subversion to both private and public Old World interests. The nation’s rotting teeth signaled the same overindulgent decay that so preoccupied Berkeley, but it originated with hazardous colonial substances and the strategies developed to artificially inflate their worth. The author suspected that similar machinations were the true motivation behind Berkeley’s advocacy for the latest New World cure-all, and characterised the Bishop of Cloyne as a “speculative” “Schemist” who sought to manipulate tar prices to the tune of millions.¹

Anti-Siris further disparaged the colonies as an unhygienic setting where sexual mixing and disease ran rampant, a stark counterpoint to the unspoiled healthfulness Berkeley fetishized. Whereas Berkeley envisioned that the New World held the cure to Old World ills, his critic recounted a narrative of the New World infecting the Old. Berkeley had set out to convert the natives, but instead “return[ed] re infecta” as their convert, having “contracted an Intimacy with an Indian” who informed him of tar-water. The author sought to cast Berkeley as suspect through his closeness to this presumed indigenous reporter, a relationship here described using the language of intermingled infection and sexual impropriety. Adding that no man was immune to “the Curious Itch...not even B[isho]ps themselves,” the pamphlet submitted that Berkeley was susceptible to contracting a venereal disease as a consequence of his time across the Atlantic.

With this colonial variant on the comedic standard of salacious clergyman, Anti-Siris invoked real histories of sexual license and violence in the conquest of the New World which resulted in the initial transmission of syphilis from the Americas to Europe. The metropolitan author artfully sullied Berkeley’s “American Excursion” by depicting transatlantic sexual contact and disease as essential motivations and outcomes of the colonial experience.²

¹ Anti-Siris, 50. “Schemist” from title. See also 77, “his religious and political Scheme.”