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The spiritual side of Samuel Richardson

Joling-van der Sar, Gerda J.

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The Relationship between Richardson and Cheyne

Introduction

So as to establish Richardson's interest in spiritual and internal religion, it is necessary to explore the relationship between Richardson and the mystically inclined Scot George Cheyne (1672-1743), a Newtonian physician and Behm-
enist, on the basis of their correspondence and some of Cheyne's books.¹³³ I will show in this and the next chapter that Cheyne was the link between certain seventeenth-century ideas as found in the works of Boehme, Fénelon, Guyon, Bourignon and Poiret, and those found in William Law's works, especially after 1735, as well as in Richardson's last two novels. As we go along similarities in their thought patterns become clear, proving that, consciously or subconsciously, Cheyne influenced Richardson.

We will see that in Cheyne's works certain Enlightenment objectives can be traced alongside ideas found in mystical or radical Pietism with its emphasis on the "light within". Cheyne did not believe that there was a contradiction between science and the essence of Christianity,¹³⁴ an essence which he believed he had found through studying the mystics.

A brief introduction to Cheyne should suffice. He was born in Methlick, near Aberdeen in Scotland, in 1672.¹³⁵ He received a classical education, being at first intended for the ministry. However, on the advice of Dr Archibald Pitcairn, Professor of Medicine at Edinburgh and chief representative of the so-called iatromathematical school of medical science, which drew close analogies between the human body and a machine, Cheyne went to the University of Edinburgh to study medicine. During these years he may have spent a brief

¹³³ A late twentieth-century critic David Shuttleton remarked in 1999 that, although literary historians have noted the biographical link between Richardson and Cheyne as his "proto-psychiatrist", their relationship remains relatively unexamined. (Cf. David E. Shuttleton, "'Pamela's Library': Samuel Richardson and Dr. Cheyne's 'Universal Cure'", in *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 1999, Feb. 23 (1), 59-79).

¹³⁴ Rightly or wrongly, it does not concern us here.

¹³⁵ There is some confusion as to the exact date of his birth. Actually, he was born in 1672, a fact which is based on the information Cheyne gives in his letters to Richardson (cf. letter LI, 23 December 1741, "70 in a few months"; letter LVI, 9 March 1742, "... as I am at 70"; letter LXVI, 30 June 1742, "now at 70"; letter LXVIII, 30 July 1742, "I am 70" (Charles Mullett, *The Letters of Doctor George Cheyne to Samuel Richardson (1733-1743)*, University of Missouri Studies, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, Columbia, 1943, pp. 77, 88, 103, 106). He was baptized in Mains of Kelly, Methlick, Aberdeenshire, on 24 February 1673, and died at Bath on 12 April 1743.

time in Leiden.¹³⁶ After he had finished his studies in 1701, he went to London where he started a practice and became a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1702. The best information about Cheyne's life up to 1733 can be gleaned from the account he gives of his "own Case" in *The English Malady*.¹³⁷ Cheyne was an active physician in the summer in Bath and in the winter at London, applying himself to chronic and especially nervous cases more frequently at Bath, where such patients would come most often. He finally settled in Bath permanently in 1718,¹³⁸ where Richardson visited him several times during their nine years' friendship. Though in the past some critics have referred to Cheyne as a quack, Roy Porter recognizes him as one of the originators of the neurological school of psychiatry.¹³⁹

The Correspondence between Richardson and Cheyne

The correspondence between Richardson and Cheyne (plates II and III), which was kept up on a regular basis over a period of about nine years, from 1734 to 1743, the year in which Cheyne died, gives us a clue not only to some of the physical problems Richardson experienced during those years, but, more importantly, to his psychological make-up. Their relationship was such that Cheyne regularly urged Richardson to treat or use him "as a brother". In his letter of 13 May 1739, Cheyne tells Richardson he is too modest and assures Richardson that he would serve him as he would himself or his family and use his friendship as his brother's.

Cheyne's use of the word "brother" is essential, as it is concerned with the concept of *agape*: the selfless love which originates in God or Christian love, charity ("brotherly love").¹⁴⁰ Cheyne regularly refers to "charity" in his

¹³⁶ Anita Guerrini refers to a possible sojourn in Leiden, during the early 1690s (cf. "James Keill, George Cheyne, and Newtonian Physiology, 1690-1740", in the *Journal of the History of Biology*, 18 (1985), 254 and *Obesity and Depression in the Enlightenment: The Life and Times of George Cheyne*, Oklahoma, 2000, p. 30 and p. 198, n. 43).

¹³⁷ *The English Malady* (1733), London and Bath, 3rd ed., 1734, pp. 325-364.

¹³⁸ For references to Cheyne and his work as a physician in London and Bath, see G.D. Henderson, *Mystics of the North-East, Including I. Letters of James Keith, M.D., and Others to Lord Deskford; II. Correspondence between Dr. George Garden and James Cunningham*, Aberdeen, 1934, pp. 75, 99, 105, 141.

¹³⁹ Cf. Roy Porter, *George Cheyne: The English Malady (1733)*, ed. with introduction by Roy Porter, London, 1990. See also Porter's *Mind-forged Manacles: A History of Madness in England from the Restoration to the Regency*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1987, as well as his *Discovering the History of Psychiatry*, Oxford, 1994. In 1974 G. Bowles published an important article, which has been used as the starting point by most later critics. ("Physical, Human and Divine Attraction in the Life and Thought of George Cheyne", in *Annals of Science*, Vol. 31 (6), 1974, 473-488). B.J. Gibbons has contributed to an increased knowledge of Behmenism and Cheyne in *Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought: Behmenism and its Development in England*, 1996, and in "Mysticism and Mechanism: The Religious Context of George Cheyne's Representation of the Body and Its Ills", in *The British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 1998, vol. 21 (1), 1-23. I disagree to some extent with some late twentieth-century critics such as Roy Porter, George Rousseau, Anita Guerrini and David Shuttleton. Where appropriate and within the scope of this study, I will address their views of Cheyne, especially when these views lead to a distorted picture of Cheyne.

¹⁴⁰ It is in the New Testament that *agape* obtains a special meaning, because it represents the love



RICHARDSON.

II. Samuel Richardson (1689-1761). Engraved by E. Scriven from a picture by M. Chamberlin in the possession of the Earl of Onslow, Speaker of the House of Commons from 1728 onwards and later a close friend of Richardson. Published in January 1811 by J. Carpenter & W. Miller.



III. George Cheyne (1672-1743). From an engraved portrait dated 1817.

books, and in his *Essay on Regimen* (1740) he specifically quotes from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians in which Paul extolls the virtue of love above other spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 13): "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. 13:12). The last verse of chapter 13 reads "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of them is charity" (1 Cor. 13:13). Charity is the "pure love" described by Fénelon: "L'amour pour Dieu seul, considéré en lui-même & sans aucun mélange de motif intéressé ni de crainte ni d'esperance, est le pur amour, ou la parfaite charité", reminiscent of the doctrine of pure love expounded by Madame Guyon, the Quietist writer whom Fénelon defended for a long time, which got him into serious problems with Bossuet among others.¹⁴¹ Fénelon was greatly admired by Cheyne and his friends, about whom more later.

Cheyne urges Richardson in his letter of 13 May to be frank with him and "all honest Men", for one cannot know one another's heart but by what we say and write. He further tells Richardson that he always speaks and thinks out, for he has nothing to conceal: "not my Faults and Frailties".¹⁴² We will see various examples of his "speaking out" in the course of this and the next chapter.

The friendship between Richardson and Cheyne and the ensuing correspondence may have started around 1733. Richardson's brother-in-law, James Leake, knew Cheyne and may have introduced the two men. Leake began his business as publisher in Bath in the early 1720s. Cheyne's *Essay of Health and*

revealed in Christ, an indication of a special quality in God and a model for humans to imitate. This resulted in a contrast in Christian usage between *agape*, as spiritual and unselfish love, and *eros*, carnal passion. The Christian doctrine of *agape* is based on the selfless love originating in God, whereas the pagan *eros* represents sexual or earthly love. *Agape* was usually translated into Latin by *caritas*, which explains the original meaning of the word "charity". The term *agape* is also applied to the religious meal which seems to have been in use in the early Church in close relation to the Eucharist. In the eighteenth century the "love-meal" was introduced among various Pietist communities, including the Moravians, and later by the Methodist John Wesley.

¹⁴¹ For the connection between Richardson and Fénelon, see p. 19 above. Fénelon distinguished between *eros* and *agape*. He wrote the following lines: "Il y a dans l'état passif une liberté des enfans de Dieu qui n'a aucun rapport au libertinage effrené des enfans du siècle. L'amour pur leur donne une familiarité respectueuse avec Dieu, comme une épouse en a avec son époux. (Article XXXII. VRAY, in the *Explication des Maximes des Saints sur La Vie Intérieure*, (1697), printed by the Swiss Henry Wetstein who had settled in Amsterdam. The quotation is from the new edition of 1698, p. 142). (I will return to Henry Wetstein later, especially in chapter 3.) In the *Explication des Maximes des Saints* Fénelon defended the concept of disinterested love and cited the works of recognized spiritual writers, such as François de Sales, one of the leaders of the Counter-Reformation (cf. the "Avertissement" of the *Explication*, p. ix). For the controversy between Fénelon and Bossuet, see "Déclaration des trois Prelats ... contre le livre de *l'Explication des Maximes des Saints*", pp. 196-259. Special reference is made by these three prelates, including Bossuet, to Madame Guyon. They write: "Il y avoit parmi nous une femme qui aiant mis au jour un petit livre, sous le titre *Moyen Court & c.* & quelques autres encore, & qui aiant avec cela répandu des Manuscrits des Quiétistes, sembloit être le chef de cette faction." (pp. 203-205). Bossuet accused the Quietists of pure fanaticism. In private he called Madame Guyon Héloïse and Fénelon Abelard, and even compared the "*cas Fénelon-Guyon*" with the "*cas Montanus-Priscilla*" (cf. Bedoyere, *Op. cit.*, pp. 200, 210). An English translation of the *Maximes* was published in London by H. Rhodes in 1698.

¹⁴² Mullet, *Op. cit.*, p. 49.

Long Life was published in 1724 by him and George Strahan, one of the leading London booksellers, and a relation of Cheyne's wife Margaret Middleton.¹⁴³ We know that Richardson printed Cheyne's *The English Malady* in 1733, also published by Leake and Strahan.¹⁴⁴ The second work Richardson printed for Cheyne was the eighth edition of the above mentioned *Essay of Health and Long Life* in 1734. In a letter, undated but before December 1734, Cheyne writes to Richardson that he is convinced no printer could have done more than Richardson.¹⁴⁵

Cheyne liked Richardson much more than he did James Leake, which may appear from Cheyne's letter of 21 December 1734. Referring to an earlier visit of Richardson to Bath, Cheyne writes:

I am sorry to hear your great Business and close Application sinks your Spirits often. I wish you could resolve once more to make a little Recess at Bath again: did I and you converse but honestly and freely one Month again, without the Participation or Example of your Brother in law, I should be able to make you as much or more alive, and gay than I am myself, who have been able cheerfully and comfortably to go through more Business of all Kinds, these 6 Months, since I recovered of that Misfortune you saw me under.¹⁴⁶

Actually, other people seemed to have disliked Leake as well. One of those who met him described him as the "Prince of all the Coxcomical fraternity of booksellers" who hardly had any learning himself and yet tried to sell it as dear as possible to others.¹⁴⁷

Cheyne often asked Richardson for advice in the latter's capacity as a printer in relation to the printing and publishing of his own works. Sometimes he gave Richardson advice on how to write. An example of this in relation to *Pamela*, Part II, which appeared in December 1741, can be found in his letter of 24 August 1741 in which Cheyne stressed the importance of having a plan or outline without which "no regular or finished Picture can be wrought" and even went on to suggest several plans in quite some detail.¹⁴⁸ Occasionally he functioned as a literary critic, as appears from an unpublished letter from January 1741-42 in which Richardson asked Cheyne's advice on *Pamela*, Part II:

If, Sir, there may be anything flagrantly amiss, in ye Opinion of any who may

¹⁴³ In a letter to Richardson of 24 October 1741, Cheyne writes: "Mr. Strahan ... wrote to my Wife ... to intercede with me ..., being our Countryman and her Relation", cf. Mullett, *Op. cit.*, p. 71.

¹⁴⁴ For a complete list of Cheyne's works printed by Richardson, see W. Merritt Sale Jr., *Master Printer*, Ithaca, 1950, pp. 157-160.

¹⁴⁵ Mullett, *Op. cit.*, p. 31.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

¹⁴⁷ H.R. Plomer, *Dictionaries of the Printers and Booksellers who were at work in England, Scotland and Ireland 1557-1775*, Ilkley, Yorkshire, 1977, p. 152.

¹⁴⁸ Mullett, *Op. cit.*, pp. 67-69.

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think it worth while to Speak of it (for want of a better Subject) in your Presence, I shou'd be greatly oblig'd to you for Hints of that Kind. I printed a very large Number, and the Bookseller advises me to proceed with another Impression, and I should be very glad, That cou'd receive the Benefit which the first could not have.¹⁴⁹

But more importantly, Cheyne was a spiritual advisor to Richardson. It is in this capacity that Cheyne played a much greater role than has been imagined by earlier critics. Their relationship was one to which the saying *par pari cognoscitur* applies. At the same time, however, we would probably do well to bear in mind the distinction between *empfinden* and *einsfühlen*.¹⁵⁰

Though not a great traveller, Richardson made several visits to Bath. The last one was in the spring of 1742. In a letter received on 17 May 1742 Cheyne wants Richardson to set out for Bath immediately, because he is convinced that the journey to Bath, which he thinks can be easily done in three days, would do Richardson good. Cheyne writes that he wants to organize lodgings for Richardson “just by him out of Town”, because he cannot possibly come near Richardson if he should be distant half a street, and he wants “to be very much with him”. That the visit did in fact take place appears from the next letter of 22 June 1742, in which Cheyne writes that Richardson has “one of the meekest, gentlest, and most bountiful [hearts] [Cheyne] ever observed and which is to such a Degree, as [he] could have had no Idea of, had [he] not had full Leisure to feel and observe it.”¹⁵¹

It is after this visit that the content of Cheyne's letters changes and becomes more focussed on the subject of spirituality. This explains why *Pamela* (published in 1740-41) is not especially relevant to my discussion of the spiritual side of Richardson, whereas *Clarissa* and *Sir Charles Grandison* are much more important. On 30 June 1742 Cheyne writes to Richardson that “low-living and its Attendants to mend a bad or weakened Constitution of [the] Body has a great Analogy and Resemblance to the Meanest Purification and Regeneration” as described in the Bible. He explains how this cure was known to the “ancient Physicians” who called it *Cyclus Metasyncriticus* or the “Transubstantiating Round and Circle”, intending to throw off “the old corrupted Mass, representing Repentance, Self-Denial, avoiding the Occasions of Sensuality and Sin, [or] the old Man with all his Works of Darkness.” Cheyne added that

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹⁵⁰ In the *Signatura Rerum* Boehme writes: “For that I see one to speak, teach, preach, and write of God, and albeit I hear and read the same, yet this is not sufficient for me to understand him; but if his Sound and Spirit out of his Signature and Similitude, entreth into my own Similitude, and imprinteth his Similitude into mine, then I may understand him really and fundamentally, be it either spoken or written, if he has the Hammer that can strike my Bell” (*Signatura Rerum*, 1.1). Whenever I use the word “influence” in this study, it will be mostly in this sense of “similitude” (likeness) and “similarity” (like, alike or having mutual resemblance, of the same kind or nature).

¹⁵¹ Mullett, *Op. cit.*, p. 100.

a low and sweetening, but especially a milk and seed diet would “shadow out” innocence and simplicity. He believed that living under the “Influence of the Divine Spirit” and in his constant presence, the inward peace and joy in the Holy Ghost would be resembled by a freedom of spirits, serenity, activity and cheerfulness on “returning Health and a mended Constitution” resulting from this “*Cyclus Metasyncriticus*.”¹⁵²

The correspondence between Cheyne and Richardson was kept up to the very end of Cheyne’s life and it meant so much to Cheyne that - a bit impatiently perhaps but we should bear in mind that by now he was about 70 - he writes in his letter of 27 January 1742/43:

You may observe that I take a Pleasure always to answer yours, always as soon as possible; and if you had as great a Pleasure to write to me as I to you, I should hear from you at least weekly.¹⁵³

Richardson was in the habit of sending Cheyne presents on a regular basis, which appears for instance from a letter of 20 April 1740 in which Cheyne acknowledges the present of “Sr. Thomas Roes Letters” or again in a letter dated 2 May 1742, in which Cheyne expresses his gratitude for “your fine Present of the fine new Edition of Pamela”.¹⁵⁴ It is in this letter also that Cheyne specifically asks Richardson:

Besure you destroy all my Letters when perused, for though I value little what the present or future World of this State, thinks of me, yet for my Family’s sake I would not be counted a mere Trifler, as these long Nothing-Letters, merely to

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 101. Cheyne wrote in the *Essay on Regimen* that “the *Purification* of the *Soul* is perfectly *analogous* to the *Cure* of the *cachochymical* and *cadaverous* State of the *Body*; and the *Method* of *Cure* of *Spiritual* Nature, takeing in the different Subjects, *Matter* and *Spirit*, is perfectly *similar* to the *Methodus metasyncriticus* of the *Ancients* in the *Cure* of a *Cachexy* in the *Body*. The *Analogy* is here perfect and complete; they differ only, as the *first* and subsequent *Terms* of a *geometrical divergent Progression*. *Sin*, *Disorder* and *Rebellion*, is to the *spiritual* Nature of an *intelligent* Being, precisely and really (as much as they are both *Realities*) what a *cancerous* and *malignant Ulcer* is to an *animal* Body: The *Cure* of the *last* is by a *low*, *sweetning* and *thinning* *Dyet* at first, to enable the *Patient* to bear the *last* Operation, which must be by *Excision* and *Extirpation*, and raising new *sound* Flesh in its Place; *Penitence*, *Self-denial*, *calm Passions*, a *mEEK Spirit*, and a constant patient Attendance to, and Dependence on, the *Directions* of the *Physician* of *Souls*, will answer the first Part; and I am of Opinion, *he* (the *Divine Physician* of *Souls*) by his omnipotent Power, and his being *GOD*, *he*, I say, must perform *supernaturally* and *instantaneously*, as it were, (for a sweetning Cure of such inveterat *Humours* alone, would require *infinit* Time) some *grand* Operation, (in which the Creature is intirely *passive*) *analogous* to *Excision* and *Extirpation*, to divide between the *Joints* and the *Marrow*, to cut out the *Adamical Core* in *lapsed* spiritual Nature, and to raise up, ingraft and implant his own *Nature* and *Substance* in its stead, to perpetuat and *eternise* its Soundness and Integrity, not in *Figure* or *Metaphor*, as is commonly, tho’ I think *barbarously*, *philosophised*; but at last, and in the *dernier Resort*, and before the *hyperboloid Curve* (to speak so) can meet with its *Assymptot*, as really and truly as *Matter* and *Spirit* are *Realities*, tho’ of different Natures.” (*Essay on Regimen*, pp. 316-317).

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 59; 93.

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amuse you, would show me.¹⁵⁵

This concurs with the following injunction, written by Richardson and dated 11 August 1744, found at the front of the notebook, a small octavo bound volume of 264 pages into which Richardson had all of Cheyne's 87 letters copied.¹⁵⁶ The injunction reads:

This Book, and the Letters in it, on no Terms, or Consideration, whatever, to be put, (or lent) into such hands, as that it may be printed, or published.¹⁵⁷

Mullett's attention was called to the notebook containing the extensive correspondence of Cheyne with Richardson, while preparing *The Letters of Dr. George Cheyne to the Countess of Huntingdon*.¹⁵⁸ Selina Hastings (1707-91), countess of Huntingdon, joined the Wesleys' Methodist Society in 1739 and was largely responsible for introducing Methodism to the upper classes. In the disputes between John Wesley and George Whitefield, whose Calvinist theology led him to break with the more Arminian Wesleys in 1741, she took the side of Whitefield and became the founder of the body of Calvinistic Methodists known as "the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion".¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 96. Yet, in a later letter dated 2 November 1742 Cheyne writes: "Perhaps I may pick out among my many Letters received from Time to Time some others that either describe [my Patients'] cases or record their Cure, which may be a Consolation or Encouragement for you, and might be of Service to others in like Cases when I am dead and gone, for my Letters and Correspondence are not the meanest Part of my Works and Experience; and as I do not think of printing more they may be as well deposited with you as with my Successors." (Cf. Mullett, *Op. cit.*, p. 115)

¹⁵⁶ The notebook, *Laing MSS.* III, 356, is at the University of Edinburgh Library.

¹⁵⁷ Mullett, *Op. cit.*, p. 19.

¹⁵⁸ The correspondence between Cheyne and Selina Hastings took place between 1730-39. Charles F. Mullett, ed., *The Letters of Dr. George Cheyne to the Countess of Huntingdon*, San Marino, 1940.

¹⁵⁹ John Byrom refers to the disputes in his letter to Dr. Hartley, dated April, 1741. Apparently, Dr. Hartley had read Whitefield's letter about predestination, written in answer to Wesley, and thought it "a shrewd thing". However, to Byrom it appeared to be a "thorough mistake of St. Paul's words", who according to him, was "far from a predestinarian". He imagined Wesley and Whitefield had "different constructions on the same word", otherwise he could not explain such a contradiction to the "general assertion of the whole Bible", i.e. that grace and salvation were offered and intended to all men. (Cf. John Byrom, *The Private Journals and Literary Remains of John Byrom*, 2 Vols., ed. Richard Parkinson, Manchester, 1856-57, Vol. II, part I, p. 306.) Consider for instance what Boehme wrote about the subject of predestination: "Now come on, you Electionists [Sparrow's note explains "that contend about Election and Predestination"] and contenders about the Election of Grace, you that suppose *you alone* are in the right, and esteem a simple faith to be but a *foolish* thing; you have danced long enough before this door, and have made you *boast* of the Scriptures, that they maintain that God hath of grace *chosen some* men in their mother's womb to the kingdom of heaven, and reprobated or rejected *others*." (Cf. *Aurora*, 26:151). Cheyne wrote about predestination as follows: "[I can] never be induc'd to believe that the omnipotent and infinitely good Author of [this terrestrial Globe and the State of Things in it], could, out of Choice and Election, or by unavoidable Necessity, much less from Malice or Impotence, have brought some into such a State of Misery, Pain and Torture, as the most cruel and barbarous Tyrant can scarce be suppos'd wantonly to inflict, or be delighted with, in his most treacherous Enemies, or villainous Slaves: For to such a Height of Pain and Torture, and higher, if possible, have I seen some

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Like Richardson, Selina Hastings had found in Cheyne not only a physician, but also a friend and adviser. This appears from a letter she wrote from Bath to her husband on 31 December 1741 in which she said that, after a friendly dinner with Cheyne and his wife, the three had spent the evening “in most pious and religious conversation, a thing hard to be found here. He is I think more in favour than ever with me, though much out of fashion here.” Two days later she wrote that:

[Cheyne] had been talking like an old apostle. He really has the most refined notions of the true spiritual religion I almost ever met with. The people of Bath say I have made him a Methodist, but indeed I receive much light and comfort from his conversation.¹⁶⁰

Mullett found included in the appendix of the book in which Richardson had collected Cheyne’s letters some other items relating to Cheyne such as his obituary which appeared in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* in 1743,¹⁶¹ as well as an article on Cheyne which had appeared first in the *Weekly Miscellany* and then in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* of 1735, and an extract of a letter which again had first appeared in the *Weekly Miscellany* and then in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* of 1738. Sometimes the copyist misread Cheyne’s letters, for instance when Cheyne refers to Jacob Boehme (spelled as “Behemen” instead of the more common English form of “Behmen”) or to Henry Wetstein (Western).

The original letters have not been found, but six of these letters, with omissions and alterations, were printed in Rebecca Warner’s *Original Letters*, published in 1817. Some of Richardson’s letters to George Cheyne have been included in John Carroll’s *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*.¹⁶² Carroll

brought from mere natural Diseases. No! None but Devils could have such Malice, none but Men themselves, or what is next themselves, I mean, their Parents, who were the Instruments or Channels of their Bodies and Constitutions, could have Power or Means to produce such cruel Effects.” (*The English Malady*, pp. 25-26.)

¹⁶⁰ Mullett, *Op. cit.*, pp. vi-vii. This letter may have contributed to the view that Cheyne perhaps had been a Methodist, a view with which I do not agree. See for instance Anita Guerrini, “James Keill, George Cheyne, and Newtonian Physiology, 1690-1740”, in the *Journal of the History of Biology*, 18 (1985), 247-266. In this essay Guerrini suggests that Cheyne perhaps saw in Methodism an antidote to the “overly intellectual apologetics of low-church Anglicans”, which had, so Guerrini informs us, reduced much of the “spiritual content of the church to a vague deism”. She then tells us that Cheyne was “certainly” open to Methodism’s appeal and that Cheyne’s autobiographical account contains all the elements of what became, in her view, the standard Methodist conversion tale. In her essay “Case History as Spiritual Biography: George Cheyne’s ‘Case of the Author’”, Guerrini further argues that Cheyne’s “religious awakening” bears many of the marks of the “standard” Methodist testimony, including the description of a sinful youth, a dramatic experience leading to a recognition of mortality, and an extended ordeal of conversion (published in *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 1995, May, 19 (2), 18-27). See also David E. Shuttleton, “Methodism and Dr. Cheyne’s More Enlightening Principles” in *Medicine in the Enlightenment*, ed. Roy Porter, Amsterdam, 1995.

¹⁶¹ There was another obituary in *The London Magazine*, XII (1743), 205.

¹⁶² John Carroll, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, Oxford, 1964, pp. 46-52, 54-55, 56-58.

did not appreciate the value of George Cheyne's contributions as appears from his remark "Dr. George Cheyne who advised Richardson not only on ways of alleviating his nervous disorders - advice which put him on a vegetarian diet and a chamber horse - but also, with equally unsatisfactory results, on the subject-matter for the second part of *Pamela*."¹⁶³

Mullett decided to edit the letters mainly because they express in some detail the medical ideas and practices in the first half of the eighteenth century and because they show us two distinguished personalities. More importantly for the purpose of this study, however, they are so interesting because they give us information about Richardson's concern with the world of spirituality and mysticism. Increased knowledge about the two men will lead to a better understanding of the first half of the eighteenth century. Cheyne is in fact the link between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as regards the European theosophical-occult tradition, the influence of which is far from negligible.

Cheyne, Physician and Metaphysician

Cheyne was in his own day considered to be a very competent doctor and was the author of several very successful books, which appeared over a period of forty years.¹⁶⁴ They show his wide interest which extended from medicine and natural philosophy to religion, metaphysics, astronomy and mathematics.¹⁶⁵ His writings usually went through several editions and were translated into other languages. As I have mentioned earlier, at least four of them were printed by Richardson.¹⁶⁶ They were extensively listed in contemporary periodicals and are found in many libraries of his day and later, for instance in those of

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁶⁴ In *The Natural Method* (1742) Cheyne explained that he considered the practice of physic in three different lights. First the "Medicina Philosophica Seu Rationalis" of which true natural philosophy is the stem or root, and practical medicine merely a branch. Pharmacy is of a lower order, but still part of this first branch. Secondly, the "Medicina Expectativa", which consists in keeping up the patient's hopes, expectations and spirits, till nature clearly points out the principal causes and symptoms in acute diseases, and in chonical cases, till air, exercise and regimen have taken place. Thirdly, the "Medicina ad Euthanasiam" which, when the case is mortal, "lays the Patient down in Death with the least Pain". But Cheyne urges that this should only be practised like "extreme Unction". Always averse of pain, he writes that, if our pains become insupportable, opium and its solution laudanum, duly dosed, have wonderful effects. Opiates allow nature (the only "true Physician") to go undisturbed about her work. He thinks that wherever pain is acute, intolerable or past enduring, opiates will most certainly relieve. He admits that there is the fear of overdosing, but adds that those who die of an overdose of laudanum in the "*Opinion of the World*", would have lived few days without it (cf. *The Natural Method of Cureing the Diseases of the Body, and the Disorders of the Mind depending on the Body*, London, 1742, pp. 216-219). Always open and ingenuous, Cheyne tells us how the last two branches, though soon learned and readily met with in every good book of pharmacy or medicine, "yet could never strike [his] Fancy" (pp. 64-66). Perhaps Richardson thought of this phrase when he had Harriet explain to Sir Hargrave that he just did not hit her fancy (*Sir Charles Grandison*, Vol. I., p. 84).

¹⁶⁵ A list of Cheyne's works is to be found in Mullett's Appendix I.

¹⁶⁶ The editing and printing of Cheyne's last two books, the *Essay on Regimen* (1740) and the *Natural Method* (1742), were an important subject in the letters written in the period from 1739 to 1742.

Thomas Gray, Samuel Johnson, John Wesley, John Byrom,¹⁶⁷ and Edward Young, who all made complimentary remarks about Cheyne's work. Samuel Johnson recommended the books of "the learned, philosophical, and pious Dr Cheyne", especially *The English Malady*.¹⁶⁸ James Boswell was less impressed with Cheyne's works, but that should not come as any surprize to those familiar with certain aspects of his personal life.¹⁶⁹ We even find Cheyne's works listed in the Catalogue of Stinstra's library.¹⁷⁰

It is to the *Essay on Regimen* (Cheyne's least successful book, though by himself considered to have been his best), that the Earl of Chesterfield referred when on 24 May 1739 he wrote to his friend George Lyttleton to tell him that he had read a great part of Cheyne's *magnum opus*. Mockingly, but perhaps not viciously, Chesterfield stated that Cheyne had found out the whole secret of metaphysics and was "kind enough" to communicate it to the public, under the title of *Conjectures*, but that Cheyne had assured Chesterfield as a friend that he had done so only out of modesty, for, that "by the living God, he could mathematically demonstrate the truth of every conjecture". Chesterfield added that Cheyne "snarls louder, grins fiercer, and is more sublimely mad" than when [Lyttleton] saw him.¹⁷¹

We find that in the eighteenth century Cheyne's professional contempo-

¹⁶⁷ See *The Private Journals and Literary Remains of John Byrom*, Vol. II, Part I, footnote 2 on p. 309. As early as 1733 Byrom mentioned Cheyne in a letter to Mrs Byrom, and in 1738 Byrom had written very favourably about Cheyne "I could much wish that Dr. Cheyne might be consulted", Vol. II, Part I, p. 200. Cheyne's friendship with Byrom began near the end of Cheyne's life when he wrote a letter to Byrom in December 1741 in which he expressed his admiration for certain mystics like St John of the Cross, John Tauler and Madame Guyon. A second letter to Byrom in August 1742 discussed similar mystical subjects and showed Cheyne's huge respect for William Law and his judgement, see Vol. II, Part 1, pp. 308-309 and Vol. II, Part II, pp. 331-332.

¹⁶⁸ James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*. (1791), London, 1965, pp. 48, 736, 782. In Boswell's *Journey of a Tour to the Hebrides*, London, 1963, pp. 169, 420. Mullett, *Op. cit.*, p. 11; Sale, *Op. cit.*, p. 157.

¹⁶⁹ Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*, London, 1977, pp. 572-599.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Johannes Stinstra, *Catalogus Bibliothecae insignem Praestantissimorum atque Optimae Notae Librorum ad Paratum Complexae, quos collegit vir Doctissimus et Plurimum Reverendus Joannes Stinstra, dum viveret, Ecclesiae Teleiobaptistarum Harlingae, per longam Annorum, Harlingen, 1790, nr. 693 (Philosophical Principles of Religion Natural and Revealed, 2 parts, 1715) and nr. 713 (Fluxionum Methodus Inversa of 1703).*

¹⁷¹ Chesterfield had read the sheets before publication. See footnote 166. Cf. Bonamee Dobree, *The Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield*, London, 1932, vol. 2, p. 358. Three years later, in 1742, Chesterfield wrote to Cheyne to thank him for inquiring after his health. He admitted having had frequent returns of giddiness, languors and other nervous symptoms, for which he had taken vomits, which did not really agree with him. As to his diet, Chesterfield informed Cheyne that the lowest sometimes agreed, and at other times disagreed, but he blamed that mostly on his constitution, which, he said, conformed itself the fashion of the times, and changed almost daily its friends for its enemies, and its enemies for its friends. However, Cheyne's alkalisid mercury and his (own) Burgundy had proved to be its two most constant friends. He added that he had read with great pleasure Cheyne's book (i.e. his next book, *The Natural Method*, published in 1742 and dedicated to Chesterfield) which had been sent as per Cheyne's request to Chesterfield by either Strahan or one of the Knapton brothers (Cheyne had returned to Strahan for this last book and had finally swapped Leake, with whom he had not been happy for a long time, for the Knaptons). Chesterfield found the physical part of *The Natural Method* extremely good, but admitted that as to the metaphysical part, he was not the right judge, because he looked

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raries referred to him frequently, often in praise, but sometimes in derision. One such an attack is the following witty poem, which appeared in the 1730s and was printed in 1757 in the *London Magazine*. It was probably written by a doctor Winter of Bath:

Tell me from whom, fat-headed Scot,
Thou didst thy system learn;
From Hippocrate thou hast it not,
Nor Celsus, nor Pitcairne.

Suppose we own that *milk* is good,
And say the same of *grass*;
The one for *babes* is only food,
The other for an *ass*.

Doctor! One new prescription try,
(A friend's advice forgive;)
Eat *grass*, reduce thyself, and *die*;
Thy *patients* then may *live*.

Cheyne did not take this lying down and replied in the same tone:

My system, Doctor, is my own,
No tutor I pretend:
My blunders hurt myself alone,
But *yours* your dearest friend.

Were *you* to milk and straw confin'd,
Thrice happy might you be;
Perhaps you might *regain* your *mind*,
And from your *wit* get *free*.

I cannot your prescription try,
But heartily "forgive";
'Tis nat'ral you should bid *me die*
That you yourself may *live*.¹⁷²

upon all metaphysics as guess-work of the imagination and added that he would take Cheyne's guess against that of any other metaphysician whatsoever (pp. 494-495).

¹⁷² *London Magazine*, XXVI (1757), 510. Also in Mullett, *Op. cit.*, pp. 16-17. The "milk and seed" diet (without meat and wine, but with a lot of vegetables, milk and water) which Cheyne prescribed in certain "serious" cases (such as his own and Richardson's) may have led George Rousseau to state gratuitously in 1988 that Cheyne's weight (in 1723-25) had been reduced from 32 stone or 203 kg to 9,3 stone or 59 kg. Rousseau even added in a footnote that Cheyne was "probably the best source for this figure", and refers to p. 342 of *The English Malady*, where indeed 32 stone is mentioned, but nothing else. This may have caused Roy Porter to remark in 1990 that it would be "fascinat-

However, sometimes the attacks were more serious and scurrilous. We find Cheyne's reaction to the accusations in some of his books. Cheyne identified two groups, the first of which he described as "stiff, rigid and precise Men", who dismissed his conjectures and sentiments as dangerous and presumptuous, and himself as "wise above what was written". To the second group belonged the "licentious, unguarded, spurious, Freethinkers", from whom he expected "less Quarter". They would merely "honour him with Enthusiasm, Romancing and Castle-building without any solid Foundation", to which Cheyne added that "Enthusiasm can only hurt the Bodies or outward Fortunes by diabolic and tyrannical Persecution".¹⁷³

Enthusiasm

The accusation hurled at Cheyne of being an enthusiast is important and needs some clarifying.¹⁷⁴ In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the word "enthusiasm" was applied disparagingly to emotional religion, representatives of which were for instance Antoinette Bourignon and Madame Guyon as well as the Quakers and the Moravians. In *Enthusiasm* Knox points at the distinction between the forced antithesis between spirit and matter upon which Manicheism is based as well as the dualism of the "Enthusiasts",

ing" to relate Cheyne to a "growing body of literature on the history of eating disorders". And hence, Shuttleton's view in 1999 of Cheyne having enjoyed a "cult-like" status as the "high-priest" of sentimental drawing-room asceticism. In 2000 this finally resulted in Guerrini's linking Cheyne with anorexia nervosa. Cf. G.S. Rousseau, "Mysticism and Millenarianism: 'Immortal Dr. Cheyne'", in *Millenarianism and Messianism in English Literature and Thought 1650-1800*, Leiden, 1988, p. 85, footnote 20; Roy Porter, *George Cheyne: The English Malady (1733)*, London, 1990, footnote 140, p. 1; David E. Shuttleton, "'Pamela's Library': Samuel Richardson and Dr. Cheyne's 'Universal Cure'", in *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 1999, Feb. 23 (1), 59-79; Anita Guerrini, *Obesity and Depression in the Enlightenment: The Life and Times of George Cheyne*, Oklahoma, 2000, pp. 108-109, 113. The confusion may have been caused by misreading Cheyne's own account of his last illness (around 1725), when he lost almost one third (of 32 stone) in weight, so that he ended up weighing about 20 stone or 127 kg. See the *English Malady*, p. 354. In two separate letters to Richardson, Cheyne mentions slightly different figures. In letter LI (23 December 1741) he mentions 34 stone. In letter LVII (9 May 1742) he tells him that he had lost at least 16 to 18 stone during his last serious illness (1723-25) before he stopped "wasting" and he thanked God he had now (in 1742) found "the right mediocrity of neither too fat nor very lean" (Mullett, *Op. cit.*, p. 88). And, finally, Cheyne's picture (Plate III) indeed leaves no doubt that this man did not weigh a mere 59 kg.

¹⁷³ *Essay on Regimen*, p. v.

¹⁷⁴ An enthusiast, *en theos*, is defined as someone who is literally possessed or inspired by a god. "Inspired" is very similar in that it means to breathe in (the godlike essence). Ronald Knox explains that the word "enthusiast" has commonly been misapplied as a label, adding that it is generally used in a pejorative sense to denote a group of Christian men and women who are more attentive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They are often ridiculed for their so-called "over-godliness" or repressed by "unsympathetic authorities". Since words only live so long as they have an errand to fulfil, the word "enthusiasm" in the religious sense belongs to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Knox suggests that Bishop George Hickes (see pp. 19 and 22 of this study for the connection between Hickes and Richardson) may have started "the vogue of the word" with his sermon on "The Spirit of Enthusiasm Exorcised" (1680), to be followed by the (third Earl) of Shaftesbury in 1711 with his "Essay on Enthusiasm" calculated to injure revealed religion in general. It was Shaftesbury who wrote that "inspiration is a real feeling of the Divine Presence, and enthusiasm a false one." (Cf. Ronald A. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion*, (1950), Indiana, 1994, pp. 1-8).

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which he clarifies as follows:

Your traditional enthusiast over-emphasizes the distinction between 'the spirit' and 'the flesh'; but the flesh is not matter, it is human nature, whether material or immaterial, still unredeemed. Human wisdom, for example, belongs to 'the flesh' quite as much as our bodily functions do. But this Oriental antithesis between spirit as entirely good and matter as entirely evil is something quite different; it leads away from Christianity to Pantheism.¹⁷⁵

It is essential to remember that Cheyne considered the Manichean system an "impious Heresy".¹⁷⁶

The enthusiast described above often suffered persecution, hence Cheyne's remark about "diabolical and tyrannical" persecution of enthusiasts. Originally from the Episcopalian (and often Jacobite) North-East of Scotland, he was well aware of the persecution several of his friends had been the victim of. Some had had to flee Scotland to safe havens offered them for instance in France or Holland. Such was the fate of his friend, the Jacobite Episcopalian minister Dr George Garden, who had issued translations of several of Antoinette Bourignon's works with prefaces of his own.¹⁷⁷ After the suppression of the Jacobite rising in 1715 Garden was thrown into prison, but manag-

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 93.

¹⁷⁶ Things, Cheyne argues, are only contradictory when they totally destroy one another, their substance, subsistence and qualities. He very much doubts whether there can ever be a full contradiction among created things, since all are effluxes of the deity in whom there is no contradiction. Cheyne further adds that there is contradiction in heat and cold in the same degree, as there is in light and darkness in the same degree, or in negative and positive terms of the same progression, and in necessary existence and nonentity. This seems to be caused by an energy, action and reaction in the contradictory or totally annihilating substance, things or qualities, as that between the good and evil principles in the Manichean system, which he considers to be an "early impious Heresy" (*Essay on Regimen*, pp. 142, 198-200).

¹⁷⁷ Garden was accused of being the author of the *Apology for M. Antonia Bourignon* (1699), which he refused to deny, asserting that it represented the great end of Christianity, i.e. "to bring us back to the love of God and charity". Antoinette Bourignon (1616-80) was a Flemish enthusiast and mystical writer. She unsuccessfully tried to found a new ascetic order. After 1662 she came to see herself as the "woman clothed with the sun" of the Book of Revelation, chapter 12. Bourignon went to Amsterdam in 1667 where she made the acquaintance with Poiret, who in Knox's words "proceeded to build her up exactly as he built up Madame Guyon a few years later". Knox was not deeply impressed by her Quietism. According to him, she did not concern herself with disinterested love, and forbade for instance the practice of almsgiving as only leading to mischief. Cf. Ronald A. Knox, *Op. cit.*, p. 354. Pierre Poiret published her works. John Wesley included an edited version of her writings in his *Christian Library* (published in 1749-50), a collection of 50 spiritual books which he reissued in handy form to his followers. Her ideas were particularly influential in Scotland in the early part of the eighteenth century and Cheyne was familiar with them. See for a complete biography Marthe van der Does, *Antoinette Bourignon: Sa vie (1616-1680) - Son oeuvre*, Groningen, 1974. See for more details about Garden and his friends G.D. Henderson, *Mystics of the North-East, Including I. Letters of James Keith, M.D., and Others to Lord Deskford; II. Correspondence between Dr. George Garden and James Cunningham*, Aberdeen, 1934. On p. 20 Henderson informs us how George Garden was the originator of the mystical tendency among a group of Scots which included his brother Professor James Garden, Lord Forbes of Pitsligo, Lord Deskford, Dr James Keith, an Aberdeen physician practising in London. And, along with Keith,

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ed shortly afterwards to escape to the continent. Cheyne may also have remembered the persecution of Antoinette Bourignon and Madame Guyon themselves, and these themes of persecution and enthusiasm may have influenced Richardson into writing *Clarissa* and *Sir Charles Grandison*. The little poem underneath one of Bourignon's engravings (plate IV) especially applies to Clarissa's predicament, and is equally relevant to Clementina's situation, though in the latter case Sir Charles Grandison intervened as comforter or mediator.¹⁷⁸ It reads as follows:

Christians I've sought from my Nativity
I liv'd, I wrote, to shew them how such to be
Convinc'd the World of errors, sins, abuses
All hate me for 't, each one my NAME traduces.
To death they persecute me every where
How should I other Lot than JESUS bear?

Similarly, Madame Guyon's song, sung in her prison cell, shows some striking parallels with Clarissa's case:

When pure love is fought
They imagine that this ought
To cut off its spreading rays.
But all they can fulfil
With their martyrising ways
Is to make it stronger still.¹⁷⁹

Discussing for example the state of suffering, expiation, and progressive purification which, at last, will set human beings at liberty to become the sons and daughters of God, Cheyne argues that all this darkness, suffering and "unintelligible Play" is only to save human liberty and to produce at last *pure love* and *naked Faith*.¹⁸⁰ Bedoyere describes Guyon's love of God as follows:

Henderson mentions Cheyne. As I have mentioned earlier, other members of this group were William and James Forbes, and Andrew Michael Ramsay, secretary to Fénelon and Madame Guyon, though Ramsay lived mostly in France. They were all, according to Henderson, simply intelligent men of good social position, who had had some experience of the political and ecclesiastical conflicts during a difficult period of history and had been led from dissatisfaction with the "outward state of things" to seek and find "peace within".

¹⁷⁸ I will argue in chapter 7 that Sir Charles Grandison represents the Paraclete, the advocate or one called to aid or support another (in *Sir Charles Grandison* Sir Charles is called to support and comfort Clementina). The Paraclete is a word used as a title of the Holy Ghost, the comforter, in art represented as a dove. Among the (seven) gifts of the Holy Ghost we find enumerated counsel, fortitude, piety, understanding, wisdom and knowledge.

¹⁷⁹ Michael de la Bedoyere, *The Archbishop and the Lady: The Story of Fénelon and Madame Guyon*, London, 1956, p. 234.

¹⁸⁰ *Essay on Regimen*, pp. 84-85.

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IV. Antoinette Bourignon (1616-1680). Engraved portrait dated 1800.

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I loved Him without any motive or reason for loving, for no thoughts passed through my head, even in the deepest part of my being. I well knew He was good and full of mercy. His perfections were my happiness. But I did not think of myself in loving Him. *I loved Him and I burnt with love, because I loved Him. I loved Him in such a way that I could only love Him; but in loving Him I had no motive but Himself.*¹⁸¹

It is a description of the soul in love with God and as such an accurate picture of Clarissa (Plate V)¹⁸².

In *Sir Charles Grandison* Richardson used Cheyne's definition of enthusiasm in the scenes in which Harriet describes Clementina to Mrs Shirley before she had met her:

The woman who, from motives of Religion, having the heart of a Sir Charles Grandison in her hand, loving him above all earthly creatures, and all her friends consenting, could refuse him her vows, must be, in that act, the greatest, the most magnanimous, of women. But could the noble Lady have thus acted, my dear grandmamma, had not she been stimulated by that glorious Enthusiasm, of which *her disturbed imagination* had shewn some previous tokens. (VII. 351) (Italics are mine)

Upon meeting Clementina for the first time, Harriet is confirmed in her suspicions:

If I admired, if I loved her before, *now* that I have seen her, that I have conversed with her, I love, I admire her, if possible, ten times more. She is really, in her person, a lovely woman, of middle stature; extremely genteel: An air of dignity, even of grandeur, appears in her aspect, and in all she says and does. Indeed she is a lovely woman! She has the finest black eye, hair, eyebrows of the same colour, I ever saw; yet has sometimes *a wildish cast with her eye, sometimes a languor*, that, when one knows her story, reminds one that *her head has been disturbed*. (VII. 353) (Italics are mine)

I will return to this subject in chapter 7.

Cheyne and Richardson were not the only ones struggling with the accusation of enthusiasm. William Law had the same problem to contend with. Cheyne was thoroughly familiar with Law's works, as was Richardson. (I will

¹⁸¹ Michael de la Bedoyere, *Op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.

¹⁸² Plate V is the frontispiece of Guyon's *Opuscules Spirituels*, edited in 1704, 1707 and in 1712 by Pierre Poirer and published in Cologne by Jean de la Pierre (Henry Wetstein's pseudonym). The explanation of the plate is described as follows: "Sur la figure du titre / qui represente les trois Traités de ce Volume / Le parfum de l'encens monte vers la nuée; / L'oraison en fait tout autants: / L'eau du TORRENT d'un mont souvent précipitée / Va se perdre en la mer: Heureuse destinée. / D'un coeur conduit en foy par l'état patissant! / Et l'Epoux descendu vers des lys des campagnes, / S'enfuit comme un chevreuil sur le haut des montagnes."



V. Frontispiece of Guyon's *Opuscules Spirituels*, edited in 1704, 1707 and in 1712 by Pierre Poiret and published in Cologne by Jean de la Pierre (Henry Wetstein's pseudonym). Library of the University of Amsterdam, Dept. ZKW, no. R-12793, 1997 D21.

prove later that Richardson printed some of Law's Behmenist works from the mid-1730s onwards.) In *An Earnest and Serious Answer to Dr. Trapp's Discourse of the Folly, Sin and Danger of Being Righteous Over-Much* (1740), William Law responded to Trapp's accusation that men and women who tried to live up to "their Height and Holiness and Perfection, which was proper to their State and Condition" were "deluded, weak, or hypocritical, or half-thinking People", who disturbed the Christian Church with their "Projects about Perfection". These "deluded" people, whom Trapp thought were in the "very Paths" that lead to "Fanatic Madness", had to be set right by returning to "the Instruction of Common Sense". Moreover, Trapp argued that in all ages Enthusiasts had been "Righteous over-much" and that enthusiasm would lead either to presumption or to desperation. In the latter case, it would throw them into despair, make them "stark mad" and have them end up in Bedlam.¹⁸³ As is clear from the above, Cheyne, Richardson and Law had a different interpretation of the word enthusiasm than Dr. Trapp, but to all of them it had a negative connotation.

Law tried to show that Dr Trapp's arguing was a clear example of what "miserable Work Learning can make with the Holy Scriptures" among the clergy:

We need not look at *Rome* or *Geneva*, or the ancient Rabbis of the *Jewish Sanhedrin*. For it must be said, that the true Messiah is not *rightly owned*, the Christian Religion is not *truly known*, nor its Benefits *rightly sought*, till the Soul is all Love, and Faith, and Hunger, and Thirst, after this new *Life, Birth*, and *real Formation* of Jesus Christ in it, till without Fear of *Enthusiasm* it seeks and expects all its Redemption from it.¹⁸⁴

Law was deeply hurt at the fact that Dr. Trapp had on several occasions distorted his words, which appears from the following text:

Does not the Doctor know that he designedly mangled the Words he quoted, and left out that Part which showed the Reason of my so expressing myself?¹⁸⁵

Finding himself in a similar situation with people distorting his words, Cheyne wrote that he always had only one "uniform *manner of thinking in Philosophy, Physics and Divinity, in the main, ever since [his] Thoughts were fixed and [his] Principles established*". Though he acknowledged that his thoughts might have had "Alternatives of *greater Light and Darkness, occasionally and transiently according to the State of his Spirits, Knowledge and Experience,*" yet in the "Heart of his Soul" he had been "*uniform, and under the same Convictions*", and always thought "spurious Free-Thinkers, active La-

¹⁸³ William Law, *Works*, Vol. VI, pp. 7-9.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

titudinarians, and Apostolic Infidels” under some bodily distemper, and much more proper subjects for medicine than argument.¹⁸⁶ These words, written in 1740, are reminiscent of William Law’s writings. Law’s views of freethinkers and Latitudinarians are found especially in *The Case of Reason* (1731) in which he attacked Matthew Tindal, who had maintained that:

1. Human reason, or natural light, is the *only means* of knowing all that God requires of us. 2. That reason, or natural light, is so full, sufficient, plain, and certain a rule or guide in all religious duties, that no external divine revelation can add anything to it, or require us to believe or practise anything, that was not as fully known before.¹⁸⁷

In Chapter V of *The Case of Reason* Law shows that, according to him:

All the mutability of our tempers, the disorders of our passions, the corruption of our hearts, all the reveries of the imagination, all the contradictions and absurdities that are to be found in human life, and human opinions, are strictly and precisely the mutability, disorders, corruption, and absurdities of human reason.¹⁸⁸

As we have seen, Cheyne strongly disapproved of infidelity. It seems that Richardson held similar views. This appears from the scene in *Sir Charles Grandison* in which Harriet tries to explain away her frightful dream (a subject I will return to later in chapter 7), which belonged to the nightmare type, not worth interpreting.¹⁸⁹ She writes:

But Superstition is, more or less, I believe, in every mind, a natural defect. Happily poised is that mind, which, on the one hand, is too strong to be affected by the slavish fears it brings with it; and, on the other, runs not into the contrary extreme, *Scepticism, the parent of infidelity*. (VI. 149) (Italics are mine)

While admitting that superstition seems a “natural defect”, Richardson clearly rejected it, but, like Cheyne, he equally rejected scepticism, “the parent of

¹⁸⁶ *Essay on Regimen.*, p. xiv.

¹⁸⁷ Law, *Works*, Vol. II, p. 57.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 128-138.

¹⁸⁹ Cheyne tells us how old people, weak and sickly constitutions, and people under acute or chronic distempers will have the wildest, most inconsistent and painful dreams (cf. *The Natural Method*, pp. 38-40, 95; *The Essay of Health and Long Life*, pp. 77-88). An article printed in 1754 in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* quotes Cheyne as contending that “All Dreaming is imperfect and confused Thinking, and ... there are various Degrees of it between sound Sleep, and being broad awake; conscious regular Thinking and not Thinking at all, being the two Extremes, and ... in Proportion as we incline to waking or to sound Sleep, we dream more or less, and our Dreams are more wild, extravagant and confused, or more rational and consistent.” (Cf. Mullett, *Op. cit.*, p. 15, “Enquiry into the Causes of Dreams”, in the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, XXIV, (1754), 36).

infidelity”.

Important information in relation to the accusation of enthusiasm can be found in Cheyne’s autobiographical account published in *The English Malady*. Realizing how “*indecent and shocking Egotism is*”, Cheyne apologized for making himself the subject of his work, but he believed that a detailed account of his own case was necessary, because of the “various and contradictory reports of, and sneers at [his] *Regimen*”. Moreover, he hoped that his case would be of some use to “*low, desponding, valetudinary, over-grown Persons*”, whose case might have some resemblance to his own. This, he believed, applied to everyone who had a “*mortal Tabernacle* subject to, and afflicted with *nervous Disorders*”, by a bad diet, or hereditary misfortune.¹⁹⁰ He concludes:

After all the Pains I have taken, I have not yet got so large a Share of *Enthusiasm*, as to hope, by these my poor *Labours*, to do Good to any, except, perhaps, to a few poor, low, *valetudinary, dying, miserable* Creatures, who have not the Courage *magnanimously and gloriously* to suffer, pine, and putrify. The *Brave*, the *Bold*, the *Intrepid*, the *Heroic*, who value not Pain, who can *suffer for Di-*

¹⁹⁰ George Cheyne, *The English Malady*, p. 362. In the *Essay of Health and Long Life*, published several years earlier in 1724, Cheyne had strongly recommended that our intake of meat and drink should be adjusted to our “concoctive” powers, so that we can live as long as our constitutions were originally made to last. The causes of chronical distempers are in Cheyne’s view the viscosity in the juices, the sharp and acrimonious salts and the relaxation or want of due force and “Springiness” in the solids (*Essay of Health and Long Life*, London, 1724, pp. 18-19). Cheyne refers to “Lewis Cornaro”, a Venetian nobleman, whose life was despaired of at 40, but who lived to a great age as a result of merely being temperate (*Essay of Health and Long Life*, pp. 31, 206). Cheyne recognized that our northern climate made the appetite keener, but still advised temperance, which, in his eyes, meant that a person with no laborious employment should restrict himself to about 8 ounces of flesh a day (c. 220 gr), 12 ounces of bread or vegetables (c. 340 gr) and a pint of wine or other liquor, and even less for those in a sedentary profession, because their nerves were more worn out by intellectual studies, for “a clear Head must have a clean Stomach” (*Essay of Health and Long Life*, p. 34). Only as a last resort in severe cases of “nervous distempers” (fearing apoplexy or palsy which would ultimately cause the patient’s death) would Cheyne prescribe his “milk and seed” diet. When seriously ill around 1711, Cheyne had heard of the “total Milk Diet” of Dr Taylor of Croydon and found that Thomas Sydenham (plate VI), a physician whom he very much admired and to whom he refers regularly throughout his works, had with great success prescribed a total milk diet in a case of “obstinate Hysterick Fits and Colicks”. Sydenham (1624-1689) repudiated all dogmatic authority in matters of science and was as little influenced by theory as by tradition. His aim was to observe nature. His first book *Methodus Curandi Febres* (1666), dedicated to Robert Boyle, was expanded into *Observationes Medicae* (1676) which was regarded of great importance in the history of medicine and had considerable success. It was reprinted in Amsterdam in the same year. Sydenham’s *Opera universa* were printed in 1687 by Henry Wetstein in Amsterdam. Sydenham suffered from gout (and calculus) from 1649 onwards and his personal experience enabled him to write a description of gout which seemed to have been unsurpassed in its kind. He made several other important contributions to medicine. We find Sydenham’s name mentioned in connection with Cheyne. In the *Gentleman’s Magazine* (XIII, 1743, 218) Cheyne is described “as a Physician, [who] seemed to proceed, like *Hippocrates* of old and *Sydenham* of late”. Similarly, in an early issue of the *Gentleman’s Magazine* Cheyne’s and Sydenham’s names are linked: “’Tis Magick, Powerful Magick, reigns in this [Cheyne’s works] / And proves what *Sydenham* was, bright *Cheyne* is.” (Cf. Mullett, *Op. cit.*, pp. 132, 136).

The Relationship between Richardson and Cheyne



VI. Thomas Sydenham (1624-1689). Engraved by E. Scriven from the portrait at All Souls College, Oxford.

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version, and who prefer death with a Bounce, to Life on such Conditions as I propose; and chuse rather to *extinguish* now, than in *forty* or *fifty* Years hence, will heartily despise and pity me and my *Lucubrations: Nunquam persuadebis etiamsi persuaseris*: You shall never convince, tho' you convict me".¹⁹¹

Cheyne tells us how, some years after the publication of the first part of the *Philosophical Principles of Religion Natural and Revealed* in 1705, so probably in 1707-1709,¹⁹² he felt melancholy and dejected, but with his faculties "as clear and quick as ever". He explains how he had examined and believed the great and fundamental principles of all virtue and morality, viz. the existence of a supreme and infinitely perfect being, the freedom of the will, the immortality of the spirits of all intelligent beings, and the certainty of future rewards or punishments, but that now he started meditating about what he called "higher and more enlightening Principles of Virtue and Morality" and wondered whether there were not some clearer accounts discoverable from the mere "*Light of Nature and Philosophy*".

Cheyne then thought of whom of all his acquaintances he would like to resemble most, or who of them had lived up to what he called "the Plain Truths and Precepts contained in the Gospels", in particular those found in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), which in its broadest context proclaims the kingdom of God to all, focussing on the spiritual and ethical nature of the people of the kingdom, whose place in it is not based on their own accomplishments.¹⁹³ And Cheyne fixed on one: "a worthy and learned Clergyman of the Church of England", who was known and distinguished in the philosophical and theological world, but whom he could not name, because he was still living (in 1733) and now very old.¹⁹⁴ He added:

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 365.

¹⁹² Cheyne now gives us an indication as to when this happened, for he writes "... my *Philosophical Principles* publish'd some years before that happen'd" (*The English Malady*, p. 331).

¹⁹³ The Sermon on the Mount is addressed to the humble and persecuted, rather than the proud and triumphant, just as Cheyne's own works were not for "the *Brave*, the *Bold*, the *Intrepid*, the *Heroic*, who value not Pain, who can *suffer* for *Diversions*, and who prefer *death* with a *Bounce*." The Sermon contains nine beatitudes or blessings, the sixth of which - "blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" - has had a strong influence on the mystical tradition. The people of the kingdom are spiritually sincere and simple, oriented towards the kingdom rather than towards their own material security. In this sense the kingdom of God was a spiritual reality rather than a political system and as such different from the theme of the Book of Revelation in which the establishment of the kingdom of God (or the millennium) upon earth is described as a political reality. One has to bear in mind that the kingdom of God is a broad concept with many divergent strands. For Cheyne this (spiritual) kingdom would have represented a state "within him", an inner state of mind, which in fact demonstrates Cheyne's mysticism. This kingdom should not be confused with the millennium (or the thousand-year-period of blessedness to be enjoyed on earth) as we find it depicted in the Book of Revelation. I will return to this subject in chapter 6.

¹⁹⁴ *The English Malady*, p. 332. In the same book Cheyne had said of truth that it is "*simple, and one in its Root and Source, but various and manifold in different Situations and Circumstances*" (cf. *English Malady*, p. xi).

So, in this case, the more quickly to settle my *Mind*, and quiet my *Conscience*, I resolved to purchase, study and examine carefully such *Spiritual* and *Dogmatic Authors*, as I knew this *venerable Man* did most approve and delight in. In this manner I collected a *Set of religious Books and Writers*, of most of the *first Ages* since *Christianity*, recommended by him, with a few others of the most *Spiritual* of the *Moderns*, which have been my *Study, Delight* and *Entertainment* in my *Retirements* ever since: and on these I have formed my *Ideas, Principles* and *Sentiments*: so as, under all the *Varieties of Opinions, Sects, Disputes*, and *Controversies*, that of *late*, and *since the Earliest Ages*, have been canvassed and bandyed in the *World*, I have scarce ever been the least shaken, or tempted to change my *Sentiments* or *Opinions*, or so much as to *hesitate* in any *material Point*.

My theory is that the venerable man whom Cheyne admired was Thomas Wilson (plate VII), bishop of Sodor and Man, who in 1733 was about 70 years old.¹⁹⁵ So let us now briefly turn to Wilson to back up my speculation.

Thomas Wilson, Bishop of Sodor and Man

Having turned his thoughts from medicine to the church, Wilson obtained in 1686 his B.A. at Trinity College, Dublin, followed several years later by an M.A. In 1687 he became curate to his uncle Richard Sherlock in the chapelry of Newchurch Kenyon, Lancashire, and was ordained priest in 1689. In 1692 he was appointed domestic chaplain to the ninth earl of Derby and tutor to his only son, for which he received a salary of 30 pounds. Appointed in 1693 as master of an almshouse at Lathom he earned another 20 pounds. At Easter of that year he made a vow to set apart a fifth of his meagre income for pious purposes, especially for the poor.

In 1697 Lord Derby offered him the bishopric of Sodor and Man. On April 6 of the next year Wilson took up his residence at Bishop's Court, Kirk Michael, which he found in a ruinous condition. He rebuilt the greater part of it at a cost of about 1,400 pounds which he paid himself, except for 200 pounds. His biographers tell us that he became a very energetic planter of fruit and forest trees, turning "the bare slopes into a richly wooded glen".¹⁹⁶

Wilson also was an enthusiastic farmer and miller, doing much to develop the resources of the island. Cheyne must have been much impressed by the fact that for some time Wilson was the only doctor on the island. He set up a drug-shop and gave advice and medicine gratis to the poor. These facts may again, much later, have influenced Richardson when he described how Sir Charles Grandison employed an apothecary and a surgeon who attended his tenants. Seeing a glass-case filled with "physical matters", Harriet asks

¹⁹⁵ See p. 27 above.

¹⁹⁶ John Keble, *The Life of the Right Reverend Father in God, Thomas Wilson, D.D., Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man*, 7 vols., ed. John Henry Parker, Oxford, 1863, which gives many particulars from year to year.



VII. Bishop Thomas Wilson (1663-1755). His portrait was painted in 1732 and engraved in 1735 by Vertue (reproduced in 1750). It shows his black skullcap and hair flowing.

what it is for. Mrs Curzon, the housekeeper, answers:

Here is ... a collection of all the useful drugs in medicine: But does not your Ladyship know the noble method that my master has fallen into since his last arrival in England? He gives a salary ... to a skilful apothecary; and pays him for his drugs besides ... and this gentleman dispenses physic to all his tenants, who are not able to pay for advice; nor are the poor who are not his tenants, refused, when recommended by Dr. Bartlett. (VII. 286)

Then Mrs Curson describes the surgeon who lives on the estate:

There lives in an house [a surgeon]... within five miles of this, almost in the middle of the estate, and pays no rent, a very worthy young man; brought up, under an eminent surgeon of one of the London hospitals, who has orders likewise for attending his tenants in the way of his business - As also every casualty that happens within distance, and where another surgeon is not to be met with. And he ... is paid on a cure actually performed. But if the patient die, his trouble and attendance are only considered according to the time taken up; except a particular case requires consideration. (VII. 286)

The building of new churches was one of Wilson's earliest projects.¹⁹⁷ In 1704 Wilson drew up his famous "Ecclesiastical Constitutions" of which it was said that "if the ancient discipline of the church were lost, it might be found in all its purity in the Isle of Man". He also established parochial libraries in his diocese as well as a public library at Castletown in 1706.¹⁹⁸ He was responsible for the first book published in Manx.¹⁹⁹

Like the Moravian Comenius whose works he had read, Wilson was involved in educational projects.²⁰⁰ With the help of the philanthropist Lady Elizabeth Hastings, sister-in-law of Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon, and highly admired by William Law, Wilson was able to increase the efficiency of the grammar schools and parish schools in the island.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ See Sir Charles Grandison's activities in this respect (e.g. Vol. III, p. 7).

¹⁹⁸ See footnote 266 below.

¹⁹⁹ This was called *Principles and Duties of Christianity ... in English and Manx ... with short and plain directions and prayers*, 2 vols., 1707.

²⁰⁰ Comenius (1592-1670) set up schools in which men were to be formed into images of Christ by means of a pansophia, an organic development of all elements of Divine wisdom. Coercion was to be avoided; the senses were to be employed wherever possible, and everything to be learned was first to be properly understood. The ultimate aim was the development of the character on Christian lines. In the *XI Questions Concerning the Soule*, Sparrow mentions Comenius in his address to the "earnest Lovers of Wisdom". Sparrow writes that Comenius, by his *Pansophia*, designed the best way to educate all from their childhood, so that in the shortest time they may get the highest learning their natures can attain to." It is in this address that Sparrow also refers to ancient philosophers such as Hermes Trismegistos, Zoroaster, Pythagoras, Plato, and the "modern Raymundus Lullius, Paracelsus and others".

²⁰¹ In *An Earnest and Serious Answer to Dr. Trapp's Discourse of the Folly, Sin and Danger of Being Righteous over-much* (1740), William Law describes how he had a universal love and kind-

Wilson's sympathies were not limited to the Church of England. Roman Catholics attended his services, and he allowed dissenters to sit or stand at the communion. The Quakers loved and respected him. We have already seen that Wilson met James Oglethorpe in 1735 with whom he shared an interest in foreign missions, especially to Georgia, whose trustees were mostly dissenters, and we know he met Zinzendorf in 1737 and was much interested in Moravian activities, became a member of Zinzendorf's Order of the Mustard Seed and accepted the Presidency of the Anglican Tropus.²⁰² From the above we may conclude that Wilson was most probably the "venerable" man whom Cheyne referred to, which is especially interesting because of Richardson's connection with Wilson.²⁰³

ness for all mankind, and more especially for those whom God had called to be his fellow-labourers in promoting the salvation of mankind, with whom he may have referred to Lady Elizabeth Hastings, who had died the year before (*Works*, Vol. VI, pp. 1-2).

²⁰² See p. 26 ff. above.

²⁰³ In his article "Mysticism and Millenarianism: 'Immortal Dr. Cheyne'" (pp. 93 and 98), Rousseau argues that William Whiston had been the "venerable clergyman of the Church of England", asserting that "there is a good deal of circumstantial evidence to suggest that Whiston is the scientist and philosopher whose 'primitive Christianity' subdued [Cheyne's] misery in illness" and that these works of primitive Christianity "confirmed Cheyne's developing sense that the material world was proximate to dissolution and the New Jerusalem imminent. To prop up his case Rousseau adds that William Whiston's Arianism and disavowal of the coeternity of the Father and Son were notorious by 1706. Rousseau further states that Cheyne was ill and despondent and as a result of this followed Whiston's example. We may compare this with Cheyne's firm rejection of Arianism as a heresy. In the *Essay on Regimen* (pp. 186-188, 287-288) Cheyne explains that the Arian and Sabellian heresies are the "two capital Errors in the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, (especially of the *Incarnation*) and divine Nature of the *Persons* (which is the Hinge of the Doctrine of the Trinity)" and that both are very detrimental to "Christian Perfection and the Practice of its cardinal Virtues: *Faith*, *Hope* and *Charity*, or the Acquisition of the *moral Powers* of the *Soul*", (i.e. justice, goodness, truth). But he adds that the Arian heresy is much more detrimental than the Sabellian. Cheyne apologized for having meddled with this subject, which he admitted to be quite out of his province, but it had been necessary to do so, because some of what he had said in the *Philosophical Principles* had been misunderstood as a result of which he had been accused of being an Arian. See for a modern discussion of Arianism: Maurice Wiles, *Archetypal Heresy: Arianism through the Centuries*, Oxford, 1996. For a detailed description of the complex issue of Whiston's Arianism, see pp. 93-111. In the article mentioned above Rousseau claims that in 1709 or 1710 Cheyne "believed that the millennium had begun" and "that recent political and social events were sufficient proof, and that [Cheyne] bore a special mission in its commencement". In the same article cited above Rousseau continues in a similar vein and, now discussing the year 1729 (according to Rousseau "[Cheyne's] second medical *annus mirabilis*"), he states that "unfortunately, no evidence exists as to whether Cheyne still extolled Whiston as he had in 1706 - as a beacon of primitive Christianity -", but that [Cheyne's] "evangelical mission to connect medicine and millenarianism increasingly obsessed him." (Cf. Rousseau, *Op. cit.*, p. 104). (It is in this essay in footnote 68, p. 102, that Rousseau describes Cheyne as a man who suffered primarily from "manic-depression", but that as Cheyne aged "this psychiatric condition was aggravated by chronic cardiac arrest.") I equally disagree with Guerrini's theory that the venerable "clergyman of the Church of England" was the Episcopalian clergyman George Garden. She informs us that in 1705 Cheyne looked for "spiritual guidance" and, "as Augustine had turned to his mother", Cheyne turned to whom Guerrini thinks was a friend of his youth, who led him toward certain appropriate texts. Guerrini incorrectly identifies this unnamed person as the "Scottish Episcopalian clergyman and mystic, George Garden", arguing that Garden "could reasonably be called an Anglican". (Cf. "Case History as Spiritual Biography: George Cheyne's 'Case of the Author'" in *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 1995, May, 19 (2), 18-27, esp. her endnote 33, p. 27).

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Returning to Cheyne's "own Case", he informs us that the study of the spiritual and dogmatic authors, which he knew this "venerable" man approved, gave him much "Peace, Tranquility and Chearfulness" and contributed to the cure of his nervous diseases. Or in his own words:

The *Fright, Anxiety, Dread and Terror*, which, in Minds of such a Turn as mine, (especially under a broken and *cachectick* Constitution, and in so atrocious a *nervous Case*) arises, or, at least, is exasperated from such Reflexions, being once settled and quieted, *That* after becomes an excellent *Cordial*, and a constant Source of *Peace, Tranquility and Chearfulness*, and so greatly contributes to forward the Cure of such *nervous Diseases*.²⁰⁴

And so he decided from then on:

To neglect nothing to secure my eternal Peace; more than if I had been certified I should die within the Day; nor to mind any thing that my secular Obligations and Duties demanded of me, less, than if I had been ensured to live 50 Years more.²⁰⁵

It is an interesting fact that this text was printed by Richardson as early as 1733 and surely must have had some influence on him considering the fact that we see similar words appear in *Sir Charles Grandison*. When Harriet refers to the end of Sir Charles's natural life on earth, she writes:

That as he must one day die, it was matter of no moment to *him*, whether it were to-morrow, or forty years hence. (II. 440)

When in 1740 the first announcements appeared of Bishop Wilson's *The Knowledge and Practice of Christianity Made Easy: or, an Essay towards an Instruction for the Indians*, which, as I have mentioned earlier, was printed by Richardson in 1741, Cheyne wrote to Wilson and expressed his feelings as follows:

I am rejoiced the good, the worthy Christian Bishop of Man *continues*, an honour to human nature, and a faithful dispenser of the words of the holy Jesus, and shall be glad to benefit by his labours and works.²⁰⁶ (Italics are mine)

In 1741 Cheyne acknowledged the book as a joint gift from the Bishop and his son in the following words:

²⁰⁴ *The English Malady*, p. 333.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 334.

²⁰⁶ John Keble, *The Life of the Right Reverend Father in God, Thomas Wilson, D.D., Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man*, 7 vols., ed. John Henry Parker, Oxford, 1863, Vol. I, Part II, p. 923.

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I was extremely obliged to you both for the valuable present of your father's book for the Indians. I esteem it much, for its justness, solidity, and propriety for the end proposed.²⁰⁷

In another letter dated 13 August 1740, Cheyne had written to Wilson that they must do their best and wait God's time, adding that he believed, though the nation, especially those of the two extremes, "the highest and greatest, and the lowest and most abject", was extremely ignorant, corrupted and vicious, there was "the dawning of some good spirit among the middling rank".²⁰⁸ As to the "end proposed", Wilson's essay was also meant to be read by those Christians of "all denominations" who "understand not why they are called Christians", it was for all "such Christians as have not well considered the meaning of the religion they profess, or, who profess to know God, but in his works do deny him".²⁰⁹

Cheyne's Family Life

Cheyne mentions his wife Margaret Middleton (whom he had married around 1712 or earlier) several times in his letters to Richardson. When advising Richardson on *Pamela*, Part II, in a letter of 24 August 1741, Cheyne sharply criticizes several instances of class distinction, which may explain why he had been called a Leveller by some of his contemporaries. First Cheyne writes that there is no difference between the sexes for they are both of the same species, a subject discussed on several occasions in *Sir Charles Grandison* and one which I will return to in chapter 7. Then Cheyne adds that since Richardson had made Pamela a "Gentlewoman" originally, he therefore thinks it is "improper" that Pamela and her parents should "ever creep and hold down their Heads in the Dirt". On the contrary, Cheyne argues that as man and wife, father and children, Pamela and her parents should approach other people "to a Par", at least "for [Cheyne's] sake". He adds that he should not have permitted such creeping behaviour in his wife, even if she had been a milkmaid.²¹⁰

In another letter dated 2 February 1742, Cheyne writes to Richardson that "from her Cradle" Margaret had been "notoriously abstemious" from a better principle than mere natural health.²¹¹ Some months later Cheyne informs Richardson that his wife showed signs of an incipient palsy as a consequence of which she had given up wine and meat almost completely.²¹²

The Cheynes had three surviving children, Francis, who was baptized on 23 August 1713 at St Michael's parish in Bath, Peggy (Margaret), and John, pos-

²⁰⁷ Ibid., Vol. I, part II, p. 924.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., Vol. IV, pp. 129, 131.

²¹⁰ Mullett, *Op. cit.*, p. 69.

²¹¹ Ibid., p. 82.

²¹² Ibid., p. 105.

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sibly born in 1717.²¹³ According to Viets,²¹⁴ the elder daughter Francis married William Stewart, an advocate, on 30 April 1741, and they lived in London. We find several references to Francis and Peggy in Cheyne's letters to Richardson. On 12 February 1741 Cheyne writes that he will be in London to visit Francis and his son-in-law "who will be married before that Time". In the same letter he promises to visit Richardson.²¹⁵ He mentions his daughters again in his letter to Richardson of 22 June 1742:

My daughter Peggy is so obliged by your Kindness and Civility to her that she charged me again and again upon her last leaving me to go to Westown, to return her most sensible Acknowledgements to you, and I really believe if she finds herself in Spirits enough to go to London to visit her Sister she would not fail to express her Gratitude to you in her own Manner personally but to make some Stops at your Habitation and Family in the Country.²¹⁶

In his letter of 14 January 1742/43 Cheyne writes that his whole family, "Wife, Daughters, Nanny, etc. (they are honest People)", admire Richardson much, and he adds that if Richardson "wanted Women" he might have his choice, though he is quick to add that Richardson has "very good ones of [his] own". Cheyne further writes that Peggy had said Richardson was the "perfect Original of [his] own Pamela" and that "Generosity and Giving, which in others are only acquired Virtues, are in [Richardson] a natural Passion". For other people "only like to give as much as they receive", whereas Richardson only likes to give.²¹⁷ It comes therefore perhaps as no surprise that it was Peggy who was to be among the first of Richardson's friends who saw the manuscript of *Clarissa* in 1746.²¹⁸

Cheyne's only son, John, became vicar of Brigstock in Northamptonshire.²¹⁹ Cheyne only occasionally mentions his son in his letters to Richardson, possibly because John had already left Bath for Oxford, when

²¹³ For the baptism of Francis, see the Public Record Office, Bath. There is no information on the baptism of Peggy (who had inherited her father's health problems to some extent). She never married and continued to live with her parents. For John's date of birth, Cheyne's biographers refer to the *Alumni Oxoniensis*, ed. J. Foster, 1888, I, 246, which lists John Cheyne as fourteen when he matriculated in 1731.

²¹⁴ Henry R. Viets, "George Cheyne, 1673-1743", in the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 23, 1949, 435-52. Other early twentieth-century critics included W.A. Greenhill (*Life of Dr. George Cheyne, M.D., with extracts from his works and correspondence*, Oxford and London, 1846, to be found in a series of "Christian Medical Biographies" of physicians distinguished for their piety); Thomas McCrae, "George Cheyne, An Old London and Bath Physician, 1671-1743", in *Johns Hopkins Hospital Bulletin*, 15, 156, March 1904, 84-94; and R.S. Siddall, "George Cheyne, M.D.", in the *Annals of Medical History*, 4, 1942, 95-109. Mullett used this material to revive Cheyne in 1943.

²¹⁵ Mullett, *Op. cit.*, p. 65.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 100. For other references to Francis, see pp. 98, 121-124.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

²¹⁸ Duncan T.C. Eaves, and Ben D. Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography*, Oxford, 1971, p. 207.

²¹⁹ *Dictionary of National Biography*, p. 219.

Cheyne and Richardson embarked upon their correspondence.²²⁰

Summing up the above, my conclusion is that Cheyne was a very sensitive man who described himself in the *English Malady* as one of those “mean-spirited Wretches” who wanted to live as long as nature had designed him to last, submitting with the utmost peace and resignation he could arrive at when his life had to end. But since pain, sickness, and especially oppression, anxiety and lowness were his “mortal Aversion”, he would refuse no means to avoid them, except those that would bring him even greater suffering. Deeply abhorring religious persecution, Cheyne was a great defender of tolerance and the freedom of conscience, arguing that there are “as many and as different Degrees of *Sensibility* or of *Feeling*, as there are Degrees of *Intelligence* and Perception in *human* Creatures”:

One shall suffer more from the Prick of a *Pin* or *Needle*, from their extreme *Sensibility*, than others from being run thro’ the Body; and the *first* sort seem to be of the *Class* of these *Quick-Thinkers*²²¹ I have formerly mentioned; and as none have it in their *Option* to chuse for themselves their own particular *Frame* of Mind, nor *Constitution* of Body, so none can chuse his own degree of *Sensibility*. That is given by the *Author* of his *Nature*, and is already determined; and both are as various as the *Faces* and *Forms* of Mankind are.²²²

Cheyne strongly believed in the “two Fountains of Life and Health”, i.e. the head and the heart.²²³ He recognized in Richardson a kindred spirit, confirmed by Cheyne’s letter dated 12 January 1739-40:

²²⁰ In his letter of 28 February 1738/9 Cheyne wrote to Richardson how angry he was with both Strahan and Leake. He felt he had been used “intolerably in all [he] had to do with [Strahan]”. But Leake, Cheyne wrote, had used him “like a Scoundrel” and added that “of late [Leake] is so insolent and selfish I dare not speak to him. He as good as gives me Lie in every Instance.” But Cheyne is even more upset at the fact that Leake had complained to Cheyne’s son: “He complained he had a hard Bargain of me to my own Son”, (cf. Mullett, *Op. cit.*, p. 46). In his letter of 24 October 1741 Cheyne wrote that he had sent sheets to Oxford “to be polished a little in the Language”, probably by his son and/or half-brother William (cf. Mullett, *Op. cit.*, p. 71).

²²¹ In *The English Malady* (p. 182) Cheyne had divided mankind into quick thinkers, slow thinkers and no thinkers. He believed that “Persons” of slender and weak nerves usually belonged to the first class, as a result of the activity, mobility and delicacy of their intellectual organs. Flattering, easy and agreeable amusements, and intervals of “No-Thinking” and “Swiss-Meditation” were therefore, according to Cheyne, as essential to them as sleep is to the weary, and meat to the hungry: else the spring would break. Study of difficult and intricate matters would infallibly hurt. Reading should be light and entertaining and conversation must be easy and agreeable, without disputes or contradiction. The advice given here has surely influenced Richardson, because it is identical to that given by Sir Charles Grandison in Clementina’s case (V. 557) when he writes that Clementina must not be contradicted. (Cheyne had made a similar tripartite division of mankind in *The Essay of Health and Long Life*, 1724, pp. 159-160).

²²² *English Malady*, pp. 366-367.

²²³ Written in a letter to Richardson, dated 27 January 1742-43, cf. Mullett, *Op. cit.*, p. 122. See also entry LXXXIII on the death of Cheyne in which we find another reference to “heart and head”. The writer states “that those who best knew him most loved him, which must be the felicity of every Man who values himself more upon the Goodness of his Heart than the Clearness of his Head; and yet Dr. Cheyne’s Works show how much he excelled in both.” (Cf. Mullett, *Op. cit.* p. 126). Indeed

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I hope you know me too well and my Manner of acting with the Lovers of Virtue and its Source, whom I profess to love and serve with my Power, to be any longer shy with me but to use me with that Freedom that becomes Persons designing the same Ends.²²⁴

In the next chapter I will look in greater detail at Cheyne's thoughts inasmuch as they are relevant to this study, and show how they found their way into *Clarissa* and *Sir Charles Grandison*.

Cheyne was very much interested in mysticism, but he was equally fascinated with science. He mentions for instance that those who had influenced and helped him to amend the new edition of *the Philosophical Principles* of 1724 were Dr. Gregory, Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford, and the "reverend and learned" Mr. John Craig, Sir Isaac Newton (plate VIII), special reference is made to the second version of Newton's *Opticks* and *Mathematical Principles of Philosophy*, Mr. Cotes, Plumian Professor of Astronomy at Cambridge, and several others. Last but not least, he referred to the *Philosophical Transactions* and the *Memoirs of the Academy Royal* at Paris.

²²⁴ Mullett, *Op. cit.*, p. 58.



VIII. Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727). Engraving published by William Darton, London, 1822.