

Berkeley Studies

No. 29 (2021)

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Berkeley Studies is sponsored by
Florida State University and the International Berkeley Society

Berkeley on the Meaning of General Terms¹

Keota Fields

Abstract: I argue that for Berkeley the meaning of a general term is constituted by the multiple particular ideas indifferently signified by that term. This reading faces two challenges. First, Berkeley argues that the meaning of sentences containing general terms is constituted by the one idea signified by the name in that sentence rather than by multiple ideas, implying that general terms are meaningful although they do not signify multiple ideas. Second, Berkeley writes that finite minds know the meaning of the biblical phrase ‘good thing’ even though that phrase fails to signify any ideas at all. Both challenges are met by deploying Berkeley’s account of mediate perception.

George Berkeley notoriously rejects abstract ideas in the Introduction to his *Principles*.² Abstract ideas are an “abuse of language” and a chief source of philosophical error (IN 6; W2: 122). Berkeley replaces abstract ideas with his own theory of general terms. As he notes in the *Manuscript Introduction*, “a word becomes general by being made the sign, not of a general idea but, of many particular ideas” (MI 17; W2: 127). General terms indifferently signify multiple particular ideas (MI 32; IN 11; W2: 135).

Yet when he turns to analyze sentences like ‘Socrates is a man’, Berkeley suggests that the meaning of such sentences is constituted by a single idea—in this case, the idea of Socrates (MI 17/IN 11/W2: 127; MI 34/IN 19/W2: 136). It seems that the particular ideas indifferently signified by ‘man’ play no role in constituting the meaning of the general term in that sentence or in the meaning of the sentence as a whole. To make matters worse, when discussing a biblical passage about heavenly rewards, Berkeley says that the general term ‘good thing’ does not signify any ideas in finite minds at all. Yet Berkeley insists that this general term is meaningful, suggesting that for Berkeley some meaningful general terms are idea-less.³ It therefore seems (despite what Berkeley says elsewhere) that the meaning of a general term and the meaning of a sentence containing a general term are *not* constituted by indifferently signifying multiple ideas.⁴

¹ This essay—along with Todd DeRose’s “‘Experience Itself Must Be Taught to Read and Write’: Scientific Practice and Berkeley’s Language of Nature” in this issue of *Berkeley Studies*—is a winner of the 2020 Colin and Alisa Turbayne International Berkeley Essay Prize Competition.

² References are to *The Works of George Berkeley* [W], ed. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop (9 vols.; London: Thomas Nelson, 1948–57). Abbreviations: NB=Notebooks, NTV=*An Essay towards a New Theory of Vision*, IN= Introduction to *Principles of Human Knowledge*, PHK= *Principles of Human Knowledge*, and TVV=*Theory of Vision Vindicated*. References to Berkeley’s *Manuscript Introduction* (MI) to the *Principles* are to section numbers in Bertil Belfrage’s diplomatic edition (Oxford: Doxa, 1987), followed by the page numbers in the Luce–Jessop edition. Also: John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (E), ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), cited by book, chapter, and section.

³ I borrow this phrase from Kenneth Williford, “Berkeley’s Theory of Operative Language in the *Manuscript Introduction*,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 11 (2003), 272.

⁴ Defenders of this interpretation include Kenneth Williford and Roomet Jakapi, “Berkeley’s Theory of Meaning in *Alciphron* VII,” 17 (2009), 99–118; John Russell Roberts, “Berkeley on

I argue that this tension is merely apparent, and that Berkeley's considered view is that the meaning of a general term is constituted by the multiple particular ideas indifferently signified by that term. The apparent tension in Berkeley's texts emerges from two challenges confronting Berkeley's theory of general terms. One challenge is to explain how a hearer can know the meaning of the speaker's words if the ideas signified by those words are private, and so imperceptible to the hearer. Another challenge is to explain how 'good thing' is meaningful despite failing to signify ideas in finite minds. As I read Berkeley, he meets both challenges by applying his own distinction between immediate and mediate perception to his indifferent signification theory of general terms. In the challenging cases just described, the hearer mediately perceives ideas signified by a general term even if that term fails to signify any of the hearer's ideas.

1. Indifferent Signification

According to Locke, the abstract idea of a triangle is composed of determinables, which can be exemplified in a variety of ways by particular determinate features (E IV.vii.9; cf. IN 12; W2: 129). Among those determinable features are lines and angles, which are exemplified by particular lines of various lengths and particular angles of various degrees, respectively. Particular ideas of triangles exemplify the abstract idea of a triangle by exhibiting determinate features exemplifying the abstract idea's determinable features. Berkeley presents three arguments against Locke's theory of abstract ideas.

First, Berkeley thinks that the mind cannot perceive ideas with undetermined features. Such features are imperceptible by definition. But even if the mind could perceive an idea with imperceptible features, that idea couldn't resemble any particular idea with determinate features (PHK 8). Berkeley seems to think that a particular idea exemplifies an abstract idea only if determinate features of the former resemble determinable features of the latter. Since a perceived determinate feature cannot resemble an 'invisible' undetermined feature, there's no sense in which any particular idea of a triangle could resemble the abstract idea of a triangle. Thus, no particular idea of a triangle could exemplify the abstract idea of a triangle.

Second, the abstract idea of a triangle must resemble *all* of the particular ideas that exemplify its determinable features. Resemblance is a symmetric relation: If x resembles y , then y resembles x . Therefore, if a particular idea resembles an abstract idea, then that abstract idea also resembles that particular idea. Consequently, an abstract idea resembles each of the particular ideas that exemplify it. But there's no guarantee that those particular ideas resemble each other. If those particulars do *not* resemble each other (as Locke says in the passage cited above), then the corresponding abstract idea must have contradictory features. But the mind cannot perceive an idea that is 'contradictory' and 'inconsistent' (see MI 20–21; IN 9–10; W2: 129–30).

Language," in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Berkeley*, ed. Richard Brook and Bertil Belfrage (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 421–35; and Kenneth Pearce, *Language and the Structure of Berkeley's World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

Third, Berkeley thinks that “an impossibility cannot be conceiv’d” and that God cannot make contradictions actual (MI 14: W2: 125).⁵ The implication is that God can create anything that does not include a contradiction; and that finite minds are capable of perceiving (or conceiving) anything that does not include a contradiction. But God cannot make an object that is not fully determinate, or which has contradictory features. Thus, not only is it impossible for such an object to exist; but finite minds are incapable of perceiving or conceiving of such things.

As mentioned above, Berkeley replaces abstract ideas with his own indifferent signification theory of general terms. But Berkeley also seems to say that the meaning of sentences containing general terms is constituted by the one idea signified by the name in that sentence rather than by multiple ideas. The implication is that the general term in that sentence is meaningful although it does not signify multiple ideas. Consider an extended passage where Berkeley analyzes the meaning of the sentence ‘Melampus is an animal’. Berkeley writes that the meaning of that sentence is constituted by *one* idea:

I perceive it evidently in my self that upon laying aside all thought of the words ‘Melampus is an animal’ I have remaining in my mind *one naked and bare idea viz that particular one to which I give the name ‘Melampus’*. (MI 34; W2: 136, my emphasis; punctuation modernized)

Berkeley writes in this passage that the same particular idea of Melampus is signified by both the subject and predicate of that sentence. In that case, it seems that the meaning of that sentence is constituted by one particular idea of Melampus without the help of the other particular ideas indifferently signified by ‘animal’. Assuming that the meaning of a sentence is composed of the meanings of its constituent terms, Berkeley’s analysis suggests that the meaning of ‘animal’ when used in that sentence is not constituted by any of the other particular ideas indifferently signified by that term.

Immediately after this passage, Berkeley rehearses reasoning used to show “how men might first have come to think there was [an abstract] general idea of animal” (MI 35; IN 19; W2: 136). That reasoning takes the form of a dilemma. On one horn of the dilemma, suppose that ‘animal’ signifies the same idea signified by ‘Melampus’. In that case, the sentence is a tautology. But ‘Melampus is an animal’ is clearly not a tautology because it is informative. On the other horn of the dilemma, suppose that ‘animal’ signifies the idea of some particular animal other than Melampus. In that case, the sentence is contradictory (e.g., ‘Melampus is Fido’, where Fido is not Melampus). But the sentence is not contradictory. We are supposed to conclude from this dilemma that ‘animal’ cannot signify any particular idea at all in ‘Melampus is an animal’, and that therefore it must signify an abstract idea. Berkeley writes, “In like manner we may be able with a little attention to discover how [abstract] general ideas of all sorts might at first have stolen

⁵ I suspect that Berkeley’s point is that God cannot manifest contradictions, since that’s what would be required in order for God to make a contradiction actual. For discussion, see Kenneth Winkler, “Berkeley and the Doctrine of Signs,” in *Cambridge Companion to Berkeley*, ed. Kenneth Winkler (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 143; and Pearce, *Language and Structure*, 26).

into the thoughts of men” (MI 35; IN 19; W2: 137). One might worry that such reasoning applies to Berkeley’s claim that the meaning of ‘Melampus is an animal’ is constituted by the particular idea of Melampus. For Berkeley seems to say that ‘animal’ signifies that idea exclusively, in which case the sentence is a tautology. One might also take this dilemma as evidence that for Berkeley the meaning of ‘animal’ is not constituted by signifying ideas, but is constituted in some other way.⁶

To see how Berkeley addresses these worries, consider another passage exactly similar to the Melampus passage. There, Berkeley analyzes the sentence, ‘Socrates is a man’:

when I say the word ‘Socrates’ is a proper particular name, and the word ‘Man’ an appellative or general name, I mean no more than this, viz that the one is peculiar & appropriated to one particular person, the other common to a great many particular persons, each whereof has an equal right to be called by the name ‘Man’. (MI 17; IN 11; W2: 127—punctuation modernized)

Taken together, the ‘Socrates’ and ‘Melampus’ passages suggest the following analysis. General terms indifferently signify multiple particular ideas. The particular idea for which the name ‘Melampus’ stands is also one of the multiple particular ideas indifferently signified by the general word ‘animal’. Thus, the same idea is signified in different ways by different words in that sentence. That’s why Berkeley says that the meaning of ‘Melampus is an animal’ is constituted by a single idea.

But although ‘animal’ signifies the idea of Melampus in that sentence, the meaning of ‘animal’ is not constituted by that idea *functioning as a particular idea*. Rather, the meaning of ‘animal’ in that sentence is constituted by the particular idea of Melampus *functioning as a general idea*. Berkeley says that a particular idea “becomes general by being made to represent or stand for all other particular ideas of the same sort” (IN 12; W2: 128). He thinks that one idea can represent others either by resemblance or by suggestion (cf. NTV 9, TVV 39 quoted below). When one idea represents others through suggestion, the result is mediate perception. The difference between perceiving the idea of Melampus functioning as a particular idea in the subject position and perceiving the very same idea functioning as a general idea in the predicate position is exactly the same as the difference between seeing particular light and colors and seeing distance by means of those light and colors. In both cases, the latter encodes information not included in the former.

As I read Berkeley, ‘animal’ indifferently signifies the particular idea of Melampus in that sentence. That particular idea functions as a general idea in the predicate position by representing the other particular ideas indifferently signified by ‘animal’. Those other ideas are mediately perceived by means of the immediately perceived idea of Melampus. Collectively, they constitute the meaning of ‘animal’. Berkeley writes that, “there is in truth an homonymy or diversity of significations in every name whatsoever except only the proper names” (MI 31; IN 18; W2:135). That diversity of significations is mediately perceived by means of a particular idea functioning as a general idea. But when the

⁶ For a defense of this reading, see Pearce, *Language and Structure*, 33–36.

particular idea of Melampus is uniquely signified by a name, it does not represent any other particular ideas.

Berkeley's distinction between the idea of Melampus functioning as a particular idea when signified by a name, and the same idea functioning as a general idea when signified by a general term, allows him to avoid the dilemma discussed earlier. The sentence 'Melampus is an animal' is informative because 'Melampus' and 'animal' have distinct meanings—one particular idea for 'Melampus'; and that same particular idea representing multiple other particular ideas for 'animal'. Although the particular idea of Melampus is immediately perceived in that sentence, when that idea functions as a general idea it becomes the means by which other particular ideas signified by 'animal' are mediately perceived. Berkeley thereby avoids the result that 'Melampus is an animal' is a tautology. That sentence also avoids being contradictory because the same idea that is uniquely signified by 'Melampus' also functions as a general idea when indifferently signified by 'animal'. Although the idea of Melampus functioning as a general idea represents ideas of Fido, Sparky, Lucky, etc., the result is not that the sentence 'Melampus is an animal' is synonymous with 'Melampus is Fido' or 'Melampus is Sparky'. Since those latter sentences contain only names, and not general terms, their meaning is constituted by *two* distinct particular ideas, both of which are functioning exclusively as particular ideas. And since there is no idea in 'Melampus is Fido' that functions as a general idea, that sentence cannot be synonymous with 'Melampus is an animal' in Berkeley's view. A similar analysis applies to 'Socrates is a man'.

2. The Problem of Communication

The dilemma just described, and that Berkeley rejects, is not the only argument for the indispensability of abstract ideas that he must confront. Locke argues that abstract ideas are necessary in order to solve an epistemic problem about language and other minds. Ideas are private and cannot be perceived by other minds. In that case, how can one person make her ideas known to another? (See *Essay* III.ii.1). Locke argues that language solves this problem by allowing one mind to indirectly perceive ideas in other minds. This indirect perception begins with a directly perceived "sensible mark" or utterance produced by the speaker. That utterance signifies exactly one of the speaker's ideas (E III.ii.2).

Locke then claims that in addition to immediately signifying an idea in the mind of the speaker, her word 'secretly' signifies an idea in the mind of the hearer. The immediate and secret significations of a word are "precisely the same" idea in each mind—that is, exactly similar ideas (E III.ii.4). Let's call this Locke's resemblance condition. When the resemblance condition is satisfied, the hearer has good reason to believe that the content of the speaker's thought is one idea rather than another, or none at all. That's because the secret signification of a word is an internal representation of the speaker's idea in the hearer's mind. Thus, a hearer can indirectly perceive a speaker's thought by directly perceiving her utterance and its secret signification (a resembling idea) in the hearer's mind. Evidence that a discourse satisfies the resemblance condition includes the transmission of knowledge and the ability to coordinate action through language. One can

hardly learn from another if teacher and learner “speak different languages,” as Locke puts it (E III.ii.4). Likewise, a team effort is unlikely to succeed if teammates fail to communicate.

Locke also thinks that a word must immediately signify exactly one idea in the speaker’s mind, and secretly signify exactly one idea in the hearer’s mind. Let’s call this Locke’s uniqueness condition (see E III.i.2, III.ii.2–4).⁷ Locke argues that if the uniqueness and resemblance aren’t satisfied, various ‘abuses’ of language result (E III.x). These include using words without meaning, and using words ambiguously or equivocally.

A special problem emerges for a general term like ‘animal’. Even if the uniqueness condition is satisfied, there’s no guarantee that particular ideas in different minds signified by the same general term will resemble each other. Suppose that Maya’s particular idea of an animal is of a scorpion; and that Grace’s particular idea is of a hawk. In that case, Grace does not know what Maya’s word ‘animal’ means. There is no internal representation of Maya’s idea in Grace’s mind because her particular idea does not resemble Maya’s particular idea. Locke concludes that uniqueness and resemblance require that Maya and Grace each have exactly one abstract idea signified by the general term ‘animal’; and that their abstract ideas resemble one another in determinable features (E III.iii).

Berkeley agrees with Locke that ideas are private and “cannot of themselves be brought into the view another.” He also agrees that “discourse & communication” solve this problem by “[instituting] sounds to be the signs of [the speaker’s] ideas” as well as ideas “raised in the mind of the hearer” (MI 19; W2: 128). Yet Berkeley’s insistence that abstract ideas are psychologically impossible entails that Locke’s uniqueness condition cannot apply to general terms.

But Berkeley’s indifferent signification theory raises the question of resemblance between sets of particular ideas in different minds. There’s no guarantee that the particular ideas in one mind that are indifferently signified by a general term exactly resemble the particular ideas indifferently signified by that same term in another mind. Suppose that the set of particular ideas in Maya’s mind indifferently signified by ‘triangle’ includes only equilateral and right triangles, but that Grace’s set includes only scalene and obtuse triangles. In that case, Grace lacks an internal representation of Maya’s set of particular ideas. Grace cannot indirectly perceive Maya’s ideas, and will not know what Maya’s word ‘triangle’ means.

As I read Berkeley, he addresses this concern by rejecting Locke’s resemblance condition. As mentioned earlier, Berkeley claims that one idea can represent another either by resemblance or by suggestion. One of Berkeley’s examples of mediate perception involves knowing the private or “invisible” emotions of other minds by means of immediately perceived ideas (NTV 9). He goes on to argue that suggestion or signification is the mechanism through which ideas, emotions, and states of other minds are mediately perceived by means of an immediately perceived idea.

⁷ Berkeley rejects Locke’s uniqueness condition at IN 18; W2: 134–35.

Importantly, Berkeley claims that mediate visual perception occurs between ideas that cannot resemble each other. Colors do not resemble textures (NTV 103). Yet, visual sensations signify tangible ideas “for no other reason, than barely because they have been observed to accompany them” (NTV 65). In a later work, Berkeley expands his explanation of how one idea comes to signify or suggest another:

Ideas which are observed to be connected with other ideas come to be considered as signs, by means whereof things not actually perceived by sense are signified or suggested to the imagination.... in general, all signs suggest the things signified, there being no idea which may not offer to the mind another idea which hath been frequently joined with it. In certain cases a sign may suggest its correlate as an image [i.e., through resemblance], in others as an effect, in others as a cause. But where there is no such relation of similitude or causality, nor any necessary connection whatsoever, two things, by their mere coexistence, or two ideas, merely by being perceived together, may suggest or signify one the other, their connexion being all the while arbitrary; for it is the connexion only, as such, that causeth this effect [i.e., that one idea signifies the other]. (TVV 39)

Berkeley lists several ways in which ‘frequently joined’ perceptions can signify each other. These are resemblance, cause and effect, and simply being perceived together. I claim that for Berkeley, the association of two perceptions as cause and effect explains mediate perception of ideas in other minds by means of perceptions in one’s own mind. Such mediate perception occurs even when the relevant perceptions in different minds do not resemble one another.

To see why, consider Locke’s claim that the transmission of knowledge is evidence that a discourse satisfies the resemblance condition. Berkeley agrees that transmission of knowledge is evidence of speaker meaning, despite rejecting abstract ideas (see IN 15–16, 21; W2: 33–35, 38). Suppose that Maya is teaching Grace geometry. Maya’s demonstrations are operations on her own particular ideas of triangles (see IN 12, 16; W2: 31–35). As a result of her lessons, Grace comes to have particular ideas of triangles. Grace’s particular ideas are indifferently signified by the word ‘triangle’, as are Maya’s particular ideas. But none of Grace’s ideas exactly resembles any of Maya’s ideas of triangles. Nevertheless, Grace’s ideas are effects of Maya’s ideas. Of course, Berkeley doesn’t mean that one idea has the power to produce another. Nor does he mean that one idea determines or necessitates the other. Berkeley simply means that one idea is regularly succeeded by another in a law-like way, and so they are associated as cause and effect (cf. PHK 32, 62, 64). That association is sufficient for one perception to suggest the other. But perceptions associated as cause and effect needn’t resemble each other. Consequently, Grace’s ideas can suggest Maya’s ideas, and vice-versa, without Grace’s ideas resembling Maya’s ideas.

3. Idea-less General Terms

Berkeley explains the meaning of general terms without resorting to abstract ideas in part by rejecting Locke’s uniqueness and resemblance conditions. But there is another

challenge confronting Berkeley's theory of general terms. That challenge prompted Berkeley to reject Locke's theory of meaning between 1707 and 1708.⁸

In the *Manuscript Introduction*, Berkeley disparages "those philosophers" like Locke, "[who] tell us every pertinent word hath an idea which never fails to accompany it where tis rightly understood" (MI 44; W2:140).⁹ But in his earlier *Notebooks* (NB 378, 696) and a paper presented in 1707,¹⁰ Berkeley adopts Locke's theory. Berkeley changed his mind when confronted with a theological challenge. As Berkeley puts it in the *Manuscript Introduction*:

We are told that the good things which God hath prepared for them that love him are such as eye hath not seen nor ear heard nor hath it enter'd into the heart of man to conceive. What man will pretend to say these words of the inspir'd writer are empty and insignificant? And yet who is there that can say they bring into his mind clear and determinate ideas of the good things in store for them that love God? (MI 36; W2: 137; see also IN 20; W2: 37)

Locke's theory implies that the biblical passage Berkeley references is meaningless, since the words 'good thing' do not signify ideas in the reader's mind. Whereas Locke has a way out of this difficulty—Locke can claim that the passage signifies abstract rather than particular ideas—Berkeley's rejection of abstract ideas makes this passage problematic for him (as discussed below, Berkeley thinks that even God cannot have abstract ideas). Nevertheless, Berkeley insists that the passage is meaningful, although he concedes that the words 'good thing' do not signify *any* particular ideas in the reader's mind.

Several commentators have concluded from this passage and others that Berkeley has a theory of operative meaning.¹¹ On those readings, operative meaning is not constituted by ideas. Rather, operative meaning is constituted by the actions, passions, emotions, or dispositions raised in the hearer by an utterance. An evaluation of those readings is beyond the scope of this essay. For present purposes, I do not deny that Berkeley has a theory of operative meaning. However, I claim that operative meaning does not constitute the meaning of general terms for Berkeley.

Consider an extended passage in the *Manuscript Introduction* where Berkeley rehearses the process by which the term 'good thing' accomplishes its operative ends without signifying particular ideas in the reader's mind. Berkeley begins by noting that in ordinary circumstances the word 'reward' signifies, "an idea of the particular good thing proposed for a reward," such as payment for one's labor. That idea is perceived together with a disposition to fulfill "those conditions on which [the reward] is to be obtained" and

⁸ See Bertil Belfrage, "The clash on semantics in Berkeley's Notebook A," *Hermathena* 139 (1985), 117–26; and Bertil Belfrage, "Berkeley's Theory of Emotive Meaning (1708)," *History of European Ideas* 7 (1986), 643–49.

⁹ See also *Alciphron* VII.2; W3: 287–88.

¹⁰ "Of Infinites," W4: 235–36.

¹¹ See Williford, "Operative Language"; Roberts, "Berkeley on Language"; and Pearce, *Language and Structure*, Ch. 1–2 for overviews of such readings.

a desire to please whomever promises that reward (MI 37; W2: 137). Since the word, the idea of a specific payment, the disposition, and the desire to please are all perceived together,¹² Berkeley's account of how one perception becomes a sign for another implies that any of those perceptions can signify any of the others.

Berkeley thinks that the same process occurs in the case of 'good thing' as used in biblical passages to refer to inconceivable rewards. He says:

Thus there having grown up in his mind a customary connexion between the hearing that proposition and being dispos'd to obey... the injunctions that accompany it, methinks it might be made use of, tho' not to introduce into his mind any idea marked by those words 'good thing' yet to incite in him a willingness to perform that which is requir'd of him. (MI 37; W2: 138)

Returning to the example discussed above, suppose that your employer has a particular idea of a payment for your labor in her mind, but you lack any such idea (perhaps because she hasn't told you how much you will be paid). Nevertheless, you perceive the word 'reward' together with your disposition and your desire. That word becomes a sign for those other perceptions without signifying any idea in your mind. Likewise, your perceptions of your own disposition and desire may suggest your employer's idea of your payment. In that case, you have an internal mental representation of the meaning of your employer's utterance, although your perception is not an idea and does not resemble your employer's idea. As a result, you understand the meaning of your employer's utterance despite lacking an idea in your own mind signified by that utterance or resembling the speaker's idea.

Berkeley thinks that the same happens with 'good thing' as used in biblical passages. The reader perceives the phrase 'good thing' together with their dispositions, emotions, desires, or other perceptions. That phrase becomes a sign for those perceptions without signifying any idea in the reader's mind. Berkeley concludes, "general names are often used in the propriety of language without the speaker designing them for marks of ideas of his own which he would have them raise in the understanding of the hearer" (MI 37; W2: 138). The utterance 'good thing' needn't signify an idea in the reader's mind in order for her to understand its meaning.

One might object that the problem of mental privacy presents a special challenge for my reading of Berkeley. In the case where an employer has a particular idea of a payment but the worker does not, the worker cannot perceive the employer's idea of a particular payment. Consequently, although the employer's idea and the worker's disposition are both signified by the word 'reward', the worker does not perceive all of these things together. Without being perceived together, there's no mechanism through which the worker's disposition can become a sign for the employer's idea. In that case, the worker's

¹² Strictly speaking, Berkeley thinks that finite minds cannot have ideas of desires and dispositions, insofar as the latter are mental activities (PHK 25, 27). But Berkeley does think that finite minds can have notions of these activities (PHK 89). Since notions are perceived, an idea of a payment and notions of a desire and a disposition can be perceived together.

disposition cannot become an internal representation of the employer's idea. The result seems to be that the worker doesn't know what the employer means by 'reward'.

Similarly, suppose that the meaning of the phrase 'good thing' is constituted by divine ideas, and that none of the finite minds reading that phrase has ideas signified by it. Even if that phrase produces cheer and fervor in the reader's mind that the reader can perceive, it seems that the reader's cheer and fervor cannot become a sign for the divine ideas signified by 'good thing' because the reader never perceives her cheer and fervor together with divine ideas. In that case, the reader's fervor cannot become an internal representation of the divine ideas that constitute the meaning of that phrase. Consequently, the reader doesn't know what the biblical phrase 'good thing' means. But Berkeley insists that phrase is both meaningful and understood by the reader.

In reply, recall that for Berkeley being perceived together is not the only way for one idea to become a sign for another. Berkeley also says that ideas can signify each other if they are associated as cause and effect. The ideas that are associated as cause and effect needn't be perceived by the same mind. The employer's idea of a particular payment is associated as the cause of the worker's disposition. The worker's disposition signifies the employer's idea because it is the effect of that idea. Consequently, the worker mediately perceives the employer's idea of a particular payment by means of immediately perceiving her own disposition. The worker's disposition thereby functions as an internal representation of the employer's idea, allowing the worker to grasp the employer's meaning.

As I read Berkeley, a similar analysis applies to 'good thing'. Roomet Jakapi argues that for Berkeley, biblical passages are indirect divine speech mediated through 'inspired' human writers; and that Berkeley thinks that God does not speak nonsense.¹³ This explains why Berkeley insists that 'good thing' is meaningful. But Berkeley also claims that even God cannot have abstract ideas since it is impossible, "that such a power [of forming abstract ideas] should be in the most perfect and exalted understanding" (MI 11; W2: 124–25). The implication is that God has particular ideas of heavenly rewards, although finite minds cannot perceive similar ideas. Since 'good thing' is a general term, Berkeley's theory of general terms suggests that it indifferently signifies multiple particular divine ideas of heavenly rewards. The challenge is to explain how finite minds can know the meaning of that general term despite being incapable of perceiving the divine ideas signified by it.

That explanation is implied by Berkeley's example of an employer promising payment to a worker, combined with his principle that perceptions can signify each other if they are associated as cause and effect. Finite minds cannot perceive the multiple particular divine

¹³ See Roomet Jakapi, "Emotive Meaning and Christian Mysteries in Berkeley's *Alciphron*," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 10 (2002), 401–411; Roomet Jakapi, "Faith, Truth, Revelation and Meaning in Berkeley's Defense of the Christian Religion (in *Alciphron*)," *Modern Schoolman* 80 (2002), 23–34; and Roomet Jakapi, "Christian Mysteries and Berkeley's Alleged Non-Cognitivism," in *Reexamining Berkeley's Philosophy*, ed. Stephen H. Daniel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 188–98.

ideas indifferently signified by ‘good thing’, just as the worker cannot perceive the employer’s idea of a particular payment signified by ‘reward’. Nevertheless, the divine ideas signified by ‘good thing’ cause in finite minds “a cheerfulness and zeal and perseverance in well doing” (MI 37; W2: 138). Just as the worker’s disposition signifies the employer’s idea because it is the effect of that idea, a finite mind’s fervor signifies divine ideas of good things because the former is the effect of the latter. Thus, a finite mind’s fervor suggests divine ideas to that finite mind, just as the worker’s disposition suggests the employer’s idea of a particular payment to the worker. For this reason, an inspired writer needn’t seek to “mark out to our understandings the ideas of those particular things our faculties never attain’d to.” The writer need only use ‘good thing’ “to incite in [the reader] a willingness to perform that which is requir’d of him” (MI 37; W2: 138). The reader mediately perceives the meaning of ‘good thing’ by means of immediately perceived effects incited by those ideas, without immediately perceiving the particular divine ideas indifferently signified by that term.

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“Experience Itself Must Be Taught to Read and Write”: Scientific Practice and Berkeley’s Language of Nature¹

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I. Introduction: Two Puzzles in Berkeley’s Writings

According to George Berkeley’s *divine language model*, which has seen a recent resurgence of scholarly interest, the natural world has a linguistic structure. Relations between natural phenomena, including ostensible causal relations, should be understood as semiotic, syntactic, or semantic relations instituted and sustained by God’s linguistic practices. Corollary to the language model is what Jonathan Dancy calls a *hermeneutic philosophy of science*, “one which understands the activity of scientific explanation as exactly analogous to semantic interpretation.”² To date, Kenneth Pearce’s *Language and the Structure of Berkeley’s World* provides the closest approximation we have to such a hermeneutic philosophy of science. The purpose of this essay is to bring us another step closer by solving two outstanding puzzles in Berkeley’s writings. Doing so will also shed light on the divine language argument in *Alciphron* IV and on the relationship between common-sense and scientific discourse. The two puzzles are:

1. Why does Berkeley oscillate, seemingly indiscriminately, between the analogies of written language and spoken language in describing the divine language of nature?
2. Why does Berkeley describe scientists as *grammarians* of nature in the 1710 edition of PHK (§§108-110) but remove this terminology in the 1734 edition?³

These puzzles admit of a common solution: between the publication of *Alciphron* in 1732 and the revision of PHK in 1734, Berkeley at least tentatively adopted the view (possibly borrowed from Francis Bacon) that scientists are distinguished by their *literacy* in the language of nature from laymen who are merely *fluent*. Beyond the textual support I provide, I take the ability of my interpretation to solve these seemingly disparate puzzles at one stroke to be a strong argument in its favor.

¹ This essay—along with Keota Fields’ “Berkeley on the Meaning of General Terms” in this issue of *Berkeley Studies*—is a winner of the 2020 Colin and Alisa Turbayne International Berkeley Essay Prize Competition.

² Forthcoming.

³ Cf. *The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne* [W], ed. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop (9 vols.; London: Nelson, 1948-1957), 2: 88-90. Other abbreviations: NB=Notebooks, NTV=*An Essay towards a New Theory of Vision*, PHK= *Principles of Human Knowledge*, DHP=*Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, PO=*Passive Obedience*, Alc=*Alciphron*, TVV=*Theory of Vision Vindicated*, S=*Siris*.

II. Written and Spoken Language

There is widespread disagreement as to whether Berkeley thinks of the language of nature as a written or spoken language. Turbayne includes the claim that it is a written language in his list of *axioms* about the divine language model,⁴ but this does not represent any consensus. For example, Creery and Hooker hold that it is spoken only,⁵ while Dancy and Printz appear ambivalent.⁶ Pearce and Fasko, meanwhile, have signaled openness to it having both written and spoken aspects but have not developed this possibility in a systematic way.

This lack of consensus is understandable as the textual evidence is ambiguous. Little if anything, for example, can be inferred from the terms “author” and “discourse,” both of which appear to be neutral with respect to the written–spoken distinction. In the Draft Introduction to PHK, Berkeley twice contrasts the hearing of discourses to the reading of texts, but this usage does not survive in his published works. In fact, the Introduction of PHK §20 (W 2: 37) and the TVV §48 (W 1: 268) both indicate that a discourse can be either read or heard. Likewise, Berkeley normally uses “author” in a non-literary sense having to do with origination or cause.⁷ Nor are the linguistic analogies which illustrate mediate perception or the bundling of ideas into objects conclusive,⁸ since his point is simply about how words come to suggest sensible things through arbitrary association.

These terms and passages aside, we still find little consistency in NTV and PHK. At most, we can say that PHK tends to employ written–language analogies while NTV runs analogies of both kinds together. In PHK, Berkeley frequently states that our ideas are “imprinted” on the senses, which is suggestive of written language. As Turbayne argues, citing PHK §§108-109 (W 2: 88-89), “further confirmation is provided by such metaphors as: ‘well-read in the language of nature,’ ‘perusing the volume of nature,’ and ‘reading other books’” (“Metaphysical Grammar,” 15). In NTV (§§142-143), Berkeley also uses an analogy with written words to explain how a visible square is more apt than a visible circle to represent a tangible square (W 1: 228-29). In both works, however, Berkeley routinely uses *marks* and *signs* interchangeably [see PHK §§65-66 (W 2: 69-70), NTV §147 (W I: 231)]. “Mark,” whatever its technical usage, connotes inscription while “sign” does not—as will become evident when I discuss Alc 7.12 (W 3: 304). Moreover, Berkeley states that “the voice of [the Author of] nature ... speaks to our eyes”

⁴ See Colin Turbayne, “Berkeley’s Metaphysical Grammar,” in *Berkeley: Principles of Human Knowledge, Text and Critical Essays*, ed. Colin Turbayne (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970), 14.

⁵ See Walter Creery, “Berkeley’s Argument for a Divine Visual Language,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 3 (1972), 219; and Michael Hooker, “Berkeley’s Argument from Design,” in *Berkeley: Critical and Interpretive Essays*, ed. Colin Turbayne (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 269.

⁶ Jonathan Dancy, *Berkeley: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 109, 122; Dancy, “Berkeley, Descartes and the Science of Nature,” *Harvard Review of Philosophy* 20 (2014), 13; and Amanda Printz, “The Scope and Significance of George Berkeley’s Language Model,” Ph.D. Diss. (University of Southern California, 2007), 43, 65, 78, and 91 state that the world is a divine *text* and that perception is “identical to reading,” but often deviate to talk of *phonemes* and divine *utterances*.

⁷ For example, PHK §81 (W 2: 75); DHP (W 2: 124); Alc 3.10 (W 3: 129); S §320 (W 5: 147).

⁸ For example, TVV §48 (W I: 267-68); DHP (W 2: 174); Alc 4.11 (W 3: 155).

[NTV §152 (W 1: 233)],⁹ and our perceptual ideas are compared to *pronounced* words [NTV §73 (W 1: 198)]. At this point in his career (1709-1710), little hangs on the distinction, and Berkeley is happy to elide it.

If Berkeley's natural theology had only conventional aims, eliding the written–spoken language distinction would be reasonable. As he states, instances of written and spoken language both seem to indicate intelligent agency: “no matter whether these signs are pronounced or written, whether they enter by the eye or the ear: they have the same use, and are equally proofs of an intelligent, thinking, designing cause” (Alc 4.7; W 3: 149). However, the Berkeley of 1732 is not content to prove God's mere existence, or even that God designed the natural world. Instead, he attempts to prove “not a Creator merely, but a provident Governor, actually and intimately present” (Alc 4.14; W 3: 160). It appears that in Alc 4, Berkeley suddenly realized that he could not infer a provident or intimately present Governor if the language of nature were conceived on the model of written language, or at least *only* on the model of written language. This is because written books, while perfectly good evidence of one or more intelligent authors, are hardly evidence that these authors are intimately present with us (or even still alive and active in the world).¹⁰ Thus, everything changes in the fourth dialogue: Berkeley carefully avoids any use of the term “mark” (reserving it for the seventh dialogue), and the spoken language analogy entirely dominates. Berkeley's express goal is to show that God “speaks to man in the same clear and sensible manner as one man doth to another” (Alc 4.6; W 3: 148). We then learn that God “constantly speaks to the eyes of all mankind” (Alc 4.11; W 3: 155), that we “have as much reason to think [God] speaks to [our] eyes, as for thinking any particular person speaks to [our] ears” (Alc 4.12; W 3: 157), and that “he daily speaks to our senses in a manifest and clear dialect” (Alc 4.14; W 3: 159).

Some have tried to draw the written–spoken distinction in terms of the sense–modality in which the language is encoded,¹¹ which could let us explain Alc 4's focus on spoken

⁹ W 1: 233. The brackets mark a later insertion in the third edition of NTV. Given that “author” has no significance for the written vs. spoken distinction, Berkeley likely made this insertion because the expression “voice of nature” was more typically used in the 18th century to refer to the innate moral conscience belonging to human beings independent of Christian revelation. Berkeley himself uses it in this moral sense at PO §25 (W 6: 31) and Alc 1.16 (W 3: 62).

¹⁰ Costica Bradatan, “George Berkeley and the *Liber Mundi* Tradition,” in *The Other Bishop Berkeley: An Exercise in Reenchantment* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), 75; and Manuel Fasko, “God's Language: George Berkeley's Conception of Nature,” Ph.D. Diss. (University of Zürich, 2020): §4.1, §4.6 are cognizant of this difficulty.

¹¹ Turbayne (“Metaphysical Grammar,” 12) and Lawrence Mirarchi [“Dynamical Implications of Berkeley's Doctrine of Heterogeneity: A Note on the Language Model of Nature,” in *Berkeley: Critical and Interpretive Essays*, ed. Colin Turbayne (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 250-52] try to equate written *letters* and spoken *phonemes* with *visibilia* and *tangibilia*, respectively. Whether this can be done has no significance for whether sensible bodies (the *words*) are instances of spoken or written language in the technical sense I discuss in this paragraph. *Visibilia* may indeed *stand for tangibilia* in the way letters stand for phonemes, while *meaning* a far wider range of things once appropriately compounded into objects and scenes. Barnouw may have something like this in mind when he writes: “the semiotic linking of visual and tactile sensations is transferred or transposed to a different level, moving from the construction of objects in space to anticipation of the results of events in the world.” See Jeffrey Barnouw, “The Two Motives Behind

language in terms of its focus on *visual* language. This is a mistake. An audio–recording of someone’s voice, after all, is no better evidence of providence or intimate presence than a book is, while a real–time exchange of epistles very much is. Moreover, Braille shows that a written language need not be visual, while sign–language shows that a visual language need not be written. The distinction is best understood metaphorically and should be drawn in terms of contextually appropriate responsiveness to our own actions and utterances. Written language, in my technical sense, is *monologic*—what we might call “mere transmission.” Spoken language, in contrast, is *dialogic* and corresponds to reciprocal communication. Only if nature is supposed to contain the latter is Berkeley’s divine language argument intelligible as an argument for divine providence and intimate presence. Written words exhibit contextual variation in the limited sense that their meanings partially depend upon the context of surrounding words and sometimes where they are inscribed (e.g. “STOP” inscribed on a street sign vs. in a telegram), but not with respect to our own subsequent actions and utterances. A copy of the *Iliad* expresses the same sentences no matter where I take it or what I yell at it; a living person does not. This is why Berkeley writes that it is “the instantaneous production and reproduction of so many signs combined, dissolved, transposed, diversified, and adapted to such an endless variety of purposes, ever shifting with the occasions and suited to them, [that] doth set forth and testify the immediate operation of a provident Spirit” (Alc 4.14; W 3: 159-60).

If the model of spoken language is uniquely sufficient for his purposes, then why does Berkeley not replace the “volume of nature” and other written language analogies in PHK with spoken language analogies? He easily could have done so while making the various other changes to the 1734 edition, leading me to believe that his failure to do so is no accident. Like Kenneth Winkler, I see in Berkeley’s system a dichotomy of empirical regularities that mirrors Wilfrid Sellars’ manifest and scientific images: “the simultaneous existence of two sets of useful regularities—one available to the common man and viable within the realm of ordinary life, the other apparent only to the curious eye of the philosopher and in the end more useful than the other, even from the point of view of common sense.”¹² On my interpretation, God’s spoken discourse corresponds to the former while God’s written discourse corresponds to the latter.

At Alc 7.12, we receive the first hint that this is what Berkeley has in mind. He asserts that arithmetic, because it is one of the sciences, requires not only that we establish a set of conventional names but that we “devise proper marks of a permanent nature” (W 3: 304). The connection between the *permanence* of a mark and its status as a written sign is simple: static signs are monologic. It is because the book and the audio–recording are both static transmissions that both exhibit no variation in response to our own actions and utterances. Accordingly, what is expressed in the divine language *qua* scientific image should be the same always and everywhere, or at least, depend in no way on our own actions. In contrast, what is expressed in the divine language *qua* manifest image should

Berkeley’s Expressly Unmotivated Signs: Sure Perception and Personal Providence,” in *New Interpretations of Berkeley’s Thought*, ed. Stephen H. Daniel (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2008), 169.

¹² Kenneth Winkler, “Berkeley, Newton, and the Stars.” *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 17 (1986), 35.

change in response to our own actions in systematic ways indicative (according to Berkeley) of divine providence. For example, while we cannot choose what we perceive, given that our eyes are open, we do have the power to choose how to act—including whether and where to look—and the regularities that obtain in our perceptions can be affected in myriad ways by these actions.

To make the distinction clearer, and to begin to see its significance, we should consider the *content* proper to each discourse. The content proper to the spoken discourse should vary in response to human activity and be scrutable to common-sense, as many derivations from simple induction do and are: “that food nourishes, sleep refreshes, and fire warms us; that to sow in the seed-time is the way to reap in the harvest, and, in general, that to obtain such or such ends, such or such means are conducive” (PHK §31; W 2: 54).¹³ Human actions can bring it about that any of these facts fail to obtain (and are either modified or replaced) in a particular context. In contrast, the content proper to the written discourse should not be contingent upon human activity and there should be no plausible induction to it from common-sense mechanics. *That Neptune exists* and *that Earth has a dense inner core* both satisfy these criteria. At least for all practical purposes, whether these facts continue to obtain is not contingent on human activity and they are inscrutable without the antecedent formulation of Newtonian mechanics.¹⁴

As we will see shortly, Newtonian mechanics are best understood as the *syntax* of the language of nature. Normally, the content of a sentence is contingent even given the full syntax of the language (just as Neptune’s existence is contingent even given Newton’s laws of motion and gravitation). It is possible, however, for a discourse in a language—whether written or spoken—to express information about its own grammar, and in so doing enable us to better understand other parts of that very discourse. In some cases, as with the syntactic rules governing the use of punctuation, these rules are in no way implicit in ordinary speech behaviors (unlike many other syntactic rules).¹⁵ Analogously, while Newtonian mechanics (or at least approximations thereof) seem to be implicit in common-sense mechanics, not even approximations of non-classical (e.g., quantum) mechanics seem to be implicit in common-sense mechanics. This is significant because it shows that my interpretation of Berkeley’s language model is consistent with scientific developments that transcend Newtonianism. As we are about to see, although scientists are to be distinguished from laymen by their literacy, there is no reason to suppose that their investigative (rather than merely interpretive) work is complete simply because they have mastered their ABCs.

¹³ Cf. NTV §147 (W 1: 321).

¹⁴ There may also be some content which finds expression in both discourses, non-propositional content, or propositional content unrelated to any specific empirical regularities (e.g. information expressed about God through “indirect reference”). So long as there is importantly different content proper to each discourse, my purposes do not require us to explore these additional possibilities.

¹⁵ For detailed argument that punctuation has syntactic functions distinct from any found in spoken language (even from those functions performed by intonation and other prosodic phenomena), see Geoffrey Nunberg, *The Linguistics of Punctuation* (Stanford, CA: Center for the Study of Language and Information, 1990), 3–7.

III. The Grammarian Analogy

The second puzzle contains two (presumably related) components: what did Berkeley *mean* by characterizing scientists as grammarians, and why did he *remove* this characterization from PHK? Of these components, the first has received the most scholarly attention.

Some, like Downing and Brook,¹⁶ see scientists as grammarians primarily in the sense that they discover empirical regularities with especially great generality (and therefore usefulness). This interpretation takes seriously Berkeley's various assertions that the knowledge possessed by scientists is different mainly in *degree* and not *kind* from that which laymen possess,¹⁷ and it makes it relatively clear why this additional knowledge is useful. However, it does not take the term "grammar" itself seriously enough. Grammatical rules are not mere empirical regularities, however general, in how a language is used. Rather, they have a prescriptive as well as descriptive dimension,¹⁸ and they govern how the meanings of complex expressions relate to the meanings of the simple expressions of which they are composed.

Others, like Pearce and Turbayne,¹⁹ see scientists as grammarians in the sense that the laws they discover are the *syntax* of the divine language—the rules for how lexical items (i.e., sensible bodies)²⁰ can be combined and ordered in experience. Interpretations of this sort take the term "grammar" seriously but make it more difficult to explain why the additional knowledge that science provides is useful. This is Dancy's main criticism ("Berkeley, Descartes," 6); seemingly, if we already speak a language, there is little that a grammarian can add to our understanding or competence.²¹

Dancy's own interpretation is that non-scientists are at an early stage of language acquisition while scientists are fluent enough to make use of the compositional grammar.

¹⁶ See Lisa Downing, "Berkeley's Natural Philosophy and Philosophy of Science," in *The Cambridge Companion to Berkeley*, ed. Kenneth Winkler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 249–52; and Richard Brook, *Berkeley's Philosophy of Science* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 20.

¹⁷ For example, PHK §105 (W 2: 87) and S §254 (W 5: 121).

¹⁸ See Turbayne, "Metaphysical Grammar," 31; and Printz, "Berkeley's Language Model," 124 on the prescriptive aspects of laws of nature in Berkeley.

¹⁹ See Kenneth Pearce, *Language and the Structure of Berkeley's World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 192, 204; and Turbayne, "Metaphysical Grammar," 7.

²⁰ Not all interpreters agree that sensible bodies are the words, but this is the prevailing interpretation and I accept it because of Berkeley's remarks in PHK §65 (W 2: 69) about ideas being combined into bodies for the same reason that letters are combined into words. Like Pearce, I also "follow Turbayne in taking visual ideas to signify tangible stimuli in the way written words signify spoken words, rather than in the way words signify their referents" (*Language and Structure*, 181). Sensible bodies are words in the language of nature, for the same word can be represented using letters or sounds just as the same table can be seen or touched.

²¹ For a discussion of how the technical grammar of physics is supposed to differ from the common-sense grammar of ordinary body-talk, see Pearce, *Language and Structure*, 188–96. He argues that grammarians can add precision and generality to normal linguistic competence, and that on the syntactic approach, "Berkeley preserves the ability of natural science to teach us things we didn't know before"—which is no doubt true but does not suffice as an explanation of science's tremendous usefulness. Not all knowledge is particularly useful knowledge.

Thus, “the scientist is distinguished by his ability to decompose whole utterances into their component words,” which is a crucial step towards fluency (Dancy, *Berkeley*, 114). It is only by acquiring this ability, for example, that we begin to be able to form novel utterances of our own. This interpretation takes the term “grammar” seriously, and points to the usefulness of grammatical understanding, but it has major problems. Berkeley makes clear that we have all been learning the divine language almost constantly from birth [see NTV §144 (W 1: 229) and Alc 4.11 (W 3: 155-56)]. If, moreover, fluency is a matter of automatically attending to the senses of words rather than to the words themselves (Pearce, *Language and Structure*, 72), and if distance (for example) is suggested to us by visible qualities so automatically that we can mistakenly think we perceive it immediately [NTV §51 (W 1: 190)], then it seems that we must already be fluent in the divine language. Since ordinary speakers of a language obviously have a grasp, if only implicitly, of its compositional grammar, such a grasp cannot be what distinguishes scientists *qua* grammarians.

I accept the syntactic approach because, as I will discuss shortly, Dancy’s criticism is solvable. However, I do not think this approach—in and of itself—can explain Berkeley’s subsequent removal of the grammarian analogy. Why, as Berkeley embraces the language model ever more and more,²² would he suddenly return to PHK and deliberately excise one of its potentially important aspects? To date, the only candidate explanation is that the grammarian analogy—while apt with respect to syntax—suggests the wrong *goals* for natural science. “Grammar manuals are useful,” Pearce tells us, “but the purpose of literature is nonetheless not to be analysed grammatically, but to be read for its content.”²³ Studying nature’s grammar is indeed *part* of the job of the scientist, but it would be myopic to analyze the grammar of a text rather than attend to its meaning. Thus, although Berkeley’s view does not change, he still opts to revise PHK.

This is indeed one possible explanation of the removal. However, it does not explain *why* the study of grammar is useful and should even be *part* of the scientist’s job description. Does explicitly formulating already implicit grammar rules enable us to understand or generate any new utterances? Usually not—but it does serve to enhance our literacy.²⁴ The utility of literacy in human languages needs no explanation, nor does that of grammar for acquiring (and improving) one’s literacy. On my interpretation, the grammarian is literally a grammarian (insofar as she renders explicit the rules we already implicitly follow), but *pace* Dancy this is useful beyond measure. Berkeley does not abandon the view that laws of nature are rules of syntax (and that it is *part* of the job of scientists to articulate and formalize them), but he removes the grammarian analogy because his mature view is that scientists are distinguished by their literacy in the divine

²² Many note this progression, but Printz (“Berkeley’s Language Model,” 24–36) has done an especially admirable job tracing it in detail.

²³ Kenneth Pearce, “The Semantics of Sense Perception in Berkeley,” *Religious Studies* 44 (2008), 258; cf. PHK §109 (W 2: 89).

²⁴ In principle, it is possible to read and write merely by learning phonetics. One can, for example, learn to sound-out a text, listen to one’s own voice, and interpret the sounds accordingly (as was sometimes the normal method in the ancient world for texts written in *scriptio continua*). This method, however, is incredibly inefficient and error-prone.

language (for which an explicit understanding of its grammar is merely one important aspect).

My interpretation also does justice to Berkeley's assertions that scientific knowledge is not fundamentally different from lay knowledge. Both are a matter of linguistic competence, and at least in principle any deliverance of natural science is expressible in common—sense terms (just as facts expressible in written English are expressible in spoken English). Science can lend clarity and exactness to our understanding, as Berkeley states at TVV §35 (W 1: 263), but it remains that “one who can neither write nor read, in common use understands the meaning of numeral words as well as the best philosopher or mathematician” (Alc 7.11; W 3: 304). Scientists may indeed have privileged access to information that is encoded only in the divine language's written form (such as the information that Neptune exists), but this information is not different in kind.

Scientists may also have the unique ability to *write*. My tentative theory, which I cannot here defend in detail, is that humans writing in the language of nature corresponds to technological innovation.²⁵ I find support for this view in two remarks by Berkeley: “general laws ... are by men applied as well to the framing artificial things for the use and ornament of life as to the explaining the various phenomena” (PHK §62; W 2: 67), and “by considering this doctrine of force, men are taught to frame engines, by means of which things difficult and otherwise impossible may be performed” (Alc 7.7; W 3: 295). Again, though science may vastly expand upon ordinary human capabilities, these capabilities are not different in kind.

Admittedly, Berkeley writes in TVV §7 (published in 1733) that “the characters of divinity are large and legible throughout the whole creation to men of plain sense and common understanding” (W 1: 255)—which seems to indicate that laymen are (or can be) literate in the divine language. My reply is twofold. First, although Berkeley knew that nature must contain a spoken discourse for the inference to divine providence to have any chance to succeed, he would have been under pressure to include written—language analogies given the extensive use of the book—of—nature trope in the theological background.²⁶ If and when he can do so without directly contradicting his purposes, it is unsurprising that he would—and at TVV §7, he is simply making introductory remarks about the need to address secular sophists as well as common folk. Second, there are additional aspects of the 1734 revisions to PHK which corroborate my interpretation and should overrule a single turn of phrase used in the interim. To these I now turn.

²⁵ For a related discussion, including discussion of humans *speaking* in the language of nature, see Mirarchi, “Berkeley's Doctrine,” 249–54; Turbayne, “Metaphysical Grammar,” 29; Dancy, “Berkeley, Descartes,” 14, and Pearce, “Semantics,” 256.

²⁶ For discussion of this background, see Bradatan, “*Liber Mundi*,” 68; Dana Matthiessen, “The Rise of Cryptographic Metaphors in Boyle and Their Use for the Mechanical Philosophy,” *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 73 (2019), 8; and Carla Rita Palmerino, “Reading the Book of Nature: The Ontological and Epistemological Underpinnings of Galileo's Mathematical Realism,” in *The Language of Nature*, eds. Geoffrey Gorham et al. (Minneapolis: Minnesota Center for Philosophy of Science, 2016), 34.

In the 1710 edition, §108 states that “a man may be well–read in the language of nature, without understanding the grammar of it,” and §110 states that “the best grammar of the kind we are speaking of [is Newton’s *Principia*].” In the 1734 edition, both lines are replaced. §108 now states that “a man may well *understand* natural signs without ... being able to say by what rule a thing is so or so,” while §110 states that “the best *key* for natural science [is Newton’s *Principia*]” (both emphases mine). At one stroke, Berkeley has done two things: he has replaced the only intimation outside of TVV §7 that laymen are literate (“well–read”) with one that they are merely fluent (“understanding”), and he has introduced a cryptographic term (“key”). I will address the significance of this term after looking at the changes to §66.

In the 1710 edition, §66 states that “to understand this language of the Author of Nature ought to be the employment of the natural philosopher.” The 1734 edition, in contrast, states that “to understand those signs instituted by the Author of Nature ought to be the employment of the natural philosopher.” Berkeley did not intend these changes to *water down* the language model, as Dancy suggests (“Berkeley, Descartes,” 17). Instead, consistently with the changes to §§108–110, he is carefully removing a turn of phrase that suggests that laymen do not understand God’s language. That scientists alone should be able to understand certain *signs* instituted by God is perfectly consistent with laymen being able to understand God’s language.

That Berkeley chooses to re-describe the *Principia* as a *key* is significant because it suggests he has been reading the alchemists in the interim.²⁷ Alongside the book–of–nature trope, cryptographical analogies pervade the writings of the alchemists—and in Francis Bacon we find the claim that “the results of investigation need to be written down, that ‘experience itself has to be taught how to read and write,’ that is, to become literate.”²⁸ Bacon is the lone alchemist (to my knowledge) to analogize scientific acumen to literacy, and although there is no definitive proof that Berkeley was reading Bacon in particular, it would hardly be surprising given how well–versed Berkeley was in the science of his day.²⁹

It is unclear how literally Bacon would have meant such claims. Jalobeanu states that it is “extremely tempting to give such claims a quasiliteral interpretation, transforming [the] experimental investigation of nature into a form of literary pursuit” (41), but he remains justifiably wary because Bacon has nothing to say about rules of grammar and syntax (63). Berkeley, however, does—and given the divine language model, he would have had

²⁷ Lest it be thought I hang too much on one changed word, note that Berkeley’s only other uses of “key” in a similar scientific context are at Alc 7.7 (W 3: 295–96), *The Analyst* §3 (W 4: 66), and S §245 (W 5: 117)—all of which are temporally consistent with a new development beginning with *Alciphron*.

²⁸ See Dana Jalobeanu, “The Marriage of Physics with Mathematics: Francis Bacon on Measurement, Mathematics, and the Construction of a Mathematical Physics,” in *The Language of Nature*, eds. Geoffrey Gorham et al. (Minneapolis: Minnesota Center for Philosophy of Science, 2016), 54.

²⁹ Apart from the occasional quotation, the only explicit mentions of Bacon are at NB 564 (W 1: 70) and Alc 6.22 (W 3: 264).

no compunction giving Bacon's analogies a perfectly literal interpretation. If he did, it explains these otherwise mysterious 1734 revisions in a parsimonious way.

IV. Conclusion: Reconciling the Two Discourses

Having accepted that Berkeley's language model contains two discourses, one written and one spoken, we may still wonder about the manner of their co-instantiation. Given that Berkeley is an immaterialist who denies that science describes any mind-independent reality underlying the world of manifest sense—experience—how could he consistently maintain that separately coherent discourses with distinct content are encoded in one and the same stream of sensible ideas produced in the minds of finite spirits by God?

The answer is unlikely to be found in Berkeley's own work, but I believe he has two main options: cryptography and steganography. On the one hand, a coherent message could contain additional encrypted messages revealed only upon the application of one or more appropriate keys. On the other hand, a coherent message could contain additional messages revealed only upon the application of a microscope. The former could be supported by Berkeley's 1734 conception of Newton's *Principia* as a key, while the latter could be supported by NTV §85: "a microscope brings us as it were into a new world [and] presents us with a new scene of visible objects, quite different from what we behold with the naked eye" (W 1: 206).

These possibilities must await further exploration, but they are not mutually exclusive—and both would be agreeable to Robert Boyle's analogizing of nature to "an excellent letter about several subjects, and to different purposes, whereof some parts were written in plain characters, others in cyphers, besides a third sort wherein both kinds of writing were variously mix'd."³⁰

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³⁰ Robert Boyle, "A Free Enquiry into the Vulgarly Receiv'd Notion of Nature" (1686), in *The Works of Robert Boyle*, eds. Michael Hunter and Edward B. Davis (14 vols.; New York: Routledge, 2000), 10: 569.

The Retrieval of the Letter ‘To the Author of the *Minute Philosopher*’ from September 9th, 1732: A Note

Manuel Fasko

In 1732 George Berkeley published *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher* to which he appended a slightly revised version of his 1709 book *An Essay Towards A New Theory of Vision* (NTV). One of the first known reactions to *Alciphron* is an anonymously written letter which appeared a few months after its publication in the newspaper *The Daily Post-Boy* (September 9th, 1732).¹ Although the author found some words of praise for *Alciphron*, she or he expressed concerns pertaining to NTV, particularly to Berkeley’s thesis that vision is the language of God (e.g. NTV § 147).² After a few months Berkeley reacted to this anonymous critique with his *Theory of Vision or Visual Language shewing the immediate Presence and Providence of a Deity Vindicated and Explained* (TVV).³

Berkeley appended a copy of the anonymous critic’s letter to TVV.⁴ However, until now an original copy of *The Daily Post-Boy* issue had yet to be discovered. As a result, there was no way to verify if and in what respects the annexed version is faithful to the original. Additionally, there are questions that have arisen regarding the publication history of the *Theory of Vision Vindicated* because, as Luce already remarked, the pamphlet was “more or less, lost to sight” for almost a century after its original publication (W 1: 243).

The first currently known republication is Cowell’s heavily annotated version from 1860. In his Preface Cowell raises further questions:

‘Of English Philosophers of the very highest note’, Sir William Hamilton has observed, ‘(strange to say!) there are now actually lying unknown to their Editors, Biographers, and fellow-Metaphysicians, published treatises of the highest interest and importance [as of Cudworth, Berkeley, Collins, &c.]’. To this class belongs the present work [TVV], which I think it at once a duty and a pleasure to rescue from the neglect into which it has fallen.

¹ See Anonymous, “To the Author of the *Minute Philosopher*,” *Daily Post-Boy* issue no. 7024, September 9, 1732, printed for T. Warner at the Black-Boy in Paternoster Row, London.

² See *The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne* [W], ed. A. A. Luce & T. E. Jessop (9 vols.; London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1948–57), 1: 277.

³ We know the exact publication date for neither *Alciphron* nor the *Theory of Vision Vindicated*. The first edition of *Alciphron* was most likely published in February (W 3: 1) or March [see *The Works of George Berkeley: Philosophical Works*, 4 vols., ed. Alexander Campbell Fraser (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871), II: 5] 1732 with a second edition following a couple of months later. TVV was probably published between January [see Jean-Paul Pittion and David Berman, “A New Letter by Berkeley to Browne on Divine Analogy,” *Mind* 78 (1969), 376] and March (W 1: 243) of 1733. I use the Gregorian calendar throughout.

⁴ Cf. *The Theory of Vision Vindicated & Explained*, ed. H. V. H. Cowell (London: Macmillan and Co., 1860), 137-41; W 1: 277–79.

Its substance was inserted in ‘The Daily Post-Boy’, of September the 9th, 1732. The next year it was reprinted in a separate form; but it has not been included in any of Berkeley’s collected works, nor had it been noticed. (v–vi)

Cowell suggests there could be two versions of the *Theory of Vision Vindicated*. At least, he seems to maintain that there are two answers by Berkeley, when he writes (referring to TVV) its “substance was inserted” in the *Daily Post-Boy* issue of September 9th, 1732 and then reprinted the next year in “a separate form.” Thus, Cowell implies that this issue of the *Daily Post-Boy* might contain an answer by Berkeley, thereby raising the question about whether there are in fact two answers by Berkeley and whether there is a hitherto unknown piece of philosophical writing by Berkeley.

Now, we can say that it is possible to tackle these questions because I was able to retrieve an original copy of the *Daily Post-Boy* issue no. 7024 from September 9th, 1732 from a private seller. (A transcription is attached at the end of this article.) I conferred with Dr. Urs Leu, Head of Department for *Alte Drucke und Rara (Old Prints and Rarities)* of *Zentralbibliothek Zürich*. He pointed out the excellent condition of the document, and he observed that the print and paper of the copy are consistent with the methods used at the time. Therefore, and in the absence of any indication to the contrary, there is currently no good reason to doubt the authenticity of the document.

In the following I will answer the three questions raised so far by analysing the document and providing a comparative analysis of the original letter and the version appended to the *Theory of Vision Vindicated*.

First, I want to address questions about whether the *Daily Post-Boy* issue of September 9th, 1732 contains an answer by Berkeley (and hence if there is more than one reaction to the anonymous critic by Berkeley). When analysing the *Daily Post-Boy* issue, the most fundamental thing to remark is that it in fact contains an article called “*To the Author of the Minute Philosopher*.” Thus, the information Berkeley provides is correct (TVV § 1).⁵ Unfortunately, the issue in question does not contain any response by Berkeley or, for that matter, any further content of (obvious) philosophical interest—with the exception of the article which caught Berkeley’s attention. Apart from this article, the issue contains a long article on the then Duke of Lorraine, Francis I (1708-1765), an *Extract of a Private Letter from Berlin, Ship-News*, some notes on deaths and marriages in London and Ireland, two notices on lost goods and several advertisements concerning the publication of books.

The document serves to remove any remaining uncertainty as to the local provenance of the newspaper. Luce has pointed out that A. C. Fraser probably made a mistake when he

⁵ Hence, we can with certainty exclude the (admittedly rather far-fetched) possibility that there was no letter and that there is another reason why Berkeley wrote the *Theory of Vision Vindicated* the way he did. Until now, we had only Berkeley’s *prima facie* trustworthy word that this letter exists but not really any *evidence* beyond this.

located the newspaper in Dublin instead of London (Fraser 1871: 363). However, without an original copy there is only circumstantial evidence to attribute a mistake to Fraser. For example, Luce argues Berkeley, in all likelihood, was in London at the time. He further remarks the *Dublin Post-Boy* was not published daily (W I: 244).⁶

While Luce's argument is *prima facie* convincing, the evidence he presents is not decisive for at least two reasons. First, it would have been possible that Berkeley made a mistake when writing down the name of the newspaper. In the absence of an original copy, it was, for example, impossible to verify that Berkeley spelled the title of the newspaper correctly or that it was not mistakenly changed in the century in which the *Theory of Vision Vindicated* dropped out of public view. Second, being in London would not have prevented Berkeley from obtaining a copy of an Ireland-based newspaper. For example, it would have been easy for anyone to bring or send him a copy from Dublin to London.

However, the retrieval of the original copy allows me to further substantiate Luce's claim, since the document indicates that the issue was "printed for T. Warner at the *Black-Boy* in Paternoster Row." While there are Paternoster Rows outside of London, the "T. Warner" in question is likely Thomas Warner (1675?-1733), a London-based "bookseller."⁷ This new information about the publisher of the newspaper, taken together with the points Luce has raised, as well as the certainty that Berkeley's information about the letter is correct, strongly suggest that, contrary to Fraser's claim, the newspaper containing the anonymous critique was in fact based and published in London at a time when Berkeley was there.

Finally, the retrieval does not shed any new light on the questions of authorship nor the reason *why* Berkeley chose to reply in the first place.⁸ In regard to the latter we only have Berkeley's brief explanation in a letter to his American friend Samuel Johnson (1696-1772) from April 4th, 1734 in which Berkeley states:

Nor should I have taken notice of that Letter about Vision, had it not been printed in a newspaper which gave it course, and spread it through the kingdom. Beside, the *Theory of Vision* I found was somewhat obscure to most people; for which reason I was not displeas'd at an opportunity to explain it. (Letter 246, Hight 2013: 375-76)

⁶ All of Berkeley's letters from July 25th, 1732 to April 16th, 1734 that indicate the place where they were written name "London" or "Green-Street" (in London) as their location. See *The Correspondence of George Berkeley*, ed. Marc A. Hight (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 345-77.

⁷ Cf. Karl Tilman Winkler, *Handwerk und Markt: Druckerhandwerk, Vertriebswesen und Tagesschrifttum in London 1695-1750* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993), 374, 384, 433. Winkler points out that although Warner was a trained cook and not part of the guild, he was nonetheless regarded as a "bookseller" (434). For more on Warner and his role in early 18th (newspaper) publishing in London, see Winkler chap. 6.4.3.

⁸ So far, the only speculation on the identity of the author can be found in Tom Lennon's article who argues it might have been Catherine Trotter Cockburn (1679-1749). See Thomas M. Lennon, "The Genesis of Berkeley's *Theory of Vision Vindicated*," *History of European Ideas* 33 (2007), 321-29, especially 328-29. While I was not able to establish if there was a personal connection between Cockburn and Warner, further research in that regard could prove to be fruitful.

Although, the difficulty scholars encountered the past decades when trying to find an original copy of the letter may cast doubt on Berkeley's claim about the reach of newspaper, it seems plausible that Berkeley was honest about appreciating the "opportunity to explain" his theory of vision again. However, the more general question of Berkeley's sincerity in this matter is altogether a different issue—one on which the retrieval of the letter does not shed any new light.⁹

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From *The Daily Post-Boy*

Number 7024

Saturday, September 9, 1732

To the Author of the Minute Philosopher.

Reverend Sir,

I Have read over your Treatise called *Alciphron*, in which the Freethinkers of the present Age, in their various shifted Tenets, are pleasantly, elegantly and solidly confuted; the Style is easy, the Language plain, and the Arguments are nervous; but upon the Treatise annexed thereto, and upon that Part where you seem to intimate that Vision is the sole Language of God, I beg leave to make these few Observations, and offer them to yours and your Readers Consideration.

I. Whatever it is without that is the Cause of any Idea within, I call the Object of Sense; the Sensations arising from such Objects I call Ideas: The Objects therefore that cause such Sensations, are without us, and the Ideas within.

II. Had we but one Sense, we might be apt to conclude that there were no Objects at all without us, but that the whole Scene of Ideas which passed through the Mind, arose from its internal Operations; but since the same Object is the Cause of Ideas by different Senses, thence we infer its Existence. But though the Object be one and the same, the Ideas that it produces in different Senses have no manner of Similitude with one another. Because,

⁹ The research on this essay was carried out as a part of my Doc.CH grant by the Swiss National Science Foundation (<http://p3.snf.ch/Project-172060>) for whose financial support I am very grateful. The same goes for Urs Leu who took the time to analyse the document I retrieved. Furthermore, I extend my sincerest gratitude to Bertil Belfrage who not only inspired me to look for an original copy of the *Daily Post-Boy* in the first place, but has been tremendously helpful with his critical feedback on earlier drafts of this paper. Finally, I wanted to thank Tom Stoneham and Peter West for their comments on previous versions.

III. Whatever Connection there is betwixt the Idea of one Sense, and the Idea of another, produced by the same Object, arises only from Experience. To explain this a little familiarly; let us suppose a Man to have such an exquisite Sense of feeling given him, that he could perceive plainly and distinctly the Inequality of the Surface of two Objects, which by its reflecting and refracting the Rays of Light, produces the Ideas of Colours. At first in the Dark, though he plainly perceived a Difference by his Touch, yet he could not possibly tell which was red and which was white, where as a little Experience would make him feel a Colour in the Dark, as well as see it in the Light.

IV. The same Word in Languages stands very often for the Object without, and the Ideas it produces within, in the several Senses. When it stands for any Object without, it is the Representative of no manner of Idea; neither can we possibly have any Idea of what is solely without us. Because,

V. Ideas within have no other Connection with the Objects without, than from the Frame and Make of our Bodies, which is by the arbitrary Appointment of God; and though we cannot well help imagining that the Objects without are something like our Ideas within, yet a new Sort of Senses, or the Alteration of the old ones, would soon convince us of our Mistake; and though our Ideas would then be never so different, yet the Objects might be the same.

VI. However, in the present Situation of Affairs there is an infallible certain Connection betwixt the Idea and the Object: And therefore, when an Object produces an Idea in one Sense, we know, but from Experience only, what Idea it will produce in another Sense.

VII. The Alteration of an Object may produce a different Idea in one Sense from what it did before, which may not be distinguished by another Sense. But where the Alteration occasions different Ideas in different Senses, we may from our infallible Experience argue from the Idea of one Sense to that of the other; so that if a different Idea arises in two Senses from the Alteration of an Object either in Situation or Distance, or any other way, when we have the Idea of one Sense, we know from Use what Idea the Object so situated will produce in the other.

VIII. Hence as the Operations of Nature are always regular and uniform, where the same Alteration of the Object occasions a smaller Difference in the Ideas of one Sense, and a greater in the other, a curious Observer may argue as well from exact Observations, as if the Difference in the Ideas was equal; since Experience plainly teaches us, that a just Proportion is observed in the Alteration of the Ideas of each Sense, from the Alteration of the Object. Within this Sphere is confined all the judicious Observations and Knowledge of Mankind: Now from these Observations rightly understood and considered, your new Theory of Vision must in a great Measure fall to the Ground, and the Laws of Opticks will be found to stand upon the old unshaken Bottom. For though our Ideas of Magnitude and Distance in one Sense are entirely different from our Ideas of Magnitude and Distance in another, yet we may justly argue from one to the other, as they have one common Cause without, of which, as without, we cannot possibly have the faintest Idea. The Ideas I have of Distance and Magnitude by feeling, are widely different from the Ideas I have of them by seeing; but that something without, which is the Cause of all the Variety of the Ideas within, in one Sense, is the Cause also of the Variety in the other;

and as they have a necessary Connection with it, we very justly demonstrate from our Ideas of feeling of the same Object, what will be our Ideas in seeing. And though to talk of seeing by tangible Angles and tangible Lines; be, I agree with you, direct Nonsense, yet to demonstrate from Angles and Lines in feeling, to the Ideas in seeing that arise from the same common Object, is very good Sense, and so *vice versa*. From these Observations thus hastily laid together, and a thorough Digestion thereof, a great many useful Corollaries in all Philosophical Disputes might be collected.

I am,

Your humble Servant, etc.

Review

Stephen H. Daniel. *George Berkeley and Early Modern Philosophy*.
New York: Oxford University Press, 2021. xii + 338 pages.
ISBN: 978-0192893895

It may come as a surprise to those familiar with Berkeley scholarship, but Steve Daniel's excellent *George Berkeley and Early Modern Philosophy* is his first monograph on a philosopher on which he has published extensively over the last two decades. Drawing from this body of work Daniel takes his reader through 18 chapters which cover a variety of issues, ranging from representation (Ch. 4) and free will (Ch. 10) to various aspects of Berkeley's theism (Ch. 9, 14–17) and authors including Hobbes (Ch. 6), Leibniz (Ch. 13), and Spinoza (Ch. 8).

At the heart of his book lies Daniel's well-known (and controversial) interpretation of Berkeley's notion of mind (cf. 1, 7–11 or Appendix 2). This includes Daniel's often (sometimes critically) noted emphasis on Berkeley's *Notebooks* (cf. 3–6 or Appendix 1). In distinction to most commentators Daniel takes Berkeley's *Notebooks* seriously and provides an interpretation that renders its entries "compatible with Berkeley's published remarks" (291). While some commentators will, for various reasons, still find issue with the prominent role Berkeley's *Notebook* plays, this does not detract from the fact that, over the course of the book, Daniel makes a strong case for his claim that the concept of mind he attributes to Berkeley (1) provides a "new way to conceive of [Berkeley's] immaterialism, (2) a new understanding of his notion of substance, and (3) a new strategy for speaking about God" (7).

As Daniel makes clear, his usage of the *Notebooks* is part of a wider strategy that aims at breaking with the "official or standard approach to study Berkeley" (2). In this interpretative tradition the emphasis rests on Berkeley's 'major works', the *Principles* (PHK) and the *Three Dialogues* (DHP). Since Berkeley explicitly deals with Descartes, Malebranche, and Locke in these works, they become the "interpretative filter through which his other works are understood" (2f). To put this point differently, in the standard interpretation Berkeley's philosophy, and in particular his notion of mind, are read as well as understood in light of the writings of Descartes, Malebranche, and Locke.

Daniel is breaking with this line of interpreting Berkeley not only by placing more emphasis on the *Notebooks* but also by 'flipping the script': for instance, instead of reading *Siris* through the lens of the immaterialism Berkeley develops in PHK and DHP, Daniel considers the latter works "in light of [Berkeley's] Christian Neoplatonic metaphysics," which is not only expressly articulated in *Siris* but, as Daniel suggests, already present in his earlier works as well (145). Furthermore, Daniel reads Berkeley alongside figures and traditions with which he is usually not associated.¹ For example, he

¹ This does not mean that Descartes, Malebranche, and Locke are not considered in Daniel's book. On the contrary: there is at least one chapter devoted to each of them (cf. Ch. 5 & 9–11). In each

starts his book by placing Berkeley and his notion of mind in Stoic (Ch. 1) and Ramist (Ch. 2) contexts before proceeding to expound the influence thinkers such as Arnauld (Ch. 7), Bayle (Ch. 12), Browne and Collins (Ch. 17), Edwards (Ch. 18), and Suárez (Ch. 3) had on Berkeley.

In short: Daniel's aim is to demonstrate the benefits of reading Berkeley in non-Lockean or non-Cartesian terms—a reading, Daniel argues, which is almost demanded by the 'principle of charity' (5, 294), because unlike versions of the "standard approach," it allows us to understand Berkeley as saying exactly what he meant to say, without inconsistencies or changes to his fundamental insights. As Daniel contends, this also provides a way to strengthen Berkeley as an author, his philosophy, and his contribution to Early Modern philosophy more generally (4–6).

While Daniel undoubtedly provides the most compelling case for his interpretation of Berkeley and the latter's notion of mind so far by putting all the pieces of the last 20+ years together, it seems proper to leave the discussion of the tenability, merits, and flaws of that interpretation to the future research discussion. Instead, I want to highlight two issues, which I believe would have deserved more attention. And which—if considered in more detail—have the potential to further strengthen Daniel's case.

My first point pertains to the issue of Berkeley's Irishness and the importance of the Irish context. Daniel repeatedly draws attention to Berkeley's "self-acknowledged Irish identity" (8–9, 52, 213). While this turn of phrase is neutral with respect to the tenability of Berkeley's self-identification, it would have been worth explicitly noting the complicated nature of Berkeley's relation to his Irish heritage. As Tom Jones has recently argued in detail,² Berkeley's entries are an instance of him "playing the Irishman for rhetorical purposes" (215), rather than a genuine embracing of his Irishness. In fact, despite his "ecumenism" (214), Berkeley's views of and remarks on the "native Irish" (i.e., Catholic) population oscillate between a lack of respect (cf. *Querist*, Qu. 96–99) and the downright horrendous (cf. *Querist*, Qu. 19, 20, 138, 196).³

Despite the complicated nature of Berkeley's self-identification, I think Daniel is right to stress this aspect. Indeed, his immediate intellectual context in Ireland arguably would have deserved more attention. Daniel repeatedly mentions two of the most prominent 'Irish' thinkers at the time, William King and Peter Browne (215, 240f., 265–72), and he discusses their views in some detail (262–66). The focus of this discussion, unfortunately, remains confined to the issue of 'Divine Analogy', that is, the problem of how we can and ought to speak about God (261). Due to this limited focus, Daniel arguably misses out on an opportunity to further his aim of broadening the background of Berkeley's

case, Daniel's discussion focuses on highlighting the ways in which the views of these thinkers fundamentally differ from Berkeley's account of the mind (cf. 82–86, 158–60, 171f., and 183–88).

² See Tom Jones, *George Berkeley: A Philosophical Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021), 214–220.

³ See *Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne*, ed. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop (9 vols.; London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1948–57), 6: 242–44.

philosophy, since there are *prima facie* good reasons to assume that King and Browne had *some* influence on Berkeley.

There is not only the potential meeting of the three authors when Berkeley presented “On Infinities” to the Dublin Philosophical Society (215), but there is also the fact that we know that King read (and disliked) Berkeley’s *New Theory of Vision* and that Berkeley read (and disliked) King’s *Sermon*.⁴ Despite the rather strained relationship of the two thinkers,⁵ King could have had a sustainable influence on Berkeley’s thinking even if only as someone who (from Berkeley’s point of view) advanced wrongheaded opinions. As Daniel acknowledges (265), Berkeley is unhappy with the position King develops in his *Sermon*, but it still could have profoundly shaped the way in which Berkeley thought about the issue of divine analogy. The same may go for the dualism between mind and body that King seems to endorse in the *Sermon*.⁶ It must be noted that it is unclear whether King also endorses a *substance* dualism and what notion of substance he is working with (cf. *Sermon* §§ 10, 16, 33). But it is precisely this kind of unclarity that renders his case *prima facie* so interesting.

The same, albeit for different reasons, holds for Peter Browne. After all, Browne was the provost at *Trinity College* when Berkeley was studying there, so one would be hard pressed to deny that Browne had *any* influence on Berkeley. And while Browne arguably endorses substance dualism, he was, as Kenneth Pearce points out,⁷ also highly critical of Locke’s *Essay*.⁸ More particularly, Pearce (221f.) argues that Browne’s notion of spiritual substance is developed in reaction to Locke, as is his notion that we can only have a “conscious Experience of [the mind’s] several Ways of Acting upon the Ideas of Sensation.”⁹ Thus, according to Daniel’s reading of Berkeley there seem to be promising points of agreement between the latter and Browne’s notions of the mind—despite the fundamentally different positions they advance when it comes to the issue of divine analogy (266–68).

To put it differently, there are good contextual and philosophical reasons to render plausible the assumption that King or Browne influenced Berkeley. It thus seems worth investigating whether their influences stretch to the latter’s notion of the mind—which is the focus of Daniel’s writing.

My second point concerns the issue of relations. Daniel repeatedly highlights that his focus rests on the “relation of mind and ideas” (12, 16, 32, 80, etc.). And while his

⁴ See Letter 12 in *The Correspondence of George Berkeley*, ed. Marc A. Hight (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 35.

⁵ See Letter 13 (*Correspondence*, 39) and Letter 108 (*Correspondence*, 175).

⁶ See William King, David Berman, and Andrew Carpenter, *Archbishop King’s Sermon on Predestination* (Dublin: Cadenus Press, 1976), §§ 19–23.

⁷ Kenneth L. Pearce, “Peter Browne on the Metaphysics of Knowledge,” *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements* 88 (2020), 216.

⁸ Cf. Peter Browne, *Things Divine and Supernatural Conceived by Analogy with Things Natural and Human* (London: Innys & Manby, 1733), 127f.

⁹ Peter Browne, *The Procedure, Extent, and Limits of Human Understanding*, 2nd ed. (London: Innys & Manby, 1729), 109.

primary aim is to clarify Berkeley's notion of mind, this formulation draws attention to the fact that relations also play an important role in this endeavor. However, even though Berkeley's notion of relations has not attracted much scholarly attention, it is notoriously difficult to interpret. For one, Berkeley does not say much more than that all relations "include" an act of the mind (PHK § 142). Considering how little Berkeley says about relations, it is unsurprising that almost contrary interpretations have been defended in the secondary literature. On the one hand, there is a reading according to which relations are nothing above and beyond mental acts of comparing.¹⁰ On the other hand, Berkeley has been interpreted as someone who thinks that relations (e.g., likeness), exist independently of mental acts of comparing and are instead simply observed or 'discovered'.¹¹

In light of this vast array of interpretations, it would have been helpful if Daniel could have further expanded on his understanding of Berkeley's notion of relation and explicitly connected this notion to the secondary literature. For instance, he writes that "differentiations and relations *are* the activities that constitute" minds (33), and that actions, relations, and minds "*subsist* rather than exist" (62). At first sight, this may sound as if Daniel is endorsing a rather anti-realist interpretation of relations in the vein of Muehlmann. Yet, this seems to be at odds with Daniel's overall interpretation of Berkeley as endorsing a "semantic realism" (274), which he shows to have interesting parallels to the kind of realism one finds in Leibniz (206f.). A more explicit discussion of the ontological status of relations as well as the secondary literature would have helped to dissolve these apparent tensions and further supported Daniel's argument, since it would have shed additional light on his interpretation and the way it differs from others. This in turn would have helped to further clarify his interpretation of Berkeley's notion of mind precisely because relations and minds are closely aligned according to Daniel.

However, the issues I have raised do not detract from the overall quality of Daniel's *George Berkeley and Early Modern Philosophy*. It relates Berkeley to many thinkers and traditions he is not often considered alongside and thereby provides a comprehensive and unique overview of Daniel's interpretation of Berkeley's notion of mind—an interpretation which is sure to spark further scholarly discussion in the future.

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¹⁰ See Robert G. Muehlmann, *Berkeley's Ontology* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992), Ch. 2; and Todd Ryan, "A New Account of Berkeley's Likeness Principle," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 14 (2006), 568.

¹¹ Peter West, "Why Can An Idea Be Like Nothing But Another Idea? A Conceptual Interpretation of Berkeley's Likeness Principle," *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* (§ 1). Luce and Jessop seem to offer yet another interpretation, when they remark that Berkeley does not elaborate on the notion of relation he introduces in PHK §142. Rather, it seems that for Berkeley "the activity of relating somehow enters into the content of the relation" (*Works* 2: 106). A suggestion what an interpretation along these lines could look like can be found in Tom Stoneham, *Berkeley's World: An Examination of the Three Dialogues* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 238-44; and Katia Saporiti, *Die Wirklichkeit der Dinge: eine Untersuchung des Begriffs der Idee in der Philosophie George Berkeley's* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2006), 240-42.

Review

Tom Jones. *George Berkeley: A Philosophical Life*.
Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021. xxiv + 624 pages.
ISBN: 978-0691159805

Is Tom Jones' book *George Berkeley: a Philosophical Life* not the first comprehensive philosophical biography of George Berkeley? Arthur Luce's mid-twentieth century biography is not philosophical: this fact is stressed both by Luce¹ and Jones (3). Another book that comes to mind for comparison is David Berman's *George Berkeley: Idealism and the Man*,² and this one does not seem to be comprehensive enough. I don't take into account Alexander Fraser's nineteenth century biography,³ although it might be considered good for its time. During the last few decades, the quality of philosophical biographies has increased dramatically: the high standards set by Ray Monk's *Ludwig Wittgenstein*,⁴ Manfred Kuehn's *Kant*,⁵ and other such books must be met by anyone who dares write a story of a philosopher's life. Tom Jones' work, based on an incredibly broad range of contemporary and modern sources, meets these standards and sets the bar even higher, finding new connections in Berkeley's life and suggesting new interpretations of the facts well known.

This voluminous book includes seventeen chapters. It begins with an introduction (Chapter One) that defines the scope of the book and gives an overview of Berkeley's philosophy, which is very useful to have in the beginning: for those who are new to Berkeley's philosophy the introductory chapter gives a general impression of it, and for professionals it reveals the author's approach to the object of his research. Besides the question that must be answered by any biography, "What do we know about George Berkeley?" (1), Jones suggest a more holistic approach to Berkeley's life and work and asks the question, "Can we attribute character to Berkeley, given that all we have of him is a set of documents, even if some such documents explicitly discuss his character?" (3) What Jones means is not only personal but also philosophical character, and it turns out that the later can be applied to explain the former. Jones calls this methodology a "biographical approach": "A consideration of the central topics in Berkeley's immaterialism offers a justification of a biographical approach to his philosophical career—but one that might first require us to rethink our ideas of what people are and how they know one another" (4). To understand Berkeley's philosophical character, we can ask a question (which Jones doesn't ask explicitly)—what is it like to live in a Berkeleyan world? The key to answering it is "participation of the Divinity" (14). This approach in Jones' hands makes Berkeley's philosophy deeply personalist: all the metaphysical questions are always about you and God. It is characteristic of Jones'

¹ Arthur A. Luce, *The Life of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1949), v–vi.

² David Berman, *George Berkeley: Idealism and the Man* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

³ Alexander C. Fraser, *Life and Letters of George Berkeley* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871).

⁴ Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1990).

⁵ Manfred Kuehn, *Kant: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

approach to start discussing Berkeley's philosophy from the problem of knowledge of other minds. "Participation of the Divinity" is the main feature of Jones' explanatory strategy: it organizes Berkeley's personal life and goals, his immaterialist metaphysics, his social philosophy, his views on family, education, economy, politics, slavery, etc. And Jones' Berkeley believes that all these spheres must be organized in a particular order that will maximize our participation in God. Jones finds a universal point of view on all the phenomena of Berkeley's life, he applies it consistently and gives us a comprehensive, persuasive, unified portrait of Berkeley. But the flip side of this picture is that it can be taken as one of several possible points of view. After all, Jones admits that there is a rationale "for never being satisfied with the interpretation at which one has arrived" (541).

Chapters Two to Fifteen describe Berkeley's life and work (Chapter Sixteen is called "Afterlife," the Seventeenth is "Conclusion"). The organization of the main part of the book is not strictly chronological. Biographical parts are interwoven with the analysis of Berkeley's views. The work leaves an impression of a monumental mosaic harmoniously uniting diverse parts, each of which is also a masterpiece. From the beginning of the second chapter, Jones surrounds the reader with the atmosphere of Berkeley's time. Jones analyzes the scarce data on the years of Berkeley's infancy, explores the details of his education in Kilkenny College and Trinity College, including their curricula and day schedules, describes Berkeley's early career steps. Jones gives probably the most detailed contextual analysis of Berkeley's first published works: *Miscellanea mathematica* and *Of Infinities*. What is particularly important is that he stresses the practical and moral context of these works. The second chapter ends with a discussion of *An Essay towards a New Theory of Vision*.

The third chapter contains an interpretation of Berkeley's immaterialist metaphysics. Jones' aim is not to give a lengthy account of all the details and problems of Berkeley's *Principles* and *Three Dialogues*. Rather, he puts these works in the frame of his "participation of the Divinity" approach. Jones' diagnosis is this: "[T]he idiosyncratic solution Berkeley proposes to the problems he is confronting is a good reconciliation of the competing conceptions of philosophy and its purpose at his time, but that was not necessarily a solution well suited to achieving his social and religious ends. It was more of an esoteric than exoteric solution" (80). In the seventeenth chapter Jones writes: "There was something revolutionary about his immaterialism, but it was one of those conservative revolutions that seeks to leave things as they are" (535). It is a reasonable interpretation given from the biographical point of view that has been accepted by Jones. But from a more common standpoint, Berkeley's immaterialism can be seen as a progressive step in the history of philosophy: a step towards, let's say, Kantian transcendental idealism. The innovative element in Jones' interpretation of Berkeley's immaterialist works is an attempt to find various philosophical personae of the author there: "Berkeley is shifting from the persona of the philosopher as guide and instructor to the persona of the philosopher as iconoclast and introvert who disregards custom" (100).

Chapter Four explores Berkeley's early social and political views. Jones offers extensive evidence for Berkeley's engagement in Tory's politics. This fact concords with the

rhetoric of Berkeley's *Passive Obedience* and his activity as a Trinity College official. In further chapters Jones emphasizes the depth of Berkeley's connection with Tories, especially with the Talbot family, which resulted in the notorious York–Talbot slavery opinion. Chapter Five concentrates on Berkeley's views on education. Jones' characteristic of Berkeley is categorical: "Berkeley's educational thinking was ... privatized and elite.... Berkeley thought of education in politico–theological terms, as a means of training people in the ways of the true church so that they could proselytize, by more or less stable means, throughout their lives" (155). This is also the leitmotif of Berkeley's approach to female education, which is overt in *The Lady's Library*—a chrestomathy collected and supplemented by Berkeley. *The Ladies Library* and *The Guardian* are the two projects of Richard Still that were realized with Berkeley's active participation. They are discussed in the sixth chapter.

In the middle chapters Jones' methodology gives the most vivid results. In Chapters Six and Eight, Jones describes Berkeley's stay in Italy and analyzes his travel journals. Berkeley's notes reveal his deep interest in the phenomenon of tarantism (involuntary dancing that was thought to be caused by the bite of a tarantula). Berkeley's attention to tarantism is an exotic topic in the literature, but Jones suggests an interpretation that establishes a strong connection between this interest and his philosophy: "Berkeley may be thinking of the tarantula as the means of communication of a peculiar form of spiritual influence. The spider is, or is the medium of, another spirit—say an ambivalent or a demonic spirit.... Being bitten is (being forced) to participate in another spirit, in the same way that seeing God's will in the world and following it is to participate in God (in a fuller or better way than merely being in the world)" (279). I don't see why we should have recourse to the demonic spirits to explain tarantism and cannot simply take it as a form of participation in God. But, anyway, Jones' "Participation of the Divinity" methodology provides Berkeley's interest in tarantism with a natural place in his world outlook.

A more important application of Jones' method is presented in Chapters Seven and Nine. These parts can be united under the title "Berkeley and ...". In the seventh chapter, Jones explores the topic of "Berkeley and others," namely, the native Irish, the Italians, the Americans, and enslaved people. Chapter Nine discusses Berkeley's relations with women. Again, Berkeley's attitude to all those groups of "others" can be explained by one sentence: "His conduct when encountering ethnically different people certainly demonstrates a concern to preserve social order in more or less its current form in this world" (226). The purpose of preservation is the fullest and most effective participation in God. Something similar can be said about Berkeley's attitude to marriage: "sexual contact and reproduction, like horse breeding ... require close management in order to produce social goods" (306). Berkeley's relations with women are also a rare topic for research on this philosopher. An important result of Jones' work is his explication of the relations between Berkeley and Anne Donnellan, to whom he made an unsuccessful proposal. And the attention that Jones draws to Anne Forster, who became Berkeley's wife, is also remarkable. For when we return to the beginning of the book—not the Introduction, but to the very beginning, its cover—we see a fragment of John Smibert's *Bermuda Group*, and many books on Berkeley have the portrait copied from this picture

on their cover. But the cover of Jones' book is the first I know where Berkeley's portrait is not cropped. Here Berkeley is depicted together with his wife and their son Henry. Jones notes the importance of Anne's role as a supporter of George's Bermuda project and his co-thinker in his later years. Jones' work makes it impossible to think of Berkeley in his middle and later years without Anne as his co-worker.

Chapter Ten depicts the details of Berkeley's Bermuda project in a broad historical and cultural context. The background reconstructed by Jones is impressive, for he draws attention to the moral inconsistency of Berkeley's approach. Berkeley considered financing his college on Bermuda by the income from the plantations on Saint Christopher's Island. His educational project had slave labor as its part. During his stay in Newport, "Berkeley practiced slavery in a slaving plantation" (233). Again, here we find a feature of Berkeley's character: his eagerness to propagate the desired social and religious order makes him blind to the circumstances of others. Berkeley, who tried to establish a college for the native Americans, doesn't consider the experience of his predecessors. Given that his actions were supported by his philosophy, Berkeley appears as a self-benighted person (in an intellectual sense). Jones' conclusion about Berkeley's role in the development of contemporary culture is pessimistic: "Berkeley's grant, then, despite it never being paid, was part of the history of transformation of the Caribbean into slave societies" (347).

Chapters Eleven and Twelve discuss *Alciphron*. Jones ties these works to Berkeley's earlier writings by claiming that "*Alciphron* is, then, a further exploration of philosophical persona" (363). It seems that here Berkeley finds the philosophical mask that fits him best: "For the remainder of his career, his character or persona as a philosopher would also take the form of practice" (378). The first example of practice that is necessarily organized for some purpose is language.

Chapters Thirteen to Fifteen cover Berkeley's years as the Bishop of Cloyne. Berkeley's philosophical practice is discussed under two topics: discipline and therapy. At this point, terminology gets some Wittgensteinian flavor: philosophy has become a practice for Berkeley, part of which at least is therapy. Berkeley's disciplinary project is based on the claim that the "spiritual and temporal authority are connected, and that civil governments should maintain an interest in the religious practice of their subjects" (391). Berkeley's non-philosophical disciplinary activities include his "guidance to his clergy on how to engage in the project of bringing Catholic inhabitants of Cloyne into the established church" (391), and his "involvement in planning the civil and military defense of Ireland from Jacobite forces in 1745 and the maxims on patriotism" (391). Again, Jones draws our attention to "[t]he limitations of Berkeley's capacity for role reversal—to think himself into the position of other people" (428).

The Fifteenth Chapter suggests a perfect interpretative instrument for Berkeley's later writings—the concept of therapy. This notion is very useful and informative because it helps Jones to unify Berkeley's later philosophy. Namely, Jones finds a remarkable connection between *The Querist* and *Siris*: "He also acts as a philosophical therapist who helps others better to direct their desires and appetites. That is the ambition of his to

major texts of his time Cloyne, *The Querist* and *Siris*. . . . *Siris* seeks to heal the body and mind. . . . *The Querist*, on the other hand, analyses human behaviour as a system of supplying demands” (455). Discipline and therapy are effective instruments to give unity to Berkeley’s character: discipline explains the synchronic unity between his philosophical and non-philosophical activities, while therapy explains the diachronic unity between Berkeley’s different writings. These two concepts are Jones’ valuable discoveries.

Chapter Fourteen describes Berkeley’s life in Cloyne. Jones shows how Berkeley’s habits were in harmony with his views—except for maybe one: “Eating presented a philosophical challenge to Berkeley, one in which appetites were pitted against reason. It was a challenge he was, at least in the judgement of his wife, unable to meet” (446). Jones describes Berkeley’s way of life in Cloyne where he tried to combine temperance with artistic taste. Berkeley’s life in Jones’ presentation was harmonious: the virtues and vices in his acts corresponded to the virtues and vices in his thought. Chapter Sixteen describes the public reaction to Berkeley’s death and his family’s life some time thereafter.

Jones’ book is a product of titanic labor and meets the highest standards of intellectual biography. Jones suggests new interpretations of some of Berkeley’s thoughts and notes, finds new biographical materials, and offers a comprehensive approach to the whole body of Berkeley’s thought. This last point is most important. One of the problems of Berkeley’s philosophy is its unity: making sense of the fact that *Principles* and *Siris* had been written by one and the same person was a hard task for many commentators. Jones completes this task in his own way. Berkeley’s later philosophy is unified by the concepts of discipline and therapy. His earlier and later periods are unified by his search for philosophical persona. This later instrument is probably not as effective as the first two. One can say that Berkeley’s change of philosophical personae is exactly the phenomenon to be explained. Anyway, in Jones’ work this change looks smooth and logical.

Jones’ book leaves the reader with a question: is Berkeley an antihero of our time? Jones’ answer can be this: Berkeley is a human with his vices and virtues, and today his vices are seen more sharply than in his own time. The apology of a philosopher is a bad strategy for a historian of philosophy, and Jones’ book is not apologetic. He tries to be objective, and his attempt is quite successful. Jones’ Berkeley fits the characteristic given to him by Jonathan Swift as “an absolute Philosopher with Respect to Money Titles or Power” (339).

But for a Russian reader like myself, Berkeley—the—Antihero is quite a trivial persona of this philosopher. In his work *Materialism and Empirio-criticism*,⁶ Lenin develops a detailed critique of Berkeley. Lenin’s attention to Berkeley had a positive consequence: it was the reason for printing the works by Berkeley—the idealist *per excellence*—in the Soviet Union. But it also shaped the attitude to his philosophy for more than seventy years: Berkeley was viewed quite negatively, and not only in theoretical matters. He was

⁶ Originally published in 1909 under the pseudonym Vl. Ilyin. English translation: Vladimir I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-criticism* (Moscow: Progress publishers, 1947).

regarded as a part of the “bourgeois philosophy,” representing all the vices of capitalism. This negative image of Berkeley in some respects accords with Jones’ picture, and, given my opposition to the first, I want to make some critical remarks on the second.

One of the conclusions in the seventeenth chapter is this: “In various ways, Berkeley was an antagonist of the philosophical and social–scientific attitudes that characterize some versions of Enlightenment. It is clear the he was an opponent of radical Enlightenment, as Jonathan Edwards defines it. . . . It is even somewhat doubtful that Berkeley could be characterised as a participant in Israel’s moderate or mainstream Enlightenment” (534). It is true that Berkeley doesn’t meet Israel’s requirements for being a philosopher of those types of Enlightenment, but it doesn’t mean that Berkeley wasn’t a part of some kind of Enlightenment. By that I mean the specific phenomenon of Irish Enlightenment. And local intellectual Enlightenments, such as Irish or Russian, although being progressive, do not satisfy Israel’s criteria for being radical or even moderate. In addition to this, Berkeley’s influence on the Enlightenment thinkers is undeniable. The reception of Berkeley’s theory of vision by Voltaire, Condillac and Diderot, and Kant’s transcendental idealism are other examples.

My second critical remark concerns another outcome of Jones’ methodology. Its holism is an advantage for its interpretation, but it has a side effect: it turns out that Berkeley’s immaterialism and theory of vision are organically connected to his views on social hierarchy. But is Berkeley’s metaphysics that harsh? Cannot we have immaterialism without passive obedience? After all, human character is not always as harmonious as the character of Jones’ Berkeley: our thought is sometimes compartmentalized, and our actions may be different from our expressed attitudes. Cannot it be the case of Berkeley as well, at least in some respects?

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News and Announcements

2022 American Philosophical Association Eastern Division Meeting: International Berkeley Society Session

Baltimore Marriott Waterfront, Baltimore, MD: January 5, 2022

Berkeley and Lady Mary Shepherd; chair [Patrick Connolly](#) (Lehigh)

Keota Fields (U Massachusetts, Dartmouth): “Shepherd and Berkeley on Physical Objects”

Richard Brook (emeritus, Bloomsburg U): “Defending Shepherd Against Some Criticisms of Her Criticisms of Berkeley”

Antonia LoLordo (Virginia): “Shepherd’s Modified Berkeleyan Theory”

International Berkeley Conference: “De Motu: Text, Context and Perspectives”

Aix-Marseille University, Maison de la Recherche, Aix-en-Provence, France:
May 30-June 3, 2022

Organizers: [Bertil Belfrage](#) and [Pascal Taranto](#)

Turbayne Essay Prize

*The next deadline for submitting papers is **November 1, 2022**.* Guidelines for submission may be found [here](#). Submitted papers should address some aspect of Berkeley’s philosophy. Essays should be new and unpublished and should be written in English and not exceed 5,000 words in length. All references to Berkeley should be to Luce & Jessop, and an MLA or similar standard for notes should be followed. Submissions are blind reviewed and will be judged by members of a review board selected by the Department of Philosophy at the University of Rochester. The winner will be announced March 1, 2023 and will receive a prize of \$2,000. Copies of winning essays are to be sent to the George Berkeley Library Study Center located in Berkeley’s home in Whitehall, Newport, RI.

2021 Turbayne Prize Winners:

Keota Fields (U Massachusetts, Dartmouth): “Berkeley on the Meaning of General Terms”

Todd DeRose (Ohio State U): “ ‘Experience Itself Must be Taught to Read and Write’: Scientific Practice and Berkeley’s Philosophy of Nature”

Both essays appear in this issue of *Berkeley Studies*.

Recent Works on Berkeley (2018 – 2021)

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