

1154-01-2571 **Julia C Tomasson*** (jct2182@columbia.edu). *How to “strain at a Gnat and swallow a Camel:”
‘The Analyst Controversy’ Reconsidered.*

Bishop George Berkeley’s (1685-1753) *The Analyst; Or, A Discourse Addressed to an Infidel Mathematician* (1734) lives on in the history of mathematics in infamy and ridicule. Berkeley’s incendiary tract was met with immediate, yet lasting, censure and is often glossed as follows: infinitesimals are nothing more than “Ghosts of departed Quantities” making the calculus incoherent at best and a metaphysical fraud at worst. In this paper I will not try to vindicate Berkeley’s critique of fluxions or metaphysical claims about infinitesimals. Nor will I exculpate him from his mathematical errors—which are as clear then as they are now. Instead, I ask a set of questions about the conditions which made the ensuing, and notably catalytic, controversy possible. I claim *The Analyst* as a text has been misunderstood; *The Analyst* was turned into a text about “Ghosts of departed Quantities” masking the true pretensions of the text in acceptable anti-Newtonian garb. I conclude that at the heart of this controversy is an image of mathematics in England post-Newton and pre-Cauchy in which mathematicians (experienced and amateur) are deeply concerned with if and when exactly they get to play by their own rules. (Received September 17, 2019)