernard, "Introductory Essay," *The Director* I: 14.

[64] *The Director* I: 29-32.

[65] Dibdin's allusion was to Captain Ansley who purchased J. Cranch's *The Plasterer*. *The Director* II: 124-25.

[66] T. Bernard, "Introductory Essay," *The Director*, 11.

promoting the work of the British Institution.

Important as *The Director*'s society reports and updates were, Bernard considered them as "a kind of supplement to each paper." The papers, viz. essays, were the true heart and soul of Bernard's literary review and his quest "to promote, improve, and refine the arts & sciences in the British empire."[67] Bernard, well-known for his faith in the power of print, knew that the British Institution was only one body; its scope was limited even if its goals were not. Accordingly, *The Director* was more than a promotional vehicle for that institution, or any other; it was a forum for Bernard's general views on the fine arts and their relationship to broad social issues. In this respect, *The Director* replaced the SBCP reports where Bernard previously had commented on artistic subjects. *The Reports* had always focused on philanthropy, but Bernard's new literary review provided the perfect setting for his essays on art and patronage. There Bernard outlined how the fine arts meshed with his social agenda, and specifically how sponsorship of British 'moral' art would not only influence the social and cultural habits of British elite, but also protect poor and uneducated Britons from the vice of immoral art and drama. These had been themes of the British Institution, but Bernard's essays had the potential to touch many more Britons than his art patronage society ever could.

Bernard composed the tone-setting opening address of *The Director's* inaugural number, using a format that closely resembled his introductory essays to each volume of SBCP reports. After asserting his intent "to promote, improve, and refine," Bernard explained that a change in the objects of British patronage was crucial. "The public must learn to pay that respect and reverence to the moral and intellectual productions of the fine arts," while artists must learn "to strive for eminence in the higher departments of his profession." Bernard's particular wish was to foster appreciation for the 'liberal arts' which offered, according to his definition, "virtuous and refined pleasure and improvement produced by mental exertion." Although history painting, the darling of the British Institution,

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[67] *Ibid*, 5.

afforded a prime example of the liberal arts, Bernard stressed that "the seclusion of a convent, the recesses of domestic life, and the wild scenes of untamed nature" are just as capable as "great and splendid actions" by "kings and heroes" of improving, elevating, fortifying, and civilizing the mind of an audience. Unfortunately British patronage was, according to Bernard, "indiscriminate, degrading, and selfish" because it supported foreign and Old Masters, and, of course portraiture, but seldom contemporary British artists. For the philanthropist, the moral shortcomings of British patronage were inseparable from its love of portraiture and all things foreign. Portraiture had its place, and foreign and ancient masters deserved study; however, many of them, according to Bernard, failed the moral test of a true liberal art. The Italian Masters, for example, produced magnificent works, but Bernard warned that "the scenes of licentiousness and cruelty which are exhibited in many of their finest pictures, have a tendency to familiarise the spectator to those odious vices." As for the Dutch and Flemish Schools, Bernard complained that their subjects were too mundane. Bernard cautioned that "When it [the artist's mind] has been long habituated to trace the representation of minute and still life, devoid of mind or action, it can never hope to emulate the immortal productions of the great masters, and, to become the *Shakespeare* or *Milton* of the *graphic art* in Britain." Bernard was particularly angered by "the noxious inundation of damaged or wretched originals and fabricated copies, which, like French principles, have infested our coasts since the calamitous period of the French Revolution." In an atmosphere biased against British talent and where collectors often bought works simply for their foreignness, what hope had Britain of producing its own graphic equivalent of Shakespeare? The answer to Bernard's rhetorical question was obvious: British patronage needed reform.[68]

Bernard further emphasized the limitations of British patronage by contrasting it with that of the Italian Renaissance. Of the latter, he observed "The greatest monarchs, and the most opulent princes, vied with each other in fostering

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[68] *Ibid*, 8-16.

the arts, by the genuine and only mode, – that of promoting and rewarding LIVING AND NATIVE EXCELLENCE." In contrast, Britons only recognized their home-grown geniuses posthumously. Bernard offered as proof the careers of Hogarth and Gainsborough whose paintings only fetched handsome prices after each had died. Bernard next compared the role of the respective states in supporting the fine arts. In 15-16th century Italian states, "the public revenue was not," according to Bernard, "applied in burying antiquities, foreign and domestic, in a costly mausoleum; nor was the attention of the connoisseur confined to the importation and acquisition of antient and extraneous compositions: but the efforts of all were employed in producing, for the delight and admiration of future ages, those wonders of art, which enlightened and splendid patronage never fail to produce."[69] Bernard's homage to Renaissance patrons was an explicit jibe at current British patronage, public and private, containing, as it did, an oblique insult of the publicly-funded British Museum as well as a challenge to the collectors of Continental artists. Bernard encouraged both groups to reevaluate their support of the fine arts with *The Director* providing the guidelines.

In another essay, "Life of Thomas Proctor," Bernard relayed the tale of an ill-fated artist, a Yorkshire-born clerk who, after viewing James Barry's *Venus Rising from the Sea*, quit his situation at a London counting house to pursue his childhood talent for drawing. Proctor gained admittance to the Royal Academy, where he won several prizes for his sculpture and history painting. Unfortunately, when he left the Academy three years later, Proctor faced a market driven by the demand for portraiture. He failed to translate his affinity and talent for history painting into the more marketable genre and was left destitute. Proctor had to pawn his art medals in order to survive, but in 1793 his lot seemed to improve. Benjamin West, President of the RA, secured a £30 stipend for Proctor to study in Rome for the next three years. But, as Bernard recorded, "the anguish of disappointment, and the pressure of indigence, had so debilitated his vital powers, that his enervated frame was incapable of supporting the change of fortune."[70]

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[69] *Ibid*, 17-8.

[70] Thomas Bernard, "The Life of Thomas Proctor," *The Director*, 7 (7 March 1807):198.

Three days later Proctor was found dead in his bed at the age of 28 – a victim, at least in Bernard's eyes, of British patronage.

Bernard intended his readers to associate a name with the issue of inadequate patronage, but he also wanted to stir them into anger and action over the fate of the national martyr, Proctor. How Bernard became familiar with Proctor's story is unknown, but he could not have created a more effective pawn for his propaganda. Proctor's character was above reproach. He was not an improvident waster, or no-talent hack; he was, as far as can be discerned, a diligent, talented artist who could not make a go of it because of circumstances largely beyond his control. Bernard hit this point home when he observed, "when genius bows its head under the pressure of distress, which has been occasioned by imprudence, or by indiscreet prodigality, we drop a sympathising tear over the errors of humanity." "When the vivid and active mind," he continued, "is seduced by vicious indulgence from the paths of rectitude, indignation is added to the regret which we undergo." Proctor, however, was guilty "neither [of] imprudence of conduct, nor licentiousness of self-indulgence."[71] His sole transgression, according to Bernard, was his devotion "to the more elevated branches of art" which made him unfit "for the mechanism of the *graphic manufactories* of the metropolis."[72] Bernard concluded his hagiography by imploring his audience "to foster and encourage English artists, and to reject the visionary and interested theories of those who, while Englishmen can excel in every branch of science and literature, attempt to disqualify them from the possession of any talent in the fine arts."[73]

Bernard's three-part essay, "On the Drama," dealt more comprehensively with the social significance of the arts, specifically their ability to affect behavior, and the dangers inherent in their neglect. Bernard broached an ever-timely question about the relationship between ideas and actions. Do books make revolutions? Do movies and video games create teenage killers? The question has

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[71] T. Bernard, "Life of Proctor," *The Director*, 203.

[72] *Ibid*, 203.

[73] *Ibid*, 204-5.

been posed in sundry ways, but Bernard's ultimate concern was to explore how the fine arts affected morals within society. Do 'immoral' plays corrupt their audience? If so, what can be done to meliorate the ill effect? These basic questions haunted Bernard and formed the bulk of his moralizing and didactic dissertation.

Calling men "creatures of imitation," Bernard held some very basic views on the impressionable nature of mankind, and particularly its susceptibility to the influence, for good or ill, of the arts. He feared most the "general and extended influence" of "a popular and amusing play" which could cause "injury to the national character."[74] Bernard presented several examples, beginning with John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728). According to the philanthropist, Gay's mock heroic of a highwayman abused "every principle of civil and religious order," and made "virtue, industry, prudence, and honesty ... the objects of every idle jest."[75] Bernard demonstrated the play's ill-effect by citing historical claims that highway robberies spiked after its first production in1728. He even dared label the author "an accessary before the fact, to all the robberies and murders which have been suggested by the presentation of it."[76] Elsewhere in his diatribe on drama, Bernard inserted a staged letter to the Director, affecting to be from a clergyman named John Jones. Jones' missive told of two juvenile criminals who, despite their age, were "old offenders." Their father, a wealthy tradesman, had indulged his sons' love of the theatre, much to the demise of their character, as the pair explained to the clergyman. They admitted to their confessor that Macheath, the hero of *The Beggars Opera*, had inspired them with his "courage and gallantry."[77] Although in dramatizing the effects of this play Bernard simply restated moral objections previously leveled by early eighteenth-century critics, he was able to infuse new life into these remonstrances by alluding to the "injury to the national character" brought about by the play's "ridicule of virtue" and "gloss and

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[74] T. Bernard, "On the Drama, Part I" *The Director* I: 357-59.

[75] T. Bernard, "On the Drama, Part II," *The Director* II: 81.

[76] *Ibid*, 81.

[77] *Ibid*, 79-80.

decoration of vice."[78] Bernard's characterization added a sense of urgency to the matter, especially during a time of war. The philanthropist would play this patriotic theme in his analysis of other 'immoral' productions.

Mary Inchbald's play *Lovers Vows* (1798), an English adaptation of August von Kotzebue's *Child of Love* (1790), was another target of Bernard's scrutiny. [79] His review opened with one more contrived epistle, this reputedly from a tradesman, Matthew Moody, who had taken his family to the play. Moody's fear "that the playhouse has done nothing but prepare my boy for the highway, and my girls for the bagnio"[80] grew from his children's admiration for the play's main characters, Frederick and Amelia. Neither character, in the tradesman's eyes, were proper moral examples for his children. Frederick, the illegitimate son of Baron Wilderhaim, was forced to beg alms on behalf of his ailing mother. When he approached the Baron he received only a pittance, after which he raised his sword against his father. As for Amelia, the baron's daughter, she ignored convention and aggressively pursued the object of her affection, namely Anhalt, her tutor and chaplain.

Moody's missive allowed Bernard to revisit the theme of corruption and drama, but another point of emphasis became the foreign, specifically the German, origins of the play. Bernard's problem with *Lover's Vows* was less the specific actions of the characters, as the manner in which the author treated the actions. Bernard could understand, for example, the mental anguish of Frederick, or his mother who had been betrayed by the false promises of the Baron; however, he refused to lionize them. "Given them your tears, your pity, your protection; strive by every act of kindness and mercy, to recall them to paths of peace and virtue. But do not," he warned, "honour and exalt them: do not propose them for example and imitation."[81] Inchbald anticipated this criticism and removed much offensive

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[78] T. Bernard, "On the Drama," *The Director* I: 356.

[79] Kotzebue (1761-1819) published *Das Kind der Liebe* in 1790; it was one of several sentimental plays that he penned. Inchbald (1753-1821) had tried to remove some of the more offensive material, but the play proved controversial nonetheless. It gained further notoriety from when Jane Austen included it in her *Mansfield Park* (1814).

[80] T. Bernard, "On the Drama, Part II," *The Director* II: 72.

[81] T. Bernard, "On the Drama, Part III," *The Director* II: 232.

material from Kotzebue's original, but even she prefaced her play with the words: "'*Vice is never so dangerous, as when it assumes the garb of morality.*'"[82] After consulting a literal translation of *Child of Love* in which Frederick's insolence and Amelia's coarse behavior appeared unabashed, Bernard appreciated the moderation of *Lovers Vows*. Still, with reference to Inchbald's Amelia, he observed that "the model is not so improved, nor its points so smoothed and polished, as ever to make it acceptable to female delicacy in England."[83] Bernard's ultimate point is that there are inherent dangers in trying to Anglicize foreign productions, especially those of German playwrights such as Kotzebue and Schiller, whose *The Robbers* and *The Stranger* also contained, according to the philanthropist, dubious moral lessons.

After drawing connections between morals and the stage, and exposing the dangers of productions imported from Germany, Bernard proposed several remedies for the decrepit state of drama in Britain. The aforementioned staged letters to the Director offer some insight into the mind of Bernard. Moody, for example, appealed to The Director to publicize plays in which "wit and mirth" might "be made consistent with honesty and virtue; and the stage be thereby made instead of an academy of vice, a school of morality."[84] Accordingly the Director suggested Richard Cumberland's sentimental comedies, which approached melodrama in their contrived and happy endings.[85] In the letter from the cleric Jones, the author, fearing that the objects of his woeful tale were not singular, dared a more drastic proposition to the Director, namely "whether any theatrical performances which are of a criminal or questionable tendency, should be allowed to be represented on the stage."[86] Jones' correspondence seemed to imply government interference, and Bernard, as the Director, offered a sympathetic ear. The latter called not for new legislation, but enforcement of statutes already on

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[82] *Ibid*, 228.

[83] *Ibid*, 233.

[84] T. Bernard, "On the Drama, Part II," *The Director* II: 72-3.

[85] Richard Cumberland (17332-1811), wrote more than 50 plays, the most popular of which were *The Brothers* (1769), *The West Indian* (1771), and *The Jew* (1794).

[86] T. Bernard, "On the Drama, Part II," *The Director* II: 80.

the books.[87] "Let us then hope," Bernard wrote, "that the Law will no longer be a *dead letter*; but that the tragic and comic Muses, will soon appear in their genuine and natural characters; – the enemies of vice, the correctors of folly, and the allies of virtue."[88] He advocated nothing less than state censorship, this would be "the paternal and superintending care of government" that he alluded to in his introductory essay to the Fourth Volume of SBCP reports.

The burden of setting a public example and protecting Britons from vice did not rest wholly with the state. Bernard had also alluded in *The Reports* to "the brotherly and individual efforts of other members of society," especially "the example of those to whom their elevated situation in life gives an enlarged scope, and more extensive influence."[89] Just as immoral plays had an extended negative impact, so too, according to Bernard, did the vice-filled life of certain members of the social and political elite. Of these, the Director took clear aim at the 'fashionable' lifestyle of the well-to-do. As before, Bernard used staged letters for his purpose. In "On the Drama," Bernard fielded a letter from one of the '*public characters*' of the metropolis, a reference to a prostitute or an actress, which some saw as synonymous. Bernard gave this correspondent the satirical name flower of London, or FLORA LONDINESIS, whose purpose in writing was to defend Mary Berry's play *Fashionable Friends* (1802). While the Drury Lane audience rejected the play, Flora dismissed that as "the old fashioned prejudices of the Gallery," arguing instead that the play was 'witty,' 'brilliant,' and contained "a true picture of *some persons* in fashionable life."[90] After conceding that the play contained "a little of what people pretend to call *fashionable vice*, in the character and conduct of the piece," she rebuked "the mob in the galleries" for their moralistic abuse of the play.[91] Appealing to the Director, she defended the heroine of the piece, Lady Selina, as "an example of the most *refined sentimentality*," adding, as evidence,

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[87] 10th Geo.II.cap.28

[88] T. Bernard, "On the Drama, Part III," *The Director*, II: 243.

[89] T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to Addington," *The Reports* IV: 8, 24-5.

[90] T. Bernard, "On the Drama, Part II," *The Director*, II: 76.

[91] *Ibid*, 78.

that "when she [Selina] leaves her husband and children in the country, and repairs to town, impelled by her *unfortunate* and ardent attachment for her friend's husband Lovell, she breathes nothing but the sentiments of an exquisite and too feeling heart."[92] The irony Bernard wishes to expose is that the cult of sentimentality which characterized some turn-of-the-century literature was so enamored with the purity of natural feelings, that it ignored conventions and often morality as well. Bernard could not accept such a choice.

Bernard, through Flora, satirized the morals of the fashionable and well-to-do; however, in a separate essay, "On the Art of Good Living," he attacked what they erroneously called the good life. In an unsigned letter from a denizen of the imaginary Haut-ton Castle, *The Director* heard about the cards, music, dice, French wines, French cuisine, and French chefs that formed the daily routine of this correspondent. He also learned that the west wing of the castle had been converted from a chapel into a stage, where, as might be expected, house servants frequently performed *The Beggar's Opera*. When the anonymous correspondent visited London during what he called 'the winter months' – April, May, June, and July –, "operas, masquerades, balls, concerts, theatricals, pic-nics, and that sort of thing, enable[d] [him] to keep very late hours and fill up the vacuity of existence, so as not to be abandoned to one's own meditations."[93] This mock portrayal of fashionable life is reminiscent of Bernard's diary entry from 1780 when he described the monks of Furness Abbey (see chapter 3). In both instances, the inversion of natural order, and the self-indulgent pursuit of pleasure, are meant to awaken patricians to the vacuousness of their fashionable existence, and to encourage them to reform their ways and become more socially conscious.

Bernard's concerted effort to 'reform' the pastimes and patronage of his peers naturally angered many among his target audience – a fact that ultimately affected the format of his literary magazine. Interestingly, the contributors to *The Director* published their essays anonymously. As founder, Bernard chose this format and his name does not appear once in any of the 24 numbers, save as

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[92] *Ibid*, 77.

[93] T. Bernard, "On the Drama, Part III," *The Director*, I: 261-2.

subscriber to the review. Bernard assumed several personae, including 'The Director,' 'A Friend to English Artists,' and 'Trismegistus Secundus,' but his ruse indicated no lack of conviction. Bernard was quite certain that his object was pure and his methods true; however, he was less sanguine about how others would receive his guidance. The experienced philanthropist knew, for example, that calling British patronage "indiscriminate, degrading, and selfish," as he did in *The Director*, might open an old wound, namely that felt by his aristocratic backers at his outspoken proposal for the British Institution. Bernard continued to work closely with these patricians and thought it politic to cloak his opinions in anonymity. While such a simple act protected the feelings of associates, it also liberated Bernard from any peer pressure at the Institution. Unknown and thus uninhibited, Bernard could bluntly express his critical view of British patrons, which, as has been shown, he did often in *The Director*.

Bernard's provocative assessment of British patronage drew immediate public response, particularly Charles Greville's pamphlet *Fly-Flap Presented to The Director* (1807). *Fly-Flap* represented not only a rebuttal of the *The Director's* appeal for patronage reform, but an inquiry into the man responsible for such opinions. Greville, writing under the initials 'C. F. G.,' rightly guessed 'The Director' to be "'a gentleman whose former task was 'making foundlings useful to society,'" an obvious allusion to Bernard's tenure as treasurer of the London Foundling Hospital. Familiarity with Bernard, however, in no way muted Greville's criticism. He accused Bernard of being 'dictatorial' and belittled the British Institution by calling the artists of its British School "*Masters* and *Misses* who have copied the fine Pictures lent by their Patriotic Proprietors." Greville's basic argument against the Institution was twofold. First, he maintained that the Royal Academy was more than adequate to British needs. "'Among the host of exhibitors [at the Academy]," he observed, "a few works were distinguished by original merit; but the observation I always made was, that patronage has been too great to mediocrity, and not great enough to bring forward rising genius; and

thus I acquit the public of the charge of the Director.'"[94] Since only a few Academy paintings were, in Greville's estimation, worthy, then the British Institution offered only redundant support to mediocre talent. Secondly, Greville cited the limited ability of British artists. "The principles on which the effect of colouring is produced, the character of the different schools, and their respective excellence," Greville asserted, "are not understood by our artists."[95] Such an assessment, if true, allowed Greville to discount the positive incentives offered by the British Institution as wasted.

The Fly-flap's insulting critique moved first Dibdin and then Bernard to respond in *The Director*. For the periodical's initial answer to the Fly-flap, Bernard passed the mantle of 'the Director' to Dibdin. This trickery allowed Dibdin to truthfully deny any formal dealings with foundlings, and preserved, in the process, Bernard's anonymity. Echoing sentiments that could easily have originated with Bernard, Dibdin fiercely defended the British Institution by observing that "the hope of *remuneration* is the strongest incentive to successful labour." "An artist," he continued, "like all other professional, and *unprofessional* men must have 'de quoi manger;'" therefore, Dibdin rhetorically asked whether the £5000 that the Institution had directed toward purchases of British history painting was "no encouragement to the fine arts?"[96]

Bernard's own rebuttal of the Fly-flap, a public letter addressed to the Director from 'A Friend to English Artists,' was ardent in its defense of native British genius, and scathing in its rebuke of Greville as a "foreign agent" whose main purpose was "to vilify the talents of our English Artists."[97] Bernard, in fact, accused the Fly-flap of belittling British sculptors so that "an eminent Italian artist, a friend of this said Monsieur Flyflap," might be asked "to prepare the public monuments, destined by a grateful country to those Heroes, to whom Britain owes its security and glory" – an allusion to the planned national

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[94] Quotation drawn from John Hoppner, "On English Painters; containing Remarks on a Publication entitled *a Fly Flap to the Director*," *The Artist* No.3 (28 March 1807): 5.

[95] *The Director* I:112

[96] *The Director* I: 93.

[97] *The Director* I: 110.

monument to Lord Nelson. Several influential patrons, including Greville, fought for Canova, the Italian artist in question, but Bernard, and others pushed for British adepts Bacon, Nollekens, Flaxman, or Westmacott.[98] Bernard interpreted Greville's advocacy of Canova as a slight, "as if British Art were not competent to erect the memorial to British valour!" In addition to questioning his support of Canova, Bernard derisively labeled the Fly-flap 'monsieur,' warning his readers that "the alien office has its eye upon him; and it is surmised that he is at least a foreign agent and emissary, if not a French Spy." Bernard's demonizing of Greville continued as he accused the Flyflap of "affect[ing], in French stile, to intermix personal allusions to your [the Director's] private character." "What decidedly proves him to be a Foreigner, if not a Frenchman," Bernard wrote in completing his barrage, is that "*he fights under false colours*; and assumes the initials of a very amiable and respectable Englishman. This is a base and wicked fraud, intended to injure the character of a worthy man, who is beloved and valued by all who know him: and who, I dare say, is heartily ashamed of what *Monsieur Flyflap* endeavours to Father upon him."[99]

Bernard's vitriolic response to Greville was more than personal payback, it symbolized one man's effort to alter the habits of an entire class of Britons, an attempt to reform a group that had faced political and social criticism since the mid eighteenth century. That class was the British aristocracy. From the 1740s, bourgeois literary figures had attacked the Francophile taste, manners, and speech of English patricians, while commercially based patriotic societies, including the Marine Society, the Society of Arts, the Society of Anti-Gallicans, challenged aristocratic leadership of the state. These early critiques of the traditional patriciate were often specific in their grievances and did not preclude widespread cooperation between bourgeois and aristocrat. The Society of Arts, for example, sponsored premiums for innovators in commerce, agriculture, or

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[98] John Hoppner (1758-1810), a portraitist and Academician, published a response to *FlyFlap* in which he made many similar points as had Bernard in the Director, especially that Britain boasted men who were more than capable of creating a worthy monument to Nelson. *The Artist* III: 13-14.

[99] *The Director* I: 113-4.

manufacturing, and they did so, in part, because the patrician-dominated state did not. Despite this implicit bourgeois critique, many influential noblemen contributed to the success of the society. Cooperation co-existed with criticism because as yet there was little suggestion that the aristocracy as a whole was corrupt or ineffectual. Much of that began to change by the 1780s in the aftermath of the Wilkes controversy and amid an ill-fated war with the American colonies. Anti-aristocratic venom became more general and potentially damaging. Radicals such as Thomas Paine and William Cobbett did not limit their barbs to specific policies, to individual politicians, or even to scheming factions; rather, they began to portray the British aristocracy collectively as a parasitic class, feeding on the British nation and its people. Not only were the activities of the British elite viewed as inept and irresponsible, they were painted as clearly un-British, during a time of war first with colonial America and later with revolutionary France. Even conservative middle-class moralists such as Hannah More observed, "to attempt to reform the poor while the opulent are corrupt is to through odours into the stream while the springs are poisoned." This public attack contributed to a crisis for the British ruling elite, one which Bernard sought to meliorate internally through public rebukes, such as the one on Greville, against unpatriotic patrician behavior.[100]

Each of Bernard's cultural projects, not just *The Director*, aimed to reform the behavior of British patricians while also rehabilitating their public image. On one level, Bernard's quest to get elite Britons to support morally uplifting art and literature, to buy British paintings and share their collections with the public, and to renounce the sensualist tendencies of their fashionable lifestyle, were pragmatic responses to specific social ills. As with philanthropy, Bernard assumed a change at the top, specifically an alteration of elite habits, would lead to a more efficient system. In the world of poor relief, this meant discouraging indiscriminate almsgiving and making philanthropy a science. In short he wanted to reform the old aristocratic philanthropy and replace it with a carefully directed, but elite-

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[100] Colley, *Britons*, 87-93, 152-4; Newman, *Rise of English Nationalism*, 63-122.

controlled project. The same could be said for the world of art patronage. The traditional patrons of the arts, the aristocrats, should not indiscriminately support artists regardless of their nationality, the morality of their work, or its social value. For instance, commissioning of portraits, which for Bernard symbolized the vanity of the old aristocratic values, must give way to disinterested patronage, that looked less to personal advantage and glorification than to the enrichment of the state, the nation, and its artists. On another level, Bernard's work was of great value in answering the public, class-based criticism from Paine, Cobbett, and More. By accepting the reproof of Bernard and others, by acting as better role models, setting aside personal pleasures such as gambling, card-playing, the Grand Tour, and other indulgences, the elite might diffuse the potency of its critics.

In revamping the image and cultural habits of patricians, Bernard's plans contributed to what Philip Harling called "a ruling-class success story." Bernard, as a member of the new British elite that emerged between 1780 and 1820, publicized ideas and reforms that allowed his peers to preserve their privileged and powerful position well into the Victorian era.[101] The resiliency of the British elite and their ability to weather the barbs of detractors rested, according to Linda Colley, precisely in this ability to adapt. Specifically, she points to the post 1780s era during which they "set about re-ordering their authority, their image, their ideas, and their composition."[102] In order to deflect criticism, and to re-establish its moral authority, the British patriciate changed some of its stripes. The passage of minor parliamentary and economic reforms, along with repeal of the corn laws did much to diffuse the accusation of 'Old Corruption, or as Harling described it, "a parasitic system that taxed the wealth of the nation and diverted it into the pockets of a narrow political clique whose only claim to privileged status was its proximity to the sources of patronage."[103] More important was the political

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[101] Harling, *Waning of Old Corruption*, 2. Cannadine, *Aspects of Aristocracy*, chapter 1, Colley, *Britons*, chapter 4.

[102] Colley, *Britons*, 149.

[103] Harling, *Waning of Old Corruption*, 1.

example set by Pitt and his disciples of "relentless hard work, complete professionalism, an uncompromising private virtue, and an ostentatious patriotism" which became a model of governance for this new elite. Giving up gambling and some French fashions, opening art collections to the nation, traveling the British Isles rather than taking the Grand Tour, these alterations also stole the wind from the sail of bourgeois criticism and helped preserve the ruling elite.[104] "Such limited concessions," according to David Cannadine, "merely served to consolidate the British landed elite's position: renewed, re-created, re-invented, and re-legitimated, it carried on so securely and so successfully that its very novelty was soon forgotten."[105]

All of these changes meant that ruling elite of Bernard's era was quite different from its eighteenth-century predecessor. "The ultimate paradox of Britain's so-called ancien regime was not," as Cannadine put it, "that it was so old, but rather that it was so new."[106] This new elite was in some ways more inclusive than the national aristocracies that went before; it included English noble and gentry families, Welsh, Scottish, and Irish landowners, but also self-made merchants, nabobs, and industrialists. Still it was by no means completely open, for only a few self-made men of talent were able to infiltrate its ranks. There is evidence to suggest that the reins of power were even more tightly entrenched in the hands of this new elite, primarily because armed with its rehabilitated public image, it had become less vulnerable to the critiques that Paine and others had formulated. Bernard, as a member of this new elite, played a significant role in shaping this new image through his cultural projects, especially *The Director*.

The Alfred Club

The third and final element of Bernard's cultural agenda, the Alfred Club, opened in Albemarle Street on 1 January 1809. The 'half-read' in coachman's cockney, was a prototype of the more famous Athenaeum Club (1824), and what

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[104] Colley offers an even more comprehensive list of changes, *Britons*, 167-93.

[105] Cannadine, *Aspects of Aristocracy*, 36.

[106] *Ibid*, 34.

John Timbs wrote of that club also described the Alfred, namely that there "individuals known for their scientific or literary attainments, artists of eminence in any class of the Fine Arts, and noblemen and gentlemen distinguished as patrons of science, literature, and the arts, could unite in friendly and encouraging intercourse."[107] Bernard conceived of the novel club, while at the Literary Club, of which he was also member. "At one of our dinners in 1807," he recorded in his memoir, "I proposed to them the formation of a Club addicted entirely to Literature, & excluding drinking, gaming & party politics." The philanthropist ruefully acknowledged that the single objection raised by his colleagues was "the impossibility of a club existing in London without those cardinal Virtues."[108] Not one to be so easily dissuaded, Bernard vowed to renew his proposal annually, and the following year he gained support and put plans into motion.

The club initially proved quite successful, at least in attracting members. In 1811 the Alfred received more than 354 applications for 6 vacancies.[109] The previous year competition had been so fierce that the Alfred trustees declined to admit the Duke of Cumberland unless he pass through the same admission procedures as all other applicants. Traditionally Princes of the Blood were admitted without ballot, so Cumberland's rejection was deemed noteworthy by *The Times*.[110] The novelty and early prestige of the Alfred attracted several notable literary figures, including Lord Byron, George Canning, and William Sotheby. By the 1830s, however, the newer Athenaeum and Travellers clubs had surpassed the Alfred in both prestige and membership. Bernard's club survived him by almost forty years, but in 1855 dissolved when most of its remaining members merged with the Oriental Club.[111]

Bernard's vision for the Alfred was clearly reformative. His proposal that the new club eschew gambling , drinking, and party politics set the sober tone he

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[107] John Timbs, *Clubs and Club Life in London*. (London: Chatto and Windus, 1872), 205-6.

[108] Bernard-Baker, *Pleasure and Pain*, 72.

[109] Ralf Nevill, *London Clubs Their History & Treasures* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1911), 283.

[110] *The Times*, 18 May 1810.

[111] Timbs, *Clubs and Club Life*, 204; Nevill, *London Clubs*, 284.

wished Britain's social elite to assume, even in their leisure. Several accounts of the Alfred indicate that members were at times painfully aware of Bernard's moralistic intent, long after his decease. One member, Lord Alvanley, admitted "I really could not enter the place without being put in mind of my catechism," a reference not only to the restrictions of the club, but its membership, which, at the time he wrote, included 17 bishops.[112] The focus on literature and science at the exclusion of all else also elicited reaction. Lord Dudley called it "'the dullest place in the world,'" adding "'you hear nothing but idle reports and twaddling opinions. It is the asylum of doting Tories and drivelling quidnuncs.'"[113] Lord Byron was slightly more kind. He called the club "'pleasant, a little too sober and literary, and bored with Sotheby and Francois D'Ivernois; but one met Rich, Ward, and Valentia, and other pleasant or known people; and it was, in the whole, a decent resource in a rainy day, in dearth of parties, or Parliament, or in an empty season.'"[114] Contrary to the aforementioned complaints, William Wilberforce, the most prominent figure of the Evangelical movement, thought the Alfred perhaps not sober enough. After dining at the club as Bernard's guest, Wilberforce confided to his diary that "I should fear, in dining there often, both self-indulgence and counter-spiritualizing tendencies."[115]

The occasion of Wilberforce's visit to the Alfred marked an auxiliary proposal Bernard had prepared for the club respecting the opening of a new theatre in London. The concern Bernard expressed in *The Director* about the morality of the stage spilled over into the activities of his social club. The proposed Alfred Theatre would be privately owned, but would provide a public model for all other London stages by presenting moral productions and by reserving a certain number of seats for less fortunate Londoners. The theatre never materialized, primarily because of the competition it would have afforded, but Wilberforce's reaction to Bernard's plan is worth noting: "no promiscuous

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[112] Timbs, *Clubs and Club Life*, 203.

[113] Griffiths, *Clubs and Clubmen*, 75.

[114] Timbs, *Clubs and Club Life*, 202-3. D'Ivernois (1757-1842) was a Swiss political economist; William Sotheby (1757-1833).

[115] Higgins, *The Bernards*, IV: 132.

admission – select plays and actors – all *pour la morale*. To consider it. Perhaps I spoke too freely about it – all cherished social affections, but *nonne*, too luxurious –too much tending to lower down the frame to the world's standard, and unspiritualize its affections? I have no time now, but will resume."[116] The Evangelical apparently approved Bernard's attempt to moralize the stage, but questioned whether even the most earnest secular plays would be appropriate. He ends his diary entry with a curious comment on Bernard. "How truly interesting is Sir Thomas Bernard! God bless him." For a man who had known and worked with Bernard for more than a decade, Wilberforce's comments betray a sense of surprise. The Evangelical never clarified what he found so interesting, but perhaps it was the fluent manner in which Bernard passed both in the world of fashion and the world of faith. Wilberforce knew Bernard's heart, so perhaps he was amazed that the philanthropist could enjoy the luxury of the Alfred without becoming consumed by it. He certainly walked a line that Wilberforce feared to tread, but Bernard knew that in order to convert his elite peers to a more earnest and socially conscious lifestyle, he would have to pick and choose his battles. The Alfred Club, for example, did not eschew fine dining or luxurious accommodations, but it did reject gambling and drinking. Just like Bernard's other two cultural projects, this club had an important role to play.

Bernard set unattainably high objectives for his trio of cultural schemes and while they fell short on several points, their contributions were considerable. The last of Bernard's plans was also the least consequential. The Alfred Club never opened its model theatre, and its membership had waned by the 1830s. Still, the format of the club inspired imitation in the form of the Athenaeum, which served during much of the Victorian era as an important nexus between British intellectual and social elite. Bernard's literary and artistic review, although more effectual than the Alfred, enjoyed only moderate success. Its brief duration, the 1807 season alone, and its 124 subscribers were hardly impressive; however, *The Director* was not infirm as its numbers would suggest. The brevity

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[116] *Ibid*, 132.

of its run, in fact, had less to do with the journal's popularity than it did Bernard's busy schedule. The philanthropist spent much of 1808 outside of London, in Durham, where his efforts were focused on the promotion of Andrew Bell's educational system. Despite its modest statistics, *The Director* boasted some very influential patrons and artists among its supporters. Heading the list of patrons were the Earl of Dartmouth, the Marquis of Stafford, and Sir George Beaumont, and as for artists, Farrington, Flaxman, Hoppner, Opie, and West all could be counted among the readership. The impact of Bernard's periodical was evident also in the responses it elicited. Several artists, including Prince Hoare and James Northcote, drew encouragement from *The Director*'s defense of British talent and formed their own periodical, *The Artist* shortly after Bernard's first number. *The Artist* not only echoed *The Director's* sentiments on patronage, it also offered firm support for the British Institution. Regarding promotion of the Institution, Bernard's review seems to have been effective. In the years following 1807, the activities of the Institution, particularly the exhibits of its British Gallery, drew reviews and attention from numerous other periodicals, including *The Examiner*, *Monthly Magazine*, and *The Anti-Jacobin Review*. Not all the comment was favorable, but at least his ideas were under public debate and that pleased Bernard. The increased public exposure in these other outlets for his patronage society likely made Bernard's decision to discontinue *The Director* easier. At any rate, Bernard's attention to the fine arts lingered long after the memory of his review had faded. He continued to play an important role at the British Institution, and, in 1809, opened the Alfred club.

As far as his cultural plans were concerned, the apple of Bernard's eye was the British Institution. It also proved to be the most significant of his projects. Contrary to his quixotic hopes, Bernard's patronage society failed to usher in a golden age of British painting. The Institution did, however, establish a model for supporting the fine arts which challenged aristocratic patrons, the entrenched Royal Academy, and the state itself to institute changes. Among the ruling elite it became more common to open collections to the public, and, in the post-1824 era, to bequeath them to the state's care at the British National Gallery. Regarding

that new gallery, the British Institution served as its private prototype. The Institution's corporate purchases and their display in its British Gallery guided the founders of the national gallery. The national gallery, it should be added, might have appeared much later than 1824 had it not been for the persistent lobbying of Bernard and his colleagues at the Institution. As for the Royal Academy, its members sometimes frowned upon the boldness of the British Institution; however, the former was better for the challenge. The Academy drew from the example of the Institution and began requiring students to study the Old Masters. The public impact of Bernard's patronage society is more difficult to gauge. There is no doubt as to the popularity of the Institution's exhibits of Old Masters, and especially its special displays of home-grown talent, such as Sir Joshua Reynolds. These exhibits were unprecedented in Britain but whether they inspired patriotism during a time of war, or stimulated a better appreciation of moral and liberal arts, as Bernard hoped, is impossible to tell. While this question remains in doubt, there can be no doubt that the British Institution, Bernard's brainchild, was an innovative and groundbreaking organization.

The impact and success of Bernard's cultural trio owed much to the rhetorical strategies that he employed. Many of these methods proved effective because by 1805 Bernard had perfected them during his philanthropic work. First of all, Bernard, in his writing for the British Institution and for *The Director*, personalized issues by making them face-to-face. In *The Director*, Bernard put real and imagined names, such as Proctor or Flora Londinensis, before the public in order to illustrate the importance of his campaign for patronage reform. *The Reports* are likewise littered with the stories of people, individual innovators of effective poor relief but also tragic victims of unemployment and trade depression, or worse yet, the indiscriminate care of casual almsgiving. In each scenario, it was essential for Bernard that the audience identify with the issue at hand and the people it affected. At the same time, the philanthropist effectively conveyed face-to-face examples in their social rather than personal context. In the tale of Thomas Proctor, Britain's lack of a determined public policy respecting support of the fine arts, and the prejudices of a private market that supported British

portraitists, illustrators, and mechanical drafters, but not history painters were co-conspirators in the artist's demise. By presenting Proctor as a victim of his environment, Bernard suggested that other tragedies might follow. Bernard had presented poverty in similar fashion, refusing to dismiss the bulk of the problem on the personal failings of the poor, whom many before him had labeled lazy. Rather, Bernard blamed indiscriminate poor relief, both public and private, for stripping hard-working laborers of their will to be independent, and fostering the pauperization of the poor. Not only did Bernard present these issues as social problems, he crafted them into causes for national embarrassment. The deficient support for an earnest and hardworking artist, just like the failure to provide dignified relief for an unemployed laborer, reflected on the entire British nation. To illustrate as much, Bernard painted past societies, such as Renaissance Italy, or worse, Britain's contemporary rival, the French, as examples of extensive government support of the arts and hosts to magnificent national galleries of art. Each of the above methods combined to personalize and ultimately prioritize patronage as an important and urgent social issue.

Equally important to Bernard's success in the world of fine arts was his ability to justify his cause and explain his solution in simple, easily digested terms. Once again, parallels between Bernard's cultural and charitable plans will be evident. In order to justify active support for the fine arts during a time of war, Bernard broadcast the social utility of the arts. "Against the prevalence of that sensuality, which has corrupted and destroyed a succession of great empires where the arts and sciences have not been duly cultivated," he wrote, "they offer a delightful and efficacious remedy; protracting the period of decay and dissolution."[117] Next the philanthropist used a deserving/non-deserving distinction in order to further justify support of British artists. His "Life of Thomas Proctor" affords the best example. Proctor appeared blameless in his own demise; he was not an idler but a dedicated history painter. Proctor's ethic distinguished him from others, making him a most deserving subject for relief. Deserving or not

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[117] T. Bernard, "Introductory Essay," *The Director*, I: 4.

relief was not to be had, at least not in time to save the melancholy artist. Bernard employed similar distinctions in his philanthropy, especially between laboring poor and pauper. The philanthropist often relayed how hard working laborers were made permanent paupers by indiscriminate relief – a tragedy akin to the plight of Proctor.

From this distinction Bernard could begin to outline his basic solution of self-help, assisted by government protection and elite leadership. He enjoined: "Let us honour and encourage our own artists; –let us supply them with the means of instruction, and the motives to exertion; and let us be confident that England will be as superior in the fine arts as she is in every other object of attainment."[118] The phraseology and basic message of this is almost identical to earlier appeals from *The Reports* regarding the poor. "Let *useful* and *practical* information be offered to them;" Bernard wrote in *Volume I*, "give them *time* to understand, and the *choice* of adopting it; and I am mistaken, if they do not show as much good sense on the subject, as any other class of men in the kingdom,[119]. In *Volume V*, he added, "Let us endeavour to operate by individual kindness and encouragement, by the prospect of acquiring property, and by every other incitement to industry and prudence: – and we shall find that, when the component parts of the body politic become sound and perfect, the state will be healthy and thriving."[120] The goal slated for Bernard's philanthropy was virtually indistinguishable from his hope for British patronage of the arts, and the methods were not altogether different. The SBCP, for example, had sought to meliorate the domestic habits of the laboring poor by offering positive incentives through self-help schemes; but the British Institution wanted to alter the behavior of British artists by sponsoring premiums and prize competitions in specified fields such as 'historical painting'. Bernard and his associates did not merely serve the interests of the poor or the artistic, they also claimed an authority to direct efforts in ways that they deemed acceptable. The dualistic aims of Bernard's program were apparent in their

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[118] *The Director*, 205.

[119] T. Bernard, "Preliminary Address," *The Reports* I: 5.

[120] T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to Wilberforce," *The Reports* V: 30.

prizes, their exhibits, and the school of painting that they established. The prizes of the BI were welcomed by artists, but it was this society of patrons who acted as judge, and who dictated the objects. The Institution was interested in promoting historical painting rather than portraiture as indicated by the prizes, but also the exhibitions that prohibited portraits and limited entries to British artists. In essence they were saying if you go this way you will be rewarded. The nationalistic fervor was also apparent in the creation of the British School, that served to retrain artists. The state and the social elite were mutually responsible for creating a positive environment in which, on the one hand, British artists could thrive, and on the other, the poor could remain independent, if not prosperous. If such reform was not realized in the art world, then the death of Thomas Proctor might be just the first of many similar victims. The remarkable commonalities between Bernard's charitable and artistic subjects reiterate that the latter truly were extensions of his philanthropy and social reform.

PART THREE:

PHILANTHROPIST AND POLITICAL LOBBYIST, 1812-1818

During the last decade of his life, Sir Thomas Bernard poured most of his energy into winning a repeal of the excise tax on salt. Chapter Seven opens with a closer look at the philanthropic origins of Bernard's interest in salt taxes. During periods of dearth, the SBCP had periodically purchased salted fish and resold them to the poor at a reduced price. When Bernard and other philanthropists tried to renew this project during the trade depression of 1812, their efforts were impeded by overzealous excise officers who required the fisheries to adhere to the letter of regulations affixed to the salt laws. After considerable investigation of the salt laws and their effect, Bernard became convinced that their repeal would benefit all Britons, rich and poor alike. He spent three years fighting to remove the salt excise before he died in 1818.

Although Bernard had sought the assistance of parliament before, e.g. for fever hospitals, small pox vaccination, and a national gallery of art, he could hardly be called a political figure. From 1815 to 1818 that changed. Bernard used all his connections and all his powers of persuasion to move the members of Parliament. The philanthropic publicity machine that he had built was now used to awaken the public to the inequity and corruption involved in the enforcement of the salt laws, as well to their negative impact on the British economy. He encouraged Britons to petition parliament with their own tales of corruption or despair, which they did beginning in 1816. Many town meetings also drew inspiration from Bernard's nationwide campaign. The aging philanthropist also orchestrated a lobby of experts from agricultural improvers to respected physicians to testify before the Board of Trade and then Commons in support of the repeal. Bernard was not the first to employ such tactics, but he may be considered a pioneer of novel political methods of applying popular pressure to institute reform.

Despite warnings from friends, Bernard persisted in this campaign almost to his dying day. He was determined to provide this final public service regardless of his health. The dedication with which he pursued repeal reflected an ethic of disinterested acceptance of social duty that came to characterize the values of the post-1780 British elite, an ethic that Bernard had learned from his youth.

CHAPTER SEVEN:
OPPONENT OF THE SALT TAX, 1800-1825

In 1812 amid a wartime depression, Sir Thomas Bernard[1] revisited the 'philanthropy of fish,' a plan for supplying urban poor with inexpensive fish; this move ultimately led him into a sustained campaign against the salt taxes.[2] Although early in his career Bernard cautiously supported the use of temporary wheat substitutes during dearth, his first introduction to fish philanthropy came in 1801 when Patrick Colquhoun, a London magistrate, approached the general committee of the SBCP. Colquhoun's plan was to increase fish consumption among city's poor by increasing supply. The Society enlisted fisheries to supply London's Billingsgate market with salted herrings, pilchards, and cod, a practice they continued sporadically during the winter months of the next decade.[3] In 1812 Bernard backed a new organization, the Association for the Relief of the Manufacturing and Laboring Poor (hereafter the AMLP), which had extended fish-philanthropy beyond London's borders and into several manufacturing districts. The first two seasons of AMLP operations proceeded without event; however, in 1814 an officer informed the Association that its suppliers must limit the salt used for preservation and transportation to accord with 41st Geo.IIIc.89, the so-called "Sprinkling Act." The mere prospect of adhering to a maze of laws and excise duties regulating domestic sale and use of salt led many fisheries to renege on their contracts. The fisheries' aversion to these statutes, many of which dated to Elizabethan England, had grown precipitously since 1798 when jurisdiction passed from the Salt Office to the Board of Excise and as the levy trebled from 5*s* to 10*s* per bushel in 1798 and then to 15s in 1805. The weight of the salt laws also lay in

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[1] When Sir Francis Bernard died in 1779, his title passed to Thomas's elder brother, John. Sir John's death in 1809 meant that the baronetcy fell to the new Sir Thomas.

[2] Bernard never used the term 'philanthropy of fish;' it refers to the title of my "The Philanthropy of Fish, Thomas Bernard and the Salt Duties," in *Consortium on Revolutionary Europe 1750-1850 Selected Papers* (2000): 386-95.

[3] The *Annual Report of the SBCP*, 1810 included £214 for purchase of fish. This is the latest notice of such an expenditure that I have found.

the paperwork and official supervision which had become more intricate since 1798.[4] In short, compliance with the salt laws affected cost and efficiency in the fisheries, which, in turn, affected the AMLP. Rather than seeking a particular solution to the AMLP's specific problem, e.g. a special tax exemption from the state, Bernard pursued a permanent solution, requiring either a parliamentary repeal, or at the very least a commutation of all regulations and taxes on salt. The philanthropist devoted the last two years of his life to this objective.

Bernard published several essays, first on the fish philanthropy and then on the effect of the salt duties. His hard work began to show results in 1817. That year parliament passed a bill (57thGeo.IIIc.49) allowing the use of rock salt in the fisheries duty free, and listened as one of its members moved for a more thorough investigation of all the salt laws. Months before that probe took place, Commons received extensive testimony from an independent Board of Trade inquiry which had concluded in April. The following March, a much-awaited committee on the salt laws was formed and on 1 June 1818, it recommended that parliament vote to repeal the duties. As it was late in the session, that recommendation lay dormant for another season. Meanwhile, on July 1st, the most active opponent of the salt laws, Sir Thomas Bernard, died. He never saw the victory for which he had fought so hard, he never read the 1824 bill that ended the impost on salt in Great Britain, and, since he was not a member, he never cast the deciding vote in parliament. Nevertheless, those who did vote on repeal, champions and enemies alike, knew well what Bernard had meant to this cause. He had transformed a little noticed tax into a public issue by spearheading a national campaign of public letters, pamphlets, town meetings, and newspaper advertisements. His correspondence and publications helped forge a powerful lobby of farmers, magistrates, fisheries, and manufacturers that pressured them into action. There is no question that the repeal of 1824 was built upon the diligence and determination of an infirm but

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[4] After the final hike in 1805, the salt tax generated a revenue of £1.5 million per annum. Before 1798 the tax was paid only at first removal from the salt works, or, if foreign, on first arrival in port. Permits were issued upon payment after which it was free to be sold. After 1798 every retailer of salt, no matter how small, had to register each transaction and pay duty. See Hughes, *Studies in Administration*, 180-82.

dedicated philanthropist, Sir Thomas Bernard.

Surprisingly Bernard's final project has received scant attention from historians, and those who deign to mention it are polarized in their opinions. J. R. Poynter, an historian of poor relief debates in England, offered only scorn for Bernard's final plan, offering the quip: "was the Malthusian challenge to be met so easily with a kettle of fish and a grain of salt?"[5] An historian of state administration, Edward Hughes, was more kind. In fact Bernard serves as the protagonist of Hughes' history of English salt taxation. The historian carefully documented not only Bernard's contribution to repeal, but also the philanthropist's many charitable projects. My study builds from this foundation, exploring the philanthropic context of salt law repeal, as well as the tools that Bernard employed during his final crusade. Bernard's methodology, specifically his publicity campaign, solicitation of the Board of Trade, and lobby of Parliament, marked the culmination of a life's experience; it also heralded the appearance of a new brand of politics that some call 'modern.' The concluding segment of this chapter re-examines Bernard's extraordinary dedication to salt law repeal. Despite declining health, he fought almost until his dying breath to purge the Excise rolls of what he deemed an offensive tax. His passionate resolve epitomized an emerging ideal of public service that characterized the ethos of the post-1780 British elite, and certainly defined the life of this philanthropist.

Philanthropy of Fish

Bernard's first exposure to the philanthropy of fish came on 15 November 1800 when Patrick Colquhoun, a London magistrate, presented the SBCP a plan for supplying Londoners with corned herrings. The committee approved what they heard and commissioned Nicholas Vansittart, a prominent member and future Chancellor of the Exchequer, to liaise with Pitt's ministry on the tax implications of the plan. The exact nature of Vansittart's mission remain obscure, but at the Society's next committee meeting he reported that SBCP suppliers could use salt

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[5] Poynter, *Society and Pauperism*, 198.

duty free under 25th Geo.IIIc.65. This statute allowed unlimited use of British salt duty free for the North Sea cod fisheries. Once this was settled, the Society opened subscriptions and solicited northern fisheries by advertising in Edinburgh newspapers. The Society raised more than £4800 in subscriptions with which it purchased and marketed over 3 million herrings to Londoners at two fish a penny. Herring sales began on 3 December lasting through the end of January, after which the Society initiated new contracts with cod and mackerel fisheries in the West Country, especially Cornwall. The SBCP wrapped up its piscine project on 3 July 1801 and honored Colquhoun by making him a life member of its general committee.

The inaugural success of the philanthropy of fish inspired Bernard to insert an account of this project and its impact in the third volume of *The Reports*. He reported, for example, that higher demand for fish had dampened price inflation for other staples while significantly improving the diet of the London poor. Bernard's focus, however, was on advantages that would accrue to the fisheries if more Londoners and Britons opted for fish rather than beef or dear wheat. The special attention afforded the fisheries in this report was timely, coming as it did on the heels of the Peace of Amiens. In 1802, faced with the prospect of peace and thousands of demobilized soldiers and sailors, unemployment presented a more immediate concern than grain prices which had moderated significantly since 1800.[6] Bernard anticipated that greater demand for fish would translate into more fisheries which, in turn, would open "proper employment" for veterans who were, according to Bernard, "not habituated to even and monotonous labour, but accustomed to the vicissitude and lottery of naval or military enterprise." Fishery work closely mimicked the uncertainty of military life; more importantly, it provided "an honorary engagement of service for our next trial of national strength and resources" and "a preservation from idle and vicious courses of life."[7] In short,

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[6] In the decade 1800-9, the yearly price average per imperial quarter peaked in 1801 at 119s.6d., significantly above the decade average of 84s.8d. Eric J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State: Early Industrial Britain, 1783-1870* (London: Longman, 1983), 402.

[7] T. Bernard, "Extract from an account of the Measures taken, during the late Scarcity, for supplying the Poor with corned Herrings, and other cheap Fish," *The Reports* III:237-8.

expansion of the fisheries would benefit national security and the social order.

Bernard's preliminary interest in the fisheries and fish philanthropy led to a heightened awareness of salt's many uses for agriculture and manufacturing. Salt was used to make barilla, for example, and fishery salt was used as an effective manure.[8] Given the versatility of salt, Bernard began to question the wisdom of its taxation. Such thoughts led him, in 1802, to consider, if only casually, the prospect of a free market in salt. The advantages of repeal, he posed "would be great and extensive; not only in the fisheries, but in agriculture, in manufactures, and in the preserving of animal food."[9] Bernard's initial observations accorded with the government's public position at the time. In 1801, William Pitt proclaimed salt law repeal would be a top priority after the war when its collection was less vital to the state revenue. Henry Addington echoed Pitt's sentiment in 1802, expressing a determination "to bring the duty on salt under consideration of Parliament; in hope that they might be greatly reduced, if not totally repealed."[10] Of course, the peace of 1802 proved temporary, making repeal unlikely. The issue did not truly regain momentum until after the peace of 1815.

Bernard's renewed interest in the philanthropy of fish after 1812 reflected a recurrence of economic distress. The British economy of the Napoleonic era struggled to deal with periodic crop failures, population growth, inflation, trade depressions, and wide-scale unemployment, not to mention the ideological and political crises fueled by war with France. Lean years often became turbulent too. Waves of food riots and Luddite machine breaking were a commonplace in years of dearth, especially in 1795-96, 1800-01, and again in 1811-12 and 1816-17. Rioters, many of whom were hard-working laborers, often clamored for magisterial regulation of grain price and quality, for prosecution of grain dealers' sharp

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[8] Foul salt was also used on rough pasture with some positive effect. See C. S. Davies, *The Agricultural History of Cheshire* (Manchester, UK: The Chetham Society, 1960), 116-17; and Sir T. Bernard, *On the Supply of Employment and Subsistence for the Labouring Classes in the Fisheries, Manufactures, and the Cultivation of Waste Lands; with Remarks on the Operation of the Salt Duties, and a Proposal for their Repeal* [hereafter *Letter to Nicholas Vansittart*] (London: 1817), 9-22.

[9] T. Bernard, "Supplying the Poor with Corned Herrings," *The Reports* III: 239-40n.

[10] Bernard, *Case of the Salt Duties*, 130-31.

business practices, or for basic relief from parochial authorities.[11] The fact that these laborers resorted to violence, albeit usually against property, suggested that the public relief system, the Elizabethan Poor Law, was inadequate.[12] It was this very group of people, the laboring poor, who had been the primary focus of many private philanthropists, including Bernard, whose SBCP had been designed in part to supplement the poor laws. Since urban laborers were also the chief targets of the philanthropy of fish, it followed that Bernard and other organizations, such as the newly-formed AMLP and Fish Association, would adopt this measure amid the economic crisis of 1812.

The AMLP was formed in London on 25 May 1812 to assess depressed conditions in British manufacturing communities and organize a relief effort. The Association established a central base of operations in London but encouraged the foundation of autonomous branches in Stockport, Nottingham, Birmingham and many other locales. The newspapers of the Metropolis provided much-needed publicity and a solid fund-raising base; however, regional affiliates acted independently to gather and broadcast accurate information about the specific needs of each community. The Association's directors trusted that local members, knowledgeable in local conditions and needs, could best make those decisions that would make relief efficient and effective. As information streamed into London, the AMLP directors gained a vivid picture of the extent of the crisis, a host of causes, and ultimately a number of possible relief projects. The Association's field correspondence revealed unemployment and inflation as the primary complaints. Napoleon's Continental system was largely to blame since it closed or constricted British manufacturers' access to European and American markets. The net result was trade depression, cutbacks and layoffs, especially in English textile regions. In Leeds, for example, nearly half of the working population was in a "state of

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[11] On riots and relief, see E. P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," and "The Moral Economy Reviewed," in *Customs in Common* (New York, 1991), 185-351. See also, John Bohstedt, *Riots and Community Politics in England and Wales, 1790-1810* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1983).

[12] An excellent introduction to the debate over the poor laws remains, J. R. Poynter, *Society and Pauperism* (1969).

distress," one-third faced similar circumstances in Yorkshire, and more than 2,000 individuals in Leicestershire.[13] In one area, as reported by a Yorkshire weaver, wages plummeted to half their 1805 level, for him personally from 28*s* to 11*s* 6*d* for the same work. Other accounts reported textile and pottery wages at almost half what they hade been during the depression of 1800-01. Inflation only made things worse. Food prices for oatmeal, wheat, and potatoes were inflated from 50 to 100 percent.[14]

The volatile mixture of unemployment, low wages, and inflationary food prices pointed to a potentially greater problem in the eyes of the AMLP: pauperization. Obviously the extent of the 1812 crisis forced numerous laborers to apply for parochial relief; the traditional poor law system was soon overwhelmed. The Association feared that temporary assistance might degenerate into long-term dependence. Their first public report made this clear.

> When a poor man has no other prospect than to drudge, day after day, for what will not satisfy the cravings of nature, and has no hope of making the least provision for a time of sickness or decrepitude, the stimulus (to work and exert himself) is taken away. That independent spirit which would prompt him to support his family by every honest exertion is broken down; and from the moment that he begins to accept parochial relief, he gradually sinks, in mind as well as circumstances, to the state of the pauper; he loses his independence; and having no motive for exertion, he will naturally become indolent, and finally claim support at the hands of the public as a matter of right.[15]

Pauperization was a familiar foe for many of the philanthropists and magistrates who patronized the AMLP, including Bernard whose SBCP had frequently warned of its ill effects. The challenge for the Association was to relieve immediate

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[13] *Report of the Association formed in London for the Relief and Benefit of the Manufacturing and Labouring Poor* [hereafter *AMLP Report*] (London, 1813), 5-6.

[14] *AMLP Report*, 7-9.

[15] *AMLP Report*, 10-11.

distress without contributing to new and more permanent problems.

After reviewing the problems and its options, the AMLP settled on fish philanthropy as the primary element of a deflationary strategy. Promoting fish consumption would, they postulated, not only improve Britons' diet, but reduce demand for scarce commodities such as oats and wheat. Lighter demand for bread corn would deflate prices thereby offering some relief to all Britons, but especially to laborers whose earnings hovered near subsistence level. The Association first implemented its plan in London in June under the direction of William Hale. The plan was fairly simple. The Association guaranteed fishermen that they would buy at a competitive price 10-20,000 mackerel daily, then would resell the fish to the manufacturing poor at a reduced rate. The response to the AMLP's overtures was immediate: London's mackerel supply spiked and prices fell to 2-3*d* per fish. On 15 June fisheries began to fill the orders placed by the Association; 17,000 fish arrived that day, were transported to Spitalfields, and retailed to weavers and other workers at a penny each. This was but the beginning. At its peak, 500,000 mackerel were bought and sold in one day.[16] Such an extraordinary increase in supply overwhelmed the Association and Spitalfields which could not possibly make use of so many fish in so little time. The AMLP thus expanded its London operations into neighboring districts on the same terms that they had offered the weaving district.

In late June the AMLP extended its efforts to the rest of England. As an experiment the Association contracted for 200 tons of corned, or salted cod, and for 400,000 corned herrings to be distributed and sold to regional chapters in Yorkshire and Sheffield.[17] Unfortunately some local chapters refused shipment of the fish because the poor would not have them either because of taste, or perhaps distaste at having their diet dictated to them. "[T]he prejudices of the poor," as the Association termed them, were obviated in some districts where skeptics had prevailed. In some cases, rejection may have been based on ignorance of the

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[16] Sir T. Bernard, *An Account of a Supply of Fish for the Manufacturing Poor with Observations* [hereafter *An Account of Fish*] (London: 1813), 6-9, and *AMLP Report*,15-18.

[17] T. Bernard, *An Account of Fish*, 10; and *AMLP Report*, 18.

preferences of the lower orders. In Sheffield, "an opinion had partially prevailed, that the poor would not eat salt fish, but," the local SBCP treasurer wrote Bernard, "the evidence is decisive that *the consumption would be large, could the supply be obtained.*"[18] In an earlier crisis in the winter of 1800-1, Devon magistrates tried to push fish consumption by requiring parishes to stock such food alternatives to sell at subsidized prices.[19] Bernard and the AMLP faced a similar challenge in convincing the poor throughout Britain just how nutritious, not to mention how palatable, salted fish could be.

The early success of the AMLP inspired Bernard to write *An Account of the Supply of Fish for the Manufacturing Poor, with Observations* in January 1813. He published this pamphlet with SBCP funds, but it never appeared in *The Reports* which had been discontinued for the time being. Bernard's tract typified an SBCP account; it opened with a factual report of AMLP operations, and concluded with a series of Bernard's observations on the plan. Bernard praised Hale's experiment as an effective alternative to "the practice upon any *symptoms of scarcity*, of purchasing up large quantities of Wheat, Rice, Potatoes, and other necessary article of life; to be sold afterwards to the poor under prime cost."[20] These "*Quack Medicines,*" though well-meaning, actually made things worse, raising local prices of an already scarce commodity, and increasing consumption of the same. Fish philanthropy, although a food subsidy, was immune to these objections. It could be supported without negatively affecting local markets for scarce bread corn; its supply seemed limitless for an island nation, and increased fish consumption, even under an artificial bounty, would ease the demand and price of more scarce staples (wheat, rice, potatoes). More importantly, the expansion of fisheries would open employment opportunities for surplus population.

Bernard followed his laudatory remarks with expressions of concern about the inadequate state of fish marketing in London. The only wholesale fish market

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[18] T. Bernard, *An Account of Fish*, 18.

[19] Bohstedt, *Riots and Community Politics*, 66.

[20] T. Bernard, *An Account of Fish*, 15n.

sanctioned by the Corporation of London was Billingsgate. When ships unloaded their fish at Billingsgate there was little chance for their cargo to reach Londoners living beyond the immediate vicinity of the market. The primary distributors of fish in the city were women who loaded baskets with fish and retailed them throughout the city. Their geographic range was limited and their attendance at Billingsgate was not dependable. While these women visited the fish market, demand was steady and fisheries continued the flow of fish up the Thames. In the spring, however, when fruit markets opened, hawkers opted to sell currants or gooseberries, which could be had in almost any wholesale market, rather than traveling a long distance to Billingsgate for fish.[21] Without distribution the fish market dried up, as fisheries looked to other markets outside London. It was a most inefficient system; Bernard estimated that 90 percent of Londoners had no effective access to fresh fish, a situation he hoped to rectify by calling a meeting to discuss measures "to open the supply of fresh Fish for he benefit of the Capital, and of such other places as are capable of it."[22]

Bernard's publication provoked the formation of a new society, the Fish Association for the Benefit of the Community (hereafter Fish Association). The Fish Association first met on 6 March 1813 at Thatched-House Tavern in London, proclaiming its goal as "obtaining of a more copious supply of fresh and corners fish, – for the support of our manufacturers, – for the better sustenance of out cottagers, by a considerable addition of wholesome and nutritious food, – for the supply of our West Indian Colonies, – and for exportation to foreign countries, in exchange for wheat, coffee, wine, oil, and other articles, so as to diffuse throughout the country that PLENTY, the attainment of which is divested of all minor considerations, and free from all objection."[23] Its object so closely mirrored that of the AMLP that the two seemed indistinguishable. The significant overlap in membership, including fish philanthropy director William Hale, added to this impression, as did the fact that when the Fish Association dissolved in 1815 it

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[21] *Ibid*, 3-4.

[22] *Ibid*, 23.

[23] *First Report of the Fish Association*, 7.

donated its funds to the AMLP.

During its brief existence the Fish Association limited its plans to improving the marketing and distribution of fish within London. Their first task was to update the city's market infrastructure, beginning with Billingsgate. Located in the oldest part of the city and within earshot of the Tower of London, this market was inconvenient to Marylebone and other heavily populated western districts. Moreover, it could not service a metropolis of two million inhabitants especially since its main distributors were basket-bearing street hawkers. As a first step, the Fish Association recommended a salt warehouse be attached to Billingsgate for the preservation of unsold fish. They also investigated how to overcome the Thames's navigational obstacles. When wind direction or the tides proved unfavorable, fishing vessels commonly ditched their cargo rather than wait indefinitely for better conditions. The Fish Association proposed alternative routes that bypassed the more difficult stretches of the Thames altogether. They suggested, for instance, that Sussex fisheries might unload at Brighton, and those from Essex at Holy Haven. From either of these alternative ports the fish could be transported into London by land carriage, thus obviating the need to navigate the Thames all the way to Billingsgate. These proposals were not without their own problems. The Brighton route, for instance, ran the risk of interference from tax collectors. Sussex fishers claimed that any fish cart sent to London was forced to pay a post tax that amounted to 28 shilling per carriage. As for the Holy Haven plan, it required a considerable initial investment to construct wharfs and cut a 5-6 mile stretch of new road.[24] Although the Association ordered a survey for its road project, and hired a lawyer to investigate the legality of the post tax as it applied to transporting fish, neither scheme passed the planning stage.[25]

The Fish Association knew that making Billingsgate more efficient was but part of the task; they proposed the construction of new markets as well as

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[24] *Second Report of the Fish Association* (London: 1813), 1-7. When the Fish Association disbanded, the AMLP briefly pursued the Holy Haven road project. *AMLP Second Report*, 21-2.

[25] The Fish Association even flirted with a railway plan to bing fish into the city. Later the AMLP considered using steam ships to overcome the Thames' wind and tide obstacles.

improvements in market information. The Association's publications reminded the public, for example, that during the reign of George II, legislation had been passed (22d Geo.II,c.49) in support of a wholesale fish market in Westminster. Even though London's population had grown dramatically since 1749, no such market had opened as of 1813. The Fish Association hoped its publicity might breath new life into the stillborn Westminster project, but it also addressed broader issues. The price of meat, bread, cheese, and other commodities were part of a Londoner's common knowledge, but the same was not true of fish. This affected the fish market greatly. Londoners, according to the Association, opted for meat over fish because they knew the former's cost and quality ahead of time. The chaotic nature of the city's fish supply precluded any such knowledge for herrings, pilchards, or any other variety. The Association addressed this by improving consumer information. They encouraged fish retailers, for example, to post daily prices outside their shops and throughout the city. Collectively these measures were designed to correct major distribution and marketing problems and thereby increased demand within the city. London was just the beginning. The Association's popularization of fish consumption in the city would lead surrounding communities, and eventually all of Britain, to follow suit.

The Fish Association's dreams were much more grandiose than their achievements. The organization disbanded in 1814 and its funds passed to the AMLP, which continued to direct fish philanthropy.[26] The *Second Report of the AMLP* (1815) indicated that it shared the Fish Association's concern about Billingsgate. It quickly discarded, however, that association's plans for Holy Haven. The AMLP's primary objective by 1815 seems to have been winning public assistance in the form of an annual bounty. Specifically, they sought £4000 to be distributed to British fisheries at 5s per cwt. for fresh fish delivered to Billingsgate during the winter months (October to March) and for no more than 4*d* per pound.[27] Such a bounty "would operate," according to the Association, "precisely on the

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[26] The cause of its breakup is not recorded. The improvement of the economy by late 1813 was a likely factor; so too, was the realization that its task was too great for any one association.

[27] *Second Report of the AMLP*, 14-5.

same principle as the purchasing of the surplus quantities of fish." In essence, they wanted the state to replace their organization as primary purchaser in order to keep fish demand high. The AMLP's interest in bounties also led them to propose another one to encourage Britons to enter the Dutch-dominated turbot fishery.

Around this time Bernard became less enamored of AMLP operations. In 1818 when a select committee of Commons asked him about the Association's operations, the philanthropist replied, "I do not know, having been a very bad attendant upon the Association for some time."[28] Although never openly expressed, Bernard's prolonged inactivity reflected his decision to distance himself from the AMLP. Bernard's instigation of the Fish Association may have been an early signal of his unease with the AMLP. Why else would he encourage the formation of a new organization whose goals followed so closely those of the senior society. Bernard's private misgivings about the AMLP were doubtless rooted in his well-documented antipathy to food charities. Although he endorsed and supported fish philanthropy, Bernard always saw it as a temporary measure to meet an emergency. He had taken a similar stance in 1799-1801 when the SBCP funded soup-charities. Bernard often warned that soup-kitchens might encourage dependence; he always preferred to teach the poor recipes so that they could help themselves.[29] The AMLP's subsidizing of fish sales showed little sign of letting up even after economic conditions stabilized. Bernard feared any measure that might create dependence among the poor; therefore, he became less and less involved with the AMLP.

The final rift between Bernard and the AMLP occurred when that body solicited protective government bounties for their work. No advocate fought harder than Bernard to promote fish consumption and the expansion of the fishing industry in Britain; however, he distrusted any attempt to manipulate the fish

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[28] "Report from the Select Committee on the Laws Relating to the Salt Duties," Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons, *Parliamentary Papers* (hereafter PP), 1818 vol. v: 438.

[29] See, for example, *Six Receipts for Dressing Rice* (London, 1810) and *Letter (on the advantages of kneading bread with bran-water) from the Reverend F. Haggit to the Bishop of Durham* (London, 1800).

market in the long term. Whether the state or a privately funded organization such as the AMLP made the attempt mattered not to Bernard. Admittedly, the SBCP secretary had sponsored temporary interference to promote consumer interest, but in the long run he followed Smith in preferring the free market. The Fish Association appeared to be more in accordance with Bernard's stance than the AMLP. Its first report questioned the expedience of bounties on grounds that they "*press the supply* beyond its natural course" and that their effects "appear in many cases to be uncertain and equivocal." "In every instance where the industry and cupidity of man are operating in any speculation or trade, the true policy," they added in Smithian fashion, "is to leave him as free as may be, *honestly* to profit by his own exertions, removing at the same time, as far as is practicable, every artificial obstruction and natural impediment, which may tend to check or embarrass his course."[30] Whereas the AMLP focused on subsidizing fish suppliers, the Fish Association strove to open new markets and remove exiting obstacles so that entrepreneurial Britons would respond on their own initiative. The AMLP seemed content to continue artificially affecting the market in Britain, a stance at odds with Bernard's basic philosophy.

Campaign for Repeal of the Salt Duties

With the Fish Association disbanded and the AMLP going in a contrary direction, Bernard embarked on his own salt tax campaign. He had discovered the salt tax as a major obstacle during his work on fish philanthropy. "What first drew my attention to the Salt laws," Bernard claimed in 1817, "was the personal concern I had in our Fisheries, with a view to increased Subsistence for the Poor. I found that they were the Obstruction to almost every Measure that could be devised or adapted."[31] Their most obvious obstruction was to fish philanthropy. The AMLP conducted its business unencumbered for three years before facing Excise interference. Initially the Association registered its cargo under 25th Geo

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[30] *First Report of the Fish Association*, 16-7.

[31] Sir Thomas Bernard to Warren Hastings, 23 January 1817, British Library, London [hereafter BL]. Warren Hastings Papers, Add. MSS. 29191.

III cap 65, which granted the North Sea fisheries unlimited use of British Salt duty-free for preservation and transport. They had ordered and retailed over 1,350 tons of fish before an excise official ordered them to adhere to 41st Geo III cap 21, the 'Sprinkling Act,' which limited the allowance of duty-free salt to only 22 lbs. Since the allowance of the Sprinkling Act was insufficient, the AMLP applied for and received an order from the Chancellor of Exchequer, Nicholas Vansittart, instructing excise officers to allow the Association to use salt duty-free as before. The damage was done; however, as "the fishermen were so completely frightened by the Excise officer coming forward, that we [Bernard and the AMLP] could not get them to proceed in their contract; and the quantity of Salt we had laid in ... was a dead loss on our hands."[32]

The disruptive effect of the salt laws, as Sir Thomas's testimony before parliament indicated, was as much bureaucratic as monetary. Even when allowances were made, as in this case, fishermen were "frightened" by the Excise men, and why not? After all, excise vigilance could often be exasperating as in the case of a Cheshire cheese maker who was brought before a magistrate on suspicion of using the briny refuse of his cheese as a manure for his garden.[33] W. G. Carter, secretary of the AMLP, reported several similar instances before Commons, including a tale about a North-Sea smack that was swamped by a wave, resulting in a loss of 10 bushels of salt. When the ship put in at Gravesend, the captain attempted to explain the whereabouts of the missing salt to the local excise officer. He related the misfortune, but also went to a local shop, purchased the 10-bushel deficiency, paid the duty on the salt, returned to the officer and offered to throw the bushels overboard. The exciseman refused the gesture, served the captain with a warrant, and the matter passed to a London court.[34]

The campaign for repeal that Sir Thomas directed marked a comprehensive effort to stimulate the British economy. It was not just about a kettle of fish and a

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[32] *Report on the Laws relating to the Salt Duties.* PP v: 433.

[33] Davies, *Agricultural History of Cheshire*, 116-17.

[34] *Papers Relating to the Salt Duties.* PP xiv (1817): 10-13. Additional instances of excise interference and bureaucratic obstacles appear in T. Bernard, *Case of the Salt Duties with Proofs and Illustrations* (London: 1817), 179-85.

grain of salt, as Poynter quipped; it was about removing obstacles and opening opportunities for private initiative withing a freer market. The level of red tape involved in complying with the maze of salt laws hindered more than the philanthropy of fish. As early as 1801 Sir Thomas had been aware of some of the diverse uses of salt above and beyond its application in fisheries.[35] The salt duties naturally affected these aspects of the economy as well. In 1815, as Bernard's repeal campaign began to gel, he continued his search for comprehensive solutions to Britain's economic instability. Increasingly he saw taxation as a major obstacle. How could Britain's depressed economy recover in the long-term while shackled by taxes on basic necessities such as salt? Bernard concluded that the nation could not, making salt tax repeal not only an attractive alternative but essential. When considered in their totality, Bernard's plans present apparent contradictions. His support of fish philanthropy, no matter how cautious, seems incongruous with his subsequent repeal campaign. How does a man shift, as he does, from advocating market interference in the form of a fish subsidy to championing market liberation as a tax repeal? Although theoretically opposed, Bernard's measures were internally consistent. He saw the free market as an ideal, but not an absolute good. Certain circumstances, for example, economic crises, necessitated the use of temporary measures, such as fish philanthropy. The objective for Bernard was self-help and if temporary market interference could prevent a worker from dependence on the poor laws, then the greater good was not the sanctity of the market, but the independence of British laborers.

Bernard's crusade against the salt laws required not only capturing the attention of Britain's lawmakers, but convincing them to commute or repeal a tax that generated a revenue of over £1.5 million per annum. As usual publicity was his primary weapon. Sir Thomas penned four extensive essays on the subject in the course of a year: *Introductory Letter to the Seventh Volume; addressed to the*

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[35] On the various uses of salt see Davies, *Agricultural History of Cheshire*, 116-17.

Right Honourable Nicholas Vansittart (hereafter *Letter to Vansittart*),[36] *On Some Popular Objections to the Repeal of the Salt Duties; being a Postscript to the letter addressed to the Right Honourable Mr. Vansittart* (hereafter *Postscript to Vansittart*), *On the Effect of the Repeal of the Salt Duties in relieving the present distresses of the Poor, being a Second Postscript to the letter to Mr. Vansittart* (hereafter *Second Postscript to Vansittart*), and *Case of the Salt Duties; with Proofs and Illustrations* (hereafter *Case of the Salt Duties*).[37] Bernard's essays distilled the complex issues of the salt laws into an easily digestible form and in the process heightened Briton's awareness of an issue of which many had been oblivious. Fishermen and salt producers, farmers and herdsmen, local magistrates and philanthropists, cabinet ministers and members of parliament, all took heed of this formerly obscure tax. Although an opponent of repeal, Thomas Wallace, M.P. from Weymouth and Vice President of the Board of Trade, appreciated the skill with which Bernard publicized the ill effects of the salt duties. "It ought also to be remembered," he told his fellow members in parliament, "that this tax had been long borne by us; it had been laid on soon after the Revolution, and though increased from time to time, it had been borne without even a murmur, until the feelings of the public had been excited by the exertions of an hon. baronet no more (Sir T. Bernard)."[38] A closer look at these four essays helps explain their obvious impact.

Bernard's first essay on the salt laws, a public letter addressed to Nicholas Vansittart, appeared in December 1816. In directing the letter to the Vansittart, a fellow member of the SBCP, Bernard revisited an old but effective habit. He wrote epistolary introductions for all but two volumes of SBCP reports, each time emphasizing a special theme and each time addressing a public figure associated

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[36] This essay was also published individually under the title *On the Supply of Employment and Subsistence for the Labouring Classes in the Fisheries, Manufactures, and the Cultivation of Waste Lands; with Remarks on the Operation of the Salt Duties, and a Proposal for their Repeal* (London: 1817). It also appeared in the SBCP reports; T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to the Seventh Volume, addressed to Nicholas Vansittart," *The Reports* VII: i-lxii. I will use the SBCP reference.

[37] The first of these essays was completed in December 1816 and the last in December of the following year.

[38] Wallace's comments came after Sir Thomas had deceased. *Hansards*, Ser.1 vol.38 (1819): 1486.

with that issue. When writing on the education of the poor, for example, Bernard's letter addressed the Bishop Durham, who had opened a school for teachers at Bishop Auckland. Vansittart received the letter on the salt duties for a couple of reasons. Most obviously, Vansittart was then Chancellor of Exchequer and had oversight of excise operations. Less commonly known was the fact that in 1801 the minister had presided over a parliamentary committee which had recommended repeal of the salt laws once the war was over. Bernard's letter served as a not-so-subtle reminder to the Chancellor; it also inaugurated Bernard's own campaign for repeal.

Although the two were on opposite sides of this issue at this time, Bernard's *Letter to Vansittart* should not be read as a personal challenge. They had been colleagues for a long time and had supported many of the same projects at the SBCP. Bernard's intended audience was not the minister, but the British public. His conversational tone when addressing the minister, moreover, was a clever convention through which Bernard raised a host of issues without coming across as overly didactic to his audience. He focused on two particular issues, the economic and moral impact of the salt duties. Unemployment dominated much of this essay. Demobilization of soldiers and a trade depression had dramatically affected the labor market. Sir Thomas argued that the salt duties made matters worse because they inhibited the free use of a commodity which, as he informed his readers, had many economic uses for fisheries , manufacturing, and agriculture. The impost on salt, according to Bernard, prevented more farmers from experimenting with salt as a manure. If the tax were removed the opposite would be true; farmers would speculate with new methods which would lead to more land under cultivation, and ultimately to more food and jobs for a growing population. He made similar cases for the use of salt in the fisheries and in the manufacture of goods such as barilla; it was a very effective strategy for a British audience consumed with the fallout of twenty years of war.

Bernard was equally persuasive when discussing the moral impact of the salt laws. In hard times and with limited opportunity, what Briton could afford to buy ample salt when its taxes raised the cost by 40 times its original value? How

many Britons would willingly pay such a high price when they could purchase the same staple for less on the black market, or when they might easily steal salt and conceal his theft? Bernard maintained that the temptation to steal or smuggle had "become so great as to affect their principles, and to convert honest men into scurvy knaves."[39] Bernard supported what seemed to be hyperbolic statements by presenting salt smuggling as a gateway crime, one that frequently led to more serious offenses. As an example, Bernard presented the unfortunate case of "two young men, who were executed a few years ago in Cheshire for defending their plunder by shooting at an exciseman." This pair, according to Sir Thomas, "confessed at the gallows, that *petty-thefts in salt-works*, were the origin and cause of their criminal habits."[40] Bernard's narrative accentuated the moral depths to which youths could fall, while his italicized comments placed significant blame for this situation on ill-conceived legislation that encouraged theft. Since these criminals were partly the victims of the salt laws, eliminating this and any other tax on the poor's necessities would be a measure of crime prevention.

That Bernard's fusion of economic and moral arguments in defense of repeal made an impression on its readers may be inferred by the fact that two months later Sir Thomas felt the need to answer his critics publicly. He published his *Postscript to Vansittart* in early February 1817 and refuted several specific objections to the argument presented in *Letter to Vansittart*. The battle for public opinion had been engaged. One of the more curious complaints leveled against repeal was that it would put excisemen, as well as their auxiliaries, out of work. Bernard's response saw no great evil in this prospect, but seized on this allegation as a chance to hammer home the moral argument for repeal. In an effective rhetorical tactic, he juxtaposed the personal pecuniary interests of the tax collectors with the moral health of Britons everywhere. "All such temptations to evil, and all perplexity and intricacy in codes of taxation, though they may be profitable to the agents and underlings of office, are very pernicious to the state and to the community." "Whilst they encourage fraud and theft and perjury," he

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[39] T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to Vansittart," *The Reports* VII: xxxiii.

[40] *Ibid*, xxxiv.

added, "they injure the fair dealer; multiply prosecutions and convictions, to the ruin of all parties, except those who are the conductors or promoters."[41] Bernard's rebuttal effectively denied that the positive value of removing an inducement to crime was calculable in monetary terms and in so doing, he masterfully transformed his opponents' defense of government jobs into an assault on honest and hard-working Britons.

Potentially one of the most damaging points raised by opponents of repeal was the preference among West Country fish curers for foreign rather than English salt. Bernard's economic apology for repeal was predicated on the necessity of English salt for the fisheries. If his opponents were right, and if the fishermen of Devon and Cornwall typified all Britain, then repeal would be of little effect. Repeal might make English salt cheaper but what difference would that make if British fisheries continued to opt for foreign varieties of salt when curing their catch? Bernard's rebuttal of this dangerous claim had to be swift and unequivocal and it was. Bernard wisely chose not to deny his opponents' allegation but to discredit the views of the West Country fishermen. He set out to show the curers' preference to be nothing more than a baseless prejudice. Bernard turned to an old ally, science, to make his case, making specific use of the findings of a Manchester chemist, Dr. William Henry.[42] Henry conducted a chemical analysis of various salts, which he presented first to the Royal Society of London and later to the public through his published article. Henry's experiments demonstrated that Cheshire salt was stronger and purer than any of its foreign counterparts. Bernard included one of the chemist's data tables in *Postscript to Vansittart*. Here, according to Bernard was scientific proof that the fancy of Cornish fishermen "is not owing to the superior strength of purity of the foreign salt, but to other causes."[43] Bernard's next task was to explain the true cause behind this baseless bias. Not surprisingly he blamed the excise. Obviously taxation made English salt more expensive, but the excise also placed the use of

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[41] T. Bernard, *Postscript to Vansittart*, 16-17.

[42] William Henry (1774-1836)

[43] T. Bernard, *Postscript to Vansittart*, 6-7.

domestic salt under the close scrutiny of tax officers. The allowance system whereby certain industries, like fisheries, gained access to English salt duty-free, entailed state-imposed restrictions on how much duty-free salt could be had. In the case of fish curers, for example, the limit was set at 50 pounds per hundredweight of fish. The confluence of these various forms of governmental interference conspired, according to Bernard, to popularize foreign salt at the expense of its English counterpart. The 50 lb. limit, for instance, was completely inadequate, leaving curers two legal choices: either buy additional domestic salt and pay the duty, or purchase foreign salt which was often cheaper. Many fisheries had chosen the latter which gave rise to the belief that "English salt will not answer for the fisheries without a *mixture* of foreign salt."[44] In short, he argued that low cost and freedom from excise interference fostered the prejudice against domestic salt that existed among the fish curers of the West Country.

Throughout Bernard's defense of English salt, there runs a palpable and patriotic scorn for fish curers who opt for foreign salt. He seems to take particular pride in proving scientifically that English salt is strong and pure, while French varieties appear relatively weak and impure. Many of Bernard's earlier SBCP publications had played on Britons' patriotism, especially during the Napoleonic Wars. Although war had passed, his essays on the salt duties continued this trend. In *Letter to Vansittart*, for example, Bernard underscored the fact that there was no custom duty on English salt exported to foreign countries, which meant that a Frenchman could purchase English salt duty free while an ambitious and innovative farmer in Cumberland could not.[45] Bernard trusted that this inequality would rile the patriotic impulses of his reader, and spur them into action.

Bernard's dreams were his opponents' nightmares; while he planned to foment outrage among the British public they clung to the status quo. The tension between these poles fueled the stance of Bernard's detractors, including Vansittart, who publicly questioned the wisdom of removing a tax which Britons

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[44] *Ibid.*, 8.

[45] T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to Vansittart," *The Reports* VII: xxxi-xxxii.

generally paid without protest. He tried to delay parliamentary action, especially any attempt to commute the salt duty in favor of a new tax. "When a tax had long been imposed," the Chancellor argued, "even its evils were borne with greater patience than the less inconveniences of a new impost."[46] Why Bernard insisted on rocking the boat was beyond his adversaries' comprehension. Bernard's public defense of his actions began with another reminder to Vansittart (and the public) that Pitt's ministry, and the Chancellor's own committee had endorsed repeal of the salt laws in 1801. Sir Thomas also presented repeal as essential to the social order. Playing to fears of riots and revolution, which were all too real during the French Revolution, Bernard warned his audience that "*an evil spirit is gone forth among a portion of the people*, many of them being at the same time really suffering for want of proper occupation."[47] The British people had endured sacrifice and suffering during twenty years of war; they had done so, according to Bernard, because all were concentrated on defeating the French enemy. Without a common enemy, how long would laboring Britons suffer their hardships in quiet? Not long, Sir Thomas argued, and repeal provided precisely the type of 'proper occupation' needed to alleviate poverty and promote the social order. Repeal, he argued, "would instantaneously supply new and beneficial objects of industry and speculation to all the members of the community; – who, instead of being in turbulent and seditious meetings, would then be much more usefully and satisfactorily employed in making their own fortunes, and thereby contributing to the welfare and prosperity of the country."[48] No matter how outlandish such a claim appears today, it likely elicited a positive response from a war weary and economically depressed Britain that faced rioting in 1816-17, postwar demobilization and unemployment, and Luddite uprisings.

Bernard knew that repeal had potential for improving the lives of hard-working cottagers and thus helping preserve the social order; therefore, he

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[46] *Hansards*, Ser.1 vol.35 (1817):1326.

[47] Peasant rebellions against Louis XIV's salt taxes in the 1670s resulted in the hanging of many rebels.

[48] T. Bernard, *Postscript to Vansittart*, 23-24.

stressed these points in his latest publication, *Second Postscript to Vansittart*. He first clarified the precise benefits that cottagers could anticipate from repeal. Most obviously repeal removed a tax burden that averaged from 11-17*s* per annum.[49] Lower taxes meant more disposable income and greater enjoyment of the fruit of their labor. The new jobs and new venture stimulated by repeal would also assist the cottager whose labor would be in greater demand and whose wages would likely rise. Last, but by no means least, the expansion of fisheries would increase the supply of a protein-rich staple, improving significantly the cottager's diet. In short, repeal would create positive incentives for cottagers' to improve their own lives through hard work and thrift. It was the basic germ of the self-help strategy employed at the SBCP, as Bernard himself noticed in his penultimate essay. He cited the third volume of *The Reports* to demonstrate that repeal operated on the same principles that had directed the SBCP, specifically "whatever encourages and promotes habits of INDUSTRY, PRUDENCE, FORESIGHT, VIRTUE, and CLEANLINESS among the poor; –whatever removes, or diminishes the incitement to any of these qualities, is detrimental to the STATE, and pernicious to the INDIVIDUAL."[50] The two projects were inextricably linked in terms of strategy (focus on patriotism, morality, science, social order), underlying principles (self-help), and ultimately the result: "the affections of the cottager may be increased, and the intrigues of *internal enemies* defeated, by his being relieved from an injurious and obnoxious tax."[51]

As Bernard was penning his postscripts, parliament began to show heightened interest in the salt laws. In February 1817, John Calcraft, M.P. from Wareham in Dorset, made known his intention to propose a committee to investigate the salt laws for the purpose of their eventual repeal or commutation. Calcraft had long been an opponent of the tax and had voted against raising it in 1805.[52] Bernard knew of Calcraft's plan to make a motion on March 15th and

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[49] *Ibid*, 10.

[50] *Ibid*, 5. Originally appeared in T. Bernard, "Introductory Letter to Durham," *The Reports*. III:10.

[51] T. Bernard, *Second Postscript to Vansittart*, 4.

[52] Hughes, *Studies in Administration*, 471-74.

worked diligently to assist.[53] Sir Thomas prepared an outline of key information and witnesses which could be presented in support of a parliamentary investigation; however, the legislature had other priorities and the motion was delayed. Bernard, who had scrambled to collect all his evidence by the 15th, was anxious to present it and considered his options. Rather than wait, the restless philanthropist pondered a more direct approach. Apparently Vansittart had privately responded to Bernard's public letters and this encouraged Sir Thomas, on March 28th, to request a meeting with Vansittart and Frederick Robinson at the Board of Trade.[54] Bernard and Lord Kenyon attended the subsequent meeting on April 13th after which they, along with J. C. Curwen, M.P. and parliamentary supporter of repeal, were recalled to testify before the Board of Trade's impromptu investigation.[55] In addition to their own accounts, they produced numerous letters of testimony from additional witnesses. This direct lobby of Trade forced the opponents of repeal to organize their own case. William Carr, an Excise solicitor, M.P., and future parliamentary opponent of repeal, presented the bulk of the rebuttal evidence to the board. His testimony, backed by correspondence from some Cheshire salt producers who wanted neither repeal or commutation, emboldened Vansittart, who was reluctant to tinker with the revenue at all, to conclude the inquiry at the end of April.[56] Although the board took no action at this time, it did forward its evidence to parliament in June. In so doing, the inquiry had accomplished at least one of Bernard's objectives, namely bringing parliament up to speed. Sir Thomas had originally gathered this information for a parliamentary debate, and now, through a circuitous route, it had arrived.

On April 25th, while the Board of Trade concluded its proceedings, Calcraft finally read his motion before Commons. Although the motion failed by nine votes, 79 to 70, parliamentary interest in the salt laws persisted throughout the remainder of the 1817 session. As Calcraft's motion failed, the House of Commons

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[53] Sir Thomas Bernard to Henry Boase, 5 March 1817, BL Add MSS 29281.

[54] Frederick John Robinson (1782-1859), future President of the Board of Trade and cabinet minister.

[55] George Kenyon, 1776-1855, second baron, politician.

[56] A copy of one letter from the salt proprietors, dated April 10th, appears in Hughes, *Studies in Administration*, 475. Bernard was rather surprised to find these gentlemen to be his adversaries.

continued its complicated discussion of the excise on rock salt as well as the custom on foreign salt imported into Britain. Protectionists from the Cheshire white salt trade wanted the state to increase customs on foreign salt, while the rock salt producers, whose primary markets were foreign, opposed such action.[57] Although Vansittart had staunchly opposed Calcraft's motion on the 25th, he made no objection to the creation four days later of an ad-hoc committee to investigate the use of rock salt in fisheries. The Chancellor may well have conceded his support in order to distract the advocates for complete repeal of all salt laws. While Calcraft accepted defeat for the moment and supported the Rock Salt committee, he was undeterred from his greater goal. He declared his intent to renew his motion in the next session. *Report from the Select Committee on the use of Rock Salt in the Fisheries* was printed on 12 May 1817, recommending that rock salt be granted duty free to the fisheries and that no additional impost be levied on foreign salt. The resulting legislation, 57th Geo.III,c.49, was a compromise. The Cheshire white salt producers did not get more protectionism, but the rock salt producers were somewhat thwarted by the restrictions placed on rock salt used in agriculture and the fisheries. The dissatisfaction felt by many of the interested parties tended to galvanize the argument for total repeal instead of half-measures such as the 1817 act. That, of course, boded well for the campaign that Bernard and Calcraft were waging.

With Bernard campaigning in the press and at the Board of Trade and Calcraft fighting in the trenches of the House of Commons, a formidable alliance had been formed against the salt taxes. Edward Hughes presented the parliamentary approach to repeal as "unconnected and in part even antagonistic" to Bernard's efforts at the Board of Trade.[58] While Calcraft and Bernard did not always act in unison, this position seems to fly in the facts of key evidence. Calcraft was undoubtedly dismayed by Bernard's solicitation of the Board of Trade while a parliamentary proceeding was pending. He called Sir Thomas's actions "singular" and "rather an unusual measure;" however, it should be remembered

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[57] *Ibid*, 362-63.

[58] *Ibid*, 473.

that the two cooperated both before and after the proceedings at Trade. When Calcraft's motion was set for March 15th it was Bernard who marshaled supporting evidence. In fact, parliamentary delays were the primary reason that the Board of Trade even heard Bernard's evidence. He feared that the bill would not make it to the floor and he had all this data ready to present, so he impatiently turned to the Board of Trade as an alternative. In April, when Calcraft's motion was finally heard in Commons, James Curwen, who had testified before the Board of Trade, was one of the most outspoken proponents. His defense of the motion entailed a restatement of the major arguments from Bernard's essays, as well as the philanthropist's precise recommendations for possible commutation taxes.[59] In short, Bernard, even as he lobbied Trade, continued to assist if not direct the battle in parliament. Such evidence suggests, contrary to Hughes' assertion, that Calcraft's parliamentary proceedings and Bernard's more direct lobby of Trade were intimately connected. In his defense, Hughes may have overstated his case out of concern for Calcraft's reputation. In order to exonerate the M.P. from charges of 'political plagiarism,' Hughes wanted to be clear, and rightly so, that Calcraft had his own reasons for supporting repeal; he had not simply jumped on Bernard's bandwagon in 1817. By the summer of 1817, the plural approach had become singular, as both men made a final push for a parliamentary repeal.

The Board of Trade inquiry, the Salt Law of 1817, and the parliamentary battle over Calcraft's motion were an education for Bernard. The Trade inquiry had clarified the opposition's argument as well as its composition. The proprietors of the Cheshire saltworks, whom Bernard assumed would welcome repeal, proved to be ardent defenders of the salt laws. During the debate that ended in the rejection of Calcraft's motion, the government, and Vansittart in particular, was forced to define its position on repeal publicly. The ministry expressed support for the status quo and during the ensuing salt legislation on rock salt demonstrated its determination to protect state revenue. The moderate nature of the Salt Act of 1817 also testified to the power of external lobby groups such as the Cheshire

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[59] *Hansard's* Ser. 1 vol.35(1817): 1339-41.

white salt manufacturers and to a lesser extent their adversaries among rock salt producers. Although this Act tried to appease these groups, it failed. No one group got everything that they wanted, but the members of the House of Commons created a weak bill that gave each group something. Ironically its weakness strengthened Bernard's case for seeking outright repeal rather than further legislative wrangling. Given Bernard's subsequent actions, two points appear to have made a lasting impression. One was the need for additional petitioning of parliament. During the debate on Calcraft's motion, Vansittart argued that the House had yet to receive any petitions that requested outright repeal. Bernard determined to disarm this argument by getting pro-repeal elements to write parliament. Bernard's second revelation was that his previous essays had ignored the tendency of the salt laws to foster monopolies. The Cheshire salt producers had shown their true colors when they opposed repeal in order to protect the virtual monopoly that they enjoyed in white salt production. With these new considerations in mind, Bernard revisited Cheshire that summer. His trip provided new information for his final publication, *Case of the Salt Duties.*[60]

When Bernard published *Case of the Salt Duties* in December 1817, he restated his moral and self-help arguments for repeal, but with a renewed fervor. On the moral front, for example, Bernard reiterated his gateway crime theory in melodramatic terms.

> In the neighbourhood of the salt works, the labourers are made thieves, by the *excess of temptation* held out by the salt duties; and are led from one crime to another, till they come to be *hanged or transported* . . . these immoral effects extended also to other parts, -- the temptation of smuggling an article (salt) . . . being too powerful for the necessitous to resist.[61]

Bernard's sensationalism aside, this basic point supported his self-help theory. In

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[60] In August Bernard once again investigated the moral impact of the salt laws. Thomas Bernard to Henry Boase, Oulton Park, 30 August 1817. BL Add. MSS. 29281.

[61] T. Bernard, *Case of Salt Duties*, 115.

order for the poor to help themselves, they required not only positive incentives such as higher wages, but also the removal of negative stimuli such as the tax on salt. They were corollaries of the same principle. Regarding positive inducements, Bernard stressed that repeal would stimulate 'domestic economy,' or thrift, among cottagers. Domestic economy had long been a staple of Bernard's philosophy of self-help, and he was at his passionate best when describing how the salt duties destroyed even the best laid plans of conscientious laborers. In Penzance, for instance, laborers often kept pigs for harvesting and resale, by which they earned part of their annual rents. For Bernard this was a perfect example of ingenuity and the desire for betterment, and proof therefore that self-help was possible. However, when the salt duties were raised to £30 in 1805, workers could no longer afford the curing salt for their pork. This meant that the pork had to be sold when harvested, a circumstance that often created a glut in the market, lowering prices to a minimum, and leaving these ambitious laborers with little to show for their thrift.[62] That a tax should take money from the hands of enterprising laborers was obscene to Bernard and justified its elimination.

Although Bernard's arguments were well-known to many of his readers, the organizational structure of *Case of the Salt Duties* was unique among his canon. The title itself set the tone for the work by alluding to a legal 'case.' Drawing from both his professional and philanthropic experience, Bernard constructed a legal brief replete with extensive evidentiary support. He opened *Case of the Salt Duties* with a presentation of taxation theories from Adam Smith's *On the Wealth of Nations* and Baron de Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws*. He used these theories to introduce his thesis that British salt laws offended accepted theories of taxation in being too complex to be generally understood, in being levied on a basic necessity, and in weighing disproportionately upon the poor. After making his opening statement, the philanthropic litigator introduced several types of supporting evidence and testimony beginning with a brief history of the salt laws

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[62] T. Bernard, *Case of Salt Duties*,108-10. Henry Boase describes a similar instance of the increase in salt duties inhibiting thrift. The poor of Cornwall formerly salted fish for a winter store, but many had ceased due to the increased expense. Henry Boase to Dr. J. A. Paris, 27 March 1818, BL, Add. MSS. 29281.

since the reign of William III. Bernard cited all significant acts as well as the major provisions of each, culminating in the most recent 57th Geo III, c 47. The next evidence presented was the witness testimony heard by the Board of Trade in April. For clarity Bernard organized and subdivided this information into four categories: the injurious effect of the salt duties on manufacturing, on the fisheries, on agriculture, and on the poor.[63] He was careful to include both sides of the argument in each category. In court-like fashion, the testimony in defense of repeal was immediately followed by a rebuttal witness. Once the basic evidence had been read by the jury (the public), it was time for closing arguments. Bernard summarized his objections and recounted what he saw as the inherent flaws of the salt laws.

For more probing jurors, Bernard appended over 180 pages of additional evidence and testimony, much of which he had gathered since the conclusion of the Board of Trade inquiry. He considered much of this evidence as irrefutable, such as that in support of salt as a manure. What Bernard wrote of this segment typified his general attitude:

> The 29 persons whom I have refered to, as having expressed their opinions in favour of the use of *salt as a manure*, are many of them men of the first rank in point of *science*; all of them respectable in character, and with the advantage of practical knowledge. It is hardly to be conceived that they should all of them have been misled, or to have united to mislead the world upon this subject. I presume not to offer either argument or opinion; but merely submit to the reader facts and authorities, *quae neque confirmare argumentis, neque refellere in animo est. Ex ingerio suo quisque dernat vel addat fidem.*[64]

In trying his case before the public, Bernard sought to provide jurors with more than ample evidence to render an informed verdict. In adopting a legal style and

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[63] For a comparison of Bernard's presentation and that of the Board of Trade, see "Papers Relating to the Salt Duties," PP (1817) xiv: 385-419.

[64] T. Bernard, *Case of the Salt Duties*, 290-91.

structure, he had tailored his writing to the objective at hand, namely the parliamentary repeal of an existing legal statute. Since he sought a legal solution to social problem, the presentation of his argument in a legal format made sense. *Case of the Salt Duties* was quite literally a legal case before the public and before parliament; it was an impressive achievement and quite different from Bernard's previous work.

Aside from its structural characteristics, *Case of the Salt Duties* introduced new arguments for Bernard's defense of repeal. In earlier essays, Bernard had mentioned that the salt duties weighed disproportionately on the poor; however, in this final publication, he went further, arguing that opposition to repeal often reflected class interests. To illustrate Bernard compared the fate of the salt excise and two other 'war taxes,' the income tax (1799) and the additional malt taxes (1801).[65] Two of these taxes, income and malt, were repealed in 1816, shortly after the peace, while the salt excise remained at its elevated level. Bernard attributed this discrepance to the powerful lobby of the 'rich Capitalist' and 'opulent Brewer' who sought relief for themselves but ignored the needs of less fortunate Britons. He might just as easily have cited the corn law of 1815 that protected landed elite while unemployed workers and demobilized workers struggled to find work and food in a period of inflated grain prices.[66] He appealed to the British elite, as he had done many times before: "Let, then, the rich remember, that they have been relieved from the PROPERTY TAX AND MALT TAX; and let them join hand & heart, to relieve the poor from the onerous burden of the SALT TAX."[67] Bernard's comment, although general, offered an implicit but rather pointed indictment of the government and Vansittart in particular. It raised question as to why the ministry appeared so receptive to wealthy brewing interests yet turned a deaf ear champions of salt-law repeal. This was a potentially powerful argument which explains Bernard's inclusion of it in *Case of the Salt Duties*.

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[65] Bernard considered these war taxes because Pitt's ministries justified them based on the exigencies of war with France. Neither the malt or salt excises were new, but had been substantially increased during hostilities.

[66] *Ibid*, 21.

[67] *Ibid*, 131.

Another new wrinkle to *Case of the Salt Duties* was its attack on the white salt monopoly in Cheshire. Compliance with the labyrinth of salt-law duties and regulations entailed posting a bond of double the actual rate of the tax just to remove the salt from the warehouse or saltworks. Only large-scale dealers had sufficient capital reserve to afford such a costly outlay in advance of the actual sale, a fact that since 1798 had gradually leveraged smaller enterprises out of the business. Although he never called it by name, Bernard's last essay described the work of the Salt Trade Association, a combination of major salt producers whose purpose was to control wages, prices, and production.[68] These were the "few rich monopolists" that Bernard alluded to in his discussion of collusion and price-fixing. The Salt Trade Association interpreted repeal as a threat and had become an effective lobby against it.[69] During the Board of Trade investigation of the salt laws, memorials from these Cheshire magnates had checked Bernard's momentum and he hoped to disarm them by heightening public awareness about their undue influence.

The Salt Trade Association's influence over a piece of legislation that they had a patently vested interest concerned Bernard greatly, as did Vansittart's public statements on the subject. In opposing Calcraft's motion for repeal, the Chancellor actually advanced a memorial from these very Cheshire salt manufacturers. The following excerpt from Hughes' *Studies in Administration* captures the moment. "The Chancellor declared:

> 'that he had the best reason for believing that the manufacturers did not consider that they would benefit by any such measure. He held a paper in his hands, which contained the sentiments of some of the most considerable salt manufacturers in the kingdom. It was signed by Messrs. Broughton and Company and Messrs. Sutton and Company, the principal proprietors of salt works in the county of Cheshire, and stated ... that they were of the opinion that

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[68] John Marshall and other Cheshire salt magnates formed the organization in 1805; its records, including minute books, letter books, and committee books, are kept at the Cheshire Record Office. Northwich MSS / DCN 102.

[69] Hughes, *Studies in Administration*, 358-59.

> this measure would be injurious to their interests and disadvantageous to the public Treasury as well as to individuals, *who would thereby be tempted to embark their capital in a trade already too much overstocked both with hands and capital for the present consumption.*'[70]

Hughes' points of emphasis mirrored closely contemporary opinion among pro-repeal M.P.s, who were startled by the audacity of Vansittart. J. C. Curwen, for example, responded: "Mr. Speaker; – Hard indeed must the right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer be pressed for arguments to defend this odious an oppressive tax, when he can be induced to offer to the House a representation from a few interested individuals in favour of the continuance of this their monopoly."[71] Although no particular friend of repeal Sir John Newport also questioned the Chancellor's judgement and why the minister chose not to introduce memorials from both sides of the issue, as "would have been somewhat more open and correct." Reflecting on Vansittart's discriminatory behavior, Newport added and answered a biting rhetorical question: "Now what was the reasoning to which the Chancellor had become a convert? Why, it was, in plain terms, this, 'We (the memorialists) say that if you repeal these duties, great numbers will be set up in the same trade with us, our monopoly will be injured, and we pray of you to interpose and secure it to us.'"[72] Calcraft's concluding speech posed an equally forceful question: "If the private application of interested individuals was thus to be preferred to the public interest, nay, to the consistency of the ministers themselves, where were the people to look for redress, or for the candid consideration of their case?"[73] Bernard's sentiments in *Case of the Salt Duties* closely echoed these parliamentary speeches. In broaching the issues of class interest and monopoly, the philanthropist had added an effective weapon to his repeal argument.

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[70] *Ibid*, 360-61.

[71] *Hansard's* Ser. 1 vol.35(1817): 1328.

[72] Hughes, *Studies in Administration*, 361.

[73] *Hansard's* Ser. 1 vol.35(1817): 1351.

Bernard's four essays on salt law repeal were only the most publicly visible element of his political campaign. He engaged in a lot of work behind the scenes, work that fortified not only his publications, but the movement as a whole. Behind the facade of these polished and persuasive pamphlets stood a well-organized political mechanic who was a master of research, correspondence, and personal contacts. Bernard corresponded with magistrates, clerics, and farmers throughout Britain collecting basic information on salt use, its production and price, as well as, data on excise enforcement of the salt laws and their impact.[74] In 1816 and 1817, Bernard also traveled to the center of salt production, Cheshire, to investigate the saltworks and to interrogate personally the local excise officials and magistrates there. Bernard's tactics for mobilizing public opinion and pressuring White Hall and Westminister heralded a new era of politics and served as model for many subsequent lobby groups such as the Anti-Corn Law League and the Chartists. Much of Sir Thomas's correspondence has been lost; however, the majority of his letters to a Cornish magistrate, Henry Boase, are extant and provide a window into Bernard's entire political program. These letters document Bernard's investigative techniques, his instigation of town meetings, his distribution of what might be termed 'talking points' to correspondents, and his attempt to securing favorable press releases in regional newspapers.

Bernard's tenure at the SBCP directly affected his repeal campaign. During the heyday of that Society Bernard had collected and disseminated volumes of empirical, if not strictly scientific, data. In the process he had made countless contacts among the local magistracy. The repeal project followed a similar pattern and drew closely on these well-established relationships. Bernard's connection to Henry Boase, for example, dated to 1801 when the Cornishman submitted *An Account of the Fisheries in the West of England* for publication in the SBCP reports.[75] The letters between these two provided the

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[74] The best extant example of this type of correspondence are the letters between Sir Thomas and Henry Boase. The British Library holds the manuscripts (Add. MSS. 29281), but Edward Hughes has reproduced many of them in his *Studies in Administration*, 478-87.

[75] H. Boase, "An Account of the Fisheries in the West of England," *The Reports* III: 321-4.

type of basic information that fed the entire campaign. Boase supplied Bernard with very detailed local information on salt prices, annual consumption among cottagers, and, on one occasion, the comparative advantages of English and foreign salt.[76] Information flowed in both directions. Bernard solicited data from local magistrates such as Boase. When they responded, he packed his essays with details from their reports. Once the essays were complete, Bernard distributed drafts or final copies to his correspondents for review. On at least one occasion, Bernard's Cornish correspondent placed an essay in the reading room of the Royal Geological Society of Cornwall. Boase, who was a member of the society, discussed the piece with his colleagues, recorded their observations, and reported back to Bernard. In this manner, Bernard's publications reached untold readers, while their author received useful feedback from a variety of sources. This intellectual exchange enhanced Bernard's subsequent essays.

Although these letters describe a fluid exchange of ideas, Bernard often directed the course of this commerce. He could be very specific about the type of information he needed, and thus there was less open dialog in these epistles than what had transpired at the SBCP. Bernard, for example, seemed particularly solicitous of accounts involving smuggling or the potential moral effect of the salt duties on the populace. Boase's January report that "to these generally necessitous persons, the temptation of smuggling an article (the tax on which is tenfold the cost,) so easily concealed and so universally in request, is commonly too great for them to resist, although at the expense of perjury or detection," was precisely the type of testimony Bernard was looking for. Accordingly, he broadcast these remarks to the Board of Trade and later before a select committee of Commons.[77] Boase's remarks also whetted Bernard's appetite for similar accounts so when he wrote to the magistrate in March, the philanthropist stressed, as he likely did to other correspondents, "Its (the salt excise) Effects in encouraging Thievery, Plunder, Smuggling, & their consequent vices, must be put in a strong

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[76] Henry Boase to Thomas Bernard, Penzance, 22 March 1817. BL Add MSS 29181.

[77] Henry Boase to Sir Thomas Bernard, 25 January 1817. BL Add MSS 29281; "Papers Relating to the Salt Duties," PP (1817)xiv: 402-4.

light, or people will shut their eyes to them."[78]

Bernard hoped that the combination of his correspondence and the essays informed by it, would lead to political action and not just discussion. Bernard's letters to Boase indicate that the action of filing petitions with parliament was first priority. "The Case (against the salt duties) is now a strong one," he bragged to Boase. "It has produced a Cheshire County Meeting, called at the request of the Farmers, with a view to themselves only: but the other classes attended the Meeting, took it out of the Farmers' hands, & voted a general & well drawn Petition to the House of Commons for Relief from the Salt duties. A few more such might do the business," he added.[79] Since Bernard saw publicity as the surest way to stimulate such meetings and petitions, he asked Boase "If you have interest with any of the West Country Papers, I should solicit the Insertion of the inclosures [two letters from J. C. Curwen and Warren Hastings] as calculated to put the business in motion."[80] Less than a week later he wrote Boase again. On the outside envelope, so as to immediately catch attention, Bernard inscribed "I hope you will soon have a County Meeting."[81] He depended on petitions from the West Country where fishing interests were significant, and his letters to Boase illumine how he hoped to obtain them.

Many contributed to the repeal campaign both in and out of parliament, but Bernard deserves a great deal of credit for the 31 petitions regarding the salt duties that Commons received in the spring of 1818, more than double the dozen heard the year before. Many of these memorials bear the unmistakable influence of Bernard. Half of the 26 petitions in favor of repeal or commutation, for example, cited the morals of the poor as one of their primary considerations.[82] Other pro-repeal petitions cited the red tape of compliance, the importance of salt

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[78] Sir Thomas Bernard to Henry Boase, Wimpole Street, 5 March 1817, BL Add MSS 29281.

[79] Sir Thomas Bernard to Henry Boase, 24 January 1817, Add MSS 29281.

[80] *Ibid.*

[81] Sir Thomas Bernard to Henry Boase, 2 February 1817, Add MSS 29281/135.

[82] *e.g.* Nobility *et al* from Palatine (Chester County), 3/6/1818; Fish curers from Greenock, 3/9/18; Fish curers from Banff and Macduff, 3/10/18, Magistrates & Town Council from Burgh of Queensferry, 3/10,18, Fish curers of Eyemouth, 3/12/18, etc. Great Britain. Parliament. *Journal of the House of Commons*, 1818.

as manure, or other arguments found in Bernard's four essays. Although Bernard may not claim full credit, the petitions testify to the impact of his publicity campaign. His decision to emphasize the moral aspects of repeal must have resonated with concerned Britons. Bernard's hard work had achieved at least one objective because in 1818 Vansittart could no longer claim that Commons had not heard any petitions in favor of repeal.

The parliamentary champion of repeal, John Calcraft, was also busy in the spring of 1818. He and Vansittart had had a meeting of the minds. For his part, Vansittart knew that public interest was so great that the salt duties could no longer be ignored or delayed as in the previous session. Calcraft, on the other hand, knew that he did not have the votes to challenge the government, nor the will to do so. Rather than force the issue by introducing a repeal bill, Calcraft moved on March 10th "that a Select Committee be appointed, to take into consideration the laws relating to the Salt Duties, and the means of remedying the inconveniences arriving therefrom."[83] The Chancellor was receptive, calling the subject "worthy of the most serious consideration" before adding his wish that the committee "recollect that those duties afforded a very large revenue." Calcraft accepted the minister's gesture and responded in kind. He expressed that "he never could have proposed to affect so large a portion of the revenue as a million and a half, which the duty on salt produced, without the idea of finding some substitute."[84] With Vansittart's concession of a select committee and Calcraft's acknowledgment of the need for a commutation tax, the parliamentary road to repeal had passed a major obstacle.

The formation of the Select Committee on the Salt Duties fulfilled a major goal of Bernard's, but it meant taking on different responsibilities. Before, Bernard's primary objective was fomenting public outrage so that parliament would listen; now, he had to help the parliamentary advocates, especially Calcraft and Curwen, to gather evidence in order to present the best possible case. Bernard met this challenge head on. He continued to collect information through

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[83] *Hansard's* Ser.1 vol.37(1818): 952.

[84] *Ibid*, 953.

correspondence as the following letter to Henry Boase reflects:

> Sir Rose Price has given me a very interesting acc't of 2 young women, committed to Jail, 50 miles off, by Mr. Scobell (I dare say most involuntarily) for having sold a little salt. I have given it to Mr. Calcraft for the Committee which meets tomorrow. Would it be practicable to get a list of the Cases of Commitment to your County Jail for the last 3 years, or year, with the Circumstances, for frauds, thefts, & Sales of Salt; of the Fines, Compromises &c paid? It would be of use.[85]

Clearly Bernard was feeding the parliamentary champions, in this case Calcraft, with vital information for their inquiry. He supplemented epistolary evidence with his own personal testimony before the committee. Bernard was called in several times, usually as an expert on the impact of the salt duties on the poor.[86]

When called to testify, Bernard tried always to present facts, a trait that clearly drew from his faith in science. Not being a scientist himself, Bernard made concerted efforts to have expert testimony on certain subjects, such as the use of salt as a manure. He assumed that scientific testimony was beyond reproach and thus he recruited credible witnesses for the committee, sometimes, as the following letter indicated, to the surprise of the witness.

> Without any intention or wish, on my part, I find myself involved in the subject of the Salt Duties; Sir Thomas Bernard has thought proper to select me as the person to give an evidence before the House of Commons upon the medicinal & physiological facts which bear upon the question at issue. ---- Willing therefore to arm myself with all the instruments in my power, I apply to you for assistance upon several points. ---- I know how well you wish us success, & how persuaded you feel of the oppressive nature of the Tax. --[87]

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[85] Sir Thomas Bernard to Henry Boase, Wimpole Street, 24 May 1818. BL Add MSS 29281.

[86] For his personal testimony see *Report on the Salt Duties* P.P. V (1818): 91-102, 193-97.

[87] John Ayerton Paris to Henry Boase, Dover Street, 21 March 1818. BL Add MSS 29281.

The unsuspecting witness was the future President of the Royal College of Physicians, John Ayerton Paris, who was writing to Henry Boase for advice, likely at Bernard's request. Bernard's tenacity may be inferred by Paris's missive; the philanthropist would not take no for an answer. He was determined to supply Calcraft and the committee with as much credible and persuasive testimony as possible.

Bernard's fieldwork for Calcraft proved invaluable but it also marked the philanthropist's final contribution to the cause. He died on 1 July 1818. Before completing Bernard's tale and the story of repeal, I want to explore briefly the passion that Sir Thomas felt for this legal battle. That he felt zealously about the repeal cause may be inferred by his vigorous recruitment of Paris, his correspondence with Boase, and his composition of four persuasive essays on the subject. What makes Bernard's actions even more remarkable was that it literally was killing him. Bernard suffered from an unspecified liver complaint for more than a decade prior to his death in 1818. His letters to Boase document his gradual decline. In July 1817 he confessed to the Cornish magistrate: "Indeed I am obliged to decline many subjects of this kind which, if I had time & means & strength, I should continue earnest in. The Repeal or Reduction of the Salt Duties, however, I do not mean to give up; tho I feel no longer equal to an extensive correspondence."[88] Ten months later Bernard was again apologizing for his failing strength. "I wished to have sent you an account of our Progress a week ago, but my hand was so weary & fagged with Correspondence &c about the Committee, that I was obliged to give it up. We have gained a good deal by our labour, as you will see by the inclosed, which I am obliged to send you copies from another letter, not being able to transcribe it myself." Here, just a month before his death, Bernard was still at work; his closing comments were about the campaign and not his own health: "We are encouraged to expect the entire Repeal next session."[89]

Bernard's remarkable devotion to the cause of repeal concerned his friends

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[88] Sir Thomas Bernard to Henry Boase, Wimpole Street, 15 July 1817, BL Add MSS 29281.

[89] Sir Thomas Bernard to Henry Boase, Wimpole Street, 24 May 1818, BL Add MSS 29281.

who feared for his health. On June 16th he responded to the concern of his dear friend and cousin, the Bishop of Durham: "Your Lordship's kind advice will I trust no be thrown away on me. If you had thought as I did on the subject of the Salt duties, I am persuaded you would have done the same, and sacrificed petty personal motives of corporeal health and enjoyment to an inquiry that promised such extensive benefit." Bernard admitted to having "tr[ied] the strength of my constitution , more than I would have done for a lesser object," but it was for the benefit of others.[90] It was, as he might have said, for Britons. Bernard's selfless patriotic gesture reflects what Linda Colley described as a 'cult of heroism.' Facing attacks from without its ranks, the British elite tried to reinvent its public image and to justify its privileged position. One way was to live lives similar to the Greek and Roman heroes that they learned of in school, men who won battles and lost their lives all for the good of the state.[91] Although this ideal was most visible in paintings of the era, for example *Death of Wolfe*, it was more than an artistic style, it "shaped individual conduct," especially, as Colley argued, among "the relative new-comers to the elite who had less to lose and more to prove."[92] Bernard and others like him adhered to this emerging ideal of "RELENTLESS HARD WORK, COMPLETE PROFESSIONALISM, an UNCOMPROMISING PRIVATE VIRTUE, and an OSTENTATIOUS PATRIOTISM."[93] This helps account for why Bernard persisted in his work long after it had become medically imprudent. So despite ill health he wrote letters, gathered witness, testified in person, whatever was necessary to support Calcraft's parliamentary committee.

Armed with 204 printed pages of witness testimony and various other information, the Select Committee on the Salt Duties issued its report on June 1st 1818. Its resolutions were hopeful but somewhat tentative. First it resolved that repeal was desirable and that it would benefit Britons from all walks of life. It added, however, that total repeal was not immediately feasible without finding

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[90] Hughes, *Studies in Administration*, 477-8; Baker, *Life of Sir Thomas Bernard*, 119-23.

[91] Colley, *Britons*, 167-8.

[92] *Ibid*, 182.

[93] Colley, *Britons*, 192, capitals in text.

some commutation tax. Such a bill, it also resolved, would be too complex to introduce this late in the session, so it would have to be explored in next year's session.[94] Absent his non-parliamentary ally, Calcraft continued the fight in 1819 but final repeal would not come until 1825 with the passage of 5th Geo IV c.65. When it did pass it received little fanfare because by then the duty had been reduced, by Vansittart in 1822, to an insignificant rate of 2*s* per bushel.[95]

While Sir Thomas Bernard died nearly six years before Commons passed final repeal in June 1824, there is little doubt of his contribution. Sir Thomas, more than any other proponent of repeal, made the salt duties a public issue and he did so by harping on themes that resonated with a mood of philanthropic, economic, and political reform. While not a doctrinaire of the dismal science, Bernard's basic case against the salt duties predated other more notable expressions of political economy, including those from cabinet ministers such as William Huskisson. The Board of Trade President never spoke on behalf of salt-law repeal, but he attacked the protective tax system in 1825 with the following words:

> By preventing competition these duties destroy the best incentive to excellence and the best stimulus to invention and improvement: they are in fact a premium on mediocrity. Secondly, they condemn the community to suffer, both in price and quality, all the evils of monopoly. Thirdly, they expose the consumer as well as the dealer to rapid and inconvenient fluctuations in price. Fourthly, they are a premium to the smuggler: they encourage all the moral evils of smuggling. Fifthly, they excite suspicion and odium in foreign countries.[96]

Excepting the last point, Huskisson's statement echoed the major motifs of *Case of the Salt Duties*. The minister was no political plagiarist but in his role at Trade

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[94] *Journal of the House of Commons*, 406.

[95] For a detailed discussion of the parliamentary battles leading to final repeal see Hughes, *Studies in Administration*, 488-507.

[96] Quoted in Hughes, *Studies in Administration*,377.

he likely encountered Bernard's work on salt-law repeal. The views of these men, though independent of one another, anticipate an economic ideal that would dominate the nineteenth century.

The Salt Law of 1825 never became a landmark piece of legislation in the manner of Corn Law Repeal in 1846. Nevertheless, each of these Acts represent an evolution of British economic and political policy. The former marked an early recognition that protective taxation through excise created monopolies often to the detriment of the general public and British consumers. The latter marked the apex of laissez faire economic policy. Salt duty repeal was a first step in economic reform that led to the removal of other excises. This trend away from indirect taxation has been labeled Liberal Toryism.[97] Philip Harling has described the economic reforms of 1797 to 1846 as part of a ruling-class success story in which elite portrayed themselves and parliament as impartial protectors of property. They passed economic reform to distance themselves from the accusation of Old Corruption. From Bernard's actions it is clear that he considered the repeal campaign as part of this process.

Bernard's contribution toward the Salt Law of 1825 speaks to other nineteenth-century trends as well. His political tactics, for example, provided a model for later political movements. In looking to the state for change, Bernard also deviated from his earlier work. Most of his philanthropic projects had taken place through private associations, accompanied only occasionally by the state. Private groups (AMLP, Fish Association et.al) also contributed to the anti-salt duty lobby, but the ultimate objective rested with a state action, namely the commutation or outright removal of a piece of legislation. Bernard's foray into parliamentary politics began innocently enough with a plan to sell fish at a subsidized price. When the most active philanthropist of the early nineteenth century put his considerable weight behind the plan he had no thought of challenging the public revenue. Government interference in the form of one overzealous excise officer changed all that. While the slip that opened Pandora's

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[97] W. R. Brock, *Lord Liverpool and Liberal Toryism* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1967).

box was trivial enough, Bernard's crusade against the salt laws was not. It was not a feeble attempt to meet Malthusian challenges to be poked fun at years later, it was an earnest relief measure that exploded into a host of other issues including social order, public morals, economic development, and the role of government. Bernard's final project was perhaps his most comprehensive, even if not the most glorious.

CONCLUSION

> Being sometimes asked for dates & circumstances respecting Societies & Institutions in the formation of which I have been concerned during the last eighteen years, & being very seldom able to give a correct answer to the Inquiry, I have often intended to look over my memorandums, & to prepare such a short detail on the Subject *as may assist in directing the attention of others, who may be inclined to similar Pursuits*. [my emphasis][1]

In January 1818, this was how Sir Thomas Bernard rationalized the writing of a brief memoir of his philanthropic career. Clearly these were not his private reflections; he intended them to be public, but it is unclear if he ever wanted them published. They were, but in 1930, by the grandson of his sister Amelia. That descendent, James Bernard Baker, combined Sir Thomas's philanthropic memoir with a travel journal that the young lawyer had penned in 1780 and added the general title *Pleasure and Pain*.[2] Nearly two centuries after it was written, "Reminiscences of a Philanthropist," continues to afford a unique glimpse into the charitable world of early nineteenth-century Britain, and, most importantly, into the life of an exceptional social reformer.

Bernard's reflections in this memoir are not particularly flattering. Of his life-altering decision to engage in philanthropy, he wrote:

> When I thought I had acquired in my Profession such a competence as satisfied my desires, I determined to quit the Law, & try what useful Occupation I could find that was not likely to increase *l'embarras des richesses*. The Endeavour to meliorate the domestic Habits of the labouring Class, was the first amusement that occurred.

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[1] Bernard-Baker, *Pleasure and Pain*, 49.

[2] Bernard-Baker's title contrasts the pleasures of Thomas's travel journal with the pains associated with his philanthropic career. The latter description he borrowed from a dedication to Bernard that read "Charity is often disposed to open its purse, but seldom to take pains." *Pleasure and Pain*, vii.

This theme of philanthropy as a casual amusement or diversion recurred in the following sales pitch to would-be volunteers.

> To those who are in want of more objects, who want more cats, more dogs, more monkies, more race Horses, more Houses, more Farms, more mistresses, and more speculations to fill up their vacant time & attention, Philanthropy offers what is inestimable; a process more cheap, a progress more certain, & a result more satisfactory, than any of the aforesaids can supply. There are disappointments; but they are trivial & soon forgotten. This system is that of the gaming Table without it's Horrors. The Eagerness exists in the same degree, but the inconveniences are excluded. Though in general a fortunate gambler, yet at times I have lost my stake: Yet I have almost always made a valuable & satisfactory acquisition in consequence of the efforts I have made.[3]

The remainder of "Reminiscences" documents precisely how Bernard 'amused' himself for over twenty years, founding charitable societies and becoming, in effect, a full-time philanthropist. What makes this memoir so intriguing is that it completely contradicts what historians have written about Bernard. The spoiled and impulsive sensualist of Bernard's self-portrait cannot be the same "indefatigable philanthropist" that David Owen characterized as "a capital example of the philanthropic impulse in a singularly pure form,"[4] or can it? The short answer is yes. Bernard's account of himself, however, is too exaggerated to be taken literally, no matter how much personal gratification he drew from what he termed "my public Labours."[5] No idle aristocrat, turning to philanthropy on a casual whim, could have maintained a sense of devotion to a single cause for more than two months, much less two decades. And only devotion and dedication can account for a man's willingness to risk life and health by visiting disease-infested slums and hospitals, or spending endless waking hours writing and editing new

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[3] Bernard-Baker, *Pleasure and Pain*, 49, 55-6.

[4] David Owen, *English Philanthropy 1660-1960* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1964), 105.

[5] Bernard-Baker, *Pleasure and Pain*, 78.

charitable plans for the poor, or devoting his dying days to a correspondence with magistrates, scientists, and legislators on behalf of salt law repeal. If Bernard were as shallow as his memoir suggested, he also would have lacked the discipline that he required of his peers. For years he cautioned the charitable about indiscriminate almsgiving, encouraging them rather to investigate experiments in order to determine what forms of relief worked best, not what made donors feel best. Given that Bernard expended a great deal of effort to make philanthropy a systematic and scientific pursuit, his characterization as an aristocratic dandy and hypocrite defies belief.

That Bernard intentionally misled his audience may be inferred from the fact that his memoir was intended as a model for others to follow. "Reminiscences" is full of propaganda designed to woo new philanthropists. Ever the advocate for elite social responsibility, Bernard's autobiography marks one last attempt to enlist Britons into public service. Mark Twain might have been jealous had he known of Bernard's scheme. In a style that anticipated Tom Sawyer's paintbrush, a can of whitewash and a ragged fence by fifty years, Sir Thomas tried to make philanthropy seem the greatest possible amusement, much more fun even than gambling. Bernard's distorted account of his quitting the law and beginning a philanthropic career marks not a rejection of his ideals, but a last-ditch effort to propagate them. Twenty years had taught him the value of positive incentives and reinforcement; it had also wizened him to be less than candid about the hard work involved in charity. Bernard, it would seem, remained a master publicist to the very end.

Bernard's mastery of public relations even in his dying days grew naturally from the essence of associated charity to which he so often contributed. Charitable societies depended upon subscriptions for financial support; therefore, they had to advertise aims, methods, and results to bring in new subscribers. They frequently claimed to offer a new approach or significant reforms of earlier methods. Innovation became ingrained in associated charity, resulting in the formation of innumerable new societies that targeted very specific problems. Bernard's memoir details roughly twenty of the organizations with which he was affiliated.

Publicity, however, was more than fund-raising for Bernard. In his mind, public appeals were indispensable to encouraging voluntarism which could help "re-knit the tattered social fabric of English social life."[6] Late eighteenth-century poverty and poor relief were particularly divisive issues, especially as poor rates soared along with grain prices. Wealthy landowners resented the increase in their taxes caused by more and more applicants for parish relief, while hard-working laborers, crippled by inflationary prices, low wages, and unemployment, took offence at having to apply for parochial aid, particularly if it meant entering a workhouse or poorhouse. The passing of blame pointed in many directions: to the laziness of the poor, to the corrupt and ill-conceived poor law system, to the emergence of mechanized manufacturing, to the enclosure of land. What was clear to Bernard was that Britain was divided between rich and poor, urban and rural, Anglican and Methodist, Whig and Tory, and that such divisions were dangerous, especially while Britons fought for survival against the armies of revolutionary France. If public appeals could recruit volunteers and promote philanthropic cooperation, then Bernard's publicity might accomplish one of its primary goals.

Bernard's emphasis on public relations pioneered a new view of charity, one that considered charitable information and its distribution a form of relief. Bernard knew that no one society (or government for that matter), no matter how well endowed, could tackle the myriad problems of early nineteenth-century Britain. Much might be accomplished, however, if individuals, societies and institutions throughout Great Britain cooperated with one another by sharing information and ideas. Bernard's public relations work centered around convincing each Briton to become active and fulfill his or her social responsibilities. In "Reminiscences," he summarized his entire career as an attempt to foster "those mental occupations which promote social union, check frivolous pursuits, & civilize the Mind."[7] Bernard's stress on the role of the individual knew no class barrier. He expected the British well-to-do, for example, to direct and fund effective poor relief, and to set an example of patriotic public

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[6] Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, 169.

[7] Bernard-Baker, *Pleasure and Pain*, 68.

service. The able-bodied poor he charged to help their own cause by being thrifty, hardworking and moral. Bernard's confidence in the poor's ability to join in their own advance flew in the face of contemporary opinions that labeled them lazy and immoral by nature. Bernard, like his intellectual mentor Adam Smith, saw the coincidence of poverty and crime or want and vice as environmental rather than fundamental. The poor were simply human, meaning they were moral agents who could and would escape their poverty if presented positive inducements, such as higher wages and education. Their response, when it came, would enrich the whole economic nation, not just the poor.[8]

Britons' ability to alter their environment depended upon more than good will; it relied upon the circulation of the right kind of information. First of all, Bernard's quest for more discriminating forms of relief led him to stress the need for local information. Localism afforded the most specific information about the unique circumstances of rural Buckingham or urban London. Those contexts were necessary if a model of discriminating relief in one locale were to be adapted successfully for a different community. Local knowledge was essential to effective relief. Secondly, Bernard wished to publicize and spread only empirically-based charitable experiments, and especially those that endorsed self-help. He wished to make poor relief a science for only then could Britain's overwhelming social problems be addressed with effect. The answer to social ills boiled down to spreading useful information based on an appreciation of local needs and conditions. Education was the key for Bernard, education of the state, of charitable individuals, and of the poor.

The SBCP epitomized Bernard's core objectives and represented his primary educational vehicle. Its goal was to disseminate proven charitable plans ranging from soup houses and savings banks to friendly societies and free chapels. The Society's reports became, in essence, a laboratory record replete with 'scientific' experiments on poor relief, with data catalogued for the ready reference. Parochial officials might read about energy-saving measures such as installing

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[8] This interpretation of Smith is drawn primarily from Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), chapter 2.

Rumford stoves in poorhouses, while other philanthropists could learn to provide midwife services to local women. Interestingly, the same principles that characterized his ideal of voluntarism (self-help, localism, and empirical research) were true of his critique of the public systems of relief, specifically the poor laws.[9] Managers of public or private forms of relief had much to learn from *The Reports*. As for laborers, they could hear of inexpensive but hearty recipes, or plans for benefits clubs or friendly societies. The SBCP was most aptly termed a 'clearing house' of charitable information and "many of the Society's ideas became," as Frank Prochaska argued, "part of the stock-in-trade of philanthropy."[10]

Voluntarism and cooperation based on individual responsibility marked the kernel of Bernard's plans to alter the British environment, but he never rejected the idea of government involvement in the process. He turned to the state for assistance on several of his philanthropic projects, applying for public funds for small pox vaccination, fever hospitals, and for statutory protection for child laborers in textile mills. Bernard's crusade against the salt laws marked his most extensive use of the state as a tool for altering Britain's diseased social environment. Bernard's approach to charity became a model for later philanthropists, especially during the Victorian era, but his political campaign for repeal of the salt duties also set a strong example of how to mobilize public opinion. Bernard applied external as well as internal pressure on parliament to act, much as activists did prior to the Reform Bill of 1832 or the repeal of the last corn laws in 1846. Popular pressure in the press combined with expert witness testimony and evidence before parliamentary committees proved a most effective

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[9] Bernard 's essays on poor-law reform included a critique of Samuel Whitbread's bill of 1807. See, T. Bernard, *A Letter to the Right Reverend Bishop of Durham* (London, 1807), and an analysis of it in Poynter, *Society and Pauperism*, 91-98, 214-22.

Despite obvious differences in funding, recent revision has transcended the compartmentalization of relief as either private or public. Joanna Innes's work writes of a mixed economy– a concept that emphasizes the overlap and interdependence between public institutional relief, private associational charity, and less structured forms of relief among families and neighbors. J. Innes, "State, Church and Voluntarism in European Welfare, 1690-1850," in *Charity, Philanthropy and Reform from the 1690s to 1850,* Hugh Cunningham and J. Innes, ed. (London: Macmillan, 1998), 15-65, and J. Innes, "The 'Mixed Economy of Welfare' in early modern England: assessments of the options from Hale to Malthus," in *Charity, Self-Interest and Welfare in the English Past*, M. Daunton, ed. (London: UCL Press, 1996), 139-80. Bernard's life and work add further evidence in support of this pluralist model.

[10] Prochaska, *The Voluntary Impulse*, 32.

tactic and one that Bernard pioneered from 1816 to 1818.

Bernard's considerable achievements are outlined in "Reminiscences" and though his account was meant for public viewing, it contains insights into the inner workings of his mind. Most telling perhaps was his declaration that:

> It has always been my wish that I might so live, as the Blessings of existence should not have been thrown away on an idle and useless Creature.[11]

This seemingly insignificant statement reflected an internalized ethic that informed Bernard's social philosophy and his many plans and projects. It reveals a man, self-conscious not only of his privileged position within society, but of the responsibilities that went with it. His use of the term 'Blessing" was also telling for Bernard interpreted his social duties as inseparably linked to his obligation to God. Bernard had, in fact, proclaimed elsewhere that Christians were the first to set a charitable example. As a Christian, his ethos typified what Frank Prochaska called a "philanthropic disposition."

In Bernard's case, as among the Victorian philanthropists that Prochaska described, his ethos was rooted in the domestic sphere in the culture of benevolence that his parents taught him. Both Francis and Amelia Bernard set an example of Christian concern for their less fortunate neighbors. But Bernard's "philanthropic disposition" only partially explains his motivation and the drive that pushed him to such fevered charitable activity. His early socialization introduced Thomas to the fine arts and to applied science and its potential to alter man's environment; it also opened his eyes to the potential of volunteer societies such as the Royal Society of Arts. These early impressions were reinforced when Thomas left the comforts of home for his formal education at Harvard and in London at the Inns of Court. At Harvard Thomas benefitted from the tuition of John Winthrop, one of the premier American scientists of the eighteenth century. His appreciation of the fine arts found like-minded volunteers at the London

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[11] Bernard-Baker, *Pleasure and Pain*, 49.

Foundling Hospital where Bernard took his first philanthropic steps. These core values explain not only his motivation for becoming involved in charity, but also the scope and tenor of his work.

This study has demonstrated Sir Thomas Bernard's broad significance to the development of British philanthropy from the late eighteenth century. In response to the social and economic pressures of industrialization, population growth, and war, charities underwent significant reforms to become more economical, more efficient, and more effective. Specifically, charitable reformers revisited the deserving, non-deserving distinction of applicants, calling for greater selectivity in the distribution of relief. They championed self-help whereby relief recipients contributed to their own recovery, while attaching elements of moral reform to every type of aid. Additionally philanthropists applied what they saw as scientific methodology in order to weed out less effective and efficient forms of relief. Bernard either pioneered or afforded considerable publicity to these trends through the many associated charities that he founded or directed, especially the SBCP.

The preceding review of Bernard's work also indicates his broader relevance to the development of British identity and the expansion of the public sphere. At the core of the SBCP and other projects was cooperation, cooperation among classes, among religious groups, among genders, and among regions. The cooperation that Bernard's philanthropy entailed brought Britons together from these many walks of life and gave them a common cause; it also afforded politically and socially marginalized groups unprecedented opportunities to contribute the improvement of their society. One of Bernard's primary vehicles for cooperation was the printed word. Reading *The Reports*, or subscribing to a national charity such as the SBCP had an integrating effect among the various regions. Britons from Cornwall to Edinburgh could imagine themselves as part of the British nation.

After 1780 the British elite also became more integrated, but not without facing accusations that they abused their power for their own self interest, were unpatriotic, and ultimately incapable. In response, the British elite changed many

of its ways. Most sinecures were eliminated from the state by 1830, while economic protectionism gave way to freer trade that opened more opportunities to bourgeois entrepreneurs. The British elite also underwent a cultural make-over and that was where Bernard played his most important role. Through the SBCP he challenged the well-to-do to accept the obligations of their social privilege and to use their power and wealth on behalf of the nation as a whole. In the world of culture, accepting this admonition meant sharing their considerable art collections with the British public, patronizing British painters, and publicly demonstrating their patriotism by displaying history paintings that depicted British military glories. The British Institution and the literary review *The Director* promoted these values and their popularity suggests they were not without effect. As the driving force behind these projects, Bernard helped publicize and propagate the cultural changes that, along with political and economic reforms, allowed the British elite to maintain its power despite open criticism. The disinterested public service that he helped promote remained part of his character throughout his life.

A few months after Sir Thomas Bernard penned his memoir, he died at Leamington Spa on 1 July 1818. The obituary in *Gentleman's Magazine*, remarked that he was "long and justly celebrated for his philanthropic labours and writings in furtherance of the public charities and other useful institutions of the kingdom," while the *Christian Observer* wrote, "the general benevolence of his character, and the usefulness of his labours, are so well known as to render it unnecessary to enter into any detail, in this Report, on the subject of the benefit which thousands of our fellow creatures have received from his charitable exertions."[12] These eulogies testify to a contemporary renown that has faded considerably. This biography has done its best to reassess the real achievements upon which Bernard's reputation was built. Although only a handful of his twenty-odd societies have been addressed here, those that have are representative of his broader work. A dearth of personal sources has made it difficult to capture the essence of this unique social reformer. Lacking the benefit of such sources, it

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[12] *Gentleman's Magazine* 88 (July-December 1818): 82, *Christian Observer* 18 (1819): 200.

seems apropos to conclude this study with remarks from two men who knew him and his work well. This study began with an artist's painting of Sir Thomas; it ends with two portraits of words. The first description appeared as a dedication in a volume of sermons by the Reverend John Gilpin, the latter are the remarks of Bernard's first biographer, the Reverend James Baker, whom the baronet had treated much like the son he never had.

> We seldom see a person, in the course of a prosperous business, stop short, and say, *I have enough.* We see him still more seldom consider his prosperity as a trust conferred by Providence for the good of others. Still more seldom do we see him engaging in that line of benevolent action, which is among the most laborious, and the least grateful. Charity is often disposed to open its purse: but seldom to take pains; though a man's time is frequently more useful than his money. We revere the memory of the late MR. HOWARD, who sought out misery in Jails. But misery is not confined to Jails. We bless the benevolent heart which seeks it in the dwellings of the poor – even in the loathsome cottages of filth and beggary. It was one of the marks of the Christian religion to *preach the Gospel to the poor*: it is surely another, to be attentive to their *temporal wants*. Indigence is generally thriftless. Half the miseries of the lower classes of mankind arise from profligacy, idleness, or mismanagement. What a blessing therefore is HE to the lower orders of society, who by *active researches* collects the several benevolent schemes of a charitable nation into one point; and by pertinent observations shows in what ways the distresses of the poor may be relieved – how early instructions may induce religious habits – how sloth may be converted into industry – penury into plenty – and misery into comfort – how the blind, also, the lame and aged, may received every assistance, of which their condition is susceptible. Thus, my dear Sir, I have drawn a picture, which I present to you. All who are acquainted with the original, will acknowledge the likeness.[13]

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[13] Quoted in Baker, *Life of Sir Thomas Bernard*, 125-127n.

> The sense which he entertained of his own duty and of the responsibility which his station in life imposed upon him, was evinced by the liberal pecuniary contributions and disinterested personal exertions which he was ever making to relieve the temporal necessities of the indigent and distressed, and to promote the moral and religious improvement of the ignorant and neglected. In these and such like labours no one ever applied himself with more disinterested zeal, no one could congratulate himself on more signal success. These are the subjects of the most effectual consolation to his surviving friends; for on these they rest their hopes, as the evidence of that sincerity of Christian faith, which through the merits of our blessed REDEEMER has marked him as HIS true disciple here on earth, and an inheritor of HIS glorious and eternal kingdom in heaven.[14]

The similarities between these contemporary observations and my own analysis make me hopeful that my reconstruction, though based on limited sources, strays not too far of the mark.

[14] Baker, *Life of Sir Thomas Bernard*, 130-32.

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