

Berkeley Studies

No. 19 (2008)

Editors

Stephen H. Daniel, *Senior Editor*
College Station, Texas, USA
Marc A. Hight, *Coordinating Editor*
Hampden-Sydney, Virginia, USA
Silvia Parigi, *Bibliographical Editor*
Cassino, Italy
Laurent Jaffro, *Book Review Editor*
Clermont-Ferrand, France
Tom Stoneham, *News Editor*
York, UK

Contents

Daniel Flage	
Was Berkeley an Ethical Egoist?	3
Luc Peterschmitt	
Can Berkeley Be an Instrumentalist? Towards a Reappraisal of Berkeley's Philosophy of Science	19
Marta Szymañska	
Review Article: George Berkeley's Philosophy in Polish Studies	32
Costica Bradatan	
Review: Stephen Gersh and Dermot Moran, eds. <i>Eriugena, Berkeley, and the Idealist Tradition</i>	40
Timo Airaksinen	
Review: Costica Bradatan, <i>The Other Bishop Berkeley: An Exercise in Reenchantment</i>	44
Genevieve Migely	
Review: Talia Mae Bettcher, <i>Berkeley's Philosophy of Spirit: Consciousness, Ontology and the Elusive Subject</i>	47
Thomas Lennon	
Review: Stephen H. Daniel, ed. <i>New Interpretations of Berkeley's Thought</i>	50
Georges Dicker	
Review: Stephen H. Daniel, ed. <i>Reexamining Berkeley's Philosophy</i>	56
News and Announcements	79
Recent Works on Berkeley (2003 – 2008)	80

© *Berkeley Studies* and Contributors 2008

Berkeley Studies is sponsored by
Hampden-Sydney College and the International Berkeley Society

Was Berkeley an Ethical Egoist?

Daniel Flage

And, generally, in the ages of Christian faith, it has been obvious and natural to hold that the realisation of virtue is essentially an enlightened and far-seeing pursuit of Happiness for the agent. Nor has this doctrine been held only by persons of a cold and calculating turn of mind: we find it urged with emphasis by so chivalrous and high-minded a preacher as Bishop Berkeley.

Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*

In this essay¹ I argue that the “Mo” sections in Berkeley’s Notebooks provide *prima facie* evidence that the young Berkeley was an ethical egoist.² The Notebook entries

¹ References to Berkeley’s Notebooks (NB) will be made parenthetically by entry number as found in *Philosophical Commentaries*, in vol. 1 of *The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne*, ed. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop, (9 vols.; London: 1948-1957). References to the *Principles of Human Knowledge (PHK)*, *Passive Obedience (PO)*, and the *Theory of Vision . . . Vindicated (TVV)* will be by section number. References to *Alciphron (ALC)* will be by dialogue and section. References to Berkeley’s sermons (*SER*) will be by sermon number and page in *Works*, vol. 7.

² There are two broad approaches to the Notebooks. One approach assumes that Berkeley’s views remained constant throughout his life. On such a view, the remarks in the Notebooks—or a significant subset of them, for example, those *not* marked with a plus sign—reflect the same position as is found in all his published works. The other approach assumes that the Notebooks give us insight only into what Berkeley was thinking in 1707-1708. These views might or might not be the same views one finds in his published works. The latter is the approach I assume in this essay. Thus, my objective is *not* to show that the mature Berkeley was an ethical egoist. His remark in his sermon “Of the Will of God” that, “as it is necessary, that the civil actions of men as well as the natural motions of bodies, be governed by some one overruling principle or law, wisely directing them to their proper ends, and confining them within their due bounds, it is no less necessary to the wellbeing of the world, that the moral actions of all mankind, considered as one great society, be subjected to the law, and conformed to the will of God, who on all accounts is entitled to a dominion over them” (*SER* 10:131-132; cf. *SER* 8:110), might suggest a position closer to utilitarianism than ethical egoism.

It is widely held that Berkeley was a utilitarian. See, for example, Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 5, *Modern Philosophy: The British Philosophers*, part 2 (Garden City: Image Books, 1964), 57-61; Paul J. Olscamp, “Some Suggestions About the Moral Philosophy of George Berkeley,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 6 (1968): 147-56; Paul J. Olscamp, *The Moral Philosophy of George Berkeley* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970); Matti Häyry, *Liberal Utilitarianism and Applied Ethics* (London: Routledge, 1994), 27-28; Matti Häyry and Heta Häyry, “Obedience to Rules and Berkeley’s Theological Utilitarianism,” *Utilitas* 6 (1994): 233-42; David Berman, *George Berkeley: Idealism and the Man* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 87-88; David Berman, *Berkeley and Irish Philosophy* (London: Continuum, 2005), 155; Stephen Darwell, “Berkeley’s Moral and Political Philosophy,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Berkeley*, ed. Kenneth P. Winkler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 311-38; cf. Stephen R. L. Clark, “Berkeley on Religion,” in *Cambridge Companion to Berkeley*, 387-99. Opponents of utilitarian interpretation include Hugh W. Orange, “Berkeley as a Moral Philosopher,” *Mind* 15 (1890): 514-23; G. Dawes Hicks, *Berkeley* (1932; rept. New York: Russell and Russell, 1968), 185; George Pitcher, *Berkeley, The Arguments of the Philosophers* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), 228-54;

demonstrate that Berkeley was intrigued by Locke's contention that moral truths are as subject to demonstration as mathematical truths,³ since at least twelve of the thirty-nine entries marked "Mo" concern moral demonstration (NB 669, 677, 683, 690, 697, 705, 732, 734, 739, 755, 804, 883; cf. 698, 728, 853). Given Berkeley's interest in the demonstrability of moral propositions and that the Berkeley of the Notebooks provides only a limited account of the meaning of moral terms, and given that neither Locke nor Berkeley accepted an ontology containing universals, I begin with a brief examination of Locke's account of the meaning of moral terms. Next, I provide a brief discussion of ethical egoism. Third, I argue that if Berkeley accepted Locke's account of the meaning of moral terms—*sans* abstract ideas—then the "Mo" entries in the Notebooks tend to suggest that Berkeley seriously entertained ethical egoism. I conclude with some brief remarks on *Passive Obedience*, arguing that at least some elements of that work can be interpreted egoistically.

1. Locke and the meaning of moral terms⁴

The Locke of the *Essay* provides an elaborate taxonomy of ideas. Among those ideas are mixed modes, which provide "greatest part of the words made use of in divinity, ethicks, law, and politicks, and several other sciences" (*Essay* 2.22.12). While ideas of substance represent objects external to the mind (external archetypes), mixed modes are non-representative; they are their own archetypes. As Locke wrote, "Our *complex* Ideas of *Modes*, being voluntary Collections of simple *Ideas*, which the Mind puts together without reference to any real Archetypes, or standing Patterns, existing any where, *are*, and cannot but be *adequate Ideas*" (*Essay* 2.31.3; cf. *Essay* 3.5.3-6). It is these voluntary joining together of ideas that provide the meanings of what might be called secondary moral terms, that is, kinds of actions to which moral properties are ascribed, such as "murther" and "sacrilege" (*Essay* 2.22.3), "lying" (*Essay* 2.22.9), "gratitude" and "polygamy" (*Essay* 2.28.4). Similarly, mixed modes provide the basis for the meaning of primary moral terms such as "good" and "evil" (*Essay* 2.20.3, 2.21.43), "moral obligation," "moral right," and "moral power" (*Essay* 2.28.3). Moral relations are "the Conformity or Disagreement, Men's voluntary Actions have to a Rule to which they are referred, and by which they are judged of" (*Essay* 2.28.4). While pleasure and pain and their respective causes are naturally good and evil, "*Morally good and evil* then, is only the Conformity or Disagreement of our voluntary Actions to some Law, whereby Good or Evil is drawn on us, by the Will and Power of the Law-maker; which Good and Evil, Pleasure or Pain, attending our observance, or breach of the Law, by the Decree of the Law-maker, is that we call *Reward* and *Punishment*" (*Essay* 2.28.5). Locke claims that

Roomet Jakapi, "Was Berkeley a Utilitarian?" in *Human Nature As the Basis of Morality and Society in Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Juhana Lemetti, (Helsinki: Philosophy Society of Finland, 2007), 53-68.

³ John Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), Book 4, Chapter 3, section 18; cf. 4.4.7, 4.4.9, and 4.12.8. References to the *Essay* will be made parenthetically by book, chapter, and section.

⁴ I have discussed Locke's account of moral reasoning and natural law in detail in "Locke and Natural Law," *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review* 39 (2000): 437-60.

moral rules are of three types: laws of God, laws of civil society, and laws of reputation, that is, social mores (*Essay* 2.28.6).

There are several points of which we should take particular notice. Mixed modes are the voluntary joining together of ideas to which a term is applied. As such, these mixed modes are strictly subjective, although Locke suggests that disputes regarding the meanings of these terms can be resolved through careful definition (*Essay* 4.3.20). It is important to notice that moral rules—whether divine, civil, or social—are all couched in terms of their tendencies to result in pain—moral evil—if violated. As I have argued at greater length elsewhere,⁵ this tying of moral law to pleasure and pain gives reason to believe that Locke was, at bottom, an ethical egoist: not only does one naturally seek pleasure and seek to avoid pain (cf. *Essay* 1.3.3), and seek to obtain those things that cause pleasure and seek to avoid those things that cause pain, but one ought to do so.⁶

2. Some remarks on ethical egoism

Before turning to Berkeley, I shall make a few remarks on ethical egoism.

Ethical egoism generally does not receive good press among moral philosophers. It is sometimes portrayed as wanton selfishness. But unless one were living alone on a deserted island—indeed, *even if* one were living alone on a deserted island—it is unclear that identifying moral obligation with doing what is in one's interest can be understood as the unbridled venting of one's selfish whims. The thought of being able to indulge in a large bowl, or two, or seven of super-premium ice cream with unlimited toppings whenever I'd wish might appear to be the height of pleasure and therefore a moral obligation on egoistic grounds. Of course, if my doctor is right—a dubious assumption we might hope—after two or three such binges I would certainly die of a massive heart attack. Since death and sensuous pleasure appear to be incompatible, and heart attacks are reported to be quite painful, I appear to be morally obligated to refrain from excessive ice cream consumption (cf. *ALC* 2.18). So, even if I were marooned on a deserted island with an endless supply of ice cream, it would appear to be contrary to my interests, and therefore morally wrong on egoistic principles, to excessively indulge my ice cream fetish (alas!).

⁵ “Locke and Natural Law,” particularly 447-48. It might be worthy of notice that Hume also ascribed to Locke “the selfish system of morals.” See David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, Appendix 2, in *Enquiries concerning the Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 3rd ed. rev. by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), Appendix 2, paragraph 3, p. 296.

⁶ This may be seen as part of a natural law tradition that takes a natural inclination as a mark of what is morally good. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* Qu. 94, Art. 2 and 3; Javier Hervada, *Critical Introduction to Natural Law*, 10th edition, trans. Mindy Emmons, Gratianus Collection Series, Section Handbooks (Montréal: Wilson & Lefleur, 2006), 132-37. Aquinas, of course, ties this inclination to reason; Locke ties it to sensation. Independent of that tradition, insofar as the notion of moral obligation is understood as a mixed mode, it allows the creator of the mixed mode to determine its ideational components.

This example shows us that one must distinguish between sustainable pleasures and unsustainable pleasures. A sustainable pleasure is one that does not lead to pain, or, more properly, of any two pleasures, the pleasure that persists (or tends to persist) for a longer period of time before resulting in pain is more sustainable. The pleasure derived from eating ice cream is not a sustainable pleasure: the amount of pleasure-per-spoonful decreases as one eats; if one eats enough ice cream in a given period of time, one will become ill: the pleasure will be replaced by pain; and if one regularly eats enough ice cream over an extended period of time, the medical types tell us it will lead to heart disease and death. Insofar as an egoist ought to maximize her own interests (pleasures), preference ought to be given to activities resulting in sustainable pleasures rather than unsustainable pleasures.⁷

If the egoistic principle can be consistently applied, its calculations must take various facts into account. Human beings often tend to react to certain kinds of actions in predictable ways. Humans do not react well to having their property stolen, having friends or relatives murdered, being told lies, being treated with little or no respect, and so forth. If one is morally obligated to maximize one's own pleasure or happiness, these facts must be taken into account even if one is living in a Lockean state of nature. The only way one can maximize one's own *long term* happiness is to pay some attention to the interests of others. So, for example, if I knew that stealing my neighbor's goat was likely to result in various actions against my person, I would have reason to refrain from theft even if I considered barbequed goat a sumptuous treat. In a political society, where some of these actions are subject to punishment by the state, I would have even more reason to abstain from these actions since the probability of punishment (with its ensuing pain) might be greater.⁸

If ethical egoism is a viable moral stance, it must be concerned with *long term* self-interest. Typically, one should avoid actions that result in immediate pleasures if a rational calculation suggests that it is likely that the long-term results would be degrees of

⁷ Actions resulting in more sustainable pleasures are, presumably, artistic and intellectual activities (cf. NB 852; *PO* 5). This does *not* mean, of course, that one can or should entirely ignore the gustatory pleasures: consuming certain amounts of the right kinds of food are necessary for the maintenance of one's life and, therefore, the possibility of obtaining artistic or intellectual pleasures. Nor does it mean that artistic and intellectual pleasures are indefinitely sustainable. While trying to figure out what is going on in Berkeley's philosophy is—*of course!*—near the height of intellectual pleasure, it also occasionally results in the pain (frustration) of finding oneself (temporarily?) unable to make sense of certain passages and how they fit together. I suspect the egoist must seek the best balance of the various activities that are jointly necessary and sufficient for the maximization of sustainable pleasure—to the extent that can be known, it is known on the basis of experience. Berkeley, as a theist, presumably held that the only infinitely sustainable pleasure is the pleasure of heaven.

⁸ Or if not greater, at least the results are more predictable. If, in a state of nature, I eat John's goat and am discovered, John might engage in various threats unless I provide some kind of restitution (e.g., another goat). If I provide no restitution, John might simply continue to threaten. On the other hand, if I eat Fred's goat and am discovered, my life might be forfeit. At least in a political system, one can expect that one's punishment will fall within a certain range.

pain that would outbalance the immediate pleasure.⁹ If one introduces the presumption of eternal rewards and punishments for one's actions relative to a set of divinely established laws—an assumption Locke and Berkeley shared—the stakes become infinitely great. So, to the extent one can determine what those divine laws require, it is in one's greatest interest to follow those laws. Under such circumstances, ethical egoism commits one to a conservative code of conduct.

Now we turn to the Notebooks.

3. The Berkeley of the Notebooks

If my previous remarks provide reason to believe that Locke accepted a fairly sophisticated form of ethical egoism, this, by itself, tells us nothing about Berkeley. At most it shows that there was a sophisticated form of egoism that was available to Berkeley, and, insofar as nominalism consists of the claim that all existents are individual and determinate (particulars), it shows that there was a moral theory based on a nominalistic ontology that stands as an alternative to Hobbes's moral theory. While the entries in the Notebooks unquestionably show that Berkeley reflected on some of the sections of Locke's *Essay* that concern moral reasoning, it is equally clear that he could not accept the Lockean theory without modifications. In examining the remarks in the Notebooks, I begin by looking at the entries that concern the meaning of moral terms and demonstration in moral reasoning.¹⁰ Next, I look at Berkeley's remarks on sensual pleasure as the *summum bonum* (NB 769). I show that even the remarks in some of Berkeley's early sermons tend to support my contention that Berkeley deemed individual pleasure or happiness as the good one ought to seek. I conclude with some remarks on *Passive Obedience*.

Berkeley cannot accept Locke's moral theory insofar as Locke couches everything in terms of mixed modes, which are abstract ideas. Berkeley denies not only that we have *abstract* ideas of moral properties; he denies that we have *any* ideas of moral properties. At NB 669 he wrote:

We have no Ideas of vertues & vices, no Ideas of Moral Actions wherefore it may be Question'd whether we are capable of arriving at Demonstration about them, the morality consisting in the Volition chiefly.¹¹

⁹ Similarly, if one is to obtain the skills necessary to engage in activities that will result in more sustainable pleasures, one often must endure a certain amount of pain along the way. For example, if one is going to experience the joys of producing music, one must endure the pain (tedium) of practicing scales.

¹⁰ For a somewhat different account of Berkeley's views on moral demonstration in the Notebooks see Graham P. Conroy, "George Berkeley on Moral Demonstration," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 22 (1961): 205-14.

¹¹ Cf. NB 508 on free will. NB 669 is ambiguous. It *might* mean that we have no ideas of moral properties at all. Such an assumption leads one to questions regarding Berkeley's account of the meaning of moral terms. See, for example, Bertil Belfrage, "The Theological Positivism of George

This is one of the entries in which Berkeley is working through the nature of moral demonstration and demonstration in general. After distinguishing moral truths from natural and mathematical truths (NB 676; cf. NB 853), he remarks that “signification or Including or thinking by Including in Morality” (NB 677) provides the basis for moral knowledge. This does *not* depend on ideas: “The opinion that men had Ideas of Moral actions has render'd the Demonstrating Ethiques very difficult to them” (NB 683). Moral demonstration is all a matter of the relations among the meanings of terms. So, “To demonstrate Morality it seems one need only make a Dictionary of Words & see which included which. at least. This is the greatest part & bulk of the Work” (NB 690). Certainty can be based solely upon words and their meanings—where “meanings” are understood as only a definitional web—so long as the meanings are held constant. As Berkeley remarked, “We may have certainty & knowlege without Ideas \wedge . \wedge i.e without other Ideas than the Words & their standing for one idea i.e. their being to be used indifferently” (NB 730-730a; cf. NB 731), that is, without equivocation. The meanings of terms or signs “are perfectly arbitrary & in our power, made at pleasure” (NB 732). But the implication of the arbitrary meanings of signs together with the assumption that demonstration involves only signs—not ideas—is that demonstration is only verbal. As Berkeley wrote:

Let any Man shew me a Demonstration not verbal that does not depend either on some false principle or at best on some principle of Nature which is y^e effect of God's will and we know not how soon it may be changed. (NB 734)

Reasoning there may be about things or Ideas Actions but Demonstration can be only Verbal. I question, no matter etc (NB 804; cf. NB 739 and 771)

So, while demonstration yields certainty, it is merely verbal certainty: like pure arithmetic, there is no guarantee that it is applicable to ordinary life.

So, Berkeley seems to have deemed the Lockean approach to demonstration in ethics a dead end since: (1) moral ideas cannot be mixed modes insofar as mixed modes are abstract ideas; (2) if one takes seriously the contention that the meanings of moral terms are arbitrary—as Locke's account of mixed modes entails—and reformulates the

Berkeley (1707-1708),” in *Human Nature As the Basis of Morality and Society in Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Juhana Lemetii and Eva Piirimäe (Helsinki: Philosophy Society of Finland, 2007), 37-52. On the other hand, it *might* mean that there is no *distinct and unique* idea that provides the meaning of a moral term such as “morally good”; rather, a moral term “piggybacks” on an idea that already provides the meaning for a term such as “pleasure” or “pain.” This kind of piggybacking is comparable to Locke's account of mixed modes, it is consistent with Berkeley's later identification of the *summum bonum* with sensual pleasure (NB 769), and it must be assumed by anyone who would attribute a teleological theory of normative ethics—whether egoistic or utilitarian—to Berkeley. Hence, my working assumption follows the second line of interpretation. Nonetheless, as we shall see below, in his discussions of moral demonstration in the Notebooks, Berkeley *seems* to hold that moral demonstration depends upon nothing more than relations among words without grounding those words in ideas of sense or reflection. This, in turn, suggests that the Berkeley of the Notebooks was still in the process of working out an account of the meaning of moral terms, a possibility that no one should find terribly surprising.

Lockean system simply in terms of the definitional meanings of signs, then moral demonstration is possible; but (3) moral demonstration becomes nothing more than a verbal issue.

But a concern with demonstration in morals is not the only theme that is found in Berkeley's jottings on morals. Among his earliest entries concerning morals are a number of entries concerning self-interest:

I allow not of the Distinction there is made twix't Profit & Pleasure. (NB 541)

I'd never blame a Man for acting upon Interest. he's a fool that acts on any other Principle. the not considering these things has been of ill consequence in Morality. (NB 542)

I am glad the People I converse with are not all richer, wiser etc than I. This is agreeable to Reason, is no sin. Tis certain that if the Happyness of my Acquaintance increases & mine not proportionably, mine much decrease. The not understanding this & the Doctrine about relative Good discuss'd with French, Madden etc to be noted as 2 Causes of mistake in Judging of moral Matters. (NB 569)

These entries suggest that whatever moral principles obtain, they at least cannot be contrary to self-interest. Following these entries, Berkeley's focus shifts to considerations of demonstration in morals. But a concern with self-interest reemerges in NB 769. There we find this:

Sensual Pleasure is the *Summum Bonum*. This the Great Principle of Morality. This once rightly understood all the Doctrines even the severest of the Gospels may cleerly be Demonstrated. (NB 769)

And a bit later, this:

Sensual Pleasure qua Pleasure is Good & desirable. by a Wise Man. but if it be Contemptible tis not quâ pleasure but qua pain or Cause of pain. or (w^{ch} is the same thing) of loss of greater pleasure. (NB 773)

These entries suggest that Berkeley was at least flirting with ethical egoism. But one might suggest that the identification of the *summum bonum* with sensual pleasure is ambiguous. One *might* suggest that Berkeley's remark should be understood as the factual claim that human beings are psychological hedonists, a claim that was fairly common at the time (cf. *Essay* 1.3.3). Even if one grants that Berkeley was concerned with a moral principle—as he suggests—it is ambiguous between the maximization of pleasure for an individual and the maximization of pleasure for a group. The former would suggest Berkeley's interests were egoistic; the latter would suggest his interests were utilitarian. Is there a way to decide which view Berkeley intended in the Notebooks?

There are several reasons why I believe the passages in the Notebooks are more consistent with an egoistic reading than a utilitarian reading. First, such a reading is consistent with the entries on self-interest and profit. Secondly, there is no entry in the Notebooks that is unequivocally concerned with the interests of society.¹² Thirdly, as I show below, his early sermon “Of Immortality” prescribes the individual attainment of happiness to be the ultimate end of action. To see what is entailed in ascribing ethical egoism to Berkeley, consider again the kind of ethical egoism I ascribed to Locke.

I suggested above that if one is to be a consistent ethical egoist, one must be concerned *not* with what appears to be an immediate source of pleasure or happiness; rather, one must be concerned with what will yield the greatest amount of pleasure or happiness *in the long run*. Berkeley acknowledges that in determining one’s duty, one must take the long view. As he notes in entry 839:

One great Cause of Miscarriage in Men’s affairs is that they too much regard the Present. (NB 839)

Further, in being concerned with one’s own good, one must not only be concerned with pleasures beyond those that are immediately obtainable, one must also be concerned with the interests of others:

In Valuing Good we reckon too much on y^e present & our own. (NB 851)

Why should attending to the interests of others point to a commitment to ethical egoism rather than utilitarianism? Because anyone living in a society—even a minimalist society such as a Lockean state of nature—who would maximize his or her own long-term interests must pay attention to the interests and inclinations of other people in the society. People who engage in robbery, murder, adultery, lying, and so forth can expect various types of retaliation if discovered. So, if one is to maximize one’s long-term self-interest, one needs to attend to the interests of others and their probable reactions to one’s actions.

Further, while Berkeley might have concluded that a purely demonstrative ethic would yield nothing more than verbal truths, he suggested that “Morality may be Demonstrated as mixt Mathematics” (NB 755).¹³ If moral demonstration is construed on the model of mixed mathematics, then it might be understood as the application of a moral principle—such as “Act in such a way that it maximizes your long-term self-interest (pleasure, happiness)” —to individual cases or as the basis for formulating general rules of conduct. To do so, one would need to appeal to laws of probable behavior.¹⁴ If one were to do so concerning general conditions—the principles involved are general, so it is reasonable to

¹² The possible exception is NB 851, which I discuss below.

¹³ Cf. NB 770, where Berkeley asked whether geometry also should be understood as mixed mathematics.

¹⁴ That Berkeley contended that one can (and, perhaps, should) appeal to descriptive natural laws in determining one’s behavior is clear from *PHK* 31. At NB 817 he wrote, “Mem. to take notice of Lockes Woman afraid of a wetting,” which alludes to an example of a woman predicting the weather based on visible signs. See *Essay* 4.17.4.

conclude that one would reach general conclusions, that is, general rules of conduct—the ethical egoist is likely to conclude that he or she should accept general rules such as, “Do not kill,” “Do not steal,” “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not bear false witness,” etc.¹⁵

Considerations of self-interest also point toward the kinds of pleasure that are best pursued. At NB 787 Berkeley notes, “Mem. to excite men to the pleasures of the Eye & the Ear w^{ch} surfeit not, nor bring those evils after them as others.” Later he remarked:

There be two sorts of Pleasure the one is ordain’d as a spur or incitement to somewhat else & has a visible relation & subordination thereto, the other is not. Thus the pleasure of eating is of the former sort, of Musick is y^e later sort. These may be used for recreation, those not but in order to their End. (NB 852)

If the consistent ethical egoist focuses on sustainable pleasures, this focus on the pleasures of the eye and ear—art and music—is what one would expect. Gustatory pleasures are unsustainable; pleasures provided by the fine arts are indefinitely sustainable. Indeed, Berkeley here suggests gustatory pleasures are little more than instrumental: the pleasures of the palate are merely a means to the attainment of health, which is a sustainable pleasure (even if it is a pleasure that is most noticed in its absence).¹⁶ It is unclear how this passage would support a utilitarian reading of Berkeley, for on such a reading it seems to suggest that the good of society is more fully obtained by a focus on the fine arts than by a system that provides all members of society with at least the basic necessities of life.¹⁷ To the ethical egoist, however, it is little more than sage advice: the pleasures from the contemplation of art or music cannot be overdone nor do they result in subsequent pain; they are sustainable pleasures.

You might have noticed that I have had little to say about the future bishop’s concern with the religious side of ethics. The reason is that the Berkeley of the Notebooks raises few ethical concerns that tie to religion. There are only two entries marked “Mo” that explicitly allude to God vis-à-vis moral obligation:¹⁸

The 2 great Principles of Morality. the Being of a God & the Freedom of Man: these to be handled in the beginning of the Second Book. (NB 508)

¹⁵ It might also be worth noticing that in *Guardian* #127—one of the *Guardian* essays universally attributed to Berkeley—after discussing the natural emotional tendency one has to look to the common good of humans, Berkeley comments, “because the good of the whole is inseparable from that of the parts; in promoting therefore the common good, every one doth at the same time promote his own private interest” (*Works* 7: 227-28).

¹⁶ Sustaining health would seem to depend on “excellent rules [descriptive natural laws] about exercise, air, and diet” (*ALC* 6:28).

¹⁷ A sophisticated egoist might well recognize that a social system that provides basic necessities to all members of society is in her best interest, since it provides a modicum of social stability.

¹⁸ NB 734 might be considered a third passage, but the issue there is moral demonstration, alluding to “some principle of Nature which is the effect of God’s will and we know not how soon it may be changed.” A fourth is NB 769, where Berkeley claims that sensual pleasure is the *summum bonum*, claiming “This once rightly understood all the Doctrines even the severest of the Gospels may clearly be Demonstrated.” I discuss NB 769 below.

God Ought to be worship'd. This Easily demonstrated when once we ascertain the signification of the word God, worship, ought. (NB 705)

The allusion to free will in the first entry requires at least that one be capable of choices that can affect one's actions (cf. NB 145, 145a, 149, 166, 539, 626, 631, 816). How the Being of God, as such, plays a role in the moral considerations of a presumptive ethical egoist is less clear, but the second passage might shed some light on that issue. Assume, as the future bishop certainly did,¹⁹ that there is a God who has all the attributes theistic philosophers traditionally assign to God, that is, God is in some sense a person, all powerful, unique, a universal ruler, etc. If there were such a one, then it would be in one's long-term best interest to recognize God's existence and to treat God with respect. Thus, just as a consideration of one's long-term self-interests might justify those claims regarding one's duties to other human beings that are summarized in the Decalogue, considerations regarding God vis-à-vis one's long-term interests are summarized in those commandments concerning God. Notice, this treats the commandments as nothing but implications of the egoistic principle: the best means to obtaining happiness is to act in accordance with those laws. If the will of God can be discerned either by reason or revelation,²⁰ then considerations based on the egoistic principle allow one to discern God's will by reason. Revelation reveals the same laws together with the disturbing claim that if you break the rules, "God'll get ya (forever and ever, amen)." So, an ethical egoist should conclude that long-term self-interest by itself—applying the egoistic principle to considerations of persons alone—would justify each of the commandments of the Decalogue, and once those same commandments are recognized as divinely instituted—together with promises of eternal happiness if followed and eternal pain if broken—one is morally obligated on egoistic grounds to follow God's laws.

Someone might object that there is another way to understand the position in the Notebooks. The objection might be posed this way: "One should take more seriously the divine command theory as an alternative account of Berkeley's views about morality. Berkeley might be an ethical egoist because he subscribes to the divine command account of morality (which presupposes fear/hope of sanctions, personal identity, freedom of the agent, etc.). The argument you have given seems to suggest just the opposite. Nonetheless, there is nothing in your argument that rules out the divine command account."²¹

There are several points to notice in reply. First, in most schematic representations of moral theories, divine command theories are set in opposition to egoistic theories of obligation. On a divine command theory, engaging in or refraining from an action of a certain kind is deemed a positive or negative duty *because* it is commanded by the Deity. On such a view, the consequences of one's actions play no role in determining the moral

¹⁹ This will become clear when we look at the sermon "Of Immortality."

²⁰ *SER* 10:130; cf. Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, ed. John C. Higgins-Biddle, The Clarendon Edition of the Works of John Locke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 149, where Locke claims even pagan philosophers, upon hearing Christian laws of morality, "found them agreeable to reason; and such as can be by no means contradicted."

²¹ I wish to thank a referee for *Berkeley Studies* for raising this objection.

character of an action. In contrast, ethical egoism is a consequentialist (teleological) theory of moral obligation, and, as such, it is *solely* the consequences of an action (furthering one's interests) that determine the action's moral character. So, while a theory of *motivation*, such as *psychological* egoism, might be fit well with a typical divine command theory—the presumptive *fact* that all human beings seek pleasure and avoid pain might motivate one to follow divine laws due to threats of eternal punishment—it is *prima facie* implausible to contend that Berkeley is an *ethical* egoist *and* subscribes to a divine command theory. Second, one might attempt to subsume the principle of ethical egoism under a divine command theory, that is, one might contend that the principal divine commandment is that in all actions one ought to seek what is in one's best interest. Historically this might be taken as some variation on a Christian natural law theory. On such a scheme, the commandments of the Decalogue—the typical divine commands in the Western tradition—would be understood as derivative rules specifying the best means to the end of individual human happiness. Further, it would allow, as most natural law theorists do, that the requirements of natural law can be known by reason alone (as well, in the Christian tradition, as by revelation). If the critic is concerned with such a divine command theory, I grant that the Berkeley of the Notebooks *might* have entertained it, although there is no textual evidence supporting it in the Notebooks, and the contention that the egoistic principle is the fundamental divine commandment is *prima facie* inconsistent with most understandings of biblical revelation.²² Finally, and most importantly, there is no evidence in the Notebooks that Berkeley identified moral rules with divine laws in virtue of their divine source. The two passages that might be cited as providing *some* evidence for such an interpretation (NB 508 and 705) are obscure. On the other hand, his identification of the *summum bonum* with sensual pleasure at NB 769 and his concern with pleasures derived from the arts at NB 852—which, presumably, are more sustainable than most sensual pleasures—tend to suggest that pleasure or happiness is the end sought in morally correct actions. If is so, then it would seem that keeping divine commandments is morally correct insofar as it yields greater pleasure and less pain.

But is there textual evidence that Berkeley held that one ought to obey God's laws simply out of self interest? It seems so. His sermon "Of Immortality" suggests exactly that.

²² There are other variants on natural law theory that could be consistent with the position in the Notebooks, although the evidence there is insufficient to show that it was the position Berkeley entertained. One such is Locke's, who claims not only that "*Morally good and evil* then, is only the Conformity or Disagreement of our voluntary Actions to some Law, whereby Good or Evil is drawn on us, by the Will and Power of the Law-maker; which Good and Evil, Pleasure or Pain, attending our observance, or breach of the Law, by the Decree of the Law-maker, is that we call *Reward and Punishment*" (*Essay* 2.28.5), but also that the laws involved range from social mores to civil laws to divine laws (*Essay* 2.28.6). In both, the end is personal pleasure that arises from conforming to or pain that arises from disobeying a law. On Locke's view, the precise content of divine laws might never be known (see *Essay* 4.18.10). So regarding divine laws pertaining to other humans, the best way to determine their content might be from the resulting pleasure or pain that arises from applying what one takes to be the content of the law.

The sermon “Of Immortality” comes from approximately the same period as the Notebooks: it was preached in Trinity College Chapel on Sunday evening, 11 January 1707-8. Focusing first on the question of the effect Christianity had on the world (*SER* 1:9), Berkeley suggests that promises of eternal bliss for living a virtuous life and eternal misery for living a vicious life gave reason to follow the path of virtue. He wrote:

if some among the Heathen practis’d good actions on no other view than y^e temporal advantages they brought to civil society, if others were found who thought vertue a reward sufficient for itself. if reason & experience had long before convinc’d the world how unpleasant & destructive vice had been, as well to its votaries as y^e rest of mankind. w^t man would not embrace a thing in it self so lovely & profitable as vertue, wⁿ recommended by the glorious reward of life & immortality? w^t wretch so obdurate & foolish as not to shun vice a thing so hatefull & pernicious wⁿ discouraged therefrom by the additional terrors of eternal death & damnation? Thus might a man think a thorough reformation of manners y^e necessary effect of such a doctrine as our Saviour’s. (*SER* 1:10).

Given the context, one might reasonably assume that Berkeley used “virtue” to refer to actions consistent with divine laws, and “vice” to refer to its opposite.²³ He seems to suggest that one ought to seek what is in one’s own interest, and the only ultimate means to do so is to follow God’s laws.

Of course, Berkeley remarks, there is little evidence that Christians are more inclined to follow a path that is rationally in one’s own interest than were the “old Heathen Romans” (*SER* 1:10), even though Christians claim to know that the stakes are much higher—eternal bliss or eternal damnation—than the heathens recognized. Indeed, even given a wager no less extreme than Pascal’s, Berkeley contends that it is only rational to place the desires for eternal happiness above all others (*SER* 1:12-13). And he explains why humans do not focus on the eternal: one has no determinate idea of eternal pleasures and pains, and one assumes that such eternal rewards and punishments are in the distant future (*SER* 1:13).

So Berkeley concludes that considerations of self-interest rationally oblige us to attend to our eternal interests, which are couched in terms of pleasure and pain. This suggests that one is morally obligated to follow God’s laws *because* doing so yields an infinite increase in pleasure, while ignoring them yields an infinite increase in pain. This is precisely what one might expect from an ethical egoist. Further, this is wholly consistent with the remark at NB 769 that “Sensual Pleasure is the Summum Bonum. This the Great Principle of Morality. This once rightly understood all the Doctrines even the severest of the Gospels may clearly be Demonstrated.” Weighing one’s actions on a scale that includes eternal

²³ It is fairly clear that the later Berkeley understood virtue in this way, in contrast with some of the moral sense theorists. See *TVV* 3.

rewards and punishments, following “even the severest [doctrines] of the Gospels” is strictly a matter of self-interest.²⁴

But someone might object that sermons are a curious source for determining philosophical beliefs. “Preachers have a vested interest in keeping ‘the faithful’ in line,” such a one would say. “Hell-fire and brimstone sermons are one of the tools of the trade. So, the fact that Berkeley preached such a sermon—even if it was not extremely sulfuric—can provide one with little insight into his moral *philosophy*.”

I confess some sympathy with such an objection.²⁵ But the fact that his public pronouncements are consistent with and in some cases help explain the meaning of his private remarks in the Notebooks seems to be a reason for taking *this* sermon to provide *some* evidence for contending that the young Berkeley seriously entertained ethical egoism.

4. *Passive Obedience*

But someone will certainly object that if even if the Berkeley of the Notebooks entertained ethical egoism, it was, at most, a brief flirtation. By the time he wrote *Passive Obedience* he was a committed utilitarian; indeed, he was a rule utilitarian. He is concerned throughout *Passive Obedience* with the public good (*PO* 8, 10, 11, 15, 29, 30, 36, *et al.*). After dismissing act utilitarianism on the grounds of insufficient knowledge of the relevant circumstances in any given case and no standard for comparison (*PO* 9), he embraces rule utilitarianism. As Berkeley wrote:

It follows therefore, that the great end to which God requires the concurrence of human actions must of necessity be carried on by the second method proposed, namely, the observation of certain, universal, determinate rules or moral precepts,

²⁴ Nor is “Of Immortality” the only sermon in which Berkeley alludes to self-interest or self-love as the reason why one is obligated to follow the Gospel. In one of the manuscripts for the sermon “On the Mission of Christ” (1714), Berkeley wrote, “Everyone knows the prevailing principle in human nature is self-love. This under the direction of Reason shou’d lead us into the true methods of obtaining happiness” (*SER* 4:48n; cf. *SER* 6:90). This remark is followed by considerations of how the passions can veil one’s considerations of self-interest. Similarly, in the “Anniversary Sermon before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel,” Berkeley claimed that obtaining eternal life is the “true interest” of every person (*SER* 9:115).

²⁵ While one might like to *assume* that there was no hard and fast distinction between Berkeley the minister and Berkeley the philosopher, to show that such an assumption is true requires a careful examination of the sermons vis-à-vis the philosophical writings of the same periods. The rhetoric of the pulpit, insofar as it is intended to fulfill certain religious objectives, need not match the rhetoric of one’s philosophical closet; good philosophy is not always good theology, and vice versa. Further, if, as David Berman suggests, Berkeley occasionally engaged in dissimulation (“Berkeley’s Life and Works,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Philosophy*, pp. 21-31), there might be additional reasons to be wary. Nonetheless, insofar as sermonic claims are consistent with the philosophical claims from the same period, they would seem to provide *some* evidence to support a philosophical interpretation. On the other hand, if there is an apparent inconsistency between philosophical claims and claims in a sermon, the latter should not provide conclusive evidence against an interpretation of a *philosophical* work.

which, in their own nature, have a necessary tendency to promote the well-being of the sum of mankind, taking in all nations and ages, from the beginning to the end of the world. (*PO* 10; cf. *PO* 11, *PO* 31)

This is, of course, *theological* utilitarianism, the objector would continue, since the moral duty of the action rests upon divine decrees, but it's no less utilitarian, since the rightness of the action depends solely upon the tendency to promote the well-being of humankind. Such is the objection.

To give a complete answer to this objection would require a thorough analysis of *Passive Obedience*, but several observations might be sufficient to raise doubts regarding the utilitarian thrust of that work.

The first puzzle comes in Berkeley's "To the Reader," where he stresses that his objective is show that subjects of a government have an absolute duty to obey the government passively. We find this:

THAT an absolute passive obedience ought not to be paid any civil power, but that submission to Government should be measured and limited by the public good of the society; and that therefore subjects may lawfully resist the supreme authority, in those cases where the public good shall plainly seem to require it; nay, that it is their duty to do so, inasmuch as they are all under an indispensable obligation to promote the common interest: *these and the like notions, which I cannot help thinking pernicious to mankind, and repugnant to right reason* [my emphasis], having of late years been industriously cultivated, and set in the most advantageous lights by men of parts and learning, it seemed necessary to arm the youth of our University against them, and take care they go into the world well-principled; I do not mean obstinately prejudiced in favour of a party, but, from an early acquaintance with their duty, and the clear rational grounds of it, determined to such practices as may speak them good *Christians and loyal subjects.* (*Works* 6:15)

This tends to speak against anything like a utilitarianism that is limited to the good of the society in which one lives.

In section 1, Berkeley indicates that his concern is with the Law of Nature, "or those virtues and duties which are equally binding in every kingdom or society of men under heaven; and of this kind I take to be that Christian Duty of not resisting the supreme Power implied in my text. *Whosoever resisteth the Power, resisteth the ordinance of God.*" Allusions to the law of nature place Berkeley's discussion within a long tradition,²⁶ a tradition that tends to explain the apparently utilitarian orientation of some

²⁶ It is worthy of notice that Berkeley more carefully distinguishes between a purely descriptive sense of "law of nature" and a prescriptive sense of that term than did some of his predecessors. He wrote: "we ought to distinguish between a twofold signification of the terms law of nature; which words do either denote a rule or precept for the direction of the voluntary actions of reasonable agents, and in that sense they imply a duty; or else they are used to signify any general rule which we observe to obtain in the works of nature, independent of the wills of men; in which sense no duty is implied"

of his comments. In his discussion of the law of nature, Aquinas claimed that the very notion of law has an orientation to the common good. He wrote, “Thus, from the four preceding articles, the definition of law may be gathered; and it is nothing else than an ordinance of reason for the common good, made by him who has care of the community, and promulgated.”²⁷ Nor is this surprising. As I argued above, if a secular ethical egoist is concerned with her long-term self-interest, she must take the interests of other humans into account. Indeed, I am inclined to believe that a sophisticated rule ethical egoist would develop a set of rules that are indistinguishable from those of a rule utilitarian.²⁸ If one introduces *eternal* rewards and punishments and a divine lawmaker, self-interest must be viewed in the very long-term.

In *PO* 4, Berkeley raises the question of how natural laws are known. Like a good natural law theorist, he holds that they are to be discovered by the deductions of reason, although that approach, “has not, that I know, been anywhere distinctly explained, or treated of so fully as the importance of the subject doth deserve.” So, Berkeley introduces a digression on the obligation of moral duties in general. He presents a discourse on self-love:

Self-love being a principle of all others the most universal, and the most deeply engraven in our hearts, it is natural for us to regard things as they are fitted to augment or impair our own happiness; and accordingly we denominate them good or evil. Our judgment is ever employ'd in distinguishing between these two, and it is the whole business of our lives to endeavour, by a proper application of our faculties, to procure the one and avoid the other. (*PO* 5)²⁹

Initially, one takes the pleasure to be sought to be purely sensual pleasure. But as one matures, one comes to realize that an immediate good is often followed by a greater evil, and that a present evil is often followed by a future good, that is, one becomes concerned with sustainable goods.

Hence an alteration is wrought in our judgments; we no longer comply with the first solicitations of sense, but stay to consider the remote consequences of an action,

(NB 33). His point there is to argue that Hobbes’s contention that the law of self-preservation is a descriptive law of nature, rather than a prescriptive law of nature.

²⁷ *Summa Theologica* Q 90, A 4, in St. Thomas Aquinas, *Treatise on Law*, ed. Stanley Parry, trans. the Benziger Brothers, Inc. (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, n.d.), 11-12. See also Q 93, A 5, p. 49, Q 93, A 6, p. 52. As Sterling Lamprecht has shown, the contention that natural laws direct humans to act for the benefit of the group was one of five tenets postulated by virtually all natural law theorists in seventeenth century Europe. See Sterling Power Lamprecht, *The Moral and Political Philosophy of John Locke* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962), 10-14.

²⁸ To say that the resulting rules are the same that as would be proposed by a rule utilitarian, of course, does *not* imply a commitment to utilitarianism, since the egoist and the utilitarian are committed to distinct foundational principles.

²⁹ Remember, natural law theory holds that we naturally do and ought seek the good: the natural end of a thing is *both* descriptive and prescriptive. See Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Q 94, A 2, especially pp. 59-60 in *Treatise on Law*, and Q 94, A 3; cf. Etienne Gilson, *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1936; rept. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1991), 337.

what good may be hoped, or what evil feared from it, according to the wonted course of things. This obliges us frequently to overlook present momentary enjoyments, when they come in competition with greater and more lasting goods, though too far off, or of too refined a nature, to affect our senses. (*PO 5*)

This is followed in *PO 6* by considerations of one's *eternal* interests, which is wholly consistent with an egoistic reading of *Passive Obedience*.³⁰

Berkeley's focus throughout *Passive Obedience* is on natural law. As I have argued above, this general focus follows from a long-term consideration of self-interest: humans are social animals (cf. *PO 25*), and, as such, one must take the interests of others into account in calculating one's own long-term interests. So, one's own interests are intrinsically wedded to the general interests of humankind. Hence, considerations of self-interest yield a system of natural law which might appear to be utilitarian. But it is fundamentally a system of law, and concerns with private calculations of what is in the public interest (*PO 29*) or other considerations of the public weal (*PO 30*) are never sufficient to call for a suspension of natural law (*PO 31*). In effect, such interests are too narrow; they are not based on *long-term* interests. Anarchy is untenable (*PO 16*). So, both considerations of self-interest *per se* and self-interest vis-à-vis public interest indicate that obeying the civil authorities is a natural law (*PO 25*).

5. Conclusions

If my arguments are plausible, I have shown that some of the remarks in the Notebooks provide reasons to believe that the young Berkeley seriously entertained ethical egoism. Egoistic principles are plausible only insofar as one is concerned with long-term self interests, interests that are tied to both interests of other persons (including God) and considerations of eternal rewards and punishments. I have argued that this is consistent with the position in his early sermons and *Passive Obedience*.³¹

James Madison University
flagede@jmu.edu

³⁰ Appealing to the light of nature (*PO 6*), Berkeley argues that "there is a sovereign omniscient Spirit" who rules the world. "He is, therefore, with the most undoubted right, the great legislator of the world; and mankind are, by all the ties of duty, no less than interest, bound to obey his laws."

³¹ A shorter version of this paper was presented at the Berkeley conference in Newport, Rhode Island on June 28, 2008. This work was supported by the James Madison University Program of Grants for Faculty Educational Leaves.

Can Berkeley Be an Instrumentalist? Towards a Reappraisal of Berkeley's Philosophy of Science

Luc Peterschmitt

According to Doug Jesseph, there are two kinds of interpretation of Berkeley's theory of force: "Commentators have regarded [Berkeley] as holding that the theory of forces can be replaced by talk about observed motions, or see him as expressing an instrumentalism in which scientific theories are acceptable for their predictive value, but not regarded as true."¹ But it seems that the instrumentalist interpretation is now so widespread that one would think that the debate has concluded. Indeed, now that this interpretation is the received view, it is not examined anymore but simply taken as evident.² In this essay, though, I will examine critically the view that Berkeley is an instrumentalist in order to open once again a discussion that has been closed too quickly.

Of course, it would be nonsense to try to prove that Berkeley is a kind of Cartesian realist. But as Jesseph acknowledges, it is nonetheless possible to admit that forces do not exist in bodies and still not conclude that Berkeley is an instrumentalist. For example, we could think that talk of forces is simply a way to refer to motions without thinking that that commits us to instrumentalism.³ Or we might come up with yet a third interpretation.

¹ Editor's Introduction, *Berkeley: De Motu and The Analyst*, ed. and trans. D. M. Jesseph (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992), 35.

² For example, Sébastien Charles writes that the task of the physicist is to "account for phenomena—Berkeley accordingly adopts an instrumentalist position" ["Berkeley occasionnaliste malgré lui? De la causalité et de la volonté chez Berkeley et Malebranche," in *Science et épistémologie selon Berkeley*, ed. Sébastien Charles (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2004), 81]. Even if the question of whether Berkeley is an instrumentalist is not the point of Charles' essay, it is introduced in a strikingly abrupt way. Charles takes it as evident that for Berkeley "to account for the phenomena" means "to save the phenomena." I won't discuss the fact that even for a realist, science has "to account for" phenomena. The question is just to know what "to account for" means, and for Charles it means "to save" the phenomena. As with all the papers in this volume—at least those that mention that point—he takes it for granted that Berkeley is instrumentalist.

³ Jesseph defines instrumentalism in this way: "Instrumentalism, broadly speaking, is the doctrine that a theory can be accepted and applied for reasons of utility, even if the claims made in the theory or its application are not accepted as literally true" [*Berkeley's Philosophy of Mathematics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 76]. But this definition is too broad, because it does not clearly define what "literally true" means in at least two ways. First, it is not clear what "literally true" means in the case of mathematical laws. Newton's second law of motion, for example, does not refer to vectors of course, so we cannot say that it is "literally true." Second, when a theory allows for different ways of speaking or metaphors, then it should be interpreted instrumentally. According to Jesseph, in this weaker sense of instrumentalism, a theory relying on a simplification is construed instrumentally, and in this sense Galileo would be an instrumentalist. But such a use of the term seems quite confusing. In any event, according to Jesseph, Berkeley "tends to" adopt the stronger version of instrumentalism as Jesseph defines it.

In any event, fleshing out such alternatives is not my concern here, since my aim is simply critical. By showing how the influential instrumentalist interpretations proposed by Karl Popper and W. H. Newton-Smith are implausible, I want only to highlight the need for resuming the search for an alternative view.

The Instrumentalist Interpretation

Both Popper and Newton-Smith support the view that Berkeley maintains a “semantical instrumentalism” (Newton-Smith’s term). For them, theoretical propositions are neither true nor false. Instead, the role of such propositions is to facilitate predictions:

Theoretical sentences are held not to have been provided with the kind of meaning that gives them truth-value. Theoretical sentences are not hypotheses which are either true or false. Their role is not to express facts about the world but to facilitate the business of making correct observational predictions. A theory is just a tool which can be used to derive observational predictions about the state of a system from statements giving its observational state at another time.⁴

According to Berkeley, Newton’s mechanics would be an efficient tool to predict phenomena, but it would not say anything about the world; that is, Newton’s mechanics and Leibniz’s dynamics do not describe facts. The only reason to say that Newtonian mechanics is better than other theories would be its superior predictive power.

This interpretation relies on two main arguments:

- The first appeals to Berkeley’s idea of mathematical hypothesis. Theoretical sentences using such hypotheses are also hypotheses, because they too lack empirical content: “The part of the theory involving the concepts which are above criticised [e.g., the concept of force] is not true since these are mathematical hypotheses. As such they should not, however, be rejected if they work well.”⁵
- The second uses the idea that, according to Berkeley, it is at least possible that different theories predict the same phenomena. The choice between them would be experimentally impossible. According to Newton-Smith, Berkeley sustains the thesis of the underdetermination of theory by data: “The same appearances *may* be successfully calculated from more than one mathematical hypothesis, and two mathematical hypotheses which yield the same results concerning the calculated appearances may not only differ but even contradict each other (especially if they are

⁴ W. H. Newton-Smith, “Berkeley’s Philosophy of Science,” in *Essays on Berkeley*, eds. J. Foster and H. Robinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 150. See also Karl Popper, “Berkeley as a Precursor of Mach,” *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 4 (1953): 29.

⁵ “Berkeley as a Precursor of Mach,” 29. Because Newton’s mechanics rests entirely on the concept of force, at best it is hypothetical (in a sense which is compatible with Newton-Smith description of semantical instrumentalism).

misinterpreted as describing a world of essences behind the world of appearances); nevertheless, there may be nothing to choose between them.”⁶

This is the general structure of the instrumentalist interpretation. Johnston adds one further argument, namely, that in a key section of the *Siris* Berkeley implies that he is an instrumentalist.⁷

It is not known what other different rules or laws of motion might be established by the Author of nature. Some bodies approach together, others fly asunder, and perhaps some others do neither.⁸

Like other commentators, Johnston takes this to mean that it is possible that what we take to be the laws of nature do not correspond to the “real” laws as established by God himself. Or at least, we do not know if they correspond.

But according to this instrumentalist interpretation of Berkeley’s philosophy, Berkeley would have sustained a quite paradoxical position: by looking backwards to Bellarmine and Osiander, before Galileo and Newton, he would have anticipated the most contemporary instrumentalism of Duhem, Quine, and even Van Fraassen. Not surprisingly, this way of reading the history of the philosophy of science is characteristic of Duhem in general.⁹

⁶ “Berkeley as a Precursor of Mach,” 30. Note that Popper seems to consider that the theorems are themselves mathematical hypotheses, even though Berkeley does not say anything like this. For Popper, mathematical hypotheses are concepts used by a theory (see below); cf. also Newton-Smith, “Berkeley’s Philosophy of Science,” 157. Lisa Downing doubts that Berkeley sustained the Quinean thesis of underdetermination; however, she admits that there is a “plurality of equally adequate dynamic theories” as “a consequence of the fact that force terms do not refer to any underlying entities.” Accordingly, she proposes that Berkeley sustains a “semantical instrumentalism” [“Berkeley’s Case Against Realism About Dynamics,” in *Berkeley’s Metaphysics, Structural, Interpretive and Critical Essays*, ed. Robert G. Muehlmann (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press), 212.

⁷ G. A. Johnston, *The Development of Berkeley’s Philosophy* (London: MacMillan, 1923), 249-50.

⁸ *Siris: A Chain of Philosophical Reflexions and Inquiries*, in *The Works of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne*, eds. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop (9 vols.; London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1948-57), 5: § 235. [Hereafter W.]

⁹ However, even before examining closely the arguments I have mentioned, one should note that Popper and Newton-Smith did not really write their papers as historians of philosophy, but as philosophers. They have something to prove. Popper begins his paper saying that he does not share the kind of position sustained by Berkeley; and Newton-Smith ends his own paper by showing easily that Berkeley’s argument does not work (there was no real concurring theory to Newton’s mechanics). But their aim is not to prove that Berkeley’s own position is false. Their aim is more general: it is to prove that instrumentalism is false. They try to prove this point by making Berkeley an instrumentalist. Such a Berkeley is thus just the ghost of the real target of Popper and Newton-Smith.

A Critique of the Instrumentalist Interpretation

I will now criticize the instrumentalist interpretation by appealing to two kinds of arguments. First, I will examine the historical context; and second, I will examine Berkeley's own texts. In both cases, it will appear that the instrumentalist interpretation is not plausible.

The historical context

Newton-Smith focuses on how Berkeley's instrumentalism is close to the standard interpretation of pre-Galilean astronomy. His references to Bellarmine and Osiander links Berkeley to a tradition and gives some historical plausibility to the instrumentalist interpretation, in that Berkeley would have been drawing on some philosophical commonplaces. However, it is not certain that such an instrumentalism has been held before the twentieth century, especially by Osiander and Bellarmine. I propose that Berkeley could not have shared their philosophical positions and thus does not rely on a pre-Galilean philosophy of science. If anything, his alleged instrumentalism would be a pure anticipation of most contemporary philosophy of science.

For example, in his *Preface* to Copernicus, Osiander affirms that it is impossible to know the true causes of celestial motions. But he adds, "Maybe the philosopher demands more likelihood, but [neither he nor the astronomer] can know or teach anything certain, unless it has been revealed by God."¹⁰ This version of instrumentalism rests on a kind of scepticism, which grounds philosophy and astronomy to Revelation—which, for Berkeley, is complete nonsense.

Like Osiander, Bellarmine affirms that it is possible to calculate appearances in different ways. But at the conclusion of his famous letter to Foscarini, he makes his views on astronomy quite clear:

I say that if there were a true demonstration that the sun was in the center of the universe and the earth in the third heaven, and that the sun did not travel around the earth but the earth travels around the sun, then it would be necessary to proceed with great caution in explaining the passages of Scripture which seem to tell the contrary, and we would rather have to say that we did not understand them than to say that something was false which has been demonstrated. *But I will not believe that there is such a demonstration, until it is shown to me.* It is not the same thing to show that the appearances are saved by assuming that the sun is in the center and the earth in the heavens and to demonstrate that the sun really is in the center and the earth in the heavens. For I believe that it is possible to demonstrate the first proposition, *but I have grave doubts about the second*, and in a case of doubt, one may not depart from

¹⁰ Osiander, Preface to Copernicus, *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* (Wittenberg, 1543), I-II: "Philosophus fortasse, veri similitudinem magis requirit, neuter tamen quicquam certi comprehendet, aut tradet, nisi divinitus illi revelatum fuerit" (my translation). All translations into English are mine.

the Scriptures as explained by the holy Fathers. I add that the words ‘the sun also rises and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where he arises, etc.’ were those of Solomon, who not only spoke by divine inspiration but was a man wise above all others and most learned in human sciences and in the knowledge of all created things, and his wisdom was from God. Thus it is not likely that he would affirm something which was contrary to a truth either already demonstrated or likely to be demonstrated. And if you tell me that Solomon spoke only according to the appearances, and that it seems to us that the sun goes around when actually it is the earth which moves, as it seems to one on a ship that the beach moves away from the ship, *I shall answer that one who departs from the beach, though it looks to him as though the beach moves away, knows that he is in error and corrects it, seeing clearly that the ship moves and not the beach.* But with regard to the sun and the earth, no wise man is needed to correct the error, since *he clearly experiences that the earth stands still* and that his eye is not deceived when it judges that the sun moves, as it is not deceived when it judges that the moon and stars move. And that is enough for the present.¹¹

Note how Bellarmine is not even sure that it possible to prove that the Copernican hypothesis can be demonstrated. At least, in 1615, it is not the case. He also clearly doubts whether one could demonstrate that the sun is really in the center of the universe. He gives a physical reason, refuting a classical argument relying on the relativity of motion. To a man on a ship, the shore seems to recede, and if the motion of the ship is regular enough, he cannot decide what is moving, the shore or the ship. According to Bellarmine, this is false: the sailor corrects what appears to be, according to the cardinal, an optical illusion. But even in that case the analogy between the sailor on the ship and the man on the earth does not hold. According to Bellarmine, our eyes are not deceived at all. He emphasizes how we experience that the earth stands still, because we do not feel it moving (this is probably the ground on which the sailor corrects the illusion: he can feel

¹¹ Bellarmine, Letter to Foscarini, 12 April 1615, in *Le opere di Galileo Galilei*, ed. A. Favaro (Firenze: Giunti Barbera, 1890-1909), XII, 172: “Dico che quando ci fusse’ vera dimostrazione che il sole sti nel centro del mondo e la terra nel 3° cielo, e che il sole non circonda la terra, ma la terra circonda il solo, allora bisognera andar con molta consideratione in explicare la Scrittura che paiono contrarie, e piu tosto dire che non l’intendiamo, che dire che sia falso quello que si dimostra. *Ma io non credero che ci sia tal dimostrazione, fin che non mi sia mostrata* ; nè è l’istesso dimostrare che supposto ch’il sole stia nel centro e la terre nel cielo, si salvano le apparanze, e dimostrare che in verità il sole stia nel centro e la terra nel cielo; perchè la prima dimostrazione credo che si possa essere, ma *della 2^a ho grandissimo dubbio*, et in caso di dubbio non si dee lasciare la Scrittura Santa, esposta da’ Santi Padri. Aggiungo che quello scrisse : ‘Oritur sol et occidit, et ad locum suum revertitur etc.’, fu Salomone, il quale non solo parlo ispirato da Dio, ma fu huomo sopra tutti gli sapientissimo e dottissimo nelle scienze humane e nelle cognitione delle cose dreaten e tutta questa sapienza l’ebbe da Dio ; onde non è verisimile che affermasse una cosa che fusse contraria alla verita dimostrata o che si potasse dimostrare. E se mi dira che Solomone parla secondo l’apparenza, parendo a noi ch’il sole giri, mentre la terra gira, come a chi si parte dal litto pare che il litto si parta da lui, *nondimeno conosce che questo è errore e lo correffe, vedeno chiaramente che la nave si muove e non il litto* ; ma quanto al sole e la terre, nessuno savio è che habbia bisogno di correggere l’errore, perchè *chiaramente sperimenta che la terra sta ferma* e che l’occhio non s’inganna quando giudica che il sole si muove, come anco non s’inganna quando giudica che la luna ele stelle si muavano. E questo basti per hora” (emphasis mine).

the boat moving).¹² From all this, it is quite clear that Bellarmine does not see any real equivalence between hypotheses: there is one true physical thesis.

My point is that Osiander is a skeptic and Bellarmine is not clearly an instrumentalist—at least it is impossible to say that he sustains the kind of semantical instrumentalism that Newton-Smith attributes to Berkeley. In a sense, it would be better to say that they are “frustrated realists.”¹³ In both cases, the knowledge of truth depends on the Scriptures or a Divine Revelation. For obvious reasons, this is very far from Berkeley’s philosophy. This implies that, if Berkeley really were an instrumentalist, he would be quite unique. Of course, that is not impossible; after all, Berkeley’s immaterialism seems to be original. But Berkeley always tries to prove that his immaterialism follows from agreed-upon principles; and secondly, he develops and explains his immaterialism at length, even though for him it is obvious. There is nothing comparable about his instrumentalism: he presents his original position in a few lines, in what he calls in a letter to Johnson “a tract” (W 2: 83).¹⁴ Maybe this means that he does not see his own originality. Maybe he read sixteenth century astronomy in the same way as Duhem. He would then have anticipated not only Duhem’s philosophy but also his way of reading historical texts. That I do not find really plausible.

Berkeley’s texts

I now turn to Berkeley’s texts. My only aim is to see if Berkeley’s explicit positions are compatible with instrumentalism. I will examine the two arguments I have mentioned. Before doing that, though, just a word about the claim that Berkeley did not recognize that he was an instrumentalist. It is clear that Johnston’s reading of *Siris* 235 is nonsense, for like Newton, Berkeley states that there are different laws in nature.¹⁵ Obviously, the laws of gravity, electricity and magnetism are not the same; but then, one might guess that there are other domains or “provinces” in nature that we do not know yet. That is to say that God could have established other laws than those we already know. After all, it

¹² Of course, such arguments are false, and it is easy to refute them: we do not feel the motion of the earth because we move with it. However, it is necessary to note that Bellarmine wrote his letter in 1615, and Galileo does not refute this kind of argument until seventeen years later, in the second part of his *Dialogue on the Two Systems of the World*, where he states the first formulation of the principle of inertia. In this historical context, Bellarmine’s argument perfectly makes sense: he could not know the new physics needed to resolve the issue.

¹³ Cf. P. Barker and R. Goldstein, “Realism and Instrumentalism in sixteenth Century Astronomy: A Reappraisal,” *Perspective on Science* (1998), 253.

¹⁴ In this passage Berkeley seems to oppose the “treatise” (*The Principles of Human Knowledge*) and the “tract,” suggesting that the second is shorter (but of no less importance).

¹⁵ Cf. Isaac Newton, *Opticks: Or, A Treatise of the Reflections, Refractions, Inflexions and Colours of Light. The Second Edition, with Additions* (London, 1717), Query 31, 350-351: “Have not the small Particles of Bodies certain Powers, Virtues or Forces, by which they act at a distance, not only upon the Rays of Light for reflecting, refracting, and inflecting them, but also upon one another for producing a great part of the Phænomena of Nature? For it’s well known, that Bodies act one upon another by the Attractions of Gravity, Magnetism and Electricity; and these Instances shew the Tenor and Course of Nature, and make it not improbable but that there may be more attractive Powers than these. For Nature is very consonant and conformable to her self.”

seems quite reasonable to suppose that we do not know everything (even the most dogmatic realist would admit that). But this does not prove that our present knowledge is not true knowledge.

So on to the two arguments in favor of the instrumentalist interpretation. According to the first, a physical theory is and can only be hypothetical. But Berkeley's declarations directly seem to contradict this assertion. Here, *De Motu* 28 is crucial:

Action and reaction are said to be in bodies, and that way of speaking suits the purposes of mechanical demonstrations; but we must not on that account suppose that there is some real virtue in them which is the cause or principle of motion. For those terms are to be understood in the same way as the term attraction; and just as attraction is only a mathematical hypothesis, and not a physical quality, the same must be understood also about action and reaction, and for the same reason. *For in mechanical philosophy the truth and the use of theorems about the mutual attraction of bodies remain firm, as founded solely in the motion of bodies, whether that motion be supposed to be caused by the action of bodies mutually attracting each other, or by the action of some agent different from the bodies, impelling and controlling them.* Similarly the traditional formulations of rules and laws of motions, along with the theorems thence deduced remain unshaken, *provided that sensible effects and the reasonings grounded in them are granted*, whether we suppose the action itself or the force that causes these effects to be in the body or in the incorporeal agent. (Emphasis mine)

First, I think that it is necessary to credit Berkeley with consistency. In this section, Berkeley says that the theorems of mechanical philosophy are true and that these theorems rest on suppositions or hypotheses. This undercuts the first argument. Berkeley does not draw the conclusion Popper draws: the fact that mechanical philosophy uses mathematical hypotheses does not entail, according to Berkeley, that it is entirely hypothetical. Indeed, the knowledge provided by natural philosophy remains firm, whatever are the suppositions on which it rests, whether they are in accordance with the nature of things or not. In fact, according to Berkeley, even if the theorems use mathematical hypotheses, they are not strictly grounded on mathematical hypotheses: "the reasonings are grounded in [the sensible effects]," that is, on the motion of bodies.¹⁶

¹⁶ It seems then that mathematical hypotheses are only one particular way to talk of real motions. Indeed, Berkeley proposes such a translation in *De Motu* 68: "Let us lay down that the new motion in the body struck is conserved either by the natural force by reason of which any body persists in its own uniform state of motion or of rest, or by the impressed force, received (while the percussion lasts) into the body struck, and there remaining; it will be the same in fact, the difference existing only in name. Similarly when the striking moveable body loses motion, and the struck body acquires it, it is not worth disputing whether the acquired motion is numerically the same as the motion lost; the discussion would lead into metaphysical and even verbal *minutiae* about identity. And so it comes to the same thing whether we say that motion passes from the striker to the struck, or that motion is generated *de novo* in the struck, and is destroyed in the striker. In either case it is understood that one body loses motion, the other acquires it, and besides that, nothing." According to Berkeley, then, understanding the transmission of force must be limited to what is perceivable. Downing does not take

However, it may be possible to interpret the notion of truth as meaning something like “predictive power.” I think that such an interpretation of *De Motu* 28 (which is never mentioned by defenders of the instrumentalist interpretation) would be far-fetched but not necessarily impossible. For what is at issue is how Berkeley understands the *truth* of mechanics, the description of the world and its state, or its order. He writes that “the theorems of mechanical philosophy . . . unveil the recesses of nature” (DM 66), but that unveiling needs to be understood in the context of how mechanics is related to metaphysics. As Berkeley observes:

To treat of the good and great God, creator and preserver of all things, and to show how all things depend on supreme and true being, although it is the most excellent part of human knowledge, is, however, rather the province of first philosophy or metaphysics and theology than of natural philosophy which to-day is almost entirely confined to experiments and mechanics. And so natural philosophy either presupposes the knowledge of God or borrows it from some superior science. Although it is most true that the investigation of nature everywhere supplies the higher sciences with notable arguments to illustrate and prove the wisdom, the goodness, and the power of God. (DM 34)

On the one hand, natural philosophy provides “notable arguments” to theology, in order to reveal the divine Wisdom, Power and so on. This supposes that mechanics describes something of the world; otherwise, it could not illustrate the Wisdom of God. On the other hand, if mechanics were entirely hypothetical, it would not have to “borrow” from theology the certainty that God acts in a regular manner. If for the instrumentalist, the order that may be found in nature is only the order we introduce into it (merely for calculative or predictive purposes), then there would be no need (as Berkeley insists there is) for highlighting the intrinsic relation between natural philosophy and theology.

Admittedly, Berkeley often, if not always, mentions the utility of science. In *De Motu* 28, for example, he acknowledges that it is not only the truth but also the usefulness of the theorems of mechanics that are fixed. Usefulness cannot be the sole criterion of acceptability for a scientific theory, because a completely acceptable scientific theory should be both useful and true. Some scientific theories are useless: for example, parts of arithmetic and even natural history are true but a waste of time. Others (e.g., analysis) are false but useful in that they allow us to identify good results. But no legitimate scientific theory is acceptable independently of how it is linked to the truth. And that is the point at issue in challenging the instrumentalist account.

DM 68 into account when she dismisses this “reductionist interpretation” (according to which “Berkeley would hold that dynamics is reducible to kinematics, that is, he would be committed to the possibility of translating any statement apparently invoking forces into a statement merely about the motions of bodies”). In her view, “Berkeley always *justifies* the use of mathematical hypotheses by the *utility* of dynamics, never by the *translatability* of dynamic terms into kinematic ones, nor does Berkeley offer anything like a manual for translation.” See Lisa Downing, “Berkeley’s Philosophy of Science,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Berkeley*, ed. Kenneth P. Winkler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 263. Cf. Luc Peterschmitt, “Berkeley et les hypothèses mathématiques,” *Archives Internationales d’Histoire des Sciences* (2003), 192-94.

The second argument in favor of Berkeley's supposed instrumentalism concerns his view about empirically equivalent theories. Berkeley certainly knew that different hypotheses could be used to explain the same phenomena. In the *Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* he alludes to the issue when he writes:

And if it pass for a good argument against other hypotheses in the sciences, that they suppose Nature or the divine wisdom to make something in vain, or do that by tedious round-about methods, which might have been performed in a much more easy and compendious way, what shall we think of that hypothesis which supposes the whole world made in vain? (DHP II, W 2: 214)¹⁷

This question was especially important in the context of Cartesian science, since mechanist principles may provide different explanations.¹⁸ But when it is impossible to choose between two hypotheses on empirical grounds, there are metaphysical reasons to keep one hypothesis, relying on the way in which God acts (viz., the easiest and most compendious way, as Berkeley puts it). So that even if physics remains uncertain and only probable, the possibility of concurring hypotheses is not understood in an instrumentalist way, because of the link between physics and metaphysics.

However, Berkeley separates physics and metaphysics in the *De Motu*. He could have (maybe he should have) addressed the question about their relation, but he does not. For

¹⁷ As Richard Glauser has shown, this is an *ad hominem* argument: it is not an indication that Berkeley endorses the position. See Richard Glauser, *Berkeley et les philosophes du XVII^e siècle. Perception et scepticisme* (Sprimont: Mardaga, 1999), 287. Malebranche makes the point: "As God acts only by using the simplest ways, it seems unreasonable to explain how we know things by admitting the creation of an infinite number of beings, since this difficulty can be solved in an easier and more natural manner." See Nicolas Malebranche, *De la recherche de la vérité*, in *Œuvres*, éd. G. Rodis-Lewis and G. Malbreil (2 vols; Paris: Gallimard, 1979-1992), 3.2.4; 1: 334; and "God never does by very difficult ways what can be done in the easiest and the simplest ways: God does not do anything uselessly and without reason" (*ibid.* 3.2.6; 1: 338). My mention of Berkeley's appeal to Malebranche's argument is intended primarily to highlight his strategy regarding alternative hypotheses.

¹⁸ See for example J. Rohault, *Traité de Physique* (Amsterdam, 1672) or Pierre-Sylvain Régis, *Système de philosophie, contenant la logique, métaphysique, physique et morale* (Lyon, 1691). The latter writes: "As its parts [of the body] are not perceptible, we cannot perceive their order or arrangement, and all that we can do is make guesses through its effects Although speculative physics can be treated only in a problematic way, and nothing demonstrative pertains to it, one must grant, however, that this part of physics, as uncertain it is, holds one of the highest ranks in human knowledge: because even if we are not completely assured of what it teaches us, we can believe that we know everything that the human mind can about a physical body if we can distinctly conceive a disposition, figure, and arrangement of its parts in such a way that all the effects depending of this body can easily be deduced . . . and since mathematics should admit only what is certain and demonstrative, physics should admit all that is probable, provided that it is deduced from one system grounded on the first truths of nature. . . . Since nature always acts in the simplest ways, we are sure that its action is to be explained by one system only. By SYSTEM, we do not understand one hypothesis, but a mass of several hypotheses that depend on one another, linked to the first truths in such a way that they are as necessary consequences and deductions from them. Purely arbitrary hypotheses cannot do that" (2: 4-5).

example, he does not seem to admit that there are equivalent hypotheses in astronomy. Compare these two texts:

It is one thing to arrive at general laws of nature from a contemplation of the phenomena, and another to frame an hypothesis, and from thence deduce the phenomena. Those who supposed epicycles, and by them explained the motions and appearances of the planets, may not therefore be thought to have discovered principles true in fact and nature. (*Siris* 228)

And if, by considering this doctrine of force, men arrive at the knowledge of many inventions in Mechanics, and are taught to frame engines, by means of which things difficult and otherwise impossible may be performed; and if the same doctrine which is so beneficial here below serveth also as a key to discover the nature of the celestial motions; shall we deny that it is of use, either in practice or speculation, because we have no distinct idea of force?" (*Alciphron* VII. 7; W 3: 295-296)

In the first text, Berkeley does not say a word about those who do not use epicycles (i.e., the Copernicans). And in the second he clearly says that the Newtonian theory of force allows us to discover the true celestial motions.¹⁹ But Newton's theory supposes that the sun is a center of force—that is, it is in the "center" (at least of the motion of the earth).²⁰ So it seems that Berkeley reverses Bellarmine's position: for the Cardinal, the Copernican hypothesis allows us to save the phenomena, but it is false; for the Bishop, if the Ptolemaic hypothesis accounts for the motion, it is nevertheless false. In neither case do I see any semantic instrumentalism.

In any event, commentators generally rely on one text to justify the instrumentalist interpretation, *De Motu* 67. There Berkeley seems to adopt the thesis according to which there equivalent theories:²¹

It remains to discuss the cause of the communication of motions. Most people think that the force impressed on the moveable body is the cause of motion in it. However that they do not assign a known cause of motion, and one distinct from the body and the motion is clear from the preceding argument. It is clear, moreover, that force is

¹⁹ This is not a question of knowing the nature of motion (which is the task of metaphysics). It is just a question of determining the true motions of celestial bodies.

²⁰ Of course, it is not a center in a geometrical sense, since the orbs are not circular (cf. Kepler's first law). However this law clearly states that the earth moves around the sun. Berkeley makes an allusion to Kepler's laws (the third) in the *Dialogues*: "Raise now your thoughts from this ball of earth, to all those glorious luminaries that adorn the high arch of heaven. The motion and situation of the planets, are they not admirable for use and order? Were those (miscalled erratic) globes ever known to stray, in their repeated journeys through the pathless void? Do they not measure areas round the sun ever proportioned to the times? So fixed, so immutable are the laws by which the unseen Author of Nature actuates the universe" (DHP II; W 2: 210-211). If he admits the third law, it would be difficult for him to refuse the first. Indeed, the general tone of this passage is clearly Copernican.

²¹ For my argument, the question whether this is an argument in favor of instrumentalism or a consequence of Berkeley's semantics does not matter. My aim is to show that Berkeley does not maintain such a position at all.

not a thing certain and determinate, from the fact that great men advance very different opinions, even contrary opinions, about it, and yet in their results attain the truth. For Newton says that impressed force consists in action alone, and is the action exerted on the body to change its state, and does not remain after the action. Torricelli contends that a certain heap or aggregate of forces impressed by percussion is received into the mobile body, and there remains and constitutes impetus. Borelli and others say much the same. But although Newton and Torricelli seem to be disagreeing with one another, they each advance consistent views, and the thing is sufficiently well explained by both. For all forces attributed to bodies are mathematical hypotheses just as are attractive forces in planets and sun. But mathematical entities have no stable essence in the nature of things; and they depend on the notion of the definer. Whence the same thing can be explained in different ways. (DM 67)

According to Popper, Newton-Smith and others, Berkeley says that it is possible to explain phenomena in different ways, so it would be possible to contrast Newton and Torricelli. But such a reading rests on a surprising shift. See how Newton-Smith paraphrases Berkeley. Berkeley's sentence is: "they each advance consistent views, and *the thing* [in the singular] is sufficiently well explained by both" [*singuli sibi consentanea proferunt, res satis commode ab utrisque explicatur*"].²² Here is Newton-Smith's reading: "both 'attain the truth', both 'explain' things" [in the plural]. This shift from "the thing" to "things" misinterprets Berkeley. Luce correctly translates the Latin "res" as singular. But then it cannot signify "phenomena." And once again, at the end of the section, Berkeley speaks of "the same thing" which may be explained (*unde eadem res diversimode explicari potest*). In both cases, the "thing" in question is not a phenomenon, but what Newton or Torricelli conceive when they speak of forces (that is to say when they try to explain the cause of the communication of motion). The term here refers to the supposed cause of the communication of motion. One should then distinguish two levels of explanation: (a) the explanation of the primitive concepts or notions of a theory (the very first part of Newton's *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*); and (b) the explanation of the phenomena.²³ The equivalence of explanations concerns only the first level of explanation. At this level, natural philosophers try to explain their conceptions or notions (e.g., what they understand by a

²² DM 67, W 4: 29.

²³ Berkeley describes the work of the physicist in this way: "The human mind delights in extending and expanding its knowledge; and for this purpose general notions and propositions have to be formed in which particular propositions and cognitions are in some way comprised, which then, and not till then, are believed to be understood. Geometers know this well. In mechanics also notions are premised, i.e. definitions and first and general statements about motion from which afterwards by mathematical method conclusions more remote and less general are deduced. And just as by the application of geometrical theorems, the sizes of particular bodies are measured, so also by the application of the universal theorems of mechanics, the movements of any parts of the mundane system, and the phenomena thereon depending, become known and are determined. And that is the sole mark at which the physicist must aim" (DM § 38). First, the physicist gives the definitions, then the most general statements, then the mathematical theorems, and *in fine* the application to the phenomena. This is the very structure of Newton's *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. Berkeley discusses only the first definitions.

word). But as Berkeley repeatedly insists regarding the obscurity of terms such as “corporeal force,” this is a difficult task.

Moreover, Berkeley does not mention here any theorem bearing on the communication of motions, but only Newton’s definition of impressed force.²⁴ This is the important point made in the last sentence of the section: “Whence the same thing can be explained in different ways.” This sentence is ambiguous. It is possible that the word “thing” refers to the notion of force that the philosophers of nature frame. But given the differences between the concepts, it is difficult to say that they share anything. It would be better to say that the “thing” is the communication of motion. The problem here rests on the verb “to explain.” Obviously, since Berkeley mentions the definitions of force given by Newton and Torricelli, we should not take the term in his technical sense (viz., to reduce a phenomenon to general laws). If Berkeley had intended that, then he would have had to admit something like a causal explanation (even if it were only a hypothetical explanation). However, giving such an explanation is not the task of natural philosophy.

The “empiricist concept”²⁵ of causality is of no use here: the problem is not to say that a body is the cause of the motion of another, but what happens in or during an impact. In fact, in their definitions of force, Newton and Torricelli try to explain how they conceive that a body may cause the motion of another body.²⁶ As this is not a real explanation (in mechanics), what is precisely conceived does not really matter: such conceptions affect neither the fact of the communication of motion nor its laws. Indeed, it is possible to see how there might not be any real difference between Newton and Torricelli: both maintain that after an impact a body keeps its motion in a straight line at a constant speed.²⁷ Is there any real difference in saying (a) that it is the state of motion that is modified (and then explain the conservation of motion by a force of inertia), or (b) that a body retains an *impetus* that moves it? In both cases, to know the direction and speed of the impacting body may help to explain the direction and speed of the impacted body, given the general laws of motion. As far as mechanics alone is concerned, it is possible to conceive that there are little men (or something comparable) in bodies that push and pull them, as long as they know perfectly the general laws of motion and act according to them. Once again, it would not change anything regarding the laws, which are the object of mechanics. Of course, from a metaphysical point of view, such a hypothesis is certainly false, just as are those of Newton and Torricelli.

²⁴ Newton, *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, definition IV: “Impressed force is the action exerted on a body to change its state either of resting or of moving uniformly straight forward” [Newton, *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, trans. by I.B. Cohen and A. Whitmann (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 405].

²⁵ See Bertil Belfrage, “Vers une nouvelle interprétation de la Théorie de la Vision de Berkeley,” in *Berkeley, langage de la perception et art de voir*, ed. Dominique Berlioz (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2003), 159-212.

²⁶ Indeed, Berkeley specifically mentions (DM 67) the commentary that Newton added to his definition: “This force consists solely in the action and does not remain in a body after the action has ceased. For a body perseveres in any new state solely by the force of inertia” (Newton, *Mathematical Principles*, 405).

²⁷ See note 16.

Conclusion

Berkeley is not an instrumentalist. At least, he is not explicitly an instrumentalist in the strong sense of Popper and Newton-Smith. The argument they and their followers give to support this interpretation does not seem to be conclusive. Still, it is possible that his conception of mathematical hypotheses could lead him to adopt an instrumentalist position; but then he would be inconsistent. This means that if the instrumentalist interpretation is right, then there is something rotten in Berkeley's philosophy. To put it in another way: proof that instrumentalism is a necessary consequence of Berkeley's philosophy would be an argument against him.

This is not to say that, just because Berkeley is not an instrumentalist, he must be a realist—at least, a “realist” in the sense that Newton or Leibniz could be. Instead of thinking of Berkeley in terms of this contrast, perhaps we could consider him more a conventionalist, closer to Poincaré's conventionalism than to Duhem's instrumentalism.²⁸ Here I am not being (or at least, not only being) ironic. If a comparison is really necessary, then this is the one that should be drawn. It is surprising that it has not been drawn, as if contemporary philosophy of science oscillates only between the strongest versions of instrumentalism and of realism. However, I am not sure that such a way to read old texts is cogent: it amounts to building ghosts of contemporary philosophy. It is more interesting to evaluate Berkeley's own position by comparing it to Newton's *Principles*, in which case we should instead ask how Berkeley gives a plausible account for the work of natural philosophy in the beginning of the eighteenth century. Maybe it doesn't (and that would be a good argument against the good bishop). But then again, maybe it does. In both cases Berkeley would still be of philosophical interest. However, to answer these questions requires that we examine more precisely what was Berkeley's philosophy of science, and in particular the role he attributes to mathematical hypotheses.

UMR "Savoirs, Textes et Langages," CNRS-Université Lille 3
luc.peterschmitt@wanadoo.fr

²⁸ Here I can only give an indication of what I have in mind by pointing to Poincaré's introduction to his *La science et l'hypothèse*. He writes that mathematical sciences rest on “disguised definitions or conventions”: they are “decrees” of our spirit—decrees that impose themselves on our science, but not on nature. Despite this fact, the scientist does not only know a world that he created himself (we could say that the order he finds in the world is not only the order he puts in it). Poincaré adds: “If it were the case, science would be powerless. But we can see it acting every day. This could not happen if it did not make us know something of reality; however, it cannot know things in themselves, as the naïve dogmatic thinks, but only the relations between things; there is nothing knowable about reality but these relations.” See Henri Poincaré, *La science et l'hypothèse* (Paris: Flammarion, 1968), 25. I do not claim that there is a perfect analogy. However, there are resemblances. In particular, both Poincaré and Berkeley affirm that there is something useful in the “principles” of a theory, and that, nevertheless, the theory may be true. It may entail a comparable tension between “usefulness” and truth.

Review Article

George Berkeley's Philosophy in Polish Studies

Marta Szymańska

Polish studies on George Berkeley have a tradition of nearly a hundred years. During that time, however, only eight books have been published on his philosophy. They are mostly academic pieces, the main focus of which is detailed analysis of Berkeley's epistemology and ontology. The aim of this article is to present an overview of these works and to show the main tendencies in Polish commentaries on Berkeley's ideas. In addition, I describe the translations of Berkeley's works that have contributed to the reception of his philosophy among readers and commentators in Poland.

* * *

Berkeley's philosophical ideas as they are presented in his works are known to Polish readers mostly from their English editions. Only four of Berkeley's works have been fully translated into Polish. *A Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* was first translated by Feliks Jezierski in 1890.¹ A translation of the work which is commonly used nowadays was made by Jan Leszczyński in 1956. *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* were first translated by Janina Sosnowska in 1927, and it was republished together with Leszczyński's translation of *A Treatise concerning the Principles of Human knowledge* in 1956 by Polish Scientific Publishers PWN in a series devoted to classic works in philosophy, "Biblioteka Klasyków Filozofii" [The Library of Philosophy Classics].² This 1956 edition is considered to be the basic Polish translation of the two works by Berkeley. More recent translations of the two works were made by Janusz Salamon (*Treatise*) and Michał Filipczuk (*Three Dialogues*) and published by Wydawnictwo Zielona Sowa in 2005³ and 2006⁴ respectively. Both of them are accompanied by an afterword that contains a brief presentation of Berkeley's philosophy. An anonymous translation of *De Motu* dates from 1915,⁵ but it was not published until

¹ George Berkeley, *Rzecz o zasadach poznania* przeł. z ang. [transl. from English by] Feliks Jezierski, pod red. Henryka Struvego [ed. by Henryk Struve] (Warszawa: Kasa im. Mianowskiego, 1890).

² George Berkeley, *Traktat o zasadach poznania ludzkiego. Trzy dialogi między Hylasem i Filonousem*, przeł. [transl. by], J. Leszczyński J. Sosnowska (Warszawa: PWN, 1956).

³ George Berkeley, *Traktat o zasadach ludzkiego poznania, w którym poddano badaniu główne przyczyny błędów i trudności w różnych dziedzinach wiedzy oraz podstawy sceptycyzmu, ateizmu i niewiary*, przeł. [transl. by] Janusz Salamon SJ (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Zielona Sowa, 2005).

⁴ George Berkeley, *Trzy dialogi między Hylasem a Philonousem. Przeciw sceptykom i ateistom*, przeł. [transl. by] Michał Filipczuk (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Zielona Sowa, 2006).

⁵ This date together with a stamp of Seminarium Filozoficzne Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego can be seen on the script of the translation.

1988.⁶ Berkeley's *Notebooks* [*Philosophical Commentaries*] appeared in Polish in 2007 in a translation by Bartosz Żukowski.⁷

Some works exist in Polish only in parts. These are old Polish translations of the medical paragraphs of *Siris*⁸ dating from 1781 and *The Querist*⁹ made in 1751. However, they are mostly of only historical significance. As far as Berkeley's works on vision are concerned, *An Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision* and *The Theory of Vision Vindicated and Explained* were translated into Polish between 1995-1998 by Prof. Miłowit Kuniński and his students at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, but the translations have not yet been published.

The situation of a rather poor availability of Polish translations of Berkeley's works makes access to them more difficult for the average Polish reader. Nevertheless, critical studies of his philosophy in Polish have contributed to making it more widely known. Two books can be mentioned as exemplary in this respect. One of them is a 1997 Polish translation of David Berman's short book *Berkeley: Experimental Philosophy*.¹⁰ A book with a similar aim, *Berkeley znany i nieznan* [*Berkeley known and unknown*], was written by the Polish author Beata Szymańska and published in the "Science and Knowledge for Everyone" series of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) ten years earlier.¹¹

In her book Szymańska describes Berkeley not only as a British empiricist but also as a scientist and even mystic (an interpretation generally unknown to Polish readers). She

⁶ George Berkeley, *O ruchu*, [w:] in Stefan Sarnowski, *Berkeley. Zdrowy rozsądek i idealizm* (Warszawa: Klub Otrycki Colloquia Communia, 1988).

⁷ George Berkeley, *Dzienniki filozoficzne*, przeł. i oprac. [transl. and ed. by] Bartosz Żukowski (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo "Słowo/Obraz Terytoria," 2007).

⁸ The first Polish translation is *Dwa sekreta doświadczone y dziwnie skuteczne. Pierwszy do uleczenia ludzi na różne choroby utyskujących. Drugi na prezerwatywę bydła tymi czasy gęsto w Polsce odchodzącego. Z języka angielskiego i niemieckiego przetłumaczone. A z prawdziwej ku ojczyźnie i ziomkom swoim miłości po kolendzie komunikowane*, tłum.[transl. by] J. A. Z[ającki] (Warszawa 1747). This translation was reprinted in Grodno in 1781 under the title *Woda żywiczna przez sławnego biskupa angielskiego Berkeley światu ogłoszona tak na wszystkie prawie choroby ludzkie, jako też bydłą częstą zarazę morową ginących w dziwnych swych skutkach doświadczona. Z Angielskiego języka dla pożytku obywatelów a najbardziej na wsi mieszkających, krótko i dokładnie opisana* (Grodno 1781). See Anna Hochfeldowa, "Wczesne polskie przekłady Berkeleya," *Archiwum historii i myśli społecznej* 29 (1983), 267-68.

⁹ The Polish translation was an eight-page work based probably on a summary published in the *Monthly Review* in March 1750. It was titled *Excerpt niektórych refleksji z książki Angielskiej Jerzego Berkeley biskupa Cloyneńskiego, wydanej pod tytułem The Querist containing several Queries proposed to the consideration of the Public* - a z przydatkiem *Exhortacji do duchowieństwa katolickiego w Hibernyi, drukowanej w Londynie 1750, In 8^o tłumaczonej exercitii linguae gratia przez J. Z. R. K. [Józef Andrzej Załuski]* (Warszawa 1751). See Hochfeldowa, "Wczesne polskie przekłady Berkeleya," 269.

¹⁰ David Berman, *Berkeley: Eksperymentalna filozofia*, przeł. [transl. by] Robert Flaszak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Amber, 1997).

¹¹ Beata Szymańska, *Berkeley znany i nieznan* (Wrocław; Kraków: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1987).

gives an overview of his life and works and, as background for understanding his ideas, provides a short presentation of the main themes in the philosophies of Descartes, Malebranche and Locke. Her discussion of Berkeley's philosophical views is organized around certain groups of problems: the character of human perception, nominalism, the forms of existence (i.e., ideas and spirits), the Molyneux problem, the *esse est percipi* formula, the proof of God's existence, monism, idealism, and the visual language theory. A separate chapter of the book is devoted to the presentation of *Siris* as a work not only rich in ideas but also in numerous references. As Szymańska points out, Berkeley's philosophical stance in *Siris* differs from his earlier one, but she sees a chance for saving the coherence in his philosophy in his visual language theory. The analyses of the book are accompanied with the question of who Berkeley was. Szymańska answers it with an inspiring account of how Berkeley was a stubborn searcher after truth who valued the act of searching as something that brings us closer to it.

Whereas Beata Szymańska's book focuses on generally unknown aspects of Berkeley's life and works, Stanisław Kijaczko's *Immaterializm: epistemologia i metafizyka. Próba interpretacji filozofii George'a Berkeley'a* [*Immaterialism: Epistemology and Metaphysics. An Interpretation of Berkeley's Philosophy*] gives a thorough academic analysis of the whole Bishop's philosophy.¹² As stated in its summary, the book aims to be "an attempt to reconstruct the methodological, epistemological and metaphysical basis of Berkeley's philosophy which, as the author claims, appears in the design of incorporating empiricist epistemology and science into a theistic metaphysics" (181). Kijaczko focuses on Berkeley's philosophy of immaterialism. He discusses its program as well as its method and shows its origins and aims in the Berkeleian system. According to Kijaczko Berkeley's immaterialism does not develop from British empiricism either as a transitional concept or as a theistic metaphysics (181). Rather, it is informed and enhanced by a theory of empiricism. In his study Kijaczko also takes up the issue of idealism. He analyses different meanings of the term "idea" including Berkeley's special use. In Kijaczko's view, ideas for Berkeley have "the status of perceived and independently existing objects which could not be explained in the framework of traditional ontology" (181). In the formula *esse est percipi aut percipere* Kijaczko shows some reference to St. Augustine's idea *quid vides ea, sunt*. The book also contains discussions of Berkeley's ethics and social philosophy as well as the importance of religion in his philosophical thought. Kijaczko addresses the problem of common sense and its ambivalence in Berkeley's philosophy, and claims that in his "justifications of moral norms and law-making and law-applying decisions" (182), Berkeley was a representative of theocentric utilitarianism. The final chapter of the book is devoted to the refutations of idealistic and realistic epistemologies by G. E. Moore and W. T. Stace respectively, as well as their analysis of the *esse est percipi* formula.

Although they contain some general information about the life and philosophy of George Berkeley, the other Polish critical studies present Berkeley's philosophical ideas in a more specialized way.

¹² Stanisław Kijaczko, *Immaterializm: epistemologia i metafizyka. Próba interpretacji filozofii George'a Berkeley'a* (Opole: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2002).

The first example is the earliest Polish study on Berkeley, a book entitled *Pojęcie idei u Berkeleyya* [‘Idea’ in Berkeley’s philosophy] by Juliusz Kleiner and published in Lvov in 1910.¹³ It is a short but detailed analysis of the category of “idea” in Berkeley’s philosophy, which may be considered to be preparatory to the understanding of the whole system. Kleiner is interested in understanding the term with regard to both Berkeley’s metaphysics and epistemology. According to Kleiner, Berkeley’s use of the term throughout his works remains incoherent, because the metaphysical use of the term is contrary to the epistemological one. That is the reason, Kleiner claims, why Berkeley eliminates activities of the soul from the definition of idea, thus saving his system of metaphysics by not having to face the problem of the identity of spiritual substance and idea. Kleiner also attempts to show the differences between ‘notion’ and ‘idea’ and, in distinguishing kinds of ideas, points at the problem of ideas of affections in God.¹⁴ Kleiner concludes his little book with the following statement: “There is some inconsequence in Berkeley’s system, the source of which lies in the introduction of the metaphysical point of view into psychology and epistemology. Both inconsequence and unclearness serve as one of many proofs in philosophy for the futility of trying to eliminate the differentiation between cognition and being” (18).

It should be stressed that the concern of most Polish studies on Berkeley is the problem of subjective idealism and commonsensical realism. For instance, Roman Ingarden raised this point in his *Niektóre założenia idealizmu Berkeleyya* [Some of the tenets of Berkeley’s idealism], published in 1931 also in Lvov.¹⁵ Ingarden starts his analysis with a contention that Berkeley’s system is an example of idealism later characterized as psycho-theological. Ingarden considers its most important claims from the point of view of metaphysics, ontology and epistemology, among which Berkeley does not clearly differentiate. The Polish philosopher makes an attempt to find that difference because, he argues, it is helpful in solving the problem of idealism and realism in Berkeley’s system. Limiting himself to the *Principles of Human Knowledge*, Ingarden points out the main tenets and analyses them very thoroughly and carefully. In his opinion Berkeley lacks a clear method in his epistemic inquiries and a precise description of their relation towards those metaphysical and ontological ones. This is what confuses potential commentators on his philosophy. The mixing up of the nature of inquiries within one claim leads to its different interpretations and make a coherent commentary impossible. It is also the source of the debate on idealism and realism with regard to his philosophy. Although Ingarden argues for treating Berkeley’s thought as an example of idealism, he does not deny that there are terms and epistemic criteria which recommend a realistic interpretation.

What is characteristic about the book by Ingarden is the originality of the discourse. As he claims at the beginning, he does not repeat Berkeley’s words. As a disciple of Edmund

¹³ Juliusz Kleiner, J., *Pojęcie idei u Berkeleyya* (Lwów: Polskie Towarzystwo, 1910).

¹⁴ It was also the object of study of W. Woyczyńska in “‘Idea’ i ‘notion’ w filozofii Berkeleyya [‘Idea’ and ‘notion’ in Berkeley’s philosophy]” published in *Przegląd Powszechny* in 1928.

¹⁵ Roman Ingarden, *Niektóre założenia idealizmu Berkeleyya*, [w:] in *Księga Pamiątkowa Polskiego Towarzystwa Filozoficznego* (Lwów, 1931).

Husserl, he wants to get to the bottom of Berkeley's philosophy from the phenomenological point of view. In order to achieve his aim he uses contemporary terms, which were unknown to the Bishop. One of them is "pure consciousness," which according to Ingarden signifies Berkeley's meaning of "idea." Ingarden's choice of words, although specific, is not confusing for a reader as the author remains very conscientious in defining the newly introduced terms. If read with accuracy, the book gives a clear picture of the complexity of Berkeley's philosophical views as they were presented in *A Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*.

Ingarden's view of immanent and subjective idealism in Berkeley's philosophy was shared by Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz, a famous member of the Lvov-Warsaw School. He expressed it in two studies, an article, "Epistemologia i semantyka" ["Epistemology and Semantics"]¹⁶ and a book, *Zagadnienia i kierunki filozofii [Issues and trends in philosophy]*.¹⁷

The theme of idealism and realism is also the object of interest of Henryk Elzenberg's "Domniemany immanentyzm Berkeleya w świetle analizy tekstów" ["The Alleged Berkeley's Immanentism in the Light of the Analysis of His Works"] published in 1964.¹⁸ But contrary to Ingarden and Ajdukiewicz, Elzenberg argues against treating Berkeley's philosophy as an example of subjective idealism. His article has three sections. He first reconstructs the *esse=percipi* thesis and points out that despite clarifications it remains open to different interpretations, especially that of immanent idealism. He then criticizes Berkeley, pointing out how both realistic and immanent interpretations of the thesis were shared simultaneously by K. Fisher, A. Fraser, and J. Laird. According to Elzenberg, realistic commentaries of Berkeley's thesis start with the publications of J. Wild and Luce's edition of Berkeley's *Philosophical Commentaries*. It should be stressed that in his criticism of treating Berkeley as an immanentist, Elzenberg does not deny that in several notes in the first notebook of *Philosophical Commentaries*, Berkeley did present an immanent view. This was, however, only an episode in his philosophical development. Against the immanent interpretation, Elzenberg critically analyses two issues, namely, the meaning of the phrase "in the mind" and the use of term "idea." He concludes his study with a statement that neither of the analyzed issues gives reasons for immanentism.

In 1988 Stefan Sarnowski published a study of Berkeley's philosophy entitled *Berkeley. Zdrowy rozsądek i idealizm [Berkeley. Common sense and idealism]*.¹⁹ It gives a solid picture both of general philosophical tendencies in 17th and 18th century thought (e.g.,

¹⁶ Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz, "Epistemologia i semantyka," (1948) in Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz, *Język i poznanie* (Warszawa: PWN, 1965) 2: 107-117.

¹⁷ Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz, *Zagadnienia i kierunki filozofii* (Kraków: Czytelnik, 1949).

¹⁸ Henryk Elzenberg, "Domniemany immanentyzm Berkeleya w świetle analizy tekstów" (1964), in Henryk Elzenberg *Z historii filozofii* (Kraków: Znak 1995): 312-337. The article was also written in French. See Henryk Elzenberg, "L'idéalisme de Berkeley est-il un idéalisme immanent?" (1953), [w:] in Henryk Elzenberg, *Z historii filozofii* (Kraków: Znak, 1995): 258-68.

¹⁹ Stefan Sarnowski, *Berkeley. Zdrowy rozsądek i idealizm* (Warszawa: Klub Otrycki Colloquia Communia, 1988).

Bacon's experimental philosophy, empiricism, idealism, metaphilosophy, atheism) and Berkeley's life and ideas. It highlights striking parallels to Engels and Lenin when ideas on matter are discussed. What is important is that the book contains a selection of some fragments of Berkeley's works translated into Polish. This seems to make the book attractive for a wide range of readers. The book focuses on Berkeley's epistemological and ontological views. Sarnowski belongs to a group of Polish commentators who consider Berkeley to be a supporter of common sense, realism in epistemology, and spiritualism in ontology. He assumes the attribution of solipsism to Berkeley's philosophical stand to be absurd, and stresses that both idealism and immanentism were criticized by Berkeley as early as in the *Principles of Human Knowledge* and the *Three Dialogues*. In favor of the realistic interpretation of Berkeley's philosophy, Sarnowski points to its sociopolitical and economic ideas and notes that the health of body was partly an object of concern in *Siris*. In his opinion, for Berkeley the real in the world refers only to the subjects of human experience (34). Just as a materialist metaphysics supports atheism, so Berkeley's immaterialism supports his religious apologetics.

Jan Sarna's 1996 *Filozofia G. Berkeleyya: idealizm czy realizm* [*The Philosophy of George Berkeley: Idealism or Realism*] challenges Sarnowski's sympathetic interpretation of Berkeley's philosophy.²⁰ Sarna's book thematizes the problem of subjective idealism and commonsensical realism in Berkeley's philosophical system, arguing in favor of a subjective idealist reading and against commonsense realism (54). He sees the essence of Berkeley's philosophy as raising "the issue of the relationship between the subjective and the objective in sense impressions, the issue of the objective character of causality and the problem of different ways of being" (9). For Sarna, Berkeley's philosophy is "an attempt to combine subjective and idealistic epistemology with objective and idealistic ontology" (64). His aim in the book is to demonstrate the falsity of the *esse est percipi* thesis. He claims that it can be true only with regard to pictures of imagination. Otherwise it is false because, as he writes, our perceiving of things is not necessary for their existence. If not for God in whose creative activity ideas exist, human souls would not be able to have perceptions. For Berkeley, the world results from God's freely acting on human minds. But this does not require the existence of spiritual substances, and in accepting their existence Berkeley contradicts the epistemic consequences of his doctrine. Throughout his writings (even in *Siris*), Berkeley consistently maintains his sensualist views. But in accepting the existence of a God who is sensually unperceived, Berkeley gives up being a sensualist. He does this to avoid solipsism and the anti-Christian religious implications of such a position. This, Sarna concludes, is an overriding concern for Berkeley, especially regarding his ethics.

In the light of the above studies on Berkeley's philosophy, it may be claimed that Polish studies focus mostly on commenting on Berkeley's *esse est percipi* thesis. A reader can find supporters of treating his philosophy as an example of both subjective idealism and realism. However, it seems that Polish commentators tend to accept the former view. This

²⁰ Jan Sarna, *Filozofia G. Berkeleyya: idealizm czy realizm* (Opole : Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 1996).

is also the view defended in the recent Polish Encyclopedia of Philosophy.²¹ Thus, the general Polish readership may identify Berkeley's philosophy mostly with subjective idealism and immanentism.

Even though the debate about his idealism versus realism has been the central topic of much Polish Berkeley scholarship, other issues have arisen as well, particularly his theology and theory of vision. For example, in "Kryzys teologii naturalnej: George Berkeley" ["The Crisis in Natural Theology: George Berkeley"] (1971)²² and "George Berkeley wobec teologii naturalnej" ["George Berkeley and Natural Theology"] (1980),²³ Anna Hochfeldowa deals with the problem of apologetics and natural theology in Berkeley's philosophy. Highlighting its great importance with regard to the Bishop's philosophy, she claims that Berkeley's theology was not traditional and rational. Instead, she describes it as "an early forerunner of the shift in the development of theological thought which found its full expression in the writings of Cardinal Newman."²⁴ Berkeley's theology is also the focus of "Teologia Berkeley'a" ["Berkeley's Theology"] by Adam Drozdek (1997).²⁵ The problem of Berkeley's religious apologetics has been discussed recently in Adam Płachciak's (2004) "Świat Berkeley'a jako epifania Boga" ["Berkeley's World as God's Epiphany"].²⁶

Berkeley's theory of vision has also been the object of recent Polish studies. Stefan Zabieglik's "Berkeley'a teoria widzenia" ["Berkeley's theory of vision"] summarizes the theories of vision and visual language described in Berkeley's *Essay towards a New Theory of Vision* (1709) and *Theory of Vision, or Visual Language* (1733) but does not delve critically into the central issues raised by Berkeley's remarks.²⁷

By contrast, Przemysław Spryszak's 2004 *Filozofia percepcji George'a Berkeley'a* [*George Berkeley's Philosophy of Perception*]²⁸ is an excellent critical study of Berkeley's theory of vision.²⁹ In the opinion of its reviewer, Miłowit Kuniński, Spryszak's book "gets to the essence of [Berkeley's] philosophy, to the problems which are the crucial for understanding not only the Bishop's philosophical system but also

²¹ Jerzy Tupikowski, "Berkeley," in *Powszechna Encyklopedia Filozofii*, red. [Ed.] A. Maryniarczyk (Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu, 2000), 1: 534-37.

²² Anna Hochfeldowa, "Kryzys teologii naturalnej: George Berkeley," *Archiwum historii filozofii i myśli społecznej* 17 (1971): 169-206.

²³ Anna Hochfeldowa, "George Berkeley wobec teologii naturalnej," *Człowiek i światopogląd* 7 (1980): 34-42.

²⁴ Hochfeldowa, "Kryzys teologii naturalnej," 206.

²⁵ Adam Drozdek, "Teologia Berkeley'a," *Studia Philosophiae Christianae* 33 (1997): 124-32.

²⁶ Adam Płachciak, "Świat Berkeley'a jako epifania Boga," *Przegląd Religioznawczy* 2 (2004): 37-42.

²⁷ Stefan Zabieglik, "Berkeley'a teoria widzenia," *Principia* 27-28 (2000): 171-85.

²⁸ Przemysław Spryszak, *Filozofia percepcji George'a Berkeley'a* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo UJ, 2004).

²⁹ Spryszak also wrote an article on Berkeley's doctrine of mediate perception entitled "Postrzeganie 'pośrednie': Analiza wybranych tez 'Nowej teorii widzenia' G. Berkeley'a," *Principia* 27-28 (2000): 187-208.

contemporary philosophy of mind and epistemology in general.”³⁰ Spryszak initially discusses general problems of the philosophy of perception and subsequently points out which of them are dealt with more or less consciously by Berkeley. After reviewing Berkeley’s method of philosophizing and the main tenets of his philosophy and theory of vision, he analyzes two crucial terms in Berkeley’s thought, mediate and immediate perception. In Spryszak’s view, Berkeley’s definition of immediate perception lacks precision and as such raises difficulties that could have been avoided if perception had not been defined as an activity but rather as a state. What follows is a discussion of the definition of ideas and their kinds as different objects of perception. Special attention is devoted to the problem of the experience of colors and sounds. Spryszak considers the meaning of the *esse est percipi* formula and how it raises the problem of representationalism and realism. He points out that Berkeley’s criticism of representationalism is grounded on weak premises, and he concludes that Berkeley’s treatment of things as conglomerates of immediately perceived objects remains contrary to common assumptions about the nature of sensual perception. By developing a criterion for judging Berkeley’s realism, Spryszak provides a means for addressing the problem of whether Berkeley’s stance is an example of realism or subjective idealism. Specifically, a real thing is continuous, complex, dimensional, and related to the mind. But Berkeley ends up rejecting this last feature, claiming that ideas are independent of the subject’s will. According to Spryszak the realism of perceived objects makes it impossible to treat them as sensual impressions of the mind. Nonetheless, a sensation of pain whose existence is subject-dependent might exist outside of a mind. As Spryszak puts it, what Berkeley seems to dismiss is still theoretically possible.

Even though no other books on Berkeley’s thought have been published in Polish since 2004, interest in his thought has not diminished. Kijaczko, Sarnowski, and Spryszak still work on Berkeley, and other commentators continue to publish articles on his philosophy. As I have indicated, many different Polish scholars since 1910 (including well-known figures such as Ingarden, Ajdukiewicz, and Elzenberg) have discussed Berkeley, but in most cases the main focus of studies is his epistemology or ontology. Work on his theology and theory of vision has been limited, and even though commentators are aware of his ethics and socio-political philosophy, no thorough analysis of this aspect of his thought has yet appeared in Polish. That situation may change as more scholars become interested in Berkeley. According to data presented by the Polish National Library, six articles have been published since 2005. This is three times more than in the period between 1996 and 2004. A similar process of change may be anticipated with regard to the scope of problems under discussion on Berkeley in Poland. Hopefully, we may expect that the recent translation of the *Philosophical Commentaries* will turn out to be a great opportunity for the debate to be broadened and to be made popular among the wider readership in Poland.³¹

³⁰ Miłowit Kuniński, *Recenzja pracy doktorskiej p. mgra Przemysława Spryszaka pt. ‘Filozofia percepcji George’a Berkeley’a’* (Kraków, 2001), 1.

³¹ I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Miłowit Kuniński for his helpful hints and support in preparing this article.

Jagiellonian University
martaewa.szymanska@gmail.com

Review

Eriugena, Berkeley, and the Idealist Tradition. Stephen Gersh and Dermot Moran, eds. Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2006. ix + 318 pp.

Eriugena, Berkeley, and the Idealist Tradition is a collection of fourteen papers (plus the editors' Introduction), originally delivered at an international conference, with the same title, organized in Dublin in March 2002 by the University of Notre Dame and Trinity College Dublin. This aspect is worth mentioning because what should have normally been an inessential ingredient, something having to do only with context of the book's genesis, has become in this case a prominent feature of the project. For what makes reading this volume a particularly refreshing and rewarding experience is due precisely to its unique blend of scholarship styles: contributors are scholars from Ireland, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Poland, Finland, Sweden, and Germany. These scholars bring into play a wide range of traditions of research and cultures of scholarship, which confers upon the project a definite sense of ample conversation, marked by polyphony and openness, at the same time keeping it safely away from a certain Anglo-Saxon research provincialism that often undermines similar—otherwise promising—projects. Moreover, and in close relation to its dialogical openness, this volume is an example of highly interdisciplinary work: throughout it the topic of idealism is being considered not in a narrow sense, just philosophically, but the contributors look at it from a variety of complementary angles, employing methodologies and narrative strategies pertaining to such fields as history of ideas, classical philology, theology and hermeneutics. Last but not least, the book displays an appropriate amount of free spirit and playfulness. At times fine irony borders on sheer artfulness, as when, for example, Vittorio Hösle notes how he is “waiting impatiently for an enlarged edition of *The Open Society and Its Enemies* by a worthy successor of Sir Karl Popper that shows us with new and better philological arguments how utterly undemocratic Plato was” (76).

In their Introduction Stephen Gersh and Dermot Moran map out the ample conceptual as well as historical territory that the term “idealism” covers. For them, there is a sense in which the history of idealism overlaps to a significant extent with the history of the Christian West. This is because both are based on the same set of metaphysical principles: to see all things as deriving from “a divine immaterial principle that is also primarily understood as being *at least* mind, [a view that] is undoubtedly central to the Western Christian theological tradition” (2). If Christian theism is to be self-consistent and accept the theoretical corollaries of its metaphysical premises, it also has to be *immaterialist*. For Gersh and Moran, “every Christian theist ought to be an idealist. No Christian theist can assent to the claim that somehow the source, ground, and cause of the created world is a material principle” (2).

The main outcome of these “cartographic” efforts is a division of idealism into “four historical-conceptual categories” (5). First, the editors distinguish “*Platonic* or *Neoplatonic idealism*.” The second major category is “*Berkeleyian immaterialism* or *mind-dependence* of physical objects.” The third is “*Kantian* and neo-Kantian *transcendental*

idealism,” with its emphasis on the “a priori correlation of objectivity with subjectivity (e.g., in Edmund Husserl) and its claim that space and time are conditions of sensibility rather than intrinsic properties of mind-external objects (Kant).” Finally, the fourth category of idealism is, for them, “Hegelian *absolute idealism*, with its conception of the cosmos as the self-evolution and coming to self-awareness of absolute spirit” (5). One might point out that, since there are also discontinuities between the various versions of idealism, methodologically the categorization may not be flawless. Yet, the two editors reassure the reader that “the degree of continuity is sufficient to justify a reexamination of the entire question in some kind of unified program” (5).

The chapters of the book are mainly organized along the historical and conceptual lines delineated by this fourfold categorization. Three chapters are dedicated to Plato as the founding father of the Western idealist tradition: “Non-subjective idealism in Plato (*Sophist* 248e-249d)” by Vasilis Politis; “The Platonic forms as *Gesetze*: Could Paul Natorp have been right?” by John Dillon—actually, as the title suggests, Dillon offers an indirect reading of Plato, namely through Natorp’s neo-Kantian lenses; and Vittorio Hösle’s “Platonism and its interpretations: the three paradigms and their place in the history of hermeneutics,” which discusses three different types of interpretation of Plato’s philosophy throughout the centuries. The next three chapters are dedicated mostly to Neoplatonism and its relationship to other schools of thought (such as Stoicism): “The Roman Stoics on divine thinking and human knowledge” by Gretchen Reydam-Schils; “The object of perception in Plotinus” by Andrew Smith; and “Saint Augustine and the indwelling of the ideas in God” by Jean Pépin. Johannes Scottus Eriugena’s philosophy occupies a prominent place in the economy of the book with three large chapters dedicated to it: Dermot Moran’s “*Spiritualis incrassatio*. Eriugena’s intellectualist immaterialism: is it an idealism?,”; Stephen Gersh’s “Eriugena’s fourfold contemplation: idealistic and arithmetic”; and Agnieszka Kijewska’s “Eriugena’s idealist interpretation of Paradise.” Then, Peter Adamson’s paper (“Immanence and transcendence: intellect and forms in al-Kindī”) occasions a journey into the universe of the medieval Arabic philosophy. Three chapters are dedicated to Berkeley: “The scientific background of George Berkeley’s idealism” by Bertil Belfrage; “The chain and the animal: idealism in Berkeley’s *Siris*” by Timo Airaksinen; and “Idealism from Kant to Berkeley” by Karl Ameriks. The final chapter, “Idealism and realism in classical German philosophy” by Walter Jaeschke, discusses versions of idealism present in classical German philosophy.

A detailed discussion of the ideas advanced by the fourteen contributors is, regrettably, beyond what can be done in the limited space of a short review. Most of the contributions to this volume are remarkably well written, rich in ideas and highly competent. I will only single out, very briefly, three papers, out of several possible, which are, I think, particularly illustrative of the polyphonic richness and varied research cultures underlying the structure and production of this volume. The first of these contributions is by Dermot Moran (University College Dublin, Ireland). The main point that Moran is making is that “radical versions of immaterialism and intellectualism,” which for him means a clear “commitment to idealism” (123), permeate the work of the Irish Christian Neoplatonist Johannes Scottus Eriugena (c. 800-c. 877). In his chapter Moran argues that Eriugena produced what is probably “the most systematic and coherent” version of Christian

Neoplatonism, both in the ancient and the medieval world (123), and Eriugena remains “the greatest *immaterialist* of Western philosophy prior to Berkeley” (145). Employing expressive imagery, Eriugena comes to see matter as nothing else but a ‘thickening of the spirit’ (*spiritualis incrassatio*) (145). Moran’s contribution is an excellent example of work at the intersection between Continental philosophy, the history of ideas, theology, and classical philology. It is a philosophically informed reading of a historical figure, at the same time showing the uttermost respect to its specific *historicity* and approaching it with admirable hermeneutical wisdom. In a time and place where ahistorical treatment of historical figures becomes norm, Moran’s interpretative credo should teach many a lesson: “To interpret an ancient or medieval thinker in the light of modern philosophical conceptual constellations requires the exercise of due hermeneutic diligence” (124).

The same type of hermeneutic wisdom is displayed in the paper contributed by Agnieszka Kijewska (Catholic University of Lublin, Poland). Kijewska’s essay focuses on Eriugena’s treatment of the notion of Paradise. She argues that “a closer look at his understanding of the biblical concept of Paradise also affords us an opportunity to explain his concept of biblical exegesis” (169), as well as access to the ultimate “originality and specificity of his approach” (168). What impresses in Kijewska’s contribution is the outstanding care with which she approaches her subject matter. When we read a text that was written centuries ago we should not look in it for answers to our own questions (we might find some answers, of course, but that’s a different story): it might well be the case that the questions that the text attempts to answer may not even exist (or be conceivable) today. When we read Eriugena, for example, “we ought to remember that his fundamental work, the *Periphyseon*, is a monumental commentary on *Genesis*” (169). The hermeneutic context in which a medieval text is to be understood is entirely different from ours:

There existed an essential parallelism between the realm or words and the domain of things; both these worlds were subject to and could be understood thanks to the rules of grammar. This conception of the world as a text finds a particularly ample development in the thought of Eriugena: the Bible and nature are both texts of a sort; both were created for man and in a way through man; both are subject to the rules of the seven liberal arts, which exist to provide an indispensable aid for the reading and understanding of them. (182)

Finally, the text contributed by Timo Airaksinen (University of Helsinki, Finland) is of special interest since it deals with one of George Berkeley’s most misunderstood and misrepresented texts (*Siris*). Among most Berkeley scholars, *Siris* (1745) is seen today as a major cause for embarrassment, something any philosopher (and Berkeley, most of all) should be ashamed of. To write *Principles of Human Knowledge* and then *Siris* is like getting the Nobel prize for peace and then going into arms trafficking. In this context, Airaksinen’s contribution is a remarkable sample of hermeneutic attentiveness. If a text does not make much sense to us, he suggests, maybe there is nothing wrong with it; it is just that *we* have to read it differently, with a different mind-set. And this is exactly what he is doing in his essay: “a philosopher must use methods which are no longer purely discursive, rational, and demonstrative, as Berkeley himself does in *Siris*” (224). For

Airaksinen, *Siris* is, in a remarkable phase, “a treatise on metaphorical metaphysics” (224).

By adopting more comprehensive hermeneutic lenses, Airaksinen gains access to a different layer of *Siris*, a more interesting one. This procedure allows the careful reader to notice “that Berkeley avoids any expressions of overconfidence. Thus his two favorite words are “hints” and “glimpses.” In its own way, *Siris* is a moderate and epistemically humble text” (228). Berkeley’s approach in *Siris* is indeed different from whatever he did before: now he understands philosophy not an agonistic exercise, where a philosophical position is valid only if it overcomes (and thus replaces) another philosophical position. In *Siris* Berkeley often “does not use arguments from premises to conclusions; he does not pretend to demonstrate anything, the only thing he wants to do is suggest some deep truths. He is pointing his finger in the right direction” (230). Berkeley thus seems to adopt an understanding of philosophy as *philosophia perennis*, as a new dialogical culture where all players are welcome and all voices are heard.

Timo Airaksinen’s chief merit is to have offered a convincing alternative reading of *Siris*. Besides that, his contribution is rich in fresh insights and innovative points. To give only one example, toward the end of his essay he advances the notion of a possible Hegelian reading of Berkeley, which I consider to be one of the paper’s most fertile insights, the development of which would deserve another essay:

In its own way Berkeley’s idealistic method resembles Hegel’s dialectic. Partial, incomplete, and inconsistent elements of thought are shown, step by step, to be unified by a higher principle, which is spiritual and idealistic in its nature. (242)

To conclude, *Eriugena, Berkeley, and the Idealist Tradition* makes an important contribution to an interdisciplinary, culturally-enriched rereading of the idealist tradition at the beginning of the 21st century, and the efforts of the editors and contributors are to be appropriately praised.

Costica Bradatan
Texas Tech University
costica.bradatan@ttu.edu

Review

Costica Bradatan, *The Other Bishop Berkeley: An Exercise in Reenchantment*
New York: Fordham University Press, 2006. xii + 227 pp.

Professor Costica Bradatan's new book discusses Berkeley's thought from a more or less neglected point of view. He focuses on Berkeley's alleged Platonism, his two virtually forgotten books *Alciphron* and *Siris*, his affinity to alchemy and alchemical studies, and his famous Bermuda Project. He explains the great traditions of thought behind the Book of Nature and the Great Chain of Being. Both were relevant to Berkeley. Also Berkeley's apologetics in *Alciphron* and elsewhere is discussed. The final chapter is "George Berkeley and Catharism." I would have thought that the good bishop has nothing to do with any of the old European heresies, but Bradatan thinks otherwise. The Cathars were Manichean dualists who condemned matter as something which is not created by God but belongs to Satan. And Berkeley condemned matter to oblivion. The reader of the book may want to decide himself how convincing such an analogy is.

The main idea of the book is that Berkeley's works have been read from a one-sided and artificial point of view. Bradatan wants to "assess Berkeley's works from its roots" (p. 1) rather than from their influence on the later academic and scientific philosophy. This is what is usually done, and Berkeley's heroic new achievements are certainly worth studying. But here his theory of vision, denial of abstractions, discussion of ideas, immaterialism, criticism of natural causality, and his theory of the mind, are all left aside. Of course it is true that Berkeley's thought was deeply rooted to the traditions of his own time. No one can shake off the effects of the historical context. And it is valuable to see what aspects of this context figure in Berkeley's writings. Bradatan works hard to prove his point that the context is much more interesting and significant than it may first seem when we read Berkeley. But then we must read all of Berkeley and not only the *Principles* and the *Three Dialogues*.

What we get instead is a genealogy of some other theories of Berkeley, carefully set against the relevant background. First Bradatan reviews the history of Platonism and alchemy and then explains how Berkeley's thought originated from such doctrines. God's archetypes are used to explain individual ideas. *Siris* is said to be an alchemical book because the idea of pine tar as a catholicon or panacea comes from the alchemical lore. Of course Berkeley utilizes ancient philosophy in his later works and he also mentions a seemingly relevant experiment in *Siris*, § 194:

Of this there cannot be a better proof than the experiment of Monsieur Homberg, who made gold of mercury by introducing light into its pores, but at such trouble and expense that I suppose nobody will try the experiment for profit. By this junction of light and mercury both bodies became fixed, and produced a third different from either, to wit, real gold. For the truth of which fact I refer to the Memoirs of the French Academy of Sciences. From the foregoing experiment it appears that gold is

only a mass of mercury penetrated and cemented by the substance of light, the particles of those bodies attracting and fixing each other.

However, Berkeley does not use the word “alchemy” or “alchemist” in his writings, not even in *Siris*. He wants to discuss chemistry. In the quotation above we find a proto-alchemical result. But when we look at it carefully we detect an anomaly. Berkeley says that Homberg “made gold of mercury” by using light. If this is alchemy, mercury turns into gold by the light that enters its pores. One substance changes into another. But Berkeley is too sober minded to say so. Instead he says that gold *is* mercury plus light. Thus gold is a combination of two substances (light is a substance in *Siris*). This is a chemical idea. An alchemist says that mercury and light are turned into gold, that is, mercury and light lose their identity and turn into a new substance, gold. Berkeley does not say so, even if Bradatan refers to Homberg’s “transmuting experiment” here (113).

This leads me to discuss *Siris* and its general significance. Bradatan makes *Siris* look like a full-blown Neoplatonic and alchemical treatise. It is true that its author discusses the ancient authors throughout the text. But it is also true that he quotes them in a very tentative manner so that it is quite difficult to know what doctrines he actually accepts and how he wants to use them. Bradatan is also right that the book reflects the Great Chain of Being and is ultimately apologetic in nature. But it also true that Berkeley develops there his philosophy of science in a detailed and sophisticated manner relying on Newton’s *Optics* and its queries. He knows Newton’s hypotheses. Here he does not hesitate. He thinks that such problems as gravity and its explanation are crucially important in philosophy. He does philosophy of science in *Siris*. Moreover, I cannot quite understand why we should call pine tar and tar water as alchemical substances as they were clearly meant to be medicine for the poor people in Cloyne.

Bradatan discusses Berkeley’s unlucky Bermuda project in terms of utopian studies. I agree that the idea of a college in Bermuda sounds like a utopian dream. But on the other hand, Utopia is a place which does not exist. Bermuda is an existing island. And the Whitehall farm near Newport RI was a home for the whole Berkeley family and their slaves for almost three years. Whitehall was no utopia, even if it was part of the utopia of Bermuda. Of course it is true that Berkeley discussed Bermuda in dream terms, but was it partly because he needed to collect money for his college project? Did he leave London because he did not want to return to Ireland (very few Irishmen do), and his London was an impossibly worldly and sinful place for a religious man and his family to live in? And why did he go to Rhode Island? He says he wanted to grow crops for the college in Bermuda. This is unlikely if we take seriously what Berkeley says about the fantastic abundance of crops in Bermuda. Bradatan describes this very well. Rhode Island soil is not particularly good for farming, unlike the perfect land of his dreams, Bermuda. Actually, Bermuda is quite a barren island. The Whitehall part of the Bermuda project remains an enigma. Why did he sail to Newport with his pregnant wife Anne at the time of the year when the Atlantic was so dangerous to cross? And they almost did not make it. My speculative answer is that he was desperate in London and needed to go somewhere just to show that his grand project was still alive.

When he was in Rhode Island the Dean must have thought also of the recruitment of young Indian students. At the time of his arrival the few surviving local Indians were already living in dismal conditions. The future Master of the College should have sent his violent raiding parties deep inland to capture some future scholars. Bradatan discusses these embarrassing plans openly and frankly.

Professor Costica Bradatan's book contains several well written accounts of the European history of ideas and he relates them to Berkeley's writings in an interesting and challenging manner. I fully agree with him that we need to read and master the whole of Berkeley's corpus and not only some preselected parts of it. Bradatan's Berkeley is an amazingly old-fashioned and traditional thinker. I personally still prefer him as a modernist hero and genius who created so many new and unexpected theories that we still struggle to cope with their details.

Timo Airaksinen
Helsinki University
timo.airaksinen@helsinki.fi

Review

Talia Mae Bettcher. *Berkeley's Philosophy of Spirit: Consciousness, Ontology and the Elusive Subject*
London: Continuum, 2007, 173 pp.

Talia Mae Bettcher's *Berkeley's Philosophy of Spirit* has the ambitious goal to render Berkeley's philosophy of mind coherent in the face of centuries of criticisms to the contrary. This is a noble endeavor and constitutes both a needed and valuable effort in Berkeley scholarship. Bettcher's interpretation offers solutions to a number of problems associated with the alleged inconsistency of Berkeley's position, such as the relation of ideas to the mind, the mind's simplicity and passivity, knowledge of the mind, time, and identity. She views Berkeley's substance as a transition from the traditional subject of inherence to the more contemporary view of the subject distinct from objects. Such a perspective is both an illuminating and gracious way to view Berkeley and place him in the history of philosophy. Her arguments are rich with the historical and philosophical context in which Berkeley formed his unconventional spiritual ontology.

Bettcher begins by leading her reader through Berkeley's early influences to demonstrate the motivations behind Berkeley's philosophical views and ends with a nod forward to Berkeley's effect on later philosophy. Such a survey exhibits a vast knowledge of both Berkeley's works as well as the philosophical and theological setting in which he developed his theory of immaterial substance. Along the way, she deftly handles numerous complications with Berkeley's position pointing out ways to render Berkeley both intelligible and consistent. In particular, Bettcher offers a striking interpretation of ideas not as modes of mind but as the variable elements of consciousness. Consciousness involves both the self and the other. She maintains the distinction between the mind and its ideas as the unchanging subject in opposition to its variable objects. This interpretation allows for consistency in Berkeley's views on the mind's simple nature along with its immortality. It also serves to produce an interesting take on the mind's existence through time as an unchanging entity that does not exist in or through time; instead, a finite mind is an agent that perceives various moments of time. The ideas change, but the mind itself does not. Though we are clear about the relation of ideas to the mind as ideas are perceptually dependent on minds, more is needed on the status of the mind's existence. Bettcher denies that Berkeley holds the traditional view of substance as an independent existent, but is then fairly silent on its ontological status and its relation to ideas.

Bettcher holds true to Berkeley's principled belief that finite spirits are agents. But, there is an interesting twist in her perspective on Berkeley's agency. According to her, Berkeley allows no knowledge of mental activities. Though the very nature of the mind is its activity, there is no access to such. Bettcher provides a nice, subtle argument for knowledge of the "I" of the mind but stops short of anything else. On her viewpoint, Berkeley can provide knowledge of the existence of the thinking agent and its thoughts. Yet, the mental activity of thinking itself, which connects the agent to its thoughts, is not something of which the agent is aware. Support for this position is prompted by

Berkeley's omissions rather than any explicit denial. Yet, one wonders why evidence to the contrary is ignored. Berkeley may not have included volitions in his items of knowledge in a few passages, but he does include them elsewhere. In fact, the very first principle of PHK I lists the passions and operations of the mind as objects of knowledge. At PHK I 142, he explicitly asserts that we have a notion of both the mind and its actions. Because Bettcher presents an eloquent and richly historical defense of Berkeley's use of "notion" to secure knowledge of the mind itself, it seems odd at best that she chooses to argue that the use of "notion" here doesn't indicate knowledge.

This particular aspect of her interpretation is especially odd given that her exclusion of volitions and mental activities from both knowledge and real existence leads to a number of questions about her own account. After all, her main theme is that the mind is consciousness of the self as agent and its ideas. Without the thinking to connect the two, it is unclear how one is conscious of oneself as an agent that produces or operates about its ideas. Bettcher argues that the immediate awareness of oneself is an immediate awareness of oneself *qua* agent. Yet what is knowledge of self as agent if there is no knowledge of agency? Her position begs the very question that she is attempting to answer: does Berkeley have secure knowledge of the mind itself? We gain knowledge of the mind by a reflex act, but according to Bettcher, we are not aware of the reflex act that gives us access to the mind. There is no awareness of being aware.

This elimination of mental activities, then, raises more questions than it seems to solve. First, it is difficult to see how the existence of God can be derived from the realization that ideas of sense are passively perceived against our will. The difference in vivacity and coherency in imagined and sensed ideas doesn't indicate the divergent sources of ideas. A second but related problem is that the distinction between the will and the understanding become utterly obsolete in her interpretation. The will acts by causing ideas that under Bettcher's analysis amounts to perceiving ideas. The awareness of the self and its ideas is the production of ideas. An imagined idea is created by the perception of it. Bettcher notes that mental operations may be mysterious for Berkeley, and given her interpretation, they are indeed mysterious. In order to avoid the conclusion that in sensory perception finite wills cause the ideas they perceive, she tries to supplement this position by claiming that there is a difference in perception: when finite minds produce imaginary ideas, they are actively perceiving, but when finite minds perceive sensory ideas, they are passively perceiving. However, without knowledge of the act of perception itself, there would be no knowledge of the different types of perceiving.

I applaud Bettcher for her consistency, but I find that the cost is too much on such a controversial reading. True, Berkeley rejects the traditional substance ontology, as Bettcher rightly points out; but there is no reason to throw out the baby with the bath water. Mental activities do not have to be taken as modes or properties of immaterial substance in order to offer a coherent account of mind.

Overall, *Berkeley's Philosophy of Spirit* offers a unique, insightful perspective into the inner workings of Berkeley's philosophy of mind. Bettcher's historical analysis of the philosophical and theological background behind Berkeley's ideas and terms is

insightfully subtle and complex. All in all, Bettcher's interpretation has a lot to offer and does indeed serve to vindicate Berkeley. Quilting together Berkeley's philosophy of mind is a daunting task, and Bettcher's philosophy of spirit certainly moves us forward.

Genevieve Migely
Cornell College
GMigely@cornellcollege.edu

Review

New Interpretations of Berkeley's Thought. Stephen H. Daniel, ed.
Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2008. 319pp.

For a handle on these twelve papers on Berkeley, we might raise the anthology question: What connects the papers? To use early modern language, are they a unity or a pile? Not every useful anthology need exhibit a tight unity, but raising the anthology question provides a scaffold for reviewing the book as a whole. Here, the papers are ordered in an arc, from ontological issues dealing with mind and God's role in human existence, to the location of these issues in theological and ethical contexts. According to the editor, Stephen H. Daniel, all of the papers "hint at a theme that brings divine activity and human experience together, namely, the laws of nature" (15). Call this the hint. In addition, "objects in the world are linked to one another by means of the perceptions and affections whereby minds come into being" (15). Call this the link. How do the hint and the link relate? "The laws of nature reveal how objects are related to one another in a way that expresses the intelligibility of creation and explains why Berkeley insists that the very idea of a thing is unintelligible (and indeed impossible) apart from the mind" (15-16).

Standardly, Berkeley has been read in the tradition of Epicurean atomism. Here we get a reading of him in the competing Stoic tradition, in terms of which the hint and the link are taken to relate. "Instead of thinking of the physical world as a mere aggregate of disconnected bodies, he recommends that we see it as an integrated unity whose members are connected internally (e.g., by the laws of nature)" (22) (the hint). Moreover, there is an "inherent connectedness of minds with one another and their objects" (the link). In fact, all of the topics raised by Berkeley "make sense only if they can be shown to as inherently linked." The upshot, it would seem, is that there should be unities at three different levels: the world as Berkeley sees it, his work, and the papers here. This is a very interesting interpretation; does it carry? One awkward result would be that because "the present juxtaposition of essays . . . is intended as a hint of what such a project would require" (16), the topics heretofore have been, and still are, largely senseless. Do the papers at least contribute to the interpretative project? Only to some degree, but at least to that degree.

Some of the papers seem to support the interpretation very little or not at all. For example, the opening paper, by Charles McCracken, discusses Berkeley's realism, in particular his alleged "commonsense realism," the view that "things have the properties we perceive them to have, and that they exist, with those properties, whether we perceive them or not" (25), and to a much lesser extent his alleged "direct realism," the view that "what we immediately perceive are physical objects, not mental entities that represent physical objects" (25). Using the interpretations of Grayling, Yolton, and Pappas, he shows that Berkeley is a commonsense realist only in the Pickwickian sense that unperceived objects exist counterfactually in that if certain perceptual conditions were to obtain, they would be perceived. Only in the last paragraph is Berkeley conceded to be a

direct realist in that “he holds that bodies are collections of ideas and we directly perceive those ideas.” But even this concession seems too great, for we do not perceive the whole collection that the body is supposed to be. Somehow I don’t find warrant here for the Introduction’s claim that “our ideas, McCracken notes, are related to God’s ideas in terms of how they are linked to one another by divine decrees in the laws of nature” (16).

The most obvious application of the Stoic approach to Berkeley is to be found of course, in the editor’s own paper. One thing is clear from Daniel’s paper and that is that Berkeley rejects the reification of mind as a substance of the sort that interpreters generally attribute to Locke; certainly, he rejects the view that the mind is known as an idea. (On the other hand, for Locke, it seems to me, neither mind nor material things are known in this way either; ideas are the only appearances of both, neither of which is known except as it appears.) For Berkeley, the mind is not a substance really, or even conceptually, distinct from “its” activities, which are the “identification, differentiation, and organization of objects” (212). These objects are not pre-existent entities, but the effects of volition. (Once again, however, the contrast with Locke is not clear, for he too says that they are concomitant occurrences.)

There are issues of importance to Berkeley, perforce receiving scant treatment here (identity of mind, free will, and immortality), but the main difficulty is the conception of the will. What is it? Daniel sees Berkeley as proleptically rejecting the Humean bundle theory of mind in so far as the series of experiences is a *unity*. It is in this sense, Daniel continues, quoting the *Notebooks*, “that ‘the spirit, the active thing, that which is soul and God, is the will alone’ (NB 712)—specifically, the will *that* there be difference and identity (i.e., certain perceptions, thoughts, and volitions)” (215).

It looks from this that we create our worlds in German idealist fashion. “When we perceive things, we perceive them as distinct from and related to one another. By that act we intend or will their differentiation.” But what of the passivity of perception that Berkeley insists upon in many central texts? Daniel’s gloss is that “we are not entirely responsible for the differentiation and relation whereby the things we experience are ordered” (223). In fact, maybe we have no responsibility. “Our experience of the world may be passive (in the sense that we do not determine the sequence of our ideas), but it is active in that *we* are the ones who experience the sequence” (224). This rather makes us passive observers, maybe even the mere empty theater of the Humean mind. The hint of a way out of this impasse comes from a footnote to Daniel’s claim, cited above, that mind or spirit is the will *that* there be differentiation and identity. “This incorporeal predication [i.e., the willing?] by which a body is perceived as a thing is what the Stoics call a *lekton*” (p. 228, n.30). Perhaps the unity in question is that of the Stoic narratological sort. After all, the point of the paper is to place Berkeley’s conception of the mind, and his philosophy generally, in the Stoic tradition (with a holistic logic of propositions as opposed to the logic of predication that readily reifies minds as substances.) The mind as the subject of discourse, as Daniel puts it, would be a storyteller, and we would experience the sequence of experiences as a story of our own telling.

This very original approach to Berkeley provides a powerful interpretive tool, offering hope of understanding how it is that Berkeley can claim as he does, that not only space in all three of its dimensions but also the things in space are constructions, and even that the individuation of the simple ideas deployed in the construction depend, in rather Quinian pragmatic fashion, upon us. The project is an exciting one, but one that would benefit from the sort of clarity and precision about Berkeley that one finds in the work of George Pappas, for example.

Whether after introducing his theory of notions, or independently of it, Berkeley thought we have consciousness of our own existence without an idea of it. How so? Talia Mae Bettcher argues that Berkeley departs radically from Descartes, Malebranche, and Locke, by denying that ideas are modifications of the mind, which has a single consciousness, and instead asserts a bifurcated consciousness of self on the one hand and ideas on the other. In the latter case, ideas are related to the mind in a way that leaves the two related with nothing in common, not even an unequivocal sense of existence.

Daniel and Bettcher disagree on at least three points: the self as an object of (inner) awareness, the self as an agent acting in the creation of ideas of imagination and passively receiving ideas of sense perception, and most importantly, the closeness of the relation between mind and idea (201-02, n15; 229, n.30). But despite Daniel's claim to the contrary, they seem to disagree, or at least do not explicitly agree, on a fourth point: "The awareness of the self is thus an awareness of being related to an object, not as another object, but *as the activity whereby objects in the world are related to one another*" (19, my emphasis). Nowhere in her article do I find Bettcher asserting the emphasized part of this claim.

Saussure took the relation between signifier and signified to be arbitrary, which initially might seem paradoxical, but which has the result that the transition between them involves no reasoning and in fact tends to go unnoticed. Jeffrey Barnouw seizes upon this to develop Berkeley's theory of signs in an explicitly Stoic direction (the Texas School of Berkeleian interpretation?). The coherence of the world revealed by the language of the Author of nature is the divine providence that is indistinguishable from the Stoic *logos*, with the single qualification that the Stoic order of causes is replaced by the order of signs that must be contingent upon the will of the Creator. That order is *arbitrary* not in the sense of being fortuitous, but in the etymological sense that it expresses that will (*arbitrium*).

Curiously, Barnouw claims that the heterogeneity of the objects of vision and touch does *not* ground the working of the relation of signification between them (149). Yet in the period the only model for a necessary connection between things is identity (see Hume, who argues that cause and effect give us no idea of necessity simply because they are different). So, an important part of the semiotic and thus of the Stoic interpretation of Berkeley is the heterogeneity thesis after all, which is taken up by Robert G. Muehlmann.

Although he does not cite the "main part and pillar" passage, Muehlmann holds that "heterogeneity is *and must be* at the very core of [Berkeley's] idealism" (p.123). This is

because, as Muehlmann sees it, heterogeneity undercuts the act–object distinction on which realism rests. Numerical or “weak” heterogeneity is insufficient, because it affirms at least the possibility, and perhaps the fact, that there is a single quality such as shape that we both see and touch. “Since the same quality is perceived both visually and tactually, that difference can be ontologically grounded only by supposing that there are (two modally different) perceptions of that one quality” (141). However, the upshot would be that while there is only one object, the shape, with two perceptions of it, which is to say that the act(s) and the object cannot be the same, and realism threatens. To block it, Berkeley must therefore argue for specific (i.e., qualitative) or “strong” heterogeneity, which denies that there is any such quality common to sight and touch. How does Berkeley do so? By assuming as a key premise that visible shape and tangible shape are of different ontological kinds: visible shape is *mind-dependent*, but tangible shape is *mind-independent*. That is, Berkeley assumes what in *Principles* 44, he calls the “vulgar error,” which Muehlmann thinks Berkeley believes to be an error even at the time of the earlier *New Theory*. A problem with this interpretation is that it requires Berkeley to be dissimulating, or at least misleading his readers over the “vulgar error.” (No Ontario School of Berkeley Interpretation here.)

One of the most promising texts for a Stoic reading of Berkeley comes from *Siris*. Consider section 266, where Berkeley extols those ancients who “had a notion of the true system of the world. They allowed of mechanical principles, but actuated by mind or soul. . . . They saw that a mind infinite in power, unextended, indivisible, immortal, governed, connected, and contained all things.” An immediate problem is that the ancients whom Berkeley identifies are not the Stoics, but the Pythagoreans and Platonists. The larger problem is that by anybody’s account *Siris* is a strange book, difficult of interpretation, as is attested by Timo Airaksinen’s catalogue of competing accounts of the work. His own view is that the arguments of the work progress “as if by means of proto-Hegelian dialectics” (p. 276). On the other hand, the aim of the work, as Airaksinen makes clear, is to establish a causal connection between God and creation in terms of a “celestial, divine, occult, and living” vehicle, which is fire and light—thus the special status of tar water, botanically produced from this fire or light (267, 278-79). This seems to be not very different from the Stoic notion of *pneuma* as the vehicle of *logos*.

Does Berkeley think he immediately sees physical objects? Unless he does, then skepticism looms; but he also thinks that only the elements of physical objects such as colors are immediately perceived. Partially agreeing and disagreeing with Pappas and Pitcher, Margaret Atherton has it both ways. Immediate is proper perception (e.g. color), but mediate perception of objects is still *perception of them* if it is understood as “predictive representationalism” (117). Perhaps a better term would be “expectational representationalism,” for the idea is that the immediately perceived elements *suggest* to us what other elements to expect the perception of. This process is, for instance, by way of contrast to the non-perceptual inferences we draw in causal reasoning. Even so, the basis for the suggestion lies with the laws of nature, and here Daniel has his connection to the Stoic levels of unity: both objects and the perceptions composing them are connected by the laws of nature (18). (Before Hume, it seems, Berkeley was already the Newton of the mind.)

In *The Analyst*, Berkeley sought to show that no infidel practitioner of the infinitesimal calculus should reject Christianity because of its mysteriousness. Douglas Jesseph details his famous argument that the calculus concepts of fluxions, infinitesimals, and evanescent increments are internally contradictory, this by contrast to the religious, physical, and mathematical concepts of God, force, and negative square roots, which though mysterious in the sense that no idea attaches to them, are at least consistent. According to Daniel's abstract, religious truths "can be fleshed out only by noting how they provide an ontological justification for practical activity. Since claims about purely mathematical (demonstratively known) entities are not claims about the existence of things that are needed to make our lives meaningful (as are claims about God and religious mysteries), they must be limited only to what can be clearly and rigorously understood"(21). But the difference cannot be a matter of practical activity or what makes our lives meaningful, for while both negative square roots and the calculus have practical application, the former is retained on instrumentalist grounds by Berkeley while the latter is explained away by the theory of compensating errors. The difference lies in the consistency of the former. Jesseph gives Daniel ground for his interpretation by insisting on two standards of instrumentalist acceptance where there seems to be only one: consistency (257-59).

In *Alciphron* VII, Berkeley attempts to refute the minute philosopher's denial of human freedom based on materialistic determinism, the determinism of the will by judgment, and divine foreknowledge. In the end, his argument involves a practical faith based upon introspection of one's agency. Initially, the question is whether one acts willingly (presumably, according to preference), which is Locke's question of voluntariness. But then an additional question arises as to whether one has the power to act as one wills, which is Locke's question of freedom. In the latter case, according to Geneviève Brykman, Berkeley's view emerges as not very different from the views of the Stoics, Shaftesbury, Collins and even Spinoza, whom he was trying to refute. According to Daniel's précis, this rapprochement comes about as a result of Berkeley's "reframing the discussion of freedom into a critique of how minds are mistakenly considered as abstractions from their actions" (20). Now while consideration of agency clearly plays a role here, the role of abstraction alleged by Daniel cannot be correct because the result is not supposed to be a *mistake*.

Was Berkeley read in the period as a Stoic? Sébastien Charles shows that for the French Enlightenment, Berkeley was viewed as a skeptic or, to use Addison's term for solipsist that was taken over the Channel, an egoist. In one instance, Berkeley's attempted refutation of perceived *libertinage* in *Alciphron* was viewed, by Pierre Desfontaines, (297) as a dissimulating ruse. On the other hand, attempts to refute Berkeley by such notables as Voltaire, Turgot, Rousseau, and Condillac, are adjudged here to be failures. Only Diderot comes close, by appealing to a practical dimension. Here is Daniel's account: "with a few exceptions (e.g., Diderot) thinkers of the French Enlightenment failed to understand how Berkeley's explanation of our knowledge of the physical world is guaranteed not by appealing to an ad hoc belief in God or a sense of the undeniable immediacy of physical objects but by relying on our *practical* apprehension of the world"

(300). Maybe so. But this is not Charles's account. He merely cites Diderot's own assessment at the end of his life: "Berkeley is still waiting for an answer."

In a previously published paper, Daniel Flage has argued an epistemically based ontology in the *Principles*. Here, he deploys the same concept for a "guided tour" through the *Three Dialogues* (p.73, n.24). Very little of the tour causes any problem, but one would like to know more precisely how his approach qualifies under the rubric of the "new interpretations" of the volume's title. It would have helped to know how Berkeley differs from the realist Descartes, for example. In any case, Flage is worked into the Stoic mix in that "he notes that such a relation between [mind and ideas] has a moral component that is consistent not only with Berkeley's laws of nature and the divine coordination of ideas in different perceivers, but also with his conclusion that immaterialism is more successful than materialism in dealing with skepticism" (17). I do not see any moral component noted by Flage as consistent in this way.

Berkeley famously rejects Locke's representative theory of perception. Martha Bolton considers two proposed reasons for his doing so. One is that cognitively we are, as commonsense would have it, in immediate contact with physical objects. But this only shows that his conception of an idea differs from Locke's. A second reason is that Locke's theory leads to skepticism. But the conception of an idea that Berkeley uses in his worries over skepticism is not Locke's but his own, hence those worries do not engage Locke's theory. Instead, Bolton proposes that Locke's conception of a simple idea as intentional violates the empiricist anti-innatist convictions. Despite this (very deep) difference, Daniel sees a (Stoic) convergence in that "Berkeley's repeated claims that nature exhibits an order and harmony indicate how he and Locke might ultimately agree on how claims about reality are justified" (17). But who wouldn't agree in this sense?

Thomas M. Lennon
University of Western Ontario
tlennon@uwo.ca

Review

Reexamining Berkeley's Philosophy. Stephen H. Daniel, ed.
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007. xiv + 235 pp.

This book contains the editor's introduction and eleven papers by three generations of Berkeley scholars from seven countries. Most of the papers arose from a conference, organized by the book's editor, that was held in April 2003 at Texas A&M University to commemorate the 250th anniversary of Berkeley's death. The essays fall into roughly three groups: essays by Michael Ayers, George Pappas, Richard Glauser, Marc Hight, and Ralph Schumacher deal largely with Berkeley's immaterialist view of the sensible world; essays by Phillip Cummins, Genevieve Migely, and Bertil Belfrage deal with Berkeley's views about the mind, and essays by Roomet Jakapi, Laurent Jaffro, and Wolfgang Breidert deal with less well-trodden topics. The book is well-edited and beautifully produced; I did not notice a single misprint. In this review I shall try to convey the core of each essay, and I shall make some critical remarks about some but not all of them.¹ The length that I allocate to each essay reflects my level of interest in its topic rather than any judgment of its quality or importance.

Michael Ayers's piece, "Berkeley, Ideas, and Idealism," argues that:

Berkeley is not a mainstream idealist. . . [For] he is not a philosopher who holds that the objects of our knowledge and thought, things as we conceive of them, are shaped by the ways in which we apprehend and comprehend the world, by our forms of sensibility and/or thought. (21)

As Ayers's language suggests, "mainstream idealism" is for him essentially Kantian idealism. Ayers argues convincingly that Berkeley's idealism is very different from both some early versions of idealism that anticipate Kant, such as Burthogge's in 1678, and some contemporary versions that he finds in Putnam and Davidson. He also thinks that Berkeley's idealism is inferior to what he calls "the heart of the idealist tradition" (22), telling us, for example, that unlike Berkeley, "Kant does not incoherently discard the category of things as they are in themselves" (18), and that

Berkeley is liable to the charge of simply trying to have his cake and eat it by separating the notion of existence in the mind, or [Cartesian and scholastic] objective existence, from its opposition to real or formal existence. These are surely correlative notions, and each has significance only in relation to the other. (17)

¹ The abbreviations I shall use for the titles of Berkeley's works are as follows: DHP = *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*; NB = *Notebooks*; NTV = *An Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision*; PHK = *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge I*.

These remarks are suggestive, but they would need to be worked out in more detail to demonstrate the incoherence that Ayers seems to think plagues Berkeley's thought. It would be interesting, too, to know how Ayers thinks Berkeley stacks up against Absolute Idealists such as Hegel, Bradley, and others whom he does not even mention.

George Pappas' contribution, "Berkeley's Assessment of Locke's Epistemology," argues that two different Berkeleian arguments designed to show that Locke's position leads to external-world skepticism are ineffective. The "conformity argument"—that we do not have knowledge of physical things because we cannot know that our ideas conform to them—fails because such knowledge requires for Locke only that there *be* such a conformity, not that we know that there is. The "inference argument"—that we do not have such knowledge because no inference from mere ideas to physical objects can work—fails because Locke, even if we attribute to him a representational theory of perception, does not and need not hold that perceptual knowledge requires any inference, but only that it be generated by a reliable process.

Pappas' piece is clear and very carefully argued, but I think that it seeks to defend Locke by weakening requirements for perceptual knowledge that Locke arguably holds, despite Pappas' claims to the contrary. Thus, regarding the conformity argument, Pappas thinks that Locke is committed only to "weak conformity," that is, to the view that "real knowledge" requires only that there *be* a conformity between our ideas and things, and not to "strong conformity," which would require that we *know* that there is such a conformity. But it seems that mere conformity of our ideas with things could obtain by mere luck, and that Locke would not count such a case of conformity as knowledge. In order for there to be knowledge, it seems that one would at least have to be *justified* in believing that there is conformity. But then Berkeley's reasons for thinking that we could not be so justified kick in and need to be addressed. With regard to the inference argument, Pappas admits that the "concurrent reasons" Locke gives in *Essay* IV.11 amount to an inferential defense of the senses. But he thinks that although Locke's "concurrent reasons are needed to establish the general reliability of the senses," they are not needed to justify particular perceptual judgments. I do not see, however, how a doubt concerning the general reliability of the senses could fail to infect particular perceptual judgments, nor do I think that Locke makes the sharp distinction between a generalized doubt of the senses and doubts about specific cases that would be required to insulate particular perceptual judgments from the generalized doubt.

Richard Glauser's essay, "The Problem of the Unity of a Physical Object in Berkeley," is a powerful critique of the view, expressed by Pitcher, Tipton, Muehlman, Flage, Raynor, and Olscamp, that "in some sense finite minds make [Berkeleian] physical objects" (51). Glauser argues that such a view would place Berkeley much further away from common-sense realism than *esse is percipi* already takes him, and that it would abolish his distinction between sensible ideas and ideas of imagination (though he acknowledges that Berkeley himself occasionally blurs this distinction). Near the end of his essay, Glauser gives plausible interpretations of passages where Berkeley *seems* to say that we create objects, as well as convincing reasons against the idea that "physical objects are made by God in conjunction with finite minds" (72).

Glauser argues that although *kinds* or *sorts* of physical objects are made by finite minds for their own purposes, *particular* objects are not; that is, “the fact that we make sorts and kinds . . . by selectively focusing on certain resemblances . . . and . . . might therefore have produced a different scheme of classification, does not show that we make individual physical objects” (64). Glauser adds that “sortal ideas can be roughly construed as a Berkeleian equivalent to Lockean nominal essences” (68), and he cites passages where Berkeley seems to presuppose that the way we count objects is wholly sortal-dependent. It seems to follow that for Berkeley at least the *number* of objects that there are is established by finite minds. But this does invite the question: in what sense exactly are particulars *not* created by our minds, if the number of particulars that exist is determined by our thought? Is it that the component ideas that constitute Berkeleian physical objects are individuated and characterized independently of the sorts or kinds that we establish? Then it seems that we do not make all sorts or kinds—that there are natural kinds and a Berkeleian equivalent to Lockean *real* essences. Or is it that there are bare particulars that can be individuated and counted in a sortal-independent way? Surely Berkeley would object to those as illegitimate abstractions. Glauser does not pursue these questions, and indeed he says that “there is no positive theory of the unity of a physical object in Berkeley, although there is a theory of the objective foundation upon which we base our act of considering a physical object as one” (72, cf. 56). Despite the questions it leaves open, this is a rich paper that should be read by anyone interested in questions about the nature of Berkeleian physical objects and whether they are mind-dependent in a sense stronger than *esse is percipi* already implies.

Marc Hight’s essay, “Why My Chair Is Not Merely a Congeries: Berkeley and the Single-Idea Thesis,” argues against, and proposes an original alternative to, the view that for Berkeley, “commonsense objects are straightforwardly nothing more than collections of ideas” (82). Hight initially presents his position this way:

My intent here is to demonstrate that there are textual as well as philosophical reasons for holding that Berkeley holds a slightly more sophisticated view. *From the perspective of finite minds*, commonsense objects are single ideas associated with collections of sensory ideas. Metaphysically, commonsense objects are collections, but when we recognize Berkeley’s inclusion of an explicitly distinct epistemic element, a superior theory emerges. The word “chair,” for instance, names a single idea that is in turn associated with a collection of sensory ideas. The word we use to name a putatively macro-object names the single idea and only indirectly the set of the sensory ideas with which the single ideas are associated. In our ordinary lives single ideas serve as epistemic unifiers of diverse possible sensory experiences. In this epistemic sense, commonsense objects are single ideas. In metaphysical reality, commonsense objects are collections associated with these single ideas. (82)

On the one hand, this account seems not to be consonant with the texts, where commonsense objects are typically treated by Berkeley as collections of ideas that come to be called by a single name because several of their members frequently occur together in our experience. But on the other hand, the account seems to differ only verbally from such a view: if Hight’s only point is that any such collection of ideas can also be regarded

as a single, complex idea, then it seems quite innocuous. Evidently, however, Hight thinks that his account differs substantially from what he calls the “collection view” (CV). But I find it difficult to see how his account so differs, except in places where he glosses it in ways that seem to me to involve either errors or misinterpretations. Here are four examples:

1. Hight rightly says that “on CV readings, perceiving a group of sensory ideas and perceiving the object are the same perceptual process,” and he rightly attributes such a view to George Pappas (83). But he takes this to mean that “when one perceives some object, that it is perceived *as* something (an apple, for example) is not an additional fact” (83-84). This seems to ignore the difference between the non-epistemic, purely objectual perception that Pappas has in mind, on which perceiving one or more members of a collection of ideas that constitute an object R amounts to perceiving R, and the higher-level perceptual achievement of perceiving something *as* an R, which Pappas is not concerned with in the relevant context. Tabby the cat may perceive a magnet by having an idea of a U-shaped object, but presumably Tabby does not perceive it *as* a magnet, since Tabby does not know what a magnet is.

2. Hight speaks, quite intelligibly, if not consonantly with Berkeley, of a “unifying single idea, represented by a name” (86), but he also says this:

Thus, *for us*, the single idea *is* the commonsense object (we consider that idea or name to be the object). . . . A single idea, a name, represents a plurality of particular things. (84-85)

Surely the locutions “idea or name” and “a single idea, a name” are not right here: for Berkeley, no less than for Locke (who devotes book II of his *Essay* to “ideas” and Book III to “words”), ideas and names are different things.

3. Hight also speaks of using names as single ideas (85), of using an idea as a name (86), and of “the single ideas that name objects and the collections with which they (the single ideas) are associated” (106n11, cf. 88). But what is it to use a name as an idea, or to use an idea as a name, or for an idea to name an object? Hight does not explain these odd locutions, and I am left thinking that they are just references to his view that names of common objects stand for single ideas that in turn are comprised of a multitude of sensory ideas. That would make sense, but the resulting analysis seems only trivially different from the standard “collections” view that Hight opposes.

4. Hight asserts that the single ideas that he equates with commonsense objects are “ideas of the imagination” (88, 89). But as Glauser notes (77n14), this flies in the face of Berkeley’s explicit distinction between ideas of the imagination, which are produced by finite minds, and ideas of sense, which occur in finite minds but are caused by God.

This is not to say that there is nothing of value in Hight's contribution. Like Glauser, he forces us to think about what exactly a Berkeleian commonsense object is: what, for example, is the coach that Berkeley discusses in DHP I? Does it include the visual ideas of wheels and horses that the sound we hear suggests to us? And if it does, then can we easily dismiss Hight's suggestion that commonsense objects are (at least partly) composed of ideas of imagination? Hight also includes a brief but worthwhile discussion of the extent to which the good Bishop really "sides with the mob" (92-94): Hight memorably says: "It is just not true"; and he includes a sensitive though inconclusive account of the differences between Pitcher and Winkler-Pappas regarding whether Berkeley thinks that we immediately perceive commonsense objects. I say "inconclusive," because in one place Hight endorses Winkler and Pappas' view that Berkeley distinguishes "between objects immediately *and* properly perceived as opposed to objects merely immediately perceived" (98); yet in another place he says that for Berkeley, "*all* immediate perception is proper to some sense modality or faculty" (99).

Ralph Schumacher's relatively brief but subtle and difficult piece, "Berkeley on Visible Figure and Extension," begins with the broad question of "how sensory cognition is supposed to be directed to objects in the perceiver's environment" (108). Schumacher immediately substitutes for this question a more specific one, tailored to Berkeley's work (especially the *New Theory of Vision*), namely, "how visual ideas are supposed to contribute to the mind's directing awareness to the geometrical properties of physical objects" (108). Further, he stipulates (a) that the geometrical properties of objects are identical with their *tangible* two and three-dimensional shapes, and (b) that for Berkeley there are no common sensibles, so that the direct objects of sight and the direct objects of touch are entirely different.

Against this pregnant background, Schumacher turns to an apparent contradiction in the *New Theory of Vision*. On the one hand, Berkeley says:

All that is properly perceived by the visive faculty amounts to no more than colours, with their variations and different proportions of light and shade . . . planes are no more the immediate object of sight than solids. What we strictly see are not solids, nor yet planes variously colored: they are only diversity of colours. (NTV 156, 158; cited at 108)

Taking Berkeley at his word, Schumacher reads this passage as claiming that "only light and colors are immediate objects of sight. . . Two and three-dimensional shapes, in contrast, are supposed to be exclusive objects of touch, which are the proper objects of geometry" (108). However, as he points out, in several places in NTV Berkeley also talks about "visible figure" and "visible extension," and treats these as directly perceived, inasmuch as they "are *marks* of tangible shapes," and "we indirectly see tangible shapes by directly seeing the visible marks that stand for them" (109). The contradiction that seems to emerge, then, is that visible figure and extension both are and are not directly seen. Schumacher also notes that the passages where Berkeley affirms that visible figure and extension are immediate objects of sight cannot be ignored because that view is

important both to his attack on the primary/secondary quality distinction and to his analysis of visual misperception (109-110). So, he says that:

In view of the importance of the claim that visible figure and extension are directly perceivable by sight, one has to look for an interpretation that reconciles this claim with Berkeley's view that light and colours are the only direct objects of sight. (111)

The central part of Schumacher's essay explores the hypothesis (he calls it an "interpretation") that the contradiction can be avoided by saying that for Berkeley

visible figure and extension are nothing but patterns of light and colours *which are regarded as visible shapes, because they are marks of tangible shapes.* (111, his italics)

Although Schumacher finds this hypothesis "plausible at first sight," I confess that I don't find it so, and that I wonder what could qualify light and colors as falling into "patterns" except their having or filling out certain shapes. But let me not press these doubts, for Schumacher goes on to criticize the hypothesis and eventually rejects it. His reasons are, first, that "being a certain visible shape must be entirely independent of standing for a certain tangible shape," because "we can perceive by sight something as broken [e.g., an oar partly immersed in water] without this visible figure being a mark of a broken tactile shape" (111). The second reason, which he says is "more important," is also more difficult to grasp. Here is part of what Schumacher says:

Berkeley emphasizes repeatedly that . . . visible shapes do not represent tangible shapes by virtue of their intrinsic properties. There is nothing in their nature that constitutes their representational character. Just like Locke's simple sensory ideas, *visible shapes do not have intrinsic intentionality.* All Berkeley intends to say by maintaining that visible shapes constitute a "universal language" or a "language of nature" is that independently of human perceivers there exists some *co-variation* between certain visible and tangible shapes. Therefore, our interpretation of certain combinations of colours as visible shapes that signify tangible shapes has to be based on the observation of this kind of co-variation. . . . [W]e have to acquire empirical knowledge about the co-variation of certain patterns of light and colours, on the one hand, and certain tangible shapes, on the other, in order to regard the former as visible shapes that stand for geometrical properties of physical objects. . . . It is this kind of empirical knowledge that distinguishes us from the Molyneux man. . . . As a consequence of this conception, not only does the visual perception of tangible shapes mediated by visible marks depend on empirical knowledge, but also the recognition of combinations of colours as visible shapes, *because a certain combination of colours only becomes a visible shape by being associated with a certain tangible shape.* Visual awareness of tangible shapes thus involves ideas of two different kinds: first-order visual ideas; and second-order ideas that refer to these sensory ideas, representing them as standing in relations of co-variation to tangible shapes. Therefore, both kinds of visual perception have to be regarded as cases of indirect perception because Berkeley characterizes *indirect* perception in terms of

inferences and associations based on experience. Visible figure and extension cannot be direct objects of sight, because as objects of immediate awareness visual ideas are bereft of any representational character. (110-112, his italics)

The latter part of this passage is difficult; it is not clear to me what the two kinds of ideas and the two kinds of visual perception are supposed to be.² But the key point of the whole passage seems to be this: if we assume that a visible shape is nothing but a color that signifies a certain tangible shape, then a color only acquires the status of being a visible shape as a result of an empirically learned association between that color and that tangible shape. But in that case, visible shape cannot be directly seen or immediately perceived, since according to Berkeley's concept of immediate perception no item that is perceived only as the result of some associative mechanism or activity can be perceived directly. The consequence is that the hypothesis that colors become visible shapes by being marks of tangible shapes cannot explicate in what sense visible figure and extension are directly perceived, and *a fortiori* cannot explicate it in such a way as to show that the contradiction between the claim that they are directly perceived and the claim that only light and colors are directly seen is only an apparent contradiction.

Schumacher next argues that Berkeley cannot avoid the contradiction by saying that visible figure and extension are perceived *indirectly*, because "we cannot even regard visible figure and extension as *indirect* objects of sight" (117, my emphasis). His argument for this is not clearly stated, but seems to involve the following steps.

1. In order for visible figure and extension to be indirect objects of sight, it must be possible to see patterns of color and light *as* visible shapes.
2. In order for it to be possible to see patterns of color and light *as* visible shapes, it must be possible to distinguish between real colors and apparent colors.
3. For Berkeley, there is no distinction between real and apparent colors, since "all possible mistakes are [merely] mistakes about the *relations* between the objects of direct sensory perception" (116).
4. So, for Berkeley visible figure and extension cannot be indirect objects of sight.

Schumacher makes this argument even more opaque by glossing it as the claim that Berkeley's theory "does not provide the conceptual resources to account for the influence of judgments on the content of sensory perceptions" (114), which resources he sees as necessary for "the concept of *seeing as*" to apply. But let me confine myself to the argument as I have summarized it. Step (3) could be resisted (though perhaps not by appealing to anything that Berkeley says explicitly), for it might be said that for Berkeley,

² As Schumacher notes (120n8), "second-order idea" and "bereft of representational character" are expressions used by Martha Bolton in "Locke on Sensory Representation," in Ralph Schumacher, ed., *Perception and Reality from Descartes to the Present* (Paterborn: Mentis, 2004), 146-167, specifically 153 and 147.

no less than for the phenomenologists whom he inspired, the difference between “appearance” and “reality” is precisely a difference in the relations among the objects of direct perception. Premise (1) is plausible, I suppose, if one assumes that color and light are the only objects of direct perception; so that if shapes are seen at all, they are seen by dint of some interpretive or associative mental act. But what about premise (2)? Schumacher says, drawing on an example of Locke’s but without any explanation, that being able to distinguish the real color of a globe of uniform color from the pattern of different apparent colors that appears to us in direct perception is “just a precondition for saying that we perceive a pattern of different colors as the visible shape of a globe of uniform color” (117). Thus, his point seems to be that the ability to distinguish real from apparent colors is a necessary condition of seeing colors as shapes. Why? Presumably, because the colors that co-vary or correlate with tangible shapes would at least have to be real colors of things, for merely apparent colors vary depending on so many different conditions that they simply do not correlate in any systematic or regular way with the tangible or geometrical properties of objects. If this is Schumacher’s point, then it seems to be right—would that he had bothered to state it!

Having argued that visible shape and extension can serve the cognitive function of directing awareness to objects’ real geometrical properties neither by being direct objects of sight (albeit ones with color “surrogates,” so to speak) nor by being indirect objects of sight signified by colors, Schumacher argues that the best course for Berkeley to have taken would be “to describe a visible shape as a distinct kind of *direct* object of sight that *intrinsically* represents a tangible shape” (118). As he points out, this is tantamount to abandoning the view that the correlation between visible and tangible shapes is empirically learned; that is, it is tantamount to rejecting the empiricist answer to the Molyneux problem. In the end he thinks that only psychological research can answer the question of whether and how vision manages to “direct our visual awareness to the geometric properties of objects” *sans* empirically learned associations.

One problem with this solution is that it does not resolve the initial contradiction between saying that only colors are directly seen and saying that shapes are directly seen. But beyond that, I am not convinced that Berkeley’s theory of perception can be rescued only by such a drastic revision of its empiricist orientation. Schumacher says that the motivation behind saying that only colors are directly seen is Berkeley’s rejection of common sensibles. But that rejection *does not really require denying that visible shape and extension are directly seen*. All that it requires is distinguishing between visible shape and extension, which can be seen but not touched, and tangible shape and extension, which can be touched but not seen. Interestingly enough, Schumacher notes that on his own proposed revision of Berkeley, “it is still possible to regard visible and tangible shapes as different entities” (118). He seems not to notice, or at least he seems to discount, the fact that so regarding them both preserves Berkeley’s heterogeneity thesis and gives him a perfectly consistent position: there is no contradiction between saying that only visible color and visible figure and extension (which *per* PHK I 10 are inseparable) are directly seen, and that tangible figure and extension are not directly seen but only suggested to the mind by visible figure and extension *cum* color.

Of course, this way of interpreting Berkeley, which I presume is fairly standard, does not solve the *textual* problem posed by his claim in NTV 156 and 158 that color, not planes, are the only direct objects of sight. I do not know why Berkeley says this, since he does not *need* to say it in order to preserve the heterogeneity of the objects of sight and touch. Further, it seems that he *should not* say it, because it conflicts with his claim in PHK 10 and elsewhere that a color without a shape is inconceivable, and it seems to imply that our ideas of colors are abstract general ideas of the kind he repudiates. I venture to speculate, then, that perhaps all he meant to assert is that *tangible* planes are not direct objects of sight. Such a reading, I think, also does much less violence to Berkeley's texts than does dropping the idea that the relation between direct objects of sight and objects of touch is empirically learned. It also has the significant merit of harmonizing with Berkeley's discussion of figure and extension in DHP I, where Philonous speaks firmly and at length of "the very figure and extension which you perceive by sense."

Finally, notice that even if we grant that visible figure and extension are directly seen, all is not smooth sailing for Berkeley's doctrine that these are marks of tangible shapes. For the visible shapes in question are presumably only apparent shapes, like the different shapes seen by a mite, by minute "creatures less than a mite," and by a human upon looking at a mite's foot that Philonous mentions in DHP I. But just as apparent colors do not systematically co-vary with tangible shapes, likewise (merely) apparent visual shapes do not systematically co-vary with tangible shapes. To take a simple example, the elliptical shape seen by viewing an elliptical plate from directly overhead does not correlate with (tangible) elliptical shape, since this seen elliptical shape would also present itself to someone viewing a round plate from an angle. Only *real* visible shapes, if I may use such a term, have any chance of correlating with tangible shapes. But before such correlations can be known, real visible shapes must be extrapolated from apparent visible shapes, and this feat of extrapolation appears no less difficult—indeed perhaps even more difficult—than that of correlating real visible shapes with tangible shapes.

Phillip Cummins' impressive paper, "Perceiving and Berkeley's Theory of Substance," argues that "Berkeley had an idiosyncratic but intelligible theory of substance" (121). The basic *premise* of the reasoning that leads to that theory is the *esse is percipi* principle, namely, the doctrine that a sensible thing or quality can exist only by being perceived, and is thus identical with an idea. From this, together with Berkeley's deep-seated assumption that a sensible thing or quality cannot perceive itself, it follows that if there is a sensible item, then there must be something *else*—call it a mind—that perceives it. Furthermore, this mind qualifies as a substance, according to the most traditional notion of substance. For on that notion, an item that depends ontologically on something else for its existence is not a substance, but the entity on which it so depends is a substance (Cummins calls this "the superordination conception of substance"). This does not mean that the superior entity must be able to exist absolutely alone (the "autonomy conception of substance," found for example in Descartes and notably in Spinoza), but only that it must not depend in the same way on the subordinate item. But this is precisely the way in which a mind and the sensible things (=ideas) that are said by Berkeley to exist "in" that mind are related. The sensible thing, being only an idea, cannot exist unless a mind perceives it. And while it is true that a mind, whose essence is *percipere*, cannot exist

unless it perceives something, Cummins denies that there is a symmetrical relationship of dependence here:

Perceiving is something that a perceiver does. Unlike the case of sensibles, the state that constitutes or grounds the existence of a mind is something that it has or does, not a state *bestowed* on it in virtue of what some other thing has or does. A mind, then, is not ontologically dependent. Further, by perceiving, a mind does what is required for a sensible's existence. Sensibles are ontologically dependent entities and minds are the entities upon which they depend. (125)

The core of Cummins' paper is his account of what the dependence of sensibles on minds consists in for Berkeley. It consists solely in their being *perceived* by minds; it does *not* consist in their being modes or qualities that *inhere* in the mind. Thus, when Berkeley says that minds and minds alone can "support" ideas or sensible things, all this means is that only minds can perceive these things. Here are two key passages where Cummins advances this interpretation:

I contend [that Berkeley] rethought ontological dependence. Within the substance tradition a quality existed in and was dependent upon the substance of which its name was predicated, so that *to be* for qualities was to *inhere* in (be supported by) a substance. Berkeley rejected the relation of inherence, at least for sensibles and perhaps entirely, and used perceiving to redefine dependence on a substance. (127-28)

My interpretive hypothesis is that Berkeley provided content or determinate meaning to "support," as applied to substances and sensible objects, in terms of perceiving, an activity which could plausibly be said to yield a contrast between a subordinate entity, the sensible whose existence consists in and depends upon being perceived, and a superior entity, or mind, whose awareness or perceiving is an indispensable condition for the existence of a sensible. The perceiver, as non-causal ground for the existence of an ontologically subordinate sensible, fills the role of substance. (127)

Not only does this account provide content for Berkeley's positive theory of mind, but just as importantly, it explodes the idea that sensible qualities could inhere in an unthinking material substance. For if (i) "supporting a sensible quality" means "perceiving a sensible quality," and (ii) no unthinking substance can perceive a sensible quality, then it follows that (iii) no unthinking substance can support a sensible quality. To quote once again from Cummins' powerful exposition:

This [account] totally precludes non-perceiving substance. It does so by making perceiving the experiential meaning of "supports," the relation with reference to which substance had been defined. . . . Matter, meaning material substance, is impossible because being an unthinking thing precludes perceiving sensible qualities, the only way in which those qualities can be supported, given their newly revealed nature. Incapable of supporting qualities in the only way allowed as

intelligible, an insentient thing cannot be a substance. It cannot perform the substance function. (127-29)

Substance is . . . conceptualized and validated by Berkeley with reference to perceiving, that is, with reference to the mind, that which perceives. There are intelligible notions of supporting and of substance in the case of mind and its objects. Supporting is perceiving. Substance is that which perceives. . . . In contrast, material substance is defined as an unperceiving substance which supports sensible objects or the sensible qualities they comprise; so defined, it is a contradiction in terms, since “support” means “perceives.” (131)

Cummins develops several implications of (and addresses a number of possible objections to) his account, and there is much to be learned from his insightful and closely argued analysis. I shall discuss only one of its implications. This is that the so-called inherence interpretation of Berkeley’s theory of substance is wrong. That certainly is a corollary of Cummins’s account, since on his view, sensible qualities exist “in the mind” not in the sense of inhering in it or being properties or states of it, but rather, just as Berkeley says at PHK 49 and DHP 237, by being perceived by it. Yet Cummins’s account does invite some questions. As he notes, *inhering in* is standardly taken as “the ontological relationship underlying predication and thus signified by singular propositions such as ‘Socrates is short’” (136). Proponents of the inherence interpretation break the link between inherence and predication, so as to avoid having to say things like “the mind is blue” or “the mind is square.” They are then left, as Cummins says, with the problem that once inherence is divorced from predication, inherence becomes inexplicable. Cummins’s Berkeley, on the other hand, rejects the inherence model of predication. When it comes to sensible things like the die that Berkeley discusses in PHK 49, this rejection does not deprive him of an underlying relationship that allows for predicating hardness and squareness of the die, because the die can be conceived as a bundle of qualities, and predicating a quality of it can be conceived as saying that this quality is a member of that bundle. But the same maneuver cannot be applied to the mind, since it is not a Humean bundle but a substance.

This leaves us with some questions. First, can we predicate of the mind anything at all? It seems that the answer must be yes, unless we are prepared to admit that the mind is wholly indescribable. But what then can we predicate of the mind? The Berkeleian answer, it seems, is that we may say that the mind is *active*; we can predicate of it two kinds of actions, perceiving and willing. But then we may ask: what is the ontological relationship that underlies those predications? One possible answer would be that the perceiving and the willing are bundled together. But it is not clear what would hold such a bundle together, and this was certainly not the view that Berkeley advocated in his mature work. It seems, then, that Berkeley may be unable to do away with inherence altogether, in that he may be committed to the view that the actions and powers of perceiving and willing inhere in the mind in a sense equally mysterious as that in which sensible qualities are held to inhere in material substance by the materialists that Berkeley opposed.

Genevieve Migely's essay, "Berkeley's Actively Passive Mind," has three purposes:

1. To show that Berkeley's view of the mind is not inconsistent, or more precisely, to show that there is no inconsistency between passages where he says that the mind's nature is to be active and passages that say that in perception, the mind is passive.
2. To explain the sense in which mind and ideas are distinct yet inseparable.
3. To fill out and explicate Berkeley's notion of mind as being a kind of activity.

For Migely, the worry mentioned in (1) is generated by two episodes: the passage in DHP I where Philonous rejects Hylas's attempt to distinguish between an act of perception and an object of perception by arguing that in our smelling a tulip, no act of perception is discernible and the mind is entirely passive, and a passage in the 24 March 1730 letter to Samuel Johnson where Berkeley says: "That the soul of man is passive as well as active, I make no doubt" (154).³ Migely does not dissect these passages; rather, drawing on Berkeley's work more generally, she specifies several ways in which perception, whether it be immediate or mediate, is active rather than passive. With respect to mediate perception, she rightly points out that "this type of perception [is one] in which the mind is performing operations and producing ideas different from the ideas perceived in immediate perception" (155). Her discussion of this point, however, is somewhat confusing. She sometimes writes as if the mind's activity in mediate perception always consists in volition (155, 168n11). But she also says that "in many of our mediate perceptions, we . . . do *not* determine by an act of our will which ideas go with which," and that the judgments involved in mediate perception can be "involuntary" (156, her italics). That not all mediate perception involves volition is certainly the correct view, for as Cummins rightly says:

There is undeniable evidence that Berkeley recognized non-volitional mental doing in addition to and independent of choosing. Mediate perception provides a relevant example. On Berkeley's account of mediate perception, when upon immediately seeing a colour, I mediately perceive something else, I am doing something, something more than what occurs when I merely see the colour. The something more, the interpretive element, involves thought, even belief, but to think or believe is not to will. Mediate perceiving is not itself a volitional state nor the effect of conscious choosing. Equally, it is not the result of a process of reasoning, which could be said to involve choice. Berkeley is insistent that mediate seeing, though something the mind does, is usually or always a product of psychological conditioning or associating. It indicates an active being, but not choice or volition. (145)

Indeed, I know of no passage in Berkeley's work where he says that mediate perception involves the will, and the paradigmatic type of case of mediate perception, which

³ Belfrage points out, however, that the view that "God is the only active being in the world" was "an important part of the first three-fifths of *Notebook A*" (173).

involves the *suggestion* of one idea or set of ideas (often of touch) by an immediately perceived idea (often of vision), is a matter of involuntary learned association that involves no volition. But despite this wrinkle, Migely is of course right to say that mediate perception always involves mental activity. For as she says:

We may not always [ever?] have a *choice* about which ideas we relate together, but we are the *cause* of that relation of ideas. (156)

Migely argues that for Berkeley, the mind is active even in immediate perception. She finds two ways in which this is true:

[First,] hedonic sensation is a part of all perceptions, as heat, taste, smells, and sounds are nothing but a particular pleasure or pain (DHP 177-80). Pleasure or pain always comes with desire or aversion (volitions). [Second], there is always assent involved in order to register the perception. . . (NB 777) . . . (NB 791) . . . (*Alc* VII.3, 288). Therefore, immediate perception is active since it involves activity in the evaluation and confirmation of sensory ideas. (157)

In further defense of the view that the mind is active even in immediate perception, one could also cite some insightful remarks from Cummins's article:

That which perceives is an agent or a doer; that which is perceived is not. A contrasting case may make this clearer. If a piece of paper, M, touches a second, N, then, equally, N touches M. M and N contribute equally to the relationship and have interchangeable roles. It would, perhaps, be more perspicuous to say that M and N are touching. In contrast, if P perceives O, P and O do not have interchangeable roles. Furthermore and more importantly, P, as perceiver, does something. Hence it is not just an element in a state of affairs; it is an agent in at least a minimal sense. To the other, O, something is done. It is an object of perception in virtue of what P does. If one wants to portray perceiving as a two-term relation, so that the perceived and the perceiver are correlatives, one can still insist that only one, the perceiving subject, is active. Because perceiving by nature takes an object, there is another *relatum*, the perceived, but doing or activity belongs only to the perceiver. (133)

Migely also admits, however, there is a limited but important sense in which the mind is passive in immediate perception. This is that in typical cases of immediate perception, we do not *cause* the ideas we immediately perceive, since they are imprinted on us by another mind. As Migely puts it:

It is in a very strict sense then that Berkeley considers the mind passive; only in immediate perception which involves no act of our will to produce the content of that sensation. . . . Accordingly, Berkeley employs "passivity" in immediate perception in a very narrow sense. Minds are "passive" in that finite perceivers are not the origin or cause of the ideas of sense. (156-57)

This is, of course, a correct description of Berkeley's position. Furthermore, the receiving of ideas of sense from the cause that transmits them to us is a crucial part of his system, if only because, as Migely says, it is the only way he can "safeguard our commonsense realism that we are not the cause of the physical world" (166).

In light of this "imprinting" doctrine, it seems doubtful to me, *pace* Migely, that Berkeley has a fully consistent view. The mind cannot be both purely active and yet be causally affected by something else. Migely herself says in a note, without demurring, that "Berkeley would still be considered inconsistent even if passivity only occurred in some, not all, perception" (169n9). In another note she says: "the mind is considered entirely active for Berkeley because it is always thinking, even though it may not always be causing the ideas about which it thinks" (169n22). There is an unresolved tension between these remarks. Perhaps Berkeley ought to have held, like Kant, that the mind is both active and passive: active insofar as it processes its data in manifold ways thanks to what Kant calls "the understanding," passive in that it also possesses what he calls "sensibility"—a faculty thanks to which it can be causally affected by an outside agency. But this would have gone against Berkeley's view that only ideas are inert and passive, and it seems to me that in the end Berkeley's sparse ontology of active minds and passive ideas does not fit with his view that finite minds are continually acted upon by the divine mind.

The most successful part of Migely's essay is her explanation of how a mind and its ideas are distinct yet inseparable (listed above as point 2). To say that the mind and its ideas are distinct, she maintains, is just to say that they have totally different natures: the mind is active, ideas are passive; this is what she calls Berkeley's "dualism." But this dualism does not imply that minds and ideas can exist separately; on the contrary, they cannot. For on the one hand, an idea can exist only by being perceived by a mind, and on the other hand, a mind can exist only when it thinks, and thinking is having and operating on ideas. But this does not mean that a mind is *identical* with its ideas; just as, to use Migely's nice example, the second floor of a house is "inseparable" from the first floor in that the second floor cannot exist unless the first floor exists, yet the second floor is not identical with the first floor. From these considerations, which Migely explains persuasively (160-62), she draws the conclusion that

it is simply false to say [with Robert Adams] that Berkeley "uses 'substance' in one of its classic senses, to mean a being that is conceivable as existing separately."
(162)⁴

In the last part of her essay, Migely tries to explain what Berkeley means by saying that the mind is an active substance (point 3 listed above). Here, like other interpreters of Berkeley, she must contend with the fact that Berkeley says little about the mind save that it is an active substance whose activities consist in understanding (perceiving) and willing. How is this to be fleshed out? Migely writes that

⁴ Thus she agrees with Cummins that Berkeley subscribes to the "superordination" (but not the "autonomy") conception of substance (131-33).

The substantial mind is an integrated, unified system of activity in which the will and the understanding operate. . . . It is a system of activity with interrelated, interdependent items. (163)

She goes on to say some interesting things about this “system” view of the mind, notably that the mental items that constitute the mind, unlike the parts of a physical system like a watch, cannot retain their identity if they are removed from the system. She then tries to fill out her account by appealing to Stephen Daniel’s work. She reports that “Daniel provides a semantic account of substance” (165) based on Ramist logic, according to which the mind is not a *thing* at all, but “is essentially linguistic and rhetorical” (164, quoted from Daniel).⁵ She quotes a number of passages from Daniel, including this one:

To say that an idea exists means nothing more than that it is the object of mind, and to refer to the substance or being of a mind is to refer to the existence of its ideas. Therefore, to think that minds *exist* in the same way that ideas exist is to think that minds are *things* like ideas; and that is something Berkeley repeatedly cautions against. (165)⁶

I confess that from reading what Migely quotes and says, I can only withhold judgment as to the coherence of Daniel’s interpretation.⁷ She says that “Daniel and I arrive at virtually the same basic conclusion regarding the Berkeleian mind: it is activity” (165). But if “to refer to the substance or being of a mind is to refer to the existence of its ideas,” and if, as Berkeley insists, ideas are wholly passive and inert, then how can the mind be active? Furthermore (to cite another sentence that Migely quotes from Daniel), if “the subsistence of minds or souls is nothing other than the existence of ideas” (164), then how is one to avoid a bundle theory of the mind that Daniel would reject?⁸

Migely adds that, in contrast to Daniel’s semantic account, “I retain an ontological account of substance” (165). But in recapping that account, she just reverts to describing the mind as an active substance whose activities are perceiving and willing. She explains that

the will and the understanding are not parts of the mind; they constitute the mind itself. They are not parts of the system; they *are* the system. Thus, by the system I am not referring to a collection of things that are part of a whole to serve some function. Rather, by the system, I mean one simple, undivided, substantial unity of activity. (164)

⁵ See Stephen Daniel, “Edwards, Berkeley, and Ramist Logic,” *Idealistic Studies* 31 (2001), 56.

⁶ See Stephen Daniel, “Berkeley’s Pantheistic Discourse,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 49 (2001), 184.

⁷ Daniel’s most recent defense of his views about the Berkeleian mind is Stephen H. Daniel, “Berkeley’s Stoic Notion of Spiritual Substance,” in Stephen H. Daniel, ed., *New Interpretations of Berkeley’s Thought* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2008), 203-230.

⁸ See Stephen Daniel, “Berkeley, Suárez, and the *Esse-Existere* distinction,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 74 (2000), 633.

This account seems to require the notion of pure activity—activity that is not performed by some substantial thing like the brain or some spiritual counterpart of the brain like Descartes' *res cogitans*. That does not appear to me to be an intelligible notion. I am inclined to think that Berkeley's most defensible account of mind is Cummins's view that it is a substance that supports ideas, where the relation of supporting is reinterpreted as perceiving, and that the mind is active both in the sense that perceiving is "a type of minimal doing" (141), and that it has the power to create ideas insofar as it can will them into existence, classify them, and manipulate them.

Bertil Belfrage's piece, "Berkeley's Four Concepts of the Soul," traces the evolution of Berkeley's view of the mind from his early notes in 1707 to the view he published in PHK in 1709. Belfrage deliberately refrains from defending any one of the four views he finds in these writings; thus he says: "The traditional question (which I shall not ask) is: Which is Berkeley's 'real' concept of mind (presuming that he never changed)?" (184n3) His meticulously researched and documented essay thus limits itself to carefully expounding each view.

He opens the essay by laying out four "assumptions" that Berkeley makes early in *Notebook A*, calling them "Berkeley's Early Principles." He notes that these assumptions, which imply that there is no knowledge, reasoning, or meaningful discourse about things of which we have no ideas, are in conflict with the "conventional concept of the soul," according to which it is "a separate active being which 'thinks' (NB 437)" (174). By citing relevant entries (e.g., NB 576), he shows that despite this conflict, early in *Notebook A* Berkeley favors the conventional concept of the soul.

However, just a few entries later Berkeley starts to adumbrate a second concept of the soul, namely, a bundle theory. Belfrage expounds this concept in detail, making subtle observations and distinctions along the way. He expounds Berkeley's view that "the will" is not a faculty but rather is "a set of particular volitions" that strive to attain a state of "complacency" or satisfaction (176). He explains that Berkeley's view, that "the concept of a person is identified with will and understanding" (177), means that "the term 'person' is used for an unbroken chain of volitions and ideas succeeding each other without (conscious) interruption" (178). He discusses whether the person/mind/soul bundle ceases to exist during periods of (presumably dreamless) sleep, thus having an intermittent existence, and he shows how Berkeley may avoid such a paradoxical consequence by appealing to the notion of a person's "*private time*" (178-79), according to which no such time elapses between falling asleep and awakening because one experiences no succession of ideas between these.

What led Berkeley to abandon the bundle theory and move toward the view that he embraces in PHK, Belfrage thinks, is the development in his views about perception. As long as he saw perception only as the passive reception of ideas imprinted by God—a view that he expresses as early as NB 499—he did not need to think of a finite mind as anything more than a bundle of ideas caused by God. But Berkeley's psychological investigations in NTV led him to the view that many ideas are "perceived" only by being suggested to the mind. This—together with the views that (a) no ideas are altogether void

of the pleasure or pain we seek to obtain or to avoid and (b) affirmation and negation of any perceptual content involves activity—led him to reject the views that to think is just to experience a succession of ideas and that to will is just to have a series of volitions. Instead, Berkeley was driven toward his third concept of mind or soul, according to which the soul is “Pure Act” (182). In support of attributing this conception to Berkeley, Belfrage cites NB 829:

Substance of a Spirit is that it acts, causes, wills, operates, or if you please (to avoid the quibble y^t might be made on y^e word it) to act, cause, will, operate & it’s substance is not knowable not being an Idea.

He interprets this passage as saying that

It is misleading . . . to use the term “it” for the soul in phrases such as “*It acts,*” “*It wills,*” and so on: “spirit” means “to act,” “cause,” “will.” . . . It is as mistaken to hypostatize spirit and take it as an “it” as to take “gravity” to denote an actor and attribute to “it” such qualities as “is red” or “is moving.” (182)⁹

According to Belfrage, however, even this third conception of the soul is not the one that Berkeley ultimately defended in PHK. The reason is that the conception of the soul as pure act seems again to imply that the soul has an intermittent existence. (Evidently, then, Belfrage does not think that Berkeley was satisfied with the appeal to a “private time” to avoid this consequence.) Belfrage reports that, in an unpublished manuscript at the end of PHK that Luce and Jessop did not include in their edition of Berkeley’s works, Berkeley tries to soften this paradox by a mystical appeal:

The subsistence of the soul, finally, is explained by an element of mysticism: when the soul does not exist, it subsists in the divine mind. (183)

But, as Belfrage adds, “this is not the view that [Berkeley] published” (183).

Instead, Berkeley reverted in the published text of PHK to his fourth view of the soul, the “metaphysical concept of the soul,” according to which “spirits are separate beings” (183-84). I say “reverted” because it seems to me that this concept is no different (except perhaps for the emphasis on, and the more specific description of, spirits’ activity) from the “conventional concept” of the soul as a “separate active being which ‘thinks’ (NB 437)” (174) that Belfrage says Berkeley began with. The evolution of his thought about the nature of the mind from 1707 to 1709, then, seems almost to have come full circle.

Roomet Jakapi’s essay, “Christian Mysteries and Berkeley’s Alleged Non-Cognitivism,” persuasively defends the thesis that Berkeley took Christian doctrines about mysteries such as the Trinity, the resurrection, and heavenly rewards to be literally true, and thus not to be reducible (as some scholars have proposed) to non-cognitive expressions of emotion or purely pragmatic devices for instilling faith and good works. According to

⁹ Note the similarity between this conception of the soul and the conception advocated by Migely.

Jakapi, some scholars have been encouraged by Berkeley's discussion—particularly in the Introduction to PHK of uses of language other than “the communicating of ideas marked by words,” such as “the raising of some passion, the exciting to, or deterring from an action, the putting the mind in some particular disposition”—to extend this then-innovative view of language to statements about Christian mysteries, in such a way that such statements “(1) are neither true nor false; (2) do not provide information; (3) are cognitively meaningless; and (4) are typically written or spoken merely to provoke emotions, attitudes, or actions” (189). Throughout his essay, Jakapi robustly opposes any such reading. He cites passages, especially from *Alciphron* VI and VII, to support his view that for Berkeley,

a mystery is primarily a religious *truth* or *doctrine* that cannot be discovered or fully explained by human reason. It is only via divine revelation that human beings know it Berkeley always held the relevant propositions in the Bible to be true. For, in sharp contrast to typical examples of non-cognitive or other uses of language, as examined in contemporary theories of meaning, in the case under observation, God, not man, is the speaker. He speaks by the mediation of divinely inspired writers (see *Alc* VI.6-10, 227-40). And for Berkeley, of course, God does not lie or speak nonsense. In other words, the propositions in question are true simply because they come from God and because they are to be found in the Scripture, the written word of God. This is an orthodox theological position that Berkeley does not seem to question in any of his writings at any stage of his philosophical development. (190)

Nevertheless, Jakapi says, Berkeley was quite prepared to *defend* beliefs in Christian mysteries by appealing to the beneficial effects of holding such beliefs. Thus Jakapi writes,

The core of Berkeley's defence of the belief in the Christian mysteries (developed specifically in *Alciphron* VII) lies in his account of the usefulness of such belief, which, in turn, is related to the doctrine of “other uses” of language. (194)

But Jakapi also insists that this pragmatic way of defending belief in Christian mysteries is consistent with his literalist interpretation. Thus, after quoting a passage from *Alciphron* VII where Euphranor extols the value of assenting to the doctrine of the Trinity even in the absence of having a clear and distinct idea of it, Jakapi writes:

The idea that propositions enunciating the doctrine of the Trinity have a good influence on those who assent to them is perfectly consistent with the view that these propositions are true and reveal something important about God and his relation to us. The passage is meant to promote and assure belief in the Trinity and to defend this belief by means of the semantic doctrine in question. No doubt is cast on the existence of the Trinity, authority of the Bible, or authenticity of the revelation. (194-95)

In Jakapi's essay, then, we have a strong affirmation of Bishop Berkeley's religiosity. As Jakapi says in concluding: "My point is simply that, while interpreting passages related to the mysteries, we should take Berkeley's religious commitments seriously" (196).

On the other hand, Jakapi's essay presents us with a Berkeley who, at least as a philosopher of language and meaning, seems not to have a truly coherent view. If as the scholars Jakapi criticizes think, uses of language employing terms for which we lack (clear and distinct) ideas could be treated as non-cognitive, then Berkeley would have unified view, according to which language is used cognitively only when linked to (clear and distinct) ideas and non-cognitively when not so linked. But on Jakapi's view, Berkeley's position cannot be rescued in such a manner, for Berkeley's uses of religious language are not reducible to non-cognitive ones even in the absence of linkage to (clear and distinct) ideas. One might try to defend Berkeley by sharply distinguishing between his roles as philosopher and "as a Christian and cleric" (195). But Jakapi rejects such a schizophrenic picture of Berkeley as "unnatural" and as likely to lead to the erroneous view that "Berkeley did not really believe in the resurrection" (195). So, we are left with a Berkeley whose religious persuasion remained in tension with his philosophical views on language and meaning.

Berkeley's religious commitments also come to the fore in Laurent Jaffro's learned, rich and highly polished essay, "Berkeley's Criticism of Shaftesbury's Moral Theory in *Alciphron* III." Now the foil is no longer non-cognitivism of any sort, but rather Shaftesbury's naturalized, moral sense ethical theory. At bottom, Berkeley's rejection of this theory stems from his commitment to "a divine command account of the source of normativity," on which "Berkeley's God is the source not only of obligation but also of utility" (210)—an account that sets him against any theory that would make moral values independent of religion. Thus Jaffro writes:

In Berkeley's opinion, the moral philosophers are the minute ones, who believe in the existence of a moral and social realm, as if the order of morality were autonomous and did not depend on the divine command. On the contrary, Christianity saves us the trouble of developing a so-called moral philosophy insofar as it provides us with a religion, in which there is everything necessary not only to our salvation hereafter but also to the conduct of our life here-below. Thus it should be no surprise that Berkeleian ethics could not be expressed as a "moral philosophy." (201)¹⁰

Jaffro does not content himself with pointing out that in light of Berkeley's divine command view, "we should renounce all thought of piecing back together Berkeley's moral philosophy" (201). Rather, the bulk of his essay is devoted to a close exposition of

¹⁰ Here Jaffro has a deft note quoting George Pitcher, *Berkeley* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), 228: "It is surprising that Berkeley does not devote more of his energies to moral philosophy. . . . Of course he has views on these matters, but it cannot be said that he anywhere provides, or tries to provide, adequate backing for them." Later Jaffro approvingly quotes another passage from Pitcher, in which Pitcher attributes the divine-command view of morals to Berkeley.

Berkeley's *internal* criticisms of Shaftesbury. Jaffro is an expert in the history of moral philosophy, and I shall not try to do justice to his refined analysis of what he sees as two different Berkeleian critiques of two different stages of Shaftesburyan moral sense theory. Roughly speaking, the first stage seeks to base morality on an untutored and spontaneous moral sense, whereas the second stage seeks to base it on a learned, cultivated moral sense analogous to "some kind of connoisseurship" (208). Berkeley's internal criticism of the former is that "the moral sense is arbitrary and in any case superfluous," and his internal criticism of the latter is that "the moral sense as a cultivated taste might be unattainable to the average human being" (208). Jaffro elaborates on these points in ways that should interest any student of moral sense ethical theory or Berkeley's objections to it. Among other things, he points out that "Berkeley's conscience is a supernatural sense of right and wrong. Actually, it is not a 'sense' at all. . . . [Berkeley] makes use of the term 'conscience' as if it were the antonym of 'moral sense' or of any 'sense' whatever" (201). Jaffro further argues that Berkeley's critique (through Euphranor) of the first stage of Shaftesbury's moral sense theory is weakened by Berkeley's failure to distinguish "the moral sense as a subjective disposition . . . from the whim of passion" (204). The problem with moral sense as a subjective disposition is not that it "would merge conscience and passion," but that it "does not give a satisfactory account of the universality of moral rules" (204-5). Jaffro also points out, in agreement with George Pitcher, that although "it is a commonplace that Berkeley was responsible for the first presentation of rule consequentialism" (213n16), it would be a mistake to see Berkeley as a rule-utilitarian. As he puts it:

The promotion of the well-being of mankind is an effect of Christian principles; it does not prove that Christian principles are true only insofar as they are favourable but that there must be some truth in Christian principles which produces such an effect. If utility were the criterion, then since pagan religions also sometimes have utility value, we should equally consider being pagan. In fact, utility is not a criterion, but rather a sign of the truth of practical principles. Therefore we should express the matter the other way around: if pagan religions are also sometimes useful, they must contain some principles of such a nature as to produce these effects, that is, Christian principles. . . . Even though Berkeley gives a seemingly rule-consequentialist account of morality in some passages of *Alciphron* and *Passive Obedience*, his discussion about the origin of moral rules shows that his point is not that a law is divine and should be obeyed because it is useful to mankind, but that it is useful to mankind because it is the law of God. (210-11)

Wolfgang Breidert's essay, "Berkeley Poetized," is a fitting dessert to this feast of a book. Breidert is not concerned with Berkeley as a poet, or with how Berkeley may have influenced poets and artists; nor does he discuss how poets may have addressed Berkeley's biography. Rather, his innovative project is to examine how poets have responded to Berkeley's immaterialist philosophy. His method is to quote lines or stanzas of poems that allude to Berkeley's immaterialism and to comment on them, asking whether they reflect an accurate understanding of his thought or are merely satirical, as many of them turn out to be. The poets he cites include Alexander Pope, Lord Byron, William Butler Yeats, and several 20th century figures: René François Armand Sully

Prudhomme (winner of the first Nobel Prize in literature in 1901), Lutz Geldsetzer (a German philosopher who wrote a history of philosophy in verse), Richard Aquila (author of the well-known *Limerick History of Philosophy*), Paul Muldoon (an Irish poet), Irving Layton (a Romanian poet who emigrated to Canada), Charles H. Sisson (an Anglican poet), Donald Davie (an English poet and literary critic), Kenneth Rexroth (an American poet), and Christian Morgenstern (a well-known German poet). Ronald Knox also earns a mention in the endnotes for his famous limerick about the tree in the quad. I presume that most of these writers are not well-known to philosophers, and it is a testament to Breidert's erudition that he contextualizes their poems by telling us interesting things about each of them and their work.

In several cases Breidert's comments are very astute, as in his demonstration that the following single stanza by Prudhomme misrepresents Berkeley in no less than *five* different ways:

Berk'ley, inspired by the horror of crude senses
 examines hostilely their proofs and evidences:
 control of body, empty phantom, soul usurps.
 God only, nothing else, that human mind disturbs,
 Adjudged by Hobbes is human knowledge of all matter
 As cause of Being but without sensitive patter.
 God, Spirit, could they be? Mere words, no entities!
 – They are the whole! Tis Berk'ley's answer; Matter lies! (217)

In other cases they Breidert's remarks are provocative, as when he argues that

In this verse [by Muldoon] the author speaks of a child who is said to be a *non-entity*, but if the poet or philosopher is talking about a non-entity, he is thinking about it, and therefore it is perceived in some way; that is, it has to exist in a Berkeleyan sense. It would seem as if Berkeley's doctrine cannot be expressed negatively. Saying "the unperceived does not exist" implies thinking about the unperceived; thus it *is* perceived and must *exist*. (222)

It seems to me that what Breidert says here shows only that one cannot consistently deny ("express negatively") Berkeley's doctrine *if one is a Berkeleyan*, but clearly enough Breidert is here touching on difficult issues about negative existential statements.

Breidert ends his essay this way:

My brief survey of poetry that deals with Berkeley and/or his philosophy allows me to conclude that many of these poems were written more satirically than out of admiration. In many cases Berkeley has been misunderstood (and misinterpreted) by poets, and even philosopher-poets are occasionally guilty of distorting his ideas. It is nevertheless interesting to notice how elements of his philosophy (especially his immaterialism) and his biography make their way into poetry. Most of these poems mention God as creator, guarantor, and observer of the world, whereas it is

astonishing that poets do not refer to either Berkeley's general theory of language or his special conception of visual language. (226)

The essays from which this reviewer learned the most are the ones on Berkeley's theory of mind. Cummins's essay is the best treatment of the Berkeleian mind's relation to its ideas that I have ever read; Migely's essay very usefully underscores issues about the coherence of Berkeley's view of the mind, and Belfrage's essay is a careful account of the historical development of Berkeley's views on the mind. Indeed, Migely's contribution can be seen as defending the third view that Belfrage attributes to Berkeley and Cummins' essay can be seen as explicating the fourth. Among the essays dealing with Berkeley's view of the sensible world, it seems to me that Glauser's lucid piece is a must-read. Jakapi's and Jaffro's essays are powerful reminders that Berkeley was not just a great philosopher: he was also a deeply committed and evidently quite orthodox cleric and theologian.

Georges Dicker
The College at Brockport
State University of New York
gdicker@brockport.edu

News and Announcements

Invitation to participate in the
International Berkeley Conference
 at the University of Karlsruhe, Germany
 17-20 August 2009

George Berkeley (1685-1753) contributed to a wide range of academic disciplines; from philosophy to mathematics and empirical psychology; from theology to political economy and monetary policy. To celebrate the 300th anniversary of Berkeley's *An Essay towards A New Theory of Vision* (1709), distinguished scholars have been invited to give a diversified account of Berkeley's works with respect to his broad range of interest. The conference, which takes place at the Institute of Philosophy, the University of Karlsruhe, Germany, is sponsored by the International Berkeley Society. For further information, please contact one of the organizers:

- Wolfgang Breidert, Baumgartenstrasse 9, D-76316 Malsch, Germany;
Wolfgang.Breidert@gmx.de
- Bertil Belfrage, Villan, S-57162 Bodafors, Sweden; bertil.belfrage@telia.com

Invitation to participate in the
International Berkeley Conference
 at the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland
 6-9 April 2010

Berkeley's *Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710) deals with a broad spectrum of philosophical issues in metaphysics, philosophical theology, epistemology, theory of perception, philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, etc. An international conference will be held at the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland, April 6-9, 2010, on the occasion of the tercentenary of the publication of Berkeley's *Principles*. Contributors are free to discuss any aspect of Berkeley's philosophy, highlighting, however, a distinct connection of their chosen topic with the *Principles*. The conference is sponsored by the International Berkeley Society and the Swiss FNRS.

A number of speakers have already been invited. Others are free to submit papers. We especially wish to encourage applications from doctoral students or from persons who have recently defended a doctoral dissertation. Their papers should be submitted to the organiser by **May 2009** at the latest. A panel of three experts will select the five best papers, and their authors will be invited to the conference by December 2009.

For further information, please contact the organiser: Richard.Glauser@unine.ch.

- Richard Glauser, Institut de philosophie, Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines, Université de Neuchâtel, 1 Espace Louis-Agassiz, CH-2001 Neuchâtel, Switzerland / Suisse

Recent Works on Berkeley

(2003 – 2008)

- Atherton, Margaret. “‘The Books Are in the Study As Before’: Berkeley’s Claims about Real Physical Objects.” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 16 (2008): 85-100.
- Bardout, Jean-Christophe. “Berkeley et les metaphysiques de son temps.” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 46 (2008): 119-39.
- Belfrage, Bertil. “The Theological Positivism of George Berkeley (1707-1708).” In Lemetti and Piirimäe (2007), 37-52.
- Berlioz, Dominique and Nef, Frederic. “Berkeley ou l’idée contre la représentation.” In *La voie des idées? Le statut de la représentation XVIIè-XXè siècles*, edited by Kim Sang Ong-Van-Cung. Paris: CNRS éditions, 2006, 163-77.
- Botterill, George. “God and First Person in Berkeley.” *Philosophy* 82 (2007): 87-114.
- Caffentzis, George C. “Algebraic Money: Berkeley’s Philosophy of Mathematics and Money.” *Berkeley Studies* 18 (2007): 3-23.
- Campagnola, Francesco. “George Berkeley e la teoria dell’analogia divina.” *Nouvelles-de-la-Republique-des-lettres* 2 (2006): 25-76.
- Cecikdagi, Caner. “An Analysis of Berkeley’s *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*” (in Turkish). *Kaygi: Uludag University Journal of Philosophy* 9 (2007): 185-211.
- El-Bizri, Nader. “A Philosophical Perspective on Alhazen’s Optics.” *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 15 (2005), 189-218.
- Gatti, Andrea and Pugliese Carratelli, Giovanni. “Per una storia intellettuale dell’eta Augustea in Inghilterra: Il Catalogue della biblioteca di Joseph Addison.” *Atti della Accademia nazionale dei Lincei. Rendiconti Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche* 14 (2003): 239-324.
- Haakonssen, Knud, ed. *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Philosophy*. 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Hamou, Philippe. "L'optique des *Voyages de Gulliver*." *Revue d'histoire des sciences* 60 (2007), 25-45.

Hight, Marc A. "Berkeley's Half-Way House." *Philosophy Compass* 1 (2006), 28-35.

_____. *Idea and Ontology: An Essay in Early Modern Metaphysics of Ideas*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008.

Hochschild, Joshua P. "George Berkeley and a Theory of Analogy." *The Downside Review* 122 (2004): 157-68.

Jakapi, Roomet. "Was Berkeley a Utilitarian?" In Lemetti and Piirimäe (2007), 53-68.

_____. "Berkeley and the Separate State of the Soul: A Note." *Berkeley Studies* 18 (2007), 24-28.

Kail, P. J. E. "Berkeley, the Ends of Language, and the *Principles of Human Knowledge*." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 107 (2007): 265-78.

Keefe, Jenny. "The Return to Berkeley." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 15 (2007), 101-113.

Klemme, Heiner F. "Causality." In Haakonssen (2006), 1: 368-88.

_____. "Substances and Modes, Space and Time." In Haakonssen (2006), 1: 343-67.

Lemetti, Juhana and Piirimäe, Eva, eds. *Human Nature as the Basis of Morality and Society in Early Modern Philosophy*. Acta Philosophica Fennica 83. Helsinki: Philosophy Society of Finland, 2007.

Lennon, Thomas M. "The Genesis of Berkeley's *Theory of Vision Vindicated*." *History of European Ideas* 33 (2007): 321-29.

_____. "The Historical Consistency of Berkeley's Idealism." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 16 (2008): 101-24.

Mensch, Jennifer. "Kant and the Problem of Idealism: On the Significance of the *Göttingen Review*." *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 44 (2006): 297-317.

Ott, Walter. "Descartes and Berkeley on Mind: The Fourth Distinction." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 14 (2006): 437-50.

Popkin, Richard H. "Scepticism." In Haakonssen (2006), 426-50.

Radcliffe, Elizabeth S.; McCarty, Richard; Allhoff, Fritz; and Vaidya, Anand Jayprakash, eds. *Late Modern Philosophy: Essential Readings with Commentary*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007.

Rozenkranz, Sven. "Priest and the Bishop." *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 87 (2006): 335-47.

Schwartz, Robert. *Visual Versions*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006.

Silva, Carmen. Review of *De Newton y los newtonianos: Entre Descartes y Berkeley* by Laura Benitez and José A. Robles. *Dianoia* (Mexico) 52 (2007): 213-15.

Skorpikova, Zuzana. "Nothing Exists, Therefore I Am" (in Czech). *Filosoficky-Casopis* 55 (2007): 709-19.

Somerville, James. "'The Table, Which We See': An Irresolvable Ambiguity." *Philosophy* 81 (2006): 33-63.

Stewart, M. A. "The Curriculum in Britain, Ireland, and the Colonies." In Haakonssen (2006), 1: 97-120.

Stoneham, Tom. "When Did Collier Read Berkeley?" *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 15 (2007): 361-64.

Waxman, Wayne. "Kant's Debt to the British Empiricists." In *A Companion to Kant*, edited by Graham Bird. Malden MA: Blackwell, 2006, 93-107.

Winkler, Kenneth P. "Perception and Ideas, Judgement." In Haakonssen (2006), 1: 234-85.