George Berkeley's

Theory of Notions

by

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" 'tis wondrous to contemplate

ye world empty'd of intelligences."

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

More than two hundred and fifty years have elapsed since George Berkeley first published his Principles of Human Knowledge and thereby divided the intelligible world into "notions" and "ideas". In the ensuing period, the more articulate world has shown a marked preference for treating only his theory of "ideas". The result has been misleading. It is therefore the purpose of this essay to present Berkeley's theory of "notions", in so far as it can be gleaned from the pages of his extant works, and to emphasize the importance of "notions" in any fair-minded attempt to view Berkeleyan philosophy as a whole.

The vital role of a theory of notions will become evident in due course. At the outset, it is perhaps more beneficial to examine some of the historical considerations affecting what is currently represented as the works of George Berkeley, accounting in particular for the dearth of specific statements regarding notions.

First, it should be noted that the Principles, Part I was by no means well received. Despite the fact that Berkeley had prepared the reader for a fuller expression of his hypothesis of immaterialism by first publishing the Theory of Vision, the fate of the Principles characteristically was either active scorn or bland dismissal. In the light of these adverse circumstances, Berkeley postponed writing Part II of the Principles, and published instead the Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous. As a popularization of

the Principles, the Dialogues covered much the same ground as the earlier publication, hence work on the theory of notions did not progress in the sequence that reasonably might have been expected.

Secondly, it is often overlooked that Berkeley did in fact write on notions in a Second Part of the Principles. Moreover, he had this undertaking well under way before the year 1716, therefore significantly early in his career. However, to the considerable misfortune of Western thought, the manuscript of this work was lost at sea, when Berkeley accompanied Lord Peterborough on a brief tour of the Continent.[1]

Evidence for the existence of Part II is sprinkled convincingly through the collections of Berkeley's writings now available to us. Aside from the commentaries of Professors Jessop and Luce and a few others, we find Berkeley himself explicitly mentioning a Second Part in the Preface to the Three Dialogues. Thus:

> "This design ["to divert the busy mind of man from vain researches, ... and rescue it from those endless pursuits it is engaged in"] I proposed, in the First Part of a Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge, published in the year 1710. But, before I proceed to publish the Second Part, I thought it requisite to treat more clearly and fully of certain principles laid down in the First, and to place them in a new light. Which is the business of the following Dialogues." [2]*

Several years before, in the Philosophical Commentaries, he had written:

> "The 2 great Principles of Morality. the Being of a God & the Freedom of Man: these to be handled in the beginning of the Second Book." [3]

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* Unless otherwise indicated, all Berkeley quotations are from the edition of his works edited by T.E. Jessop and A.A. Luce. As a text, the Jessop and Luce is superior to Fraser's 1901 edition; specific differences are noted in Volume I, in the General Preface.

[1] George Berkeley, Works eds. Luce and Jessop, (London, 1948-57), II, 5. & George Berkeley, Works ed. Fraser (Oxford, 1901), IV. 222.

[2] Vol. II. 167-8.

[3] Vol. I. 63, Entry 508.

> "Extension tho it exist only in the Mind, yet is no Property of the Mind, The Mind can exist without it tho it cannot without the Mind. But in Book 2 I shall at large shew the difference there is betwixt the Soul & Body or Extended being:" [1]

Also, in Berkeley's letter of 25 November 1729, to the American philosopher, Samuel Johnson, we read:

> "As to the Second Part of my treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge, the fact is that I had made a considerable progress in it; but the manuscript was lost about fourteen years ago, during my travels in Italy, and I never had leisure since to do so disagreeable a thing as writing twice on the same subject." [2]

Johnson's answer to the above letter implored Berkeley to rewrite, unhappily to no avail.[3]

In addition to point-blank references to the elusive Part II, internal clues drawn from Berkeley's works, as they now appear, are numerous and suggestive of the view that Berkeley was compelled to formulate a theory of notions. For example, we find in contemporary editions of the Principles:

> "Thing or being is the most general name of all, it comprehends under it two kinds entirely distinct and heterogeneous, and which have nothing in common but the name, to wit, spirits and ideas. The former are active, indivisible substances: the latter are inert, fleeting, dependent beings, which subsist not by themselves, but are supported by, or exist in minds or spiritual substances." [4]

Or again,

> "But besides all that endless variety of ideas or objects of knowledge, there is likewise something which knows or perceives them, and exercises divers operations, as willing, imagining, remembering about them. This perceiving, active being is what I call mind, spirit, soul, or my self." [5]

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1 Vol. I. 103-4, Entry 878.
2 Vol. II. 282.
3 Ibid. p.290.
4 Ibid. p.79.
5 Vol. II. 41-2.

But, of spirits and their relations, we can have only notions. By notions alone are we able to penetrate the active world, a world on which all ideas depend for their very existence. In consequence, the quoted passages can be seen as examples urging a theory of notions.

To cite another work on the same theme, we find in the De Motu:

> "There are two supreme classes of things, body and soul. By the help of sense we know the extended thing, solid, mobile, figured, and endowed with other qualities which meet the senses, but the sentient, percipient, thinking thing we know by a certain internal consciousness. Further we see that those things are plainly different from one another, and quite heterogeneous. I speak of things known; for of the unknown it is profitless to speak."[1]

Plainly, this is Berkeley's intelligible world, with its ideas of extension and notions of thinking. We have come full circle, back to the initial claim. In doing so, we have seen evidence for some theory of notions exhibited through a good portion of Berkeley's philosophical writings. Hence we can conclude that an elaboration of notions is not a mere imposition on Berkeleyan thought.

Finally, in any consideration of Berkeley, his interpreters must also come into view. Indeed, to see Berkeley in the variety of guises attributed to him has a peculiar importance; for it has become a commonplace that few thinkers have been so often expounded and so little read. An almost unbroken tradition has very nearly transformed Berkeley's philosophy into a satire of what he actually wrote. The classic example is perhaps James Beattie, who asserted in all seriousness:

> "But if a man be convinced, that matter hath no existence, ... he will, I am afraid, have but little reason to applaud himself on this new acquisition in science; ... If he fall down a

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[1] Vol. IV. 36.

> precipice, or be trampled under foot by horses, it will avail him little, that he once had the honour to be a disciple of Berkeley,".[1]

Other like interpreters can be assembled from almost every subsequent age and culture of the Western world; and in a later chapter, some of these representatives will be duly examined. For the present, it is sufficient to observe that all too frequently, a truncated concept of Berkeley has been the result of viewing his thought exclusively in terms of "ideas". The "good Berkeley" has more than once been dismissed with a pat on the head for his clerical biases, and few published readers have concerned themselves with "notions", the other half of Berkeley's intelligible world.

Therefore, in order not to perpetuate a time-honored injustice, let us now hear Berkeley in his own behalf, and begin by examining his conceptions of "notions" and of "ideas".

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[1] James Beattie, Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth (Edinburgh, 1771), p.303.

CHAPTER I

There can be little doubt that Berkeley contributed to the inaccurate and even contradictory interpretations of his own theory of notions. In the text of the Principles alone, the reader encounters four quite distinct uses of the word "notion". We find, for example, "notion" used as a very general and indistinct concept,* as Berkeley writes:

> "... I observe, that as the notion** of matter is here stated, the question is no longer concerning the existence of a thing distinct from spirit and idea, from perceiving and being perceived: but whether there are not certain ideas, of I know not what sort, in the mind of God, which are so many marks or notes that direct him how to produce sensations in our minds, in a constant and regular method:".[1]

In another passage, Berkeley's imprecise use of "notion" seems to equate the words "notion" and "idea", in the very restricted sense of the Berkeleyan "idea". For in the first edition of the Principles we read:

> "All our ideas, sensations, notions** or the things which we perceive, by whatsoever names they may be distinguished, are visibly inactive, there is nothing of power or agency included in them." [2]

In the second edition, this usage is corrected, as we shall see later in this chapter.

Moreover, we are also told, in effect, that "notions" are mental constructs not necessarily corresponding to the physical world, but

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* Since both "idea" & "notion" have technical meanings in the context of this paper, I shall reserve "concept" & "understanding" for more general use, except where a specific intention is obvious [re: p.12].

** Italics mine.

1 Vol. II. 72.

2 Vol. II. 51.

rather suggested by experience. Relative to the nature of spirit in a preceding discussion, Berkeley continues his varied theme on "notions" thus:

> "If any man shall doubt of the truth of what is here delivered, let him but reflect and try if he can frame the idea of any power or active being; and whether he hath ideas of two principal powers, marked by the names will and understanding, distinct from each other as well as from a third idea of substance or being in general, with a relative notion* of its supporting or being the subject of the aforesaid powers, which is signified by the name soul or spirit. This is what some hold;". [1]

Yet throughout the Principles, we also see "notions" used to express immediate knowledge, or better, immediate knowing. In fact, the above-quoted section is concluded:

> "... but so far as I can see, the words will, soul, spirit, do not stand for different ideas, or in truth, for any idea at all, but for something which is very different from ideas, and which being an agent cannot be like unto, or represented by, any idea whatsoever. Though it must be owned at the same time, that we have some notion* of soul, spirit, and the operations of the mind, such as willing, loving, hating, in as much as we know or understand the meaning of those words." [2]

It is this fourth meaning of "notion", indicating agents and activities totally unlike ideas which concerns us; and all further references to notions will indicate only this usage.**

From the quotations marshalled thus far, we can easily see that, whatever else they are, notions are not inert, passive, or dependent objects of the mind. Hence, they are not ideas; since for Berkeley, to be an idea means precisely to be inert, passive and absolutely mind-dependent. The dictum "esse is percipi" specifically applies

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* Italics mine.

** For a survey of Berkeley's later use of "notion" see Appendix I. For a brief account of historical usage, see Appendix II.

1 Vol. II. 52.

2 Ibid. pp. 52-3.

to ideas. At the same time, it is totally inapplicable to notions, as indicated in the Sections already mentioned.[1]

Turning to ideas, in the Philosophical Commentaries, Berkeley tells us:

"By Idea I mean any sensible or imaginable thing."[2]

His later works elaborated on this concept but did not essentially change it. Treating "sensible" and "imaginable" strictly, the final result is much the same as this early statement.

Aside from passivity and other qualities characteristic of all Berkeleyan ideas, they are further distinguished into three classes; i.e. ideas of sensation, ideas of imagination and ideas of reflection.

By ideas of sensation is meant all of those ideas experienced through the senses and over whose occurrence we have no control. For example, we read that, given light and vision, if I open my eyes, I cannot choose but see.[3]

Ideas of imagination are those ideas which we can entertain or dismiss at will. They characteristically reflect some past idea of sensation, in whole or in part; as for example the idea of the man, Jones, whom I saw yesterday, or of the centaur, Jones, that I have never seen.[4]

Ideas of reflection are, in one sense, a subdivision of ideas of imagination. Like those of imagination, ideas of reflection can be summoned and dismissed at will. But, unlike ideas of imagination,

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1 Vol. II. pp.41-2 & ff.
2 Vol. I. 93, Entry 775.
3 Vol. II. 53.
4 Ibid.

they must be ideas of some previous sensation. Otherwise, Berkeley would not be able to say as he does in Section 35 of the Principles:

> "I do not argue against the existence of any one thing that we can apprehend, either by sense or reflexion. That the things I see with mine eyes and touch with my hands do exist, really exist, I make not the least question." [1]

One feature to be stressed immediately is the divergence of meaning of ideas of reflection, as understood by Berkeley and by Locke. For Berkeley, ideas of reflection are always primarily ideas, hence passive by definition.[2] In contrast, Locke arrives at a knowledge of the operations of the mind through ideas of reflexion. We read for instance in Book II of Locke's Essay that:

> "... the perception of the operations of our own mind within us, as it is employed about the ideas it has got;"
>
> furnishes the understanding with ideas of Reflection.
>
> "And such are perception, thinking, doubting, believing, reasoning, knowing, willing, and all the different actings of our own minds; - which we being conscious of, and observing in ourselves, do from these receive into our understandings as distinct ideas as we do from bodies affecting our senses." [3]

Clearly, the two concepts are crucially different. In fact, for Berkeley, to have a passive idea of the activity of "thinking" is a blatant impossibility. We have only notions of thinking, and Berkeley is quite specific about the mutually-exclusive and contradictory characters of notions and ideas.

In understanding Berkeley's thought, it is difficult to overemphasize the importance of the difference between notions and ideas. That Berkeley appreciated the need for this fundamental

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1 Vol. II. 55.

2 Ibid. pp.51-2.

3 John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (Oxford, 1894), I. 123-4.

distinction becomes apparent in the second edition of the Principles. For example, he deliberately clarified the wording of the aforementioned Section 25 of the Principles by deleting "notions" from his opening remarks about ideas in the second edition. Thus, the final reading to receive his approval was:

> "All our ideas, sensations, or the things which we perceive, by whatsoever names they may be distinguished, are visibly inactive, there is nothing of power or agency included in them." ★ 1

Other modifications of the text took the form of extensions to earlier paragraphs. In the second edition, we read as an elaboration of Section 89:

> "We comprehend our own existence by inward feeling or reflexion, and that of other spirits by reason. We may be said to have some knowledge or notion of our own minds, of spirits and active beings, whereof in a strict sense we have not ideas. In like manner we know and have a notion of relations between things or ideas, which relations are distinct from the ideas or things related, inasmuch as the latter may be perceived by us without our perceiving the former. To me it seems that ideas, spirits and relations are all in their respective kinds, the object of human knowledge and subject of discourse: and that the term idea would be improperly extended to signify every thing we know or have any notion of." 2

And, on the same theme, we find completing Section 142:

> "We may not I think strictly be said to have an idea of an active being, or of an action, although we may be said to have a notion of them. I have some knowledge or notion of my mind, and its acts about ideas, inasmuch as I know or understand what is meant by those words. What I know, that I have some notion of. I will not say, that the terms idea and notion may not be used convertibly, if the world will have it so. But yet it conduceth to clearness and propriety, that we distinguish things very different by different names. It is also to be remarked, that all realtions including an act of

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★ As previously noted, in the first edition, this section began: "All our ideas, sensations, notions or the things which we perceive, ..."

1 Vol. II. 51.

2 Ibid. p.80.

> the mind, we cannot so properly be said to have an idea, but rather a notion of the relations or habitudes between things. But if in the modern way the word idea is extended to spirits, and relations and acts; this is after all an affair of verbal concern." [1]

Merely verbal concerns notwithstanding, from the preceding passages, we can see that again and again, Berkeley insisted on the vital distinction between ideas and notions. Moreover, it should also be evident that these two concepts pretty well divided the world between them. Consequently, there is some cause for wonder that Berkeley's remarks concerning the role of notions should have been consistently ignored by so many, for so long a time.

Having seen a good portion of what Berkeley actually did write about notions, it may be well to draw attention to one general point that he did not specifically make. Certainly, according to Berkeley, we have notions of spirits and relations. But if we examine his primary claims, we shall find that each of us has a notion of only one spirit, ourself. And, the notion of other spirits, including God, is arrived at by inference from the notion of the self. In consequence, Berkeley's theory of notions regarding "relations" is very generous, and far exceeds the scope of this thesis.

The complications that would accompany an exhaustive study of relations can be seen in only a few lines. For instance, it would be essential to treat the exact relations obtaining between spirit and sense-ideas.* These, in turn, would demand minute comparison with the relations of spirit and thing-ideas.* This would suggest

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* For this useful distinction, I am indebted to John Oulton Wisdom, The Unconscious Origin of Berkeley's Philosophy (London, 1953), p.7.

1 Vol. II. 106.

that objects have internal relations, that may or may not be evident to any finite spirit at any given moment. What then would be meant by a physical object, and how could it be distinguished from a façade? Is a desk really a collection of inexplicably related and infinitely numerous perspectives; and which perspective, if any, is best? What determines the temporal continuity of an object? What is arithmetic? What is geometry? Or finally, the most telling question for Berkeley may arise; i.e. what is a concept? In the light of these problems, relations as such, will be treated only in so far as they directly bear on the evidence for spirits. And in considering spirits, the emphasis will be on their essential activity, in stark contrast with the passive ideas of Berkeley's world.

CHAPTER II

Proceeding from the assertion that notions are not ideas, we may well ask just what this position involves. A whole world of activity literally must be accounted for in terms of a theory of notions. As I have mentioned, a mere glance would suggest that, not having "ideas" of spirits, Berkeley must consequently have "notions" of them. However, a thorough examination defers this conclusion.

To be precise, we should distinguish between immediate knowledge of the self, and all other notions of spirit. Strict reasoning indicates that while Berkeley professes an immediate awareness of self, he arrives at the notions of other minds or spirits by inference. But this is not to say that Berkeley merely has "ideas" of other minds. Given his definitions, this remains impossible. What he does have is a notion of the relations of other spirits, finite and Infinite, to his own existence. Berkeley thus infers the existence of other spirits and has direct knowledge of himself, both of which claims can be elaborated on only by calling forth the relations, or better, relatings, inherent in the experience of individuals. To this extent, I shall be compelled to speak of Berkeley's notions of "relations", although a thorough treatment of relations far exceeds both the plan of this paper and my own competence. Consequently, all subsequent remarks will be directed toward limiting the discussion of a theory of relations wherever possible, admitting it only when its exclusion would distort Berkeley's own concept of spirit.

Assuming Berkeley's perspective, I know myself, and infer the existence of other spirits. These other spirits include other men,

angels, and God. And, since I arrive at the existence of other spirits by means of my self-knowledge, good order suggests that we proceed to speak first of the notion of the self.

For Berkeley, that the individual spirit exists and is in some ways known, is self-evident. Or, alternatively phrased, that the self exists, is a self-evident truth. This is one assumption that Berkeley never calls in question. In fact, his certainty of the existence of the self is used to express the strength of his conviction that sensations are real, as when he proclaims:

> "That what I see, hear and feel doth exist, that is to say, is perceived by me, I no more doubt than I do of my own being." [1]

Obviously, it is not very helpful simply to be told that a crucial assumption in any philosophy is self-evidently true. It is equally apparent that, in the nature of the case, it does not make sense to argue about the proofs or demonstrations for self-evidence. And, Berkeley of course did not attempt such a proof. Fortunately, he also did not merely dismiss the treatment of the existence or being of the self with a series of rhetorical assertions. Instead, we are given some evidence supporting the existence and, to some extent, the character of the active self, of which we have indemonstrable notions only. Thus in the Three Dialogues we read:

> "How often must I repeat, that I know or am conscious of my own being; and that I my self am not my ideas, but somewhat else, a thinking active principle that perceives, knows, wills, and operates about ideas. I know that I, one and the same self, perceive both colours and sounds:..." [2]

I "am conscious of my own being", and I am "a thinking active

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1 Vol. II. 57.

2 Ibid. pp.233-4.

principle". My consciousness is that notion of the self for which I claim the unalterable certainty of self-evidence. But for this claim, it is impossible to produce a demonstration.

Let us turn then to the more mentionable line of thought which Berkeley pursues in discussions of the self. Aside from my self-consciousness, I am also "a thinking active principle that perceives, knows, wills, and operates about ideas." Or again, since the self is a spirit, it is:

> "... one simple, undivided, active being: as it perceives ideas, it is called the understanding, and as it produces or otherwise operates about them, it is called the will." [1]

From these passages, it is evident that the self of which we may be said to have a notion is singular. That is, the self is a single principle, characterized by activity. This is all the same as saying that the self is a focal point of all of its operations about ideas. Put differently, the self has a definite perspective on its ideas; and in this concept of perspective, there lies a promising line of development.

Consistent with Berkeley's principles, the spatial connotations of a word like "perspective" are useful in suggesting evidence for the active self. If, in ordinary experience, we may be said to associate with our ideas in space, we cannot fail to notice that we take a certain proprietary view of some of our ideas, though not of others. For example, it is not a matter of complete indifference to what I call to my self, if my sensible idea of my hand comes in contact with my sensible idea of molten lead. Although both objects

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[1] Vol. II. 52.

mentioned are unquestionably my ideas, and ideas which I cannot dismiss at will, yet my concern about the one is obvious. The whole difference lies in the point of view appropriate to the case. The idea of a sensible and spatial hand in the above example, is a hand I call my own, one which I do not relish burning. The concept of possession (the relating of my passive ideas to my active interests) which I entertain in the instance of "hand" and not in the instance of "molten lead", points to a certain spatial orientation of my self. For, as long as I regard some sensible ideas as my own possessions or directly some part of a spatial entity I call my body, then I can hardly dismiss the conviction that I am more intimately associated with one space than with another. And, my interest in this certain space introduces a second consideration.

In observing that all concatenations of ideas are not equally pleasant for the space which I seem to inhabit, some of my activities as spirit will be directed toward organizing a tenantable environment of ideas. My concepts of "near" and "far", of "here" and "there" are among those that will be utilized; and in so acting in manipulating my ideas, I shall have uncovered a correlative means of approaching the evidence for my active spirit.

Thus far we have found that the self which Berkeley never doubts can at least be talked about in terms of <u>evidence for</u> a spirit. The "simple, undivided, active being" of the <u>Principles</u> has been seen to have a definite commitment to one part of space rather than another. But, this is by no means an argument for the extension of spirit. It is, rather, a means of approaching the self-evidently existent in terms of some of its more pedestrian activities. And,

as in ordinary discourse, we are here ringing the changes of suggestion in order to make the point, when a direct approach no longer suffices. For:

> "Such is the nature of spirit or that which acts, that it cannot be of it self perceived, but only by the effects which it produceth." [1]

The importance of relating "effects" to the activities of spirits will become evident when, for example, we encounter Berkeley's analogical arguments for the existence of other spirits. This will be treated in the following chapters. For now we continue the present inquiry.

So far, I have tried to exhibit evidence that merely points, in very general terms, to the notion of an active spirit, the self. In the course of this general inquiry or exploration, we have found that what may be called interest in one's welfare, often assumes the form of a proprietary interest in some unity in sensible experience, i.e. the sensible body, or commitment to some particular space. This interest, in turn, yields the observation that we do, in fact, make some efforts to alter our environment in a manner that we deem beneficial to our bodies. The interesting question for Berkeleyan thought now becomes: What is the significance of these efforts in which we seem to engage?

There appears to be a not infrequently occurring aspect of human thought characterized by the conviction that if we are aware of the circumstances, or the approaching circumstances, then we can act appropriately. "Circumstances" or appropriate actions in this example, may assume any one of a variety of forms; the point to be

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[1] Vol. II. 52.

stressed is the general feeling of our not being solely passive entities. This view is, perhaps, somewhat optimistic about individual human powers, but such conviction that human beings are characteristically active typifies Berkeley's concept of a human spirit. If, in Berkeley's behalf, we now proceed from this view, one fruitful result immediately follows. And that is the assertion that prediction of future experiences is a plausible, indeed indispensable function of a finite spirit in relation with a spatial body that it claims to possess. In a word, not only do we "operate" about ideas, but in so doing we necessarily predict the results.

That prediction permeates the whole of our deliberated activity becomes clear with a little scrutiny. Berkeley made this point in passing, in the Theory of Vision when he asserted that the senses supplement each other in promoting our interests.[1] In a section dealing with the mutually-exclusive character of the objects of sight and touch, he affirmed that sight often serves to prevent actual contact; as when a man sees a tiger approaching and is thereby enabled to retreat. Alternatively, if the same man saw, instead of a tiger, a watermelon lying in an unguarded patch, he might be well advised to approach. In either case, he is certain to be acting in terms of what he predicted to be a future state of affairs, whether of dining or of being dined upon.

In our daily lives, it is unquestionably in our best interests to predict accurately. While the penalty for a mistake is by no means always fatal, it is frequently undesirable. In any case, that we are predicting accurately is always our assumption. Yet, we do

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[1] Vol. I. 192 ff.

often make mistakes; and therefore some description of our errors may not be unenlightening.

It should be noted that here, the word "prediction" distorts somewhat the concept of activity. The gerundial form, "predicting" is perhaps superior for this purpose, in that it is more readily seen that an active spirit can actively concern itself with predicting future states of affairs. But we spoke of mistaken predictings or predictions. Put briefly, when we realize our intentions, or have our forecastings confirmed, then we can be said to have predicted successfully. When, on the other hand, we predict unsuccessfully, we are confronted with an irregularity in the outcome, and we are surprised. Surprise, in the ordinary course of life is, in fact, our reaction to an unforeseen happening, a reaction produced because we foresaw or predicted a different happening from that which actually occurred. Hence, as we are surprised, we must be thinking; and, as thinking, we are the active spirits for which Berkeley contends.

There are three rather interesting results that emerge from this digression on prediction.

The first is that we, as acting spirits, always predict our obviously deliberated actions in order to experience sensible ideas of the desired kind.

Secondly, our less-obviously deliberated actions also include the character of a prediction because we must: a) foresee some result or we would not be able to act at all; and b) foresee some result in order to be surprised, or we would not be surprised at a failure; since surprise is a reaction terminating an unsuccessful prediction.

Thirdly, and most important, is the observation that a prediction or predicting not only is the acting of a spirit, but is always an acting in relation to some future time. Since there are no simultaneous instants of time, no two occurrences can be held together and compared in terms of merely passive ideas. Just as we can have no ideas of successive instants of time, we have no idea of successive occurrences. Hence we can never make predictions in terms of ideas alone. Our predictions may well operate about future sensible ideas, but their very futureness is not an idea. It is rather a relation of another occurrence to the present occurrence, and of this relation we can have only notions. Here again, the importance of the dynamic notion for Berkeleyan thought is evident. Ideas, in their passivity, simply cannot account for any evidence of the "not now". They are inadequate for prediction, and therefore notions must be invoked.

In conclusion, let us return to the self, our original topic. We have seen the development of evidence for the self terminate in notions of future occurrences; i.e. in relations. Since however, it is not my purpose to develop a theory of relations, only the self has been stressed. Throughout the discussion, there has been no attempt to prove the existence of the self. As at the beginning, Berkeley's notion of the self, as existing, remains self-evident. The whole of this chapter has therefore concentrated on airing likely suppositions, or common prejudices, in order to suggest the plausibility of the self-evident. And, in keeping with the theme of plausibility, suppositions have been introduced with the intention of appealing to or expressing common sense, in the best Berkeleyan tradition. Hopefully, the "one simple, undivided, active being" remains, now supported by the formidable weight of common opinion.

CHAPTER III

In order to shed additional light on the preceding section, and also to place the following chapters on a more intelligible footing, it is well to consider some prevailing historical influences in Berkeley's thought. It should not be entirely forgotten, for example, that George Berkeley was, from 1734 until his death in 1753, a bishop of the Anglican Communion.[1] Nor, for that matter should his setting in the history of philosophy be overlooked. Berkeley, the eighteenth-century bishop, was also Berkeley, the British Empiricist, poised traditionally between John Locke and David Hume. That these three men composed the so-called school of British Empiricism is perhaps one of the most misleading of historical accidents. But, it nevertheless is true that Locke had a considerable influence on the development of Berkeley's thought. Entry upon entry in the Philosophical Commentaries refers directly or indirectly to some doctrine held by Locke.[2] In summary, to whatever extent, Berkeley's philosophy sprang in part from the school of British empiricism.

Planted somewhat as it was, in the empiricist seed-bed, Berkeleyan thought exhibited two characteristic strains in the course of its development. That is, for Berkeley, sense experience is first regarded as a reality to be accounted for, rather than as a misfortune to be circumvented. And, correlatively, sense experience is held to be of great value in constructing a positive and complete philosophy. In fact, from the outset of his published works, one of Berkeley's most insistent arguments against any form of representationism was that it deprived sense experience of its reality and thereby left

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1 A.A. Luce, The Life of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne (London, 1949), p.159.

2 Vol. I. 15, 19, 21, 25, 33, 65, 79 ff.

in doubt all knowledge derived from sensation.[1] In this connection, he further saw fit to launch a full-scale assault on the abstract idea of material substance, in preparation for his institution of mental substance, or mind. In a word, Berkeley was not one to dismiss lightly the whole world of sensible ideas. A good portion of his philosophy attests to the view that he took them seriously, and would regard as inadequate any philosophical system that discredited ideas of sensation by holding them to be more or less adequate copies of qualities inherent in a physical substratum.

Further, Berkeley's emphasis on sensation, combined with the loss or absence of his metaphysical works on spirit, serves to introduce a likely supposition about his relation to Kant. Though Kant never read Berkeley, there can be found a peculiar similarity of some fundamental points in the two philosophies.[2] In a following chapter, the relationship will receive a fuller treatment. For now, the question involves Berkeley's notion of the self, and its similarity to Kant's "transcendental unity of apperception".[3]

Even in a brief analysis for example, we find that neither concept of self entertained by Kant or by Berkeley can be approached by comparison with ideas. Moreover, both concepts of the self are presuppositions of sense-experience, sense-experience that has a perspective. In both cases, having always a perspective <u>of</u> space and time, neither self, as conceived, is thereby known <u>in</u> space and time; but rather each is the condition of experienced space and time.[4] In regard to detailed treatments of space and time, it would

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1 Vol. II. 25-6, 49.

2 Immanuel Kant. <u>Critique of Pure Reason</u>, trans. N. Kemp Smith (London, 1958), p.104 ff.

3 Ibid. p.135 ff.

4 Vol. II. 83.

be unwise to force this comparison. But it is worthy of some notice at least, that Berkeley, the somewhat empiricist, also was inclined to reason in terms of the necessary presuppositions of the sense-experience he so vigorously defended; and that in so doing, he in fact came remarkably close to expressing the later concept of the "transcendental unity of apperception".[1]

There are other more or less residual trends that should not be overlooked in Berkeley's thought. When, for instance, Berkeley speaks of experience, as the mind experiences, he means what is, for him, better expressed by the word "experiencing". In experiencing or in the general operations of the mind, we find divisions like thinking, willing, perceiving, loving, hating and so on.[2] Of all of these activities of the mind, Berkeley conceived thought to be its character, or characteristic form. He, in fact, expressly conceived the mind to think always, although this conception of thought took the two related forms, thinking per se and willing. We find in the Principles, that:

> "it is a plain consequence [of the preceding argument] that the soul always thinks: and in truth whoever shall go about to divide in his thoughts, or abstract the existence of a spirit from its cogitation, will, I believe, find it no easy task." [3]

And, in the Philosophical Commentaries we read:

> "While I exist or have any Idea I am eternally, constantly willing, my acquiescing in the present State is willing." [4]

These are certainly clear assertions that the mind always thinks or wills. Now the question becomes, what does this mean for Berkeley?

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1 Vol. II. 41-2.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid. pp.83-4.

4 Vol. I. 95, Entry 791.

If we emphasize Berkeley's tendency to reason seriously from sense experience, we may well conclude that the living, temporal mind is never at any moment to be found not thinking. This is the view that Professor Jessop tacitly holds, affirming as he does that "'Always' does not for Berkeley mean 'timeless'."[1] But is this in fact the only position consistent with the whole of Berkeleyan thought? Does 'always' refer merely to successive moments of time? And, more important, must "always" be only the unfailing counter of endlessly succeeding instants?

It would appear that to hold "always" never to mean "timeless" needlessly and incautiously circumscribes Berkeley's realm of interests. With the predelictions and circumstances already mentioned, the "always" of time begins to seem somewhat limited. If we notice the activity of the self; the mind as the cause of its ideas, or at least the cause of the alteration of some of them; and the natural immortality of the soul; the concept of "always" takes on a rather different hue.

The point is that, if we consider the timeless activity of Aristotle,[2] a concept not excluded by Berkeley; and the soul's natural immortality,[3] a view espoused by him; together they conspire to expand the concept of "always" to include a timeless "always". Moreover, it can hardly be disputed that, in Berkeley's system, the active spirit is a logical as well as a temporal cause of passive ideas. Hence, it would seem that a timeless "always" should be admitted as a distinctly plausible tenet of Berkeley's thought.

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1 Vol. II. 270.

2 Aristotle, The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. R. McKeon (New York, 1941), Meta. BK. IX, Ch. 6, p. 827.
A.E. Taylor, Aristotle (London, 1919), pp. 61, 96, 98.
W.D. Ross, Aristotle (London, 1960), p.176 ff.

3 Vol. II. 106.

Certainly there is no obvious reason why the soul's temporal and timeless thinking cannot coexist in Berkeley's philosophy. In view of what he actually stated, the active self may perfectly well be active "always", in the timeless always of an unexpressed metaphysics. At least prudence suggests that, imperfectly acquainted as we are with the precise nature of the soul, we are well advised not to pontificate about its impossibilities. And, any self-consistent elaboration of Berkeley's thought not categorically denied by him, surely should remain uncondemned by spectators. On the other hand, no mere possibility should be looked on as a demonstration; or, in this case, as the undiluted philosophy of George Berkeley.

It is a matter of historical interest that even incomplete listings of what substantially was Berkeley's own library, reveal works of Plato and Aristotle, together with those of a number of their followers. Included also are Latin translations of Maimonides.[1] Of greater interest for philosophy is the fact that there are important gaps in Berkeley's account of spirits which can readily be filled by concepts clearly stated in Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed, as we shall see. But this is not to build a case for any specific remote influences on Berkeley. It should be noted that similar questions are treated by Aquinas, although not so happily, from Berkeley's point of view.[2]

In any case, the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions are evident in Berkeley's works. Even in passing, their merging influences can be seen to permeate the notion of the self. For in Berkeley, we are told

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1 Mind. N.S. Vol. 41, 1932. p.474.

2 Aquinas, Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas, ed. A.C. Pegis (New York, 1945), I, Summa Theologica, Qu. 50, Art. 3, pp. 485-7.

in summary, that we, as human beings, are active spirits. We moreover are necessary though not sufficient causes of our own ideas. Although our souls are naturally immortal, they are not indestructible.[1] We are one and all, finite. And it is this essential human finitude which reminds us once more of Berkeley's historical setting, echoing his theme of an abiding God "in whom we live, and move, and have our being."[2]

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1 Vol. II. 105.

2 Ibid. p.109.

CHAPTER IV

Section A:

Having established notions of our selves, the discussion can turn now to other finite spirits. For Berkeley, this becomes a discussion of men and angels.

From the bishop's point of view the similarities of men and angels, as spirits, is obvious. But, in recognition of the warmly-supported differences that have arisen over comparisons of this very kind, the first part of this chapter will yield to the influence of history and deal only with our notions of other human spirits.

Given the concepts of notions and of the self, Berkeley could hardly be clearer in his informal though analogical argument for the similar existence of other finite spirits. Thus:

> "From what hath been said, it is plain that we cannot know the existence of other spirits, otherwise than by their operations, or the ideas by them excited in us. I perceive several motions, changes, and combinations of ideas, that inform me there are certain particular agents like my self, which accompany them, and concur in their production." [1]

The preceding passage, taken from the Principles is merely an elaboration of a view long held by Berkeley. Once more, the Philosophical Commentaries are found to contain an important preview of his later work. In the second volume, Entry 752 reads:

> "We cannot Conceive other Minds besides our own but as so many selves. We suppose ourselves affected wth such & such thoughts & such & such sensations." [2]

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1 Vol. II. 107.

2 Vol. I. 91.

Since, in the two instances quoted, Berkeley speaks incomparably in his own behalf, there is no need to elaborate on his fundamental position concerning other human spirits. The only questions that can reasonably occur must be about the analogy and its comparative strength.

In view of the fact that analogies are, by their nature, only more or less strong, Berkeley's views on other human spirits fairly burst with the vigor of comparative excellence. In essence, he claims; other agents that seem to be like myself, and totally unlike my passive ideas, are like myself. Inasmuch as I am related to a certain set of sensible ideas; i.e. my body, this same relation to a similar set of ideas I attribute to a spirit that seems from its actions so like my own spirit. As I observe that my body performs actions that I have willed it to perform, in a like fashion I attribute actions of a like kind to a will resembling my own. Other spirits are, as it were, a mirror-image of my own embodied spirit; and I have, in fact, as good reason to attribute spirits to other bodies as I have to attribute a body to my own spirit. It is a mere prejudice of custom to suppose that one set of ideas, i.e. those of my body, are more real to me than another set of ideas, i.e. those of another body. The difference lies in my interest in these two sets of ideas; but they nevertheless are equally my ideas.

Of all of Berkeley's claims about the world, this argument for other human spirits probably presents the fewest difficulties in the context of his thought. Hence a charge of solipsism is the more surprising since this analogy, drawn from the existence

of the self, as embodied spirit, to the existence of other enspirited bodies, is as close as is consistent with the nature of any analogical argument. Indeed, greater strength would convert the whole into a tautology. Yet, in spite of evidence to the contrary, Berkeley was assailed by charges of solipsism, of a most extreme kind, soon after the Principles appeared.*

It is little to the point to worry much about the illusions of some of Berkeley's interpreters, but others of them enjoyed some not undeserved prominence, and any widespread opinion borrows a shading of plausibility proportional to its area of influence and duration. Therefore, in the interest of clarifying what should have been eminently lucid from the outset, let us examine the charge of solipsism in terms of Berkeley's earliest recorded thoughts on the matter, and then proceed to view subsidiary accusations.

In the few lines of the quoted Entry 754 alone, there are two excellent reasons for denying that Berkeley was a solipsist. First, he writes:

> "We cannot Conceive other Minds besides our own but as so many selves."

But, we know our self-evident selves only by means of notions. And, since notions are the means of knowing appropriate to spirits and not to ideas, the conception of other minds, if it is enter-

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* Samuel Johnson's "refutation" of Berkeley is a case in point. In this instance, a claim of omnipotent solipsism is attributed to Berkeley, asserting as his doctrine that any of the ideas of sensation can be suspended by the simple act of thinking of something else. This is certainly the tacit assumption of one who would refute by kicking; and it is equally certain that Berkeley never pretended to such power over ideas of sensation.

tained at all, must be the conception of other minds as active, hence as independent spirits.

Secondly, being "affected wth such & such thoughts" and <u>then</u> "with such & such sensations" immediately suggests the <u>activity</u> of our own spirits. On one interpretation, this somewhat brief statement suggests that first we think and <u>then</u> we act, in terms of our thoughts. And, supposing ourselves to have such thoughts and sensations, in the context of this Entry, we equally suppose it to be true of other human spirits. Where then is Berkeley's solipsism?

To return to the most extreme outcry raised against Berkeley, a further context should not be overlooked in disputing his alleged solipsism. Surely the question must arise that, if Berkeley was not entirely mad, what could be supposed to possess an Anglican bishop to affirm a solipsism denied by his profession? And, even if, as I am convinced was not the case, Berkeley was a reluctant cleric of dubious convictions, I am at a complete loss to reconcile the missionary zeal he exhibited, with the radical and apparently omnipotent solipsism of which he was accused. Let us examine the matter and consider what man, presumably in his senses though of this peculiar tenor, would betake himself across the North Atlantic on two occasions merely to rearrange some recalcitrant ideas that could just as well have been disciplined in the comparative comfort of an Irish parsonage.

Surely, the most consistent accounting for all of these concepts, together with the actions taken by Berkeley, would be

to conclude that, as it happened, he was perfectly insane. This very idea has, in fact, received some 200 pages of airing under the auspices of John Oulton Wisdom, of whom we shall hear more later.[1] For now, it is enough to let the various charges of solipsism stand on their respective merits; and entertain ourselves with thoughts of the shepherd of his imagined flock, sailing inconvenient though imagined seas, only to be ultimately defied by the reluctant imagination of his Parliament.

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1 Unconscious Origin, p.140 ff.

Section B:

In his Introduction to the Siris Professor Jessop observes that, among the finite spirits with which Berkeley must contend, angels demand their place, or places.[1] If we can disregard the varying orders of angels and merely concentrate on the concept of angel, Berkeley's involvement in a theory of notions becomes yet more clearly apparent. For, granting that angels are spirits and therefore are not amenable to representation as ideas, they too must be accounted for in terms of notions. Further, it can hardly be doubted that they must be accounted for somehow, if we call to mind the position of any Anglican bishop on this question. But, this is not to hold that Berkeley is obliged to prove the existence of angels, by any construction ordinarily given to the word "prove". On the contrary, a proper concern with angels, from the point of view of this essay, is only to allow for the concept of angels in an elaboration of Berkeley's philosophical thought.

Although, to the best of my knowledge, Berkeley makes only a single reference to "angels"[2] as such, and that not in his philosophical writings, there are nevertheless some indications that this usage was not a mere theological gesture. Briefly, angels can be readily interpreted as those finite spirits which are other than men. And making this well-founded assumption, the case for angels in Berkeleyan thought opens.

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1 Vol. V. 10.

2 Vol. VIII. 37-8.

As I have mentioned, there is only one direct reference to "angels" on which to build a subsequent argument, and that reference is isolated. Consequently, the line of reasoning must turn at once to elaborations gleaned from precedents; and here, for example, the utility of Maimonides can be seen in interpreting Berkeley's own limited remarks. Once more it should be noted that it is beyond the scope of this paper to treat of remote influences on Berkeley, and it certainly is not my purpose to suggest the predominance of Maimonides' concepts in Berkeley's writings. On the other hand, it is my intention to shed some light on an obscure but essential concept in Berkeley's theory of notions, namely "angels"; and therefore I have drawn freely on a source whose account of angels is perfectly consistent with Berkeley's own limited and indirect statements, as the following passages will show.

Turning to Part II of The Guide of the Perplexed, we find the first example of a community of concepts and interests. Maimonides, of course, actually did write the following; but it could easily have been written by Berkeley. Thus:

> "We have already stated above that the angels are incorporeal. This agrees with the opinion of Aristotle: there is only this difference in the names employed -- he uses the term "Intelligences," and we say instead "angels." His theory is, that the Intelligences are intermediate beings between the Prime Cause and existing things, and that they effect the motion of the spheres, on which motion the existence of all things depends. This is also the view we meet with in all parts of Scripture; every act of God is described as being performed by angels." [1] [deleted sentences]

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[1] Moses ben Maimon, The Guide of the Perplexed, trans. M. Friedländer (New York, 1881), Part II, p.37.

> "When we assert that Scripture teaches that God rules this world through angels, we mean such angels as are identical with the Intelligences."[1]

The foregoing is clearly consistent with Berkeley's own views, both as to the Primacy of God and the "motion" or moving principle on which the very concept of all spirit depends. While Berkeley's God certainly is not the self-contemplating Prime Mover of Aristotle, neither is that of Maimonides. Far from it, both Maimonides and Berkeley significantly subscribe to the concept of a God acting through the medium of angels in ruling the world. Secondarily, in these passages, we also see that the actions of angels are not oddities in the world, but are rather in the ordinary course of things. Angels clearly then are not mere agents of the extraordinary events called "miracles", but are equally the agents of the more prosaic order from which we derive, for Berkeley, our laws of nature.

The interests of Berkeley are more easily seen in a second passage from the same Chapter in Maimonides' Guide. Here he is quite explicit about angels in the world scheme. In a closing remark we are told:

> "They [the passages cited by Maimonides in the text] only show that all parts of the Universe, even the limbs of animals in their actual form, are produced through angels; for natural forces and angels are identical." [2]

Angels are thus fully instated in the course of nature. More significantly, for our purposes, this interpretation co-ordinates

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1 Guide, Part II, p.38.
On the same subject, see Summa Theologica, Vol. I, Qu. 50, p.480 ff.

2 Ibid. Part II, p.39.

Berkeley's concepts of an Immanent God and a God who acts through some agency or who admits some secondary cause. And, in reference to the concept of causes, we hear the bishop himself in a letter to Samuel Johnson. On 25 November, 1729, he wrote:

> "Cause is taken in different senses. A proper active efficient cause I can conceive none but Spirit; nor any action, strictly speaking, but where there is Will. But this doth not hinder the allowing occasional causes (which are in truth but signs); ... Neither doth it hinder the admitting other causes besides God; such as spirits of different orders, which may be termed active causes, as acting indeed, though by limited and derivative powers."[1]

This is probably the fullest comment Berkeley made touching, albeit indirectly, on the subject of angels. And in the light of this and previous statements, at least a few suppositions can be made in summary.

First, angels are finite spirits characterized, as are all finite spirits, by willing.

Secondly, as finite spirits, angels cause derivatively. And possibly, the natural forces are made consistent, and we thus are able to ascribe laws to nature because of the limited powers of angels. In any case, the powers of angels, or natural forces, are circumscribed by Infinite Spirit.

Thirdly, as fellow finite spirits, angels are perhaps not so alien to man as may have been thought. If angels too are characterized by willing, an analogical argument for angels, as spirits to whom we do not attribute body, will be strengthened. But perhaps the most intriguing question that arises from this whole

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[1] Vol. II. 279-80.

discussion is one of man's continuousness with the world. If, for example, man is a finite spirit, with all this implies for Berkeley, and, if the natural forces prevailing in the world too are finite spirits, though with presumably different limitations; it may not be unrewarding to inquire further about these similarities and differences. In a word, if we are like the natural forces that prevail in the world, can we reasonably hope to know the world better in view of this likeness? Are we too natural forces that prevail in a limited sphere of the universe, and whence this limit?

For Berkeley, God of course provides for the limitations as well as for the existence of finite spirits. Man both perceives and knows according to Divine law; and, it would be a very long treatise to distinguish between the perceived world and the known world in Berkeleyan thought. For the present, it need only be remarked that angels, conceived as natural forces, are alien neither to man nor to his world. There is, in consequence, no necessity for embittered theological controversies about the propriety of admitting angels in Berkeley's philosophical thought. Angels round out the system of natural law rather satisfactorily, and while exhibiting both philosopher and bishop, they also serve to introduce the ultimate link in the order of spirits; i.e. Berkeley's Infinite Spirit, or God.

CHAPTER V

Section A:

Once again, in the case of God, we find that Berkeley's specific statements are sparse to the point of obscurity. But in this instance the lack is intolerable. In fact, if some positive philosophical concept cannot be drawn out of Berkeley's miscellaneous remarks about God, or Infinite Spirit, then the whole sense of Berkeleyan thought is in the balance. Given its structure, Berkeley's philosophy positively requires a consistent concept of God, however limited. And this is not even to mention the peculiarities of a muddled Spirit that would ensue for an orthodox bishop of the Anglican Church. On both counts then, philosopher and bishop should either produce a concept of God, or permit the production of one within the limits of sound reasoning.

The lost manuscript of the Principles once more makes its influence felt in the absence of a developed system of Infinite Spirit. Berkeley is reputed to have expressly treated, or have planned to treat, the nature of God in this much-lamented manuscript, a fact worth mentioning for two reasons.[1]

First, in view of the importance of God to Berkeley, by any construction of "importance", there is just cause for wonder that the God of the extant Principles is not more evident.

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[1] Vol. II. 5.

The mystery is somewhat lessened by the simple historical fact that there was a planned exposition of the nature of God, probably lost in manuscript form, and certainly never rewritten.

Secondly and correlatively, the fact of the treatment of God in the Second Part, however lost it may be, affirms Berkeley's own recognition of God's philosophical importance and argues for his willingness to treat the topic beyond the confines of his pulpit.

Limited as his direct statements are, Berkeley nevertheless did write on the concept of Infinite Spirit, and to this we now turn. For reasons already stated, Berkeley is much to be preferred to his commentators, so far as his remarks actually survive. Therefore, the following need be prefaced only with the observation that Berkeley oscillated between two views of God: a) as analogous to man, and b) as an indispensable posit for his theory of ideas. This mixture of these rather different concepts becomes evident early in the Principles when Berkeley notes that:

> "... the supreme spirit which excites those ideas in our minds, is not marked out and limited to our view by any particular finite collection of sensible ideas, as human agents are by their size, complexion, limbs, and motions."[1]

Here we have the "supreme spirit" exciting ideas, while not being spatially distinguishable, as are human, finite spirits.* Yet, given the passivity of ideas, a cardinal point of Berkeley's philosophy, we must attribute all ideas of sensation to some

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* This is to claim nothing more than that we do commonly attribute spatial differences to human spirits.

1 Vol. II. 65.

active source; and to put it bluntly, God is elected. God is a necessary posit in the world of passive ideas subscribed to by Berkeley. But it is a poor argument to plead for God merely in order to fill gaps or correct faults in reasoning. On the other hand, if God is essential to a philosophical system, it is no argument against the system as such. The quarrel is with affirming the necessity of God's existence, with all the anthropomorphic trappings, on the strength of passive ideas which by definition, must exist in some mind. The difficulty for Berkeley is one of a poetic tradition seeming to work at cross-purposes with consistent reasoning. The dilemma gains in strength when Berkeley's analogical argument is applied enthusiastically. As a kindred Spirit, God must in some manner be like other spirits. Berkeley's problem is to place limits on this similarity without the aid of similar ideas, and here the problem takes form.

> "it is evident, that God is known as certainly and immediately as any other mind or spirit whatsoever, distinct from our selves. We may even assert, that the existence of God is far more evidently perceived than the existence of men; because the effects of Nature are infinitely more numerous and considerable, than those ascribed to human agents. There is not any one mark that denotes a man, or effect produced by him, which doth not more strongly evince the being of that spirit who is the Author of Nature." [1]

It is worth noting that in the above passage Berkeley is compelled once more to mix the two concepts of God, as analogous spirit, and as necessary sustainer of ideas and incidentally of finite

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1 Vol. II. 108.

spirits. The analogical statements about God weaken however, since while Berkeley tirelessly points out the "numerous and considerable" "effects of Nature", he is conspicuously silent about similar "effects of Nature", And this is not just an isolated instance of the strain that Berkeley perceived in an analogical argument. In the immediately following section of the Principles, we again are told:

> "And after the same manner [as we see men] we see God; all the difference is, that whereas some one finite and narrow assemblage of ideas denotes a particular human mind, withersoever we direct our view, we do at all times and in all places perceive manifest tokens of the divinity:". [1]

In these final sections of the Principles, Berkeley's turning away from an analogous argument for the existence and character of God is slowly revealed. But the situation is an unhappy one. For the bishop, a philosophical necessity is not a very satisfactory notion of divinity; but on the other hand, it is all too clear that anthropomorphism also has its shortcomings. And moreover, the human spirit's very likeness to God is seriously questioned in Berkeley's Third Dialogue when he observes:

> "I do not therefore say my soul is an idea, or like an idea. However, taking the word idea in a large sense, my soul may be said to furnish me with an idea, that is, an image, or likeness of God, though indeed extremely inadequate, [sic] For all the notion I have of God, is obtained by reflecting on my own soul heightening its powers, and removing its imperfections." [2]

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1 Vol. II. 109.

2 Ibid. pp.231-2.

What Berkeley is finally compelled to admit in this passage is that a concept of God as analogous to the self, is an "extremely inadequate" concept. Only by the questionable operation of removing the imperfections of my own soul can I have any notion of God, as the traditional anthropomorphic God. Berkeley acknowledges these difficulties even in the same paragraph, when he concludes on this point by a return to the necessity of a God; thus:

> "from my own being, and from the dependency I find in my self and my ideas, I do by an act of reason, necessarily infer the existence of a God, and of all created things in the mind of God." [1]

In summary, Berkeley's expressed views on God thus far have asserted His necessary existence and impugned His analogous spirituality, and consequently, His anthropomorphic character. We are left at this juncture, with a necessary God of no specific positive character. But again, it should be noted that a God, as a mere posit of reason is not entirely satisfactory to Bishop Berkeley, the aspiring missionary. In fact, there are some fifty-four largely anthropomorphic books of the Bible for which he also must account in terms of God, the logical posit and mainstay of his philosophy.

To complete this first section concerning Berkeley's specific remarks, we are finally confronted with his most shattering declaration against God's analogical character. In effect,

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[1] Vol. II. 232.

God is inscrutable. His ways are not those of "impotent and saving mortals".[1] And beyond the persistent assertion that God is Infinite Spirit, there is no reliable parity of reason.

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1 Vol. II. 111.

Section B:

At this point in the discussion, it might be well to mention Berkeley's orientation on the question of God. From the theological view, his interest in formulating some acceptably Christian concept of God is obvious. Nor should it be entirely forgotten that a Triune God would be the primary component of Berkeley's ultimate theological position. Since however, the doctrine of the Trinity is beyond the scope of this paper, all further discussion of God will avoid drawing hard and fast distinctions between the concepts of the Trinity and a unitary God, and of course will also shun arguments proper to only one of the two notions of God.

From the historical point of view, Berkeley's conception of God should be noted in passing, as compared with some prevailing conceptions of his time. Most often, he is associated, in this respect, either with Locke or Malebranche, or with both. This is a mistaken though recurring view that can easily be shown to be erroneous. Further, it is of some importance to discredit this opinion, as it tends to obscure both a consistent development of Berkeley's notion of God, and the fundamental tension of this concept in his system.

The concept of God entertained by John Locke can readily be dissociated from Berkeley. If it is unsatisfactory to Berkeley merely to have an inadequate notion of God via the self, how much more unsatisfactory must this concept of God be, when it is

derived from the self as an idea of reflection? Locke would reason to God from the self, which he held to be known by an "idea of reflexion".[1] Removing the limitations of this idea, he arrives at an idea of God.[2] But this is not to equate the word "idea" as understood by Locke and Berkeley, and thereby dismiss Locke on these grounds. The force of the argument lies rather in Locke's conception of God, as the self with all of its inherent finitude displaced, and Berkeley's notion of God as active, inscrutable Spirit. Incidentally, Berkeley's God also is sustainer of a world devoid of material substance, while Locke is a staunch defender of the necessity of matter. The fact is, that the two Gods of Locke and Berkeley are literally two Gods. Their functions are crucially different in the respective systems of thought; all of which serves to deny Berkeley's direct debt to Locke, in respect of the concept of God.

In the opening sections of the Principles there is a very extended denunciation as well as lucid argument against the concept of a material substratum.[3] Thus, one line of division at least is drawn between Locke and Berkeley. There is no similarly extensive attack on concepts held by Malebranche, although a shorter comment is very much to the point.

As a contemporary of Berkeley, Malebranche might well have influenced the bishop's conception of God. Certainly the mark

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1 See note: p.9 n.3. (Chapter I)

2 Locke, Essay -- Bk II, Chp. XXIII, No. 33 p.418 ff.

3 Vol. II. 42 ff.

of Malebranche is evident in some developed conceptions of immaterialism, but the immaterialism itself is quite different. We can read Berkeley's specific denial of most similarities in the Three Dialogues; and whatever the motive, his statements deserve at least a hearing. Thus, in the Second Dialogue, the antagonist Hylas is made to inquire:

> "But what say you, are not you too of opinion that we see all things in God? If I mistake not, what you advance comes near it." [1]

To which Philonous replies, in part:

> "Few men think, yet all will have opinions." [deleted sentences] "I shall not therefore be surprised, if some men imagine that I run into the enthusiasm of Malbranche, though in truth I am very remote from it. He builds on the most abstract general ideas, which I entirely disclaim. He asserts an absolute external world, which I deny. He maintains that we are deceived by our senses, and know not the real natures or the true forms and figures of extended beings; all of which I hold the direct contrary. So that upon the whole there are no principles more fundamentally opposite than his and mine. It must be owned I entirely agree with what the holy Scripture faith [sic.], that in God we live, and move, and have our being. But that we see things in his essence after the manner above set forth, I am far from believing,..." [1]

That Berkeley considered it necessary to comment at such length on Malebranche in the Three Dialogues, indicates the apparent popularity of associating the two philosophers. In view of the fact that the Dialogues were written to elaborate on certain sections of the Principles, we can conclude that the Malebranche comparison seems to have been a rather tenacious property of the public mind. It seems not to have sufficed that, on the subject of God, Berkeley had quite clearly stated earlier in the Principles:

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1 Vol. II. 214.

> ..."we need only open our eyes to see the sovereign Lord of all things with a more full and clear view, than we do any one of our fellow-creatures. Not that I imagine we see God (as some will have it) by a direct and immediate view, or see corporeal things, not by themselves, but by seeing that which represents them in the essence of God, which doctrine is I must confess to me incomprehensible." [1]

By now it should be abundantly clear at least that Berkeley did not consider his concept of God to be anything like that entertained by Malebranche. It should further have been seen that some of Malebranche's fundamental positions, as enumerated by Berkeley, are entirely out of phase with the strong empiricist strain in Berkeleyan thought, and if we reject the value of Berkeley's empirical tenor, we will find the price very great. For then, we must also call in question the concept of that which is "a necessary presupposition" of something else. In short, two cardinal points of Berkeley's philosophy: a) its empirical setting, and b) its pro-Kantian leanings would be sacrificed, if a concept of God such as that held by Malebranche were admitted. These losses, together with Berkeley's flat denials of the similarity, should eliminate the supposed debt to Malebranche, with no lingering doubts.

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[1] Vol. II. 108-9.

Section C:

Having examined apparently obvious sources for Berkeley's notion of God, we are now necessarily confronted with the task of examining the less obvious ones. This undertaking would be much more difficult were it not for the orienting principle provided by Professor Luce in his work, Berkeley's Immaterialism.[1] Stated briefly, he maintains that Berkeley's philosophy is written from a point of view that can be summarized in the following manner:

God exists, and in consideration of this fact, what else can we also admit.[2]

A general view similar to this one was also entertained by Bergson. That is, he held that Berkeley had ever before his mind, as its adversary, the transparent film of material substance, which, when disturbed, obscured God in our experienced world. The intention of Berkeley's philosophy was, in consequence, to tear away this film, or better, show it to be merely a figment of an uncritical imagination.[3]

The superiority of Luce's view over that of Bergson seems to consist in the following consideration. Proceeding from Bergson's position, inquiry into Berkeley's philosophy would take a rather

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1 A.A. Luce, Berkeley's Immaterialism, (London, 1945), p.71.

2 Ibid. The exact quotation is: "God is; can there be matter?"

3 Henri Bergson, The Creative Mind, trans. M.L. Andison (New York, 1946), p.140 ff.

negative and circuitous route. If we were bent on detecting and/or establishing Berkeley's position only after having slain the many dragons of materialism, we might never get around to Berkeley's positive thought at all. And, if we undertook to ferret out each dragon from the natural habitat of its premises, we may lose sight of Berkeley himself altogether. That is, we could repeatedly show what is not the case for Berkeley, without ever mentioning what is. Assuming Bergson's initial view, the best result that could be hoped for in a battle against materialism would be to arrive at a philosophy of a miscellaneous collection of spirits. In this case, order might be achieved by invoking theology, but this would seem rather premature. Alternatively, order might be created in such a result by proceeding from the concept of a hierarchy of spirits. This, in effect, is Luce's original position. And, in contra-distinction to Bergson's view, Luce's has the great merit of more obviously starting at the beginning.

In the interests of elucidating Berkeley's notion of God, and even of elaborating on it, let us now begin with the useful assumption of Professor Luce. Agreeing, with Berkeley, that there is a God, what else can also be admitted to the universe? Here, the absolute necessity of expanding on some of the determinations of God's character is apparent. What else indeed can be admitted, unless some fairly precise concept of God is formed? This is not to affirm that Berkeley is entirely at sea in this matter. Rather, the purpose is merely to emphasize the central role of God in his thought. And it is this primary importance of God, for Berkeley,

that makes a more elaborate treatment of the notion of God desirable, if not mandatory.

We have seen thus far that God is Infinite Spirit, and that Infinite Spirit, as spirit, is active and also somewhat analogous to finite spirits, including man. We have further seen that this analogy is proportionately weak as God is unlike man; and that the ultimate dissimilarity of these two kinds of spirits is expressed in the statement that God is inscrutable. As a result, the analogy drawn between God and man is all but destroyed. On the positive side, we remain with the conviction that God, as Infinite Spirit, is a necessary posit in a world of passive ideas.

Berkeley's God is not however a deus ex machina. Professor Luce's summary of the bishop's position is just that, a summary and not a creation. The bishop remains a bishop, and barring his insanity, God is central to the thesis of the whole Berkeleyan system. Nevertheless, we still remain with an undoubted, active, necessary, inscrutable God. And at this point, again the writings of Maimonides can usefully delineate Berkeley's scheme of things.

For example, approaching from a different perspective, Maimonides is eloquent on the negative attributes of God. To speak loosely, if we cannot positively enumerate God's characteristics, ours at least is the advantage of recognizing what God is not. God is not Corporeal, and a host of difficulties vanish with this assertion.[1] Moreover, God's incorporeal nature, for Berkeley,

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[1] Guide, Part I, p.208 ff.
See also Summa Theologica, Vol. I, Qu. 3, p.25 ff.

satisfies the requirement that God is spirit. Yet, in attributing nothing positive to God, He still remains for us unknowable, except as a spiritual cause demanded by reason. In this sense, Maimonides' God of negative attributes is equally the Infinite Spirit of Berkeley.

On the subject of an inscrutable God, Maimonides comes directly to the point. In effect, we, in our ignorance and consequent tendencies toward anthropomorphism, suppose that we can attribute human characteristics to God. In this we err. Far from knowing God by His attributes, we know Him only by His activities, and from these infer attributes. Hence, while the poets of the Bible sing of God's benevolence, God's wrath and even of the might of His arm, the more discriminating student of these works does well to remember this poetic influence. Inferences from God's actions to His attributes have a strictly circumscribed realm of value. The negative attributes not withstanding;

> "... all attributes ascribed to God are attributes of His acts, and do not imply that God has any qualities." [1]

Thus illuminated, a good number of Berkeley's remarks about Infinite Spirit become more intelligible. The inscrutable God of Maimonides serves to reveal rather than to obscure Berkeley's own notions. So conceived as known by His actions, Berkeley's God becomes, as it were, more clearly remote, but nevertheless more clear. God is inscrutable precisely because He can be

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[1] Guide, Part I, p.198.
See also Summa Theologica, Vol. I, QQ. 12-13, p.91 ff.

known only through His actions. Because we do not and indeed cannot attribute spatial dimensions to God, the analogy drawn between Him and ourselves is seriously weakened. Thus reduced, for all practical purposes, only to a notion of Infinite Spirit without any readily associated ideas, God is understandably more distant from us, though equally the creating and sustaining Infinite Spirit subscribed to by Berkeley. On this interpretation, our anthropomorphism also becomes more intelligible; and what could have been a serious embarrassment to the whole Judaeo-Christian Scriptural tradition becomes instead the flower of many generations of poets.

In the case of Berkeley, confusions about the Infinite Spirit arose only when analogical reasoning was employed indiscriminately; and against this tendency, Berkeley himself argued with some enthusiasm. Even in the first edition of the Principles he warned against the dangers of building systems with hastily-noted similarities. Making reference to the laws of Nature, he remarked:

> "we are apt to lay too great stress on analogies, and to the prejudice of truth, humour that eagerness of the mind, whereby it is carried to extend its knowledge into general theorems." [1]

Later, the privileged concept of God The Artificer became a particular target of the bishop. In 1729 he wrote to Johnson, rejecting this interpretation of God, and made the Infinite Spirit even more remote by observing:

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1 Vol. II. 87.

> "A clock may indeed go independent of its maker or artificer, inasmuch as the gravitation of its pendulum proceeds from another cause, and that the artificer is not the adequate cause of the clock; so that the analogy would not be just to suppose a clock is in respect of its artist what the world is in respect of its Creator." [1]

Ultimately for Berkeley, only the family of spirit unites God and man. Infinite Spirit is inscrutable, and our most rational efforts to understand can rest only on incomplete and uncertain premises. It is true that we may reason somewhat about God from the activities of God; but if we would certainly find God in nature, we merely delude ourselves. The Sustainer of all is not recognizable, and His relation to the world cannot be further known. Our knowledge terminates at the end assigned by Berkeley, when he summarizes thus:

> "... by a diligent observation of the phenomena within our view, we may discover the general laws of Nature, and from them deduce the other phenomena, I do not say <u>demonstrate</u>; for all deductions of that kind depend on a supposition that the Author of Nature always operates uniformly, and in a constant observance of those rules we take for principles: which we cannot evidently know." [2]

Thus the clerk succumbs; bequeathing all further commitments to the cleric.

In conclusion, we can at last see that Berkeley's statements about Infinite Spirit are not necessarily so strained and ill-conceived as they first appeared to be. It is also once again evident that the loss of the <u>Principles Part II</u> was a very

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1 Vol. II. pp.280-1.

2 Ibid. p.88.

serious loss to the whole of the Berkeleyan system. However, at least in this limited development of Berkeley's miscellaneous remarks, it would also seem that nothing of major value has been lost to him. Reviewing his fundamental principles regarding notions, we see for example that he retains, in its full force, his premise of the necessary activity of Infinite Spirit. He equally preserves the whole spirit-sustaining tenor of his immaterialism. And the inscrutable God of tradition is fully the author of an orderly world to which we are pleased to ascribe a system of natural laws. In short, and despite all of his obscurities about God, the Irish philosopher has yet remained the Anglican bishop; in this case, appropriately aided in his orthodoxy by "Moses, the son of Maimon, the Spaniard". [1]

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1 J.S. Minkin, The World of Moses Maimonides with selections from his Writings (New York, 1957), p.114.

PART II

'And coxcombs vanquish Berkeley with a grin.'

John Brown

"Essay on Satire occasioned
by the death of Mr. Pope"

PART II

CHAPTER VI

The role of dissenting commentators respecting Berkeley's philosophy is by no means insignificant. And, this is so, despite the fact that, as Mill observed, most of the bishop's numerous adversaries expired "having generally occupied themselves in proving what he never denied, and denying what he never asserted."[1] In all events, they seriously influenced the historical Berkeley as he has come down to us. For example, Samuel Johnson's "argumentum ad lapidem"[2] made a much greater impact than might reasonably have been expected; and so it seems not entirely beside the point to explore the more influential commentators of Berkeley in some detail.

In an account familiar to many, Boswell determinedly records the "refutation" by Johnson as follows:

> "After we came out of the church, we stood talking for some time together of Bishop Berkeley's ingenious sophistry to prove the non-existence of matter, and that every thing in the universe is merely ideal. I observed, that though we are satisfied his doctrine is not true, it is impossible to refute it. I shall never forget the alacrity with which Johnson answered, striking his foot with mighty force against a large stone, till he rebounded from it, 'I refute it thus.' "[3]

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1 J.S. Mill, Three Essays on Religion, (New York, 1874), p.262.

2 Samuel Alexander, Philosophical and Literary Pieces, ed. J.L. (London, 1939), p.119.

3 James Boswell, Boswell's Life of Johnson, ed. M. Morris (London, 1925), p.162.

It is certainly acknowledged that Johnson has since been soundly rebuked for this simple-minded exercise. Yet traces of his thought endure and, with specific regard to notions, still flourish. In another less-often quoted incident, Boswell recalls for us that:

> "Being in company with a gentleman who thought fit to maintain Dr. Berkeley's ingenious philosophy, that nothing exists but as perceived by some mind; when the gentleman was going away, Johnson said to him, 'Pray, Sir, don't leave us; for we may perhaps forget to think of you, and then you will cease to exist.'"[1]

Whatever the virtues of consistency, we might well question Johnson's unvarying disregard for the contents of Berkeley's writings. In this second passage, we can clearly see, by a negative instance, the importance of the concept of notions in Berkeleyan thought. And it will hardly be disputed that Johnson's philosophical understanding suffered some serious deficiencies. But this is by no means to focus on personalities. As it happens, Johnson typifies a point of view rampant certainly since the first edition of the Principles, and as such, contributes to making the general point that without "notions", Berkeley and his thought positively vanish, leaving no identifiable impressions.

And yet while leaving Johnson to his merits, we need not run into the opposite enthusiasm and attribute "To Berkeley, ev'ry Virtue under Heav'n.",[2] as did Pope. Nor should we,

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1 Life of Johnson, p.536.

2 Alexander Pope, The Poetical Works of Alexander Pope, ed. A. W. Ward (London, 1924), p.341.

under the influence of Pope, assume that Berkeley fared better with the poets than among his less-lyrical critics. Byron quite pointedly saves us from this error when, in the eleventh canto of Don Juan, he observes:

"When Bishop Berkeley said 'there was no matter,'
And proved it -- 'twas no matter what he said:
They say his system 'tis in vain to batter,
Too subtle for the airiest human head;
And yet who can believe it? I would shatter
Gladly all matters down to stone or lead,
Or adamant, to find the world a spirit,
And wear my head, denying that I wear it." [1]

And so defenders and arch-critics might be continued. Undoubtedly, a very sizable number of early eighteenth century pamphlets and broadsides could also be assembled expressing, in the most vehement terms, positions both for and against what was commonly supposed to be Berkeley's philosophy. If however, as we may suspect, their authors were no less rash than some of their better-known contemporaries, we should merely find countlessly repeated instances of a failure to hear Berkeley in his own terms and a conspicuous neglect of the role of notions in his thought.

Consistent with the adverse remarks of Johnson and Byron, the philosophy of Berkeley had the dubious advantage of passing

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1 George Gordon, Lord Byron, Don Juan and Other Satirical Poems, ed. L.I. Bredvold (New York, 1935), p.543.

from the British Isles through Continental Europe in a pervading wave of fog. Of specific instances, we shall hear more in the following chapters. For now, it should be pointed out at once that Berkeley's commentators are by no means uniformly bad. There are notable exceptions to the carping school, among whom are André Leroy, Erich Cassirer, Ernst Cassirer and, of course, the joint editors of the critical Berkeley edition T.E. Jessop and A.A. Luce.

Let us compare, for example, the ill-considered comments of Samuel Johnson with André Leroy's lament for the missing theory of notions:

> "Combien l'on aimerait lire ce second livre des Principes, dont le manuscrit fut perdu lors des voyages en Italie, et que Berkeley n'eut jamais le loisir d'écrire de nouveau! " [1]

That Leroy sees the role of notions as central to Berkeley's philosophy is evident. For example, in the same work we read his description of the Berkeleyan world, with some of the key relations obtaining in it among "ideas", finite human spirits and Infinite Spirit. Thus:

> "Pour Berkeley, la chose sensible est toujours passive; elle est un tableau qui nous est proposé, d'une manière analogue à celle que nous employons pour nous proposer des vues pittoresques en imagination. Ce n'est pas nous qui nous nous proposons nos idées sensible, c'est donc un autre esprit, et un esprit plus puissant que le nôtre, puisque nous ne pouvons refuser entièrement les idées.

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1 André-Louis Leroy, George Berkeley (Paris, 1959), p.160

> Entre l'activité de cet esprit et la mienne, une opposition s'établit, qui, pour un temps très court, stoppe mon activité. Ainsi, sans cesser d'être foncièrement actif, un esprit peut être maintenu dans une courte immobilité par un esprit plus puissant." [1]

The above brief exposition of important contrasts serves also to introduce a further example of Berkeley's sometimes-favorable position on the Continent. Having long suffered from the labelling tendencies of mankind, we can imagine the soul of Berkeley rejoicing to read in a late edition of a French reference volume the following distinction, significantly under the heading:

> "Sur Idéalisme.
> A partir du XVIII^{e} siècle, ce terme est fréquemment employé pour désigner la doctrine de Berkeley; mais lui-même se sert, pour la qualifier, du terme immatérialisme." [2]

This nicety of distinctions is retained in the same volume as we read under the heading,

> Immaterialisme,
> "Mot crée par Berkeley pour désigner sa doctrine métaphysique, qu'il considère comme l'exacte antithèse du matérialisme:". [3]

By comparison, the Oxford English Dictionary gives as one definition of Immaterialism:

> "The doctrine that matter does not exist in itself as a substance or cause, but that all things have existence only as the ideas or perceptions of a mind." [4]

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1 Leroy, Berkeley, pp.163-4.

2 Vocabulaire Technique et Critique de la Philosophie ed. A. Lalande (Paris, 1960), p.437.

3 Ibid., p.473.

4 Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford, 1933), V. 61.

To illustrate this definition, the Dictionary selected from Berkeley the cryptic comment:

> "You tell me indeed of a repugnancy between the Mosaic history and Immaterialism." [1]

Aside from the shortcomings of the definition, the illustration is, when isolated, an unfortunate choice. In its context, the above quotation, far from being an assertion of fact for Berkeley, is issued as a challenge by the protagonist, Philonous, whose whole purpose is to maintain that there is no "repugnancy between the Mosaic history and Immaterialism", as understood by Berkeley.[2]

Unhappily, this is not the only occurrence of a questionable representation of Berkeley's thought by the Oxford Dictionary. In both instances in which Berkeley is quoted referring to the word "notional", the view of Berkeley's adversary apparently is represented as his own. The difficulty, in both cases, arises from the fact that "notional" is a cognate of a highly technical term for Berkeley and hence easily confused with the more restricted usage. In consequence we are told misleadingly by the Oxford Dictionary:

> "All things that exist, exist only in the mind, that is, they are purely notional." * [3]

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* The usage supposedly illustrated is: "Of things, relations, etc.: Existing only in thought; not real or actually existent; imaginary." [4]

1 O.E.D., V. 61.

2 Vol. II. 255.

3 O.E.D., VII. 233.

4 Ibid.

The context of this statement is:

> "First then, it will be objected that by the foregoing principles, all that is real and substantial in Nature is banished out of the world: and instead thereof a chimerical scheme of ideas takes place. All things that exist, exist only in the mind, that is, they are purely notional. What therefore becomes of the sun, moon, and stars?... To all which, and whatever else of the same sort may be objected, I answer, that by the principles premised, we are not deprived of any one thing in Nature. Whatever we see, feel, hear, or any wise conceive or understand, remains as secure as ever, and is as real as ever. There is a rerum natura, and the distinction between realities and chimeras retains its full force." [1]

Or again, we read:

> "Airy, notional men, enthusiasts"...* [2]

In this case, the context is a reference to a division of the creatures of the world into insects; fishes, birds, and beasts; and man, by some unnamed "ingenious freethinker", in Berkeley's sense of this phrase. The full sentence, stated by Lysicles, one of Berkeley's adversaries in the dialogue, runs as follows:

> "The birds are airy notional men, enthusiasts, projectors, poets, philosophers, and such-like: in each species every individual retaining a tincture of his former state, which constitutes what is called genius." [4]

Thus, we see that even today, Berkeley's position in the English-speaking world is not one of unmixed clarity.

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* Illustrating: "Of persons: Given to abstract or fanciful speculation; holding merely speculative views." [3]

1 Vol. II. 55.

2 O.E.D., VII. 233.

3 Ibid.

4 Vol. III. 213-14.

In contrast with the eccentricities of the lexicographers, the bishop's star rose steadily in the house of Cassirer. And ironically, the subtleties of Berkeley's prose were given back to us in German. Erich Cassirer, the less well-known and younger man who died at an early age, was the author of a book entitled Berkeleys System, Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Systematik des Idealismus. In this work, he expounds Berkeley and also raises interesting and involved questions regarding Berkeley's theory of concepts. Since, however the scope of this essay expressly does not include Berkeley's theory of relations, hence concepts, reference to the work of Erich Cassirer is intended solely to record one of the very few writers on Berkeley who was willing to expound and criticize him on his own terms. Thus we can read in Cassirer's analysis of Berkeley's thought:

> "Why then, can there not be any concept of material being? The notions concern the spirits: one's own spirit, other spirits and in the ultimate metaphysical sense, the spirit of God. The mathematical concepts however are symbolized in the intuition, * therefore they belong to the world of sensation and with it to the lower sphere of knowledge. We shall see how, in spite of these limitations, concept and judgment will acquire an increasing importance in the analysis of experience." [1]

Ernst Cassirer, the far better-known of the two, raises similar questions in regard to Berkeley's theory of concepts. In volume I of The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Cassirer questions the bishop's theory of concepts with specific regard

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* In the Kantian sense of intuition.

1 Erich Cassirer, Berkeleys System; ein beitrag zur geschichte und systematik des idealismus (Giessen, 1914), p.51.

to language. And, again, while it is far from my purpose to extend the discussion into a theory of relations adequate for concepts, such a discussion is undoubtedly essential for a thorough investigation of Berkeley's notions of relations. Moreover, both of the Cassirers mentioned are significant as commentators of Berkeley in recognizing precisely this condition. For, in The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, we can note the underlying question regarding Berkeley's concepts:

> "In line with his sensationalist approach, Berkeley interpreted this language of the mind, which he proved to be a condition of spatial perception, exclusively as a language of the senses. But on closer scrutiny this interpretation negates itself. For it lies in the very concept of language that it can never be purely sensuous, but represents a characteristic interpenetration and interaction of sensuous and conceptual factors; in language it is always presupposed that individual sensory signs be filled with general intellectual meaning content." [1]

And again, in Das Erkenntnisproblem, the approach is more oblique, though the question of concepts remains. For example, Berkeley's account of "syllogistic reasoning" is of crucial importance to further discussion as Cassirer poses the problem in passing:

> "The idea as sensual presentation is no longer an indispensable criterion of knowledge. However, the kind of knowledge that is recognized here is clearly differentiated from the abstract general idea which, as before, is considered an impossible mixture between thought and sense perception. As with Descartes, the certitude of the reality of the self is obtained in

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[1] Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, trans. R. Manheim (New Haven, 1953), I. 100.

> Berkeley in an "inner" vision which is equally far removed from the way we grasp any object of experience and of any mediated insight, namely by syllogistic reasoning." [1]

Any attempt to review the most significant writers on Berkeley would, of course, include the editors of the two best-known editions of his works. Beginning with A.C. Fraser, there is little question as to the contribution he made by first publishing the collected works of Berkeley. Even the rather hostile review by Peirce [2] makes this admission; though Fraser's effort was far from perfect. On the contrary, like many of those who make the first attempt in a given field, he too suffered the disadvantages of the pioneer, and his work exhibits the flaws of uncritical discovery. Originally, the work appeared in four volumes, and obviously it cannot be estimated fairly in only a few lines. Therefore the subject is better left unopened, while we acknowledge Fraser's singular merits and our enormous debt to him. At the same time, we are obliged to note that his text of Berkeley has been superseded by the text published under the combined editorship of Professor Jessop and Canon Luce.

Again, in the case of Jessop and Luce, a thorough analysis of their contribution to Berkeleyan scholarship cannot be given briefly. Regarding however, the question of notions, there is some perhaps not uninstructive disagreement between them.

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1 Ernst Cassirer, Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der Neueren Zeit (Berlin, 1922), II. 312.

2 C.S. Peirce, Collected Papers, ed. A.W. Burks, (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), VIII. 9. Originally appeared in The North American Review 113 (Oct. 1871).

As it happens, both Jessop and Luce have published translations of Berkeley's De Motu. In these published texts, the Latin phrase, given variously as principio motus, motus principium, and principium motus, has received different renderings by the two editors. Their differences seem to focus on the words "principle" and "source", the former being favored by Luce, the latter by Jessop. In the context of the sections, which will be quoted, it appears that Luce does not distinguish so clearly between "principle" (a relation) and "source" (a spirit) as does Jessop. For Berkeley, of course, both "principle" as premise, and "source" as power, are considered notions, but presumably they are distinguishable notions. The translation given by Luce seems to blur this distinction as, under his auspices we read:

> "6 Obviously then it is idle to lay down gravity or force as the principle of motion; for how could that principle be known more clearly by being styled an occult quality?" [1]

Or again:

> "29 Take away from the idea of body extension, solidity, and figure, and nothing will remain. But those qualities are indifferent to motion, nor do they contain anything which could be called the principle of motion. This is clear from our very ideas." [2]

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1 Vol IV. 32.

2 Ibid. p.38.

And, yet again:

> "30 A thinking, active thing is given which we experience as the principle of motion in ourselves. This we call soul, mind, and spirit." [1]

Stressing Luce's English rendering, "principle of motion", we turn now to Jessop's version of the same lines. In contrast, he has translated in a manner that suggests equally the similarities and differences between "premise" and "power" as follows:

> "6. Obviously, then, gravity or force cannot be laid down as the source or principle of motion, for can that principle be any more clearly known by calling it an occult quality?" [2]

> "29. If extension, solidity and shape were taken away from the idea of body, what would remain would be nothing. But those qualities are indifferent in respect of motion, having in them nothing that can be called the source of motion. This is perfectly evident in the ideas we have of them." [3]

> "30. Something thinking and active is a fact, and we experience it in ourselves as a source of motion. We call it soul, mind, or spirit." [4] ★

Professor Jessop further elaborated on this point by affirming:

> "It seems quite clear to me that in Sects. 6, 29 & 30 Berkeley is not concerned with "principle" as premiss, rule, or law, but with a real source or productive power. I cannot make sense of the sections otherwise." [5]

★ The Latin text, as it appears in the nine volume critical edition of Berkeley's works reads as follows:
"6 Patet igitur gravitatem aut vim frustra poni pro principio motus: nunquid enim principium illud clarius cognosci potest ex eo quod dicatur qualitas occulta?" Vol. IV. 12.

1 Vol. IV. 38.

2 T.E. Jessop, Berkeley, Philosophical Writings (Toronto, 1952), p.204.

3 Ibid. p.207.

4 Ibid.

5 T.E. Jessop, Unpublished letter dated: Oct. 21, 1961.

In closing this part of the discussion it is perhaps well to repeat that the group of commentators given is by no means exhaustive. Rather, they have been deliberately selected in order to serve two related purposes. For example, the more superficial and popular writers treated in this section clearly reveal that they mis-read Berkeley, and did so largely by failing to take into account his theory of notions. In contrast, the opposing group serves to illustrate the complementary claim that, among the ablest commentators and critics of Berkeley are those who recognized his need for a theory of notions, and who took seriously the implications of such a concept in his thought.

"29 Auferantur ex idea corporis extensio, soliditas, figura, remanebit nihil. Sed qualitates istae sunt ad motum indifferentes, nec in se quidquam habent, quod motus principium dici possit. Hoc ex ipsis ideis nostris perspicuum est." Vol. IV. 18.

"30 Datur res cogitans activa quam principium motus esse in nobis experimur. Hanc <u>animam</u>, <u>mentem</u>, <u>spiritum</u> dicimus; ...". Vol. IV. 18.

CHAPTER VII

Section A

i

Throughout the development of this essay, the claim has been that to neglect his theory of notions is to neglect Berkeley. Hence, the acknowledged purpose of this section is to offer illustrations of important, indeed classical, misrepresentations of Berkeley's thought arising precisely from the neglect of notions. More specifically, we shall see that the most serious blunders in this regard, ordinarily result from: a) a cavalier treatment of Berkeley's use of the term "idea"; b) a partial or total ignoring of the term "notion"; or, c) both of these errors, which obviously nourish each other.

Turning now to some eminent thinkers in their own right, let us review their interpretations of Berkeley; all of which are alleged to have failed, at least in part, through neglecting a theory of "notions". In presenting these quotations, it is perhaps well to mention that the passages quoted have deliberately been made extensive in the interest of providing some context for the pertinent remarks contained in them. Further, for the sake of simplicity, I shall simply present the quotation to be discussed in full, and then, in a few sentences, refer to the

passage just quoted, remarking on the specific problem that could be explored further within the framework of a theory of notions. Again, this series is by no means exhaustive, nor should the immediately-following comments be construed as answers to the questions raised. The purpose is merely to suggest that further discussion of Berkeley's philosophy, in many cases, demands a lively recognition of "notions" as well as the more generally considered though in no sense faultlessly-construed "ideas".

On March 15, 1715, Leibniz wrote to his correspondent, the Jesuit father Bartholomaeus des Bosses, concerning Berkeley. In reference to the reality of bodies, Leibniz affirmed:

> "We rightly maintain that bodies are real objects; for appearances too are real. However, if anyone wanted to maintain that bodies are substances, he would, I believe, require some new principle accounting for the real union of bodies.
>
> He, in Ireland, who attacks the reality of bodies seems neither to adduce adequate reasons nor to explicate his own mind sufficiently. I suspect that he belongs to that kind of man who wants to be known for his paradoxes." *

And, thus as Leibniz judged, the scene was drawn; with a setting of concepts which would again notably recur among the German-speaking writers on Berkeley.

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* The Latin text is given as follows:

"Recte tuemur corpora esse res, nam et phaenomena sunt realia. Sed si quis tueri velit corpora esse substantias, indigebit, credo, novo quodam principio unionis realis.

Qui in Hybernia corporum realitatem impugnat, videtur nec rationes afferre idoneas, nec mentem suam satis explicare. Suspicor esse ex eo hominum genere, qui per Paradoxa cognosci volunt." G.W.F. von Leibniz, (Die) Philosophischen Schriften, ed. C.J. Gerhardt, (Berlin, 1879), II. 492.

ii

Although in the case of non-English-speaking commentators one may always question the translations of Berkeley available to them, the third of the "British Empiricists" can lay claim to no such extenuating circumstance. Turning now to Hume, it is instructive to examine and contrast his direct remarks about Berkeley's philosophy. Notice, for example, the praise emanating from the first passage quoted:

> "A very material question has been started concerning abstract or general ideas, whether they be general or particular in the mind's conception of them.[1] A great philosopher has disputed the receiv'd opinion in this particular, and has asserted, that all general ideas are nothing but particular ones, annexed to a certain term, which gives them a more extensive signification, and makes them recall upon occasion other individuals, which are similar to them." "[1] Dr. Berkeley." [1]

Concerning the passage above, it is of some moment to remember that, for Berkeley, the annexing of "particular" ideas is a more important condition than Hume might have thought. If we recall that annexing or to annex is an activity in Berkeley's philosophy, then the role of notions becomes evident even in what Hume would praise for other reasons. And, bearing in mind the concept of "notions", we can further see the consistency of Berkeley when Hume later objects to a cardinal point of the bishop's thought in stating:

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[1] David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature (Oxford, 1958), p.17.

> "When we talk of self or substance, we must have an idea annex'd to these terms, otherwise they are altogether unintelligible. Every idea is deriv'd from preceding impressions; and we have no impression of self or substance, as something simple and individual. We have, therefore, no idea of them in that sense." [1]

> "When I turn my reflexion on myself, I never can perceive this self without some one or more perceptions; nor can I ever perceive any thing but the perceptions. 'Tis the composition of these, therefore, which forms the self." [2]

> "When my perceptions are remov'd for any time, as by sound sleep; so long am I insensible of myself, and may truly be said not to exist. And were all my perceptions remov'd by death, and cou'd I neither think, nor feel, nor see, nor love, nor hate after the dissolution of my body, I shou'd be entirely annihilated, nor do I conceive what is farther requisite to make me a perfect non-entity. If any one upon serious and unprejudic'd reflexion, thinks he has a different notion of himself, I must confess I can reason no longer with him. All I can allow him is, that he may be in the right as well as I, and that we are essentially different in this particular. He may, perhaps, perceive something simple and continu'd, which he calls himself; tho' I am certain there is no such principle in me." [3]

The opposition of Hume and Berkeley on the question of the self is, of course, perfectly clear. And yet, in regard to the above quotations, it is difficult to dismiss entirely the suspicion that Hume's survey of Berkeley's conception of notions was, at best, cursory. Certainly, the later writer made no systematic effort either to explicate or to undermine this fundamental tenet of his immediate predecessor. And, perhaps it is not too much to suggest that, in consequence, Hume's view of Berkeley and indeed of empiricism, was somewhat impaired.

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1 Treatise of Human Nature, p.633. [Appendix].

2 Ibid, p.634.

3 Ibid, p.252.

iii

Another Scottish philosopher, Thomas Reid, also is of some importance in exhibiting the historical Berkeley. Besides bringing against the bishop a charge of solipsism (already dealt with), Reid asserts, in consideration of Section 142 of the Principles: *

> "From this it follows, that our imaginations are not properly ideas but notions, because they include an act of the mind. For he tells us, in a passage already quoted, that they are creatures of the mind, of its own framing, and that it makes and unmakes them as it thinks fit, and from this is properly denominated active. If it be a good reason why we have not ideas, but notions only of relations, because they include an act of the mind; the same reason must lead us to conclude, that our imaginations are notions and not ideas, since they are made and unmade by the mind as it thinks fit, and from this it is properly denominated active." 1

Surely this is like concluding from the assertion that cats and rabbits are furry creatures, that cats <u>are</u> rabbits; for the reason that they both, in fact, have four legs. For here, Reid seems utterly to miss the point of Berkeley's terminology.

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* There are some variations in the Section as quoted by Reid:
"Princip. sect. 142.
'We may not, I think, strictly be said to have an idea of an active being, or of an action, although we may be said to have a notion of them. I have some knowledge or notion of my mind, and its acts about ideas, in as much as I know or understand what is meant by these words. It is also to be remarked, that all relations including an act of the mind, we cannot so properly be said to have an idea, but rather a notion of the relations and habitudes between things.' "

1 Thomas Reid, <u>Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man</u>, (Dublin, 1784), I. 216.

If "imaginations" are to be construed as Berkeley's ideas of imagination, then they clearly are not notions because they happen to be ideas. And Reid is simply mistaken if he thinks that "an act of the mind" included with any object for the mind automatically renders such an object a notion. All ideas certainly involve an act of the mind, in the sense that they are mind-dependent. But this does not thereby convert an "idea" into a "notion". Further, Reid seems to be capitalizing on the cognates of the word "imaginations"; i.e. "image" and "imaging", which are two crucially different concepts in the context of Berkeley's philosophy. Here again, it seems that a closer view of "notions" would have served Reid well in maintaining the quite distinct though complementary concepts of "notion" and "idea". *

iv

From the works of Kant, we can glean the following comments about Berkeley:

> "Idealism -- meaning thereby material idealism -- is the theory which declares the existence of objects in space outside us either to be merely doubtful and indemonstrable or to be false and impossible." "The latter is the dogmatic idealism of Berkeley. He maintains that space, with all the things of which it is the inseparable condition, is something which is in itself impossible; and he therefore regards the things in space as merely imaginary entities. Dogmatic idealism is unavoidable, if space be interpreted as a property that must belong

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* The case against Reid gains force in the immediately following pages of this same chapter on Berkeley.

> to things in themselves. For in that case space, and everything to which it serves as condition, is a non-entity. The ground on which this idealism rests has already been undermined by us in the Transcendental Aesthetic." [1]

And, moreover, undermined of necessity; for Kant had already been quite clear that:

> "if we regard space and time as properties which, if they are to be possible at all, must be found in things in themselves, and if we reflect on the absurdities in which we are then involved, ... we cannot blame the good Berkeley for degrading bodies to mere illusion." [2]

There are two other pertinent statements that shed light on Kant's interpretation of Berkeley. In the Prolegomena we read:

> "The proposition of all genuine idealists from the Eleatic School to Bishop Berkeley is contained in this formula: 'all knowledge through the senses and through experience is nothing but illusion, and only in the ideas of pure understanding and reason is truth'." [3]

And, a few paragraphs later:

> "But they [the idealists] and among them especially Berkeley regarded space as a mere empirical representation which, like the appearances in it, only becomes known to us, together with all its determinations, by means of experience or perception;". "From this it follows: that as truth rests on universal and necessary laws as its criteria, experience with Berkeley can have no criteria of truth because nothing was laid (by him) a priori at the ground of appearances in it, from which it then followed that they are nothing but illusion;". [4]

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1 Critique of Pure Reason, p.244.

2 Ibid. p.89.

3 Immanuel Kant, Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics, trans. P.G. Lucas, (Manchester, 1959), p.145.

4 Ibid. pp.145-6.

Let us now review the burden of Kant's stated objections to Berkeley. We see that the charges can be summarized, though loosely, in the following statement. "Idealists are imposed upon by a phenomenal world of illusion; and George Berkeley is an arch-perpetrator of this myth".

In previous chapters this view of Berkeley has been shown to be erroneous. In passing it has become apparent that:

1) It is a mistake to term Berkeley an "idealist", in what has become the ordinary sense of that word. It is less misleading to use his own word, "immaterialism", in reference to his philosophy.

2) Whatever other so-called idealists have held to be true of the phenomenal world, Berkeleyan thought affirms its reality copiously in the related treatises.

3) Not only is the phenomenal world <u>real</u> for Berkeley, but it also is orderly, thereby permitting us to distinguish its reality from "the irregular visions of fancy".

4) And finally, now placing the stress on a theory of notions, we can see Berkeley the "immaterialist", guaranteeing both the orderly relations and the reality of the phenomenal world through the auspices of Infinite Spirit.

Section B

i

Whether as the cause or the effect of Kant's views, we are told, in the Oxford English Dictionary, that by 1803,

> "The system of Berkeley ... is espoused under the name Idealism by writers of reputation in Germany." [1]

More important for the historical Berkeley, the trend was continued by at least one influential writer in Germany well into the nineteenth century. Whatever else his merits, Friedrich Lange had the considerable misfortune to take seriously Kant's interpretation of Berkeley. For example, the quotation of the preceding footnote p.73, n.3 appears in Lange's History of Materialism,[2] and when taken together with the following passage, appears to be a thorough-going indictment of a most questionable Berkeley:

> "And again, in the last era which we treated, we find two men differing in nationality, modes of thought, calling, faith, and character, who nevertheless both abandoned the foundation of Materialism upon the same point -- Berkeley the bishop, and D'Alembert the mathematician. The former looked upon the whole world of phenomena as one great delusion of the senses; the latter doubted whether there exists outside us anything corresponding to what we suppose we see." [3]

Perhaps Lange's admiration for Kant drew him into this flagrant misrepresentation of Berkeley. Perhaps Lange actually read

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1 O.E.D., V. 17.

2 Frederick A. Lange, The History of Materialism, trans. E.C. Thomas (London, 1880), II. 164.

3 Ibid. pp.157-8.

Berkeley and from his reading, reached the conclusion of the above quotation. If he did so, his familiarity with Berkeley far exceeded that of Kant, who seems never to have read a line of Berkeley writings. In any case, the result as shown, overlooks entirely the function of Infinite Spirit (of which we have notions only) and the resultant reality of the "whole world of phenomena".

ii

However mistaken his criticisms of Berkeley may be, Vladimir Lenin undoubtedly was correct in his conviction that the philosophy of Berkeley is the antithesis of materialism. In the volume Materialism and Empirio-Criticism one need not search long to find the opposition, and hear polemics rise against a pseudo-Berkeley. Thus, on page 12, we are told:

> "Let us regard the external world, or nature as 'a combination of sensations' which is caused in our mind by the divinity. Admit this and give up searching for the 'ground' of these sensations outside of the mind and man, and I will recognize within the framework of the idealist theory of knowledge all of natural science, the application and certainty of its inferences. It is exactly this framework that I need for my conclusions for the sake of 'peace and religion.' Such is Berkeley's idea. It correctly expresses the essence and social significance of idealist philosophy, and we will encounter it later, when we come to speak of the relation of Machism to natural science." [1]

Whether the above passage does in fact correctly express "the essence and social significance of idealist philosophy"

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[1] Vladimir I. Lenin, Materialism and Empirio-Criticism, trans. D. Kvitko (New York, 1927), p.12.

is not here our concern. As to the claim, "such is Berkeley's idea.", this is certainly doubtful, since from Berkeley's point of view, the quoted sentences beginning with "Admit this" and ending with " 'peace and religion' " reveal a distinctly wrong-headed approach to the subject. The questions at issue are hardly matters for bargaining, and it is misleading to characterize Berkeley's philosophy as a plaintive cry for mercy from superior metaphysical systems. Consequently, the above remarks are wrongly construed to be the "essence" of Berkeley's critical thought.

But to continue; we find considerable confusion even on the same page when Lenin observes:

> "As for Berkeley's theory, which threw Fraser into rapture, it is expounded in the following words: 'The connexion of ideas (do not forget that for Berkeley ideas and objects are identical) does not imply the relation of cause and effect, but only of a mark or sign with the thing signified (65)." [1]

Here the key phrase is Lenin's hint that "for Berkeley ideas and objects are identical". This conviction of the author probably goes far to explain the mistaken stress of the earlier quotation. Certainly, this latter remark belies any claim to a serious view of "notions", which in fact precisely saves Berkeley from holding ideas and objects to be indistinguishable. That objects are not totally ideas is exactly the view that Berkeley entertains, and is able to do so through a theory of relations, again of which we have only notions.

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1 Materialism, p.12.

In dealing with an author like Lenin, one is perhaps slightly suspicious of his precise motives in considering Berkeley at all. This is, of course, not a sufficient reason to discount Lenin's remarks, but the suspicion in his case seems justified when we compare what he cared to quote from Berkeley with the context of the quotation as it appeared in the Principles. Thus, Lenin would have us read as Berkeley's view:

> "The source of the absurdity [of thinking the unthinkable] 'follows from our supposing a difference between things and ideas ... and depends on the supposition of external objects' (87)." [1]

The full quotation is part of a series of arguments against representationism and reads as follows:

> "All this scepticism follows, from our supposing a difference between things and ideas, and that the former have a subsistence without the mind, or unperceived. It were easy to dilate on this subject, and shew how the arguments urged by sceptics in all ages, depend on the supposition of external objects." [2]

In this case, there is perhaps some decisive obscurity in Berkeley's expression, though when considered in conjunction with the rest of the Principles, the obscurity largely disappears. Yet, in fairness, it should be admitted that the apparent division of the clause, "and that the former have a subsistence without the mind or unperceived" from the preceding clause, is unfortunate for Berkeley's meaning. But on the other hand, it also has been insisted, with supporting evidence, that things indeed are different

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1 Materialism, p.10.

2 Vol. II. p.79.

from ideas. Moreover, it has repeatedly been emphasized that the type of mind on which an idea directly depends, i.e. whether finite or Infinite mind, makes a very considerable difference in the character of the idea. Furthermore, the "external objects" referred to in both passages clearly are to be identified not with the Mind-dependent natural phenomena of Berkeley's own philosophy, but rather with objects dependent on "material substratum", the "stupid thoughtless somewhat", [1] that Berkeley holds to be both a chimerical sustainer of the natural world as well as a contradictory hypothesis of metaphysics. In closing, once more we see that the consequence of overlooking notions is to find not a true likeness of Berkeley, but merely a caricature.

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[1] Vol. II. p.73.

CHAPTER VIII

Section A

We come now to the last chapter dealing with Berkeley's commentators. As mentioned earlier, Wisdom apparently entertained the view that Berkeley really was quite mad. But this is not the moment to discuss Berkeley's alleged peculiarities. Wisdom's view has its main philosophical interest for us in his tacit claim that Berkeley's thought is best expressed in a series of attacks on various opponents; e.g. "Matter" (an ambiguous term never clarified by Wisdom), "deists", "mathematicians" and so on. From this view, Wisdom immediately proceeds to mix and confuse questions of philosophy, psychology, history and even geography, as follows:

> "In this evolution [of Berkeley's thought], Matter began by being his main target, became replaced in part by deists, mathematicians, and every kind of profligate, and ultimately ceased actively to be his arch-enemy. What underlay this change of outlook?
>
> Why did Berkeley give vent to his attack on mathematicians, for which the ammunition was being prepared in the Philosophical Commentaries and the little essay 'Of Infinites', only after twenty-five years?
>
> Why did his broadminded fairness forsake him in dealing with the deists?
>
> Is Siris to be explained as a rational attempt to alleviate disease or is it not rather, with all its quality of myth, a sign of hypochondria?
>
> Why did he choose America -- and more especially the obviously unsuitable site of Bermuda -- for his new College?
>
> Is his marriage at forty-three to be explained on the grounds that he had not before met the right partner, or has it not rather an intrinsic connexion with his whole development?

> Is his ill-health, which became chronic on his return from America when he was forty-six, to be explained as due to a sedentary life, to middle age, to constitutional weakness, or is it not to be regarded as a functional disorder explicable psychosomatically in terms of psychogenetic trends and environmental circumstances?
>
> These questions concern the development of philosophical views, modifications of temperament, and organic changes. Is there a connexion between these phenomena?
>
> Those who cannot see how they could be connected may nonetheless be invited to reflect upon the strangeness of devoting a great part of one's life to attacking Matter, which necessitated the construction of a metaphysic of Esse percipi. It is easy, of course, to overlook the problem by assuming something like the following: are not thoughts the logical outcome of thoughts; was not Esse percipi the logical outcome of the unsatisfactory ontology and epistemology left by Locke; is not thinking a logical process that requires no other explanation than that, given the premisses, the conclusion must follow? This might be commonsense; it would certainly not be a fact; it is at best a psychological theory -- a rudimentary psychological theory about higher mental processes. It has the merit of being simple, but it throws no light whatever on Berkeley's sense of mission on behalf of Esse percipi against Matter." [1]

From his quoted remarks, one perhaps may wonder about Wisdom's hostility toward a "sense of mission". Combined with perfectly defensible historical considerations in regard to Berkeley's Will, which Wisdom also makes much of,[2] reflections on the author's own "sense of mission" grow less than flattering. So much does this seem to be the case, that even Wisdom's remarks on Berkeley's apparent domestic tranquillity are given a peculiar ring, thus:

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1 Unconscious Origin, pp.135-6.

2 Ibid., pp.232-3

> "Of his marriage it is sufficient to say that it was one of the few among the marriages of the great philosophers to be successful." [1]

In the light of other statements in this volume, one is brought to question the phrase "sufficient to say". Sufficient to say what, we may ask. Wisdom is particularly reticent in his reply to our query, but the balance of his remarks serves to identify this kind of half-concealed insinuation as a major factor in the arsenal of our author. While others may allude to "illusions", "taking thought" or "mere" ideas in only a few sentences, Wisdom consumes entire chapters in the same endeavor, apparently under the mistaken impression that a grand fallacy is somehow less fallacious if grand, and that ultimately, philosophical worth is best judged from the perspective of the analyst's couch.

Section B

i

Comparatively recently two eminent English philosophers have published views of Berkeley that again reveal the time-honored custom of overlooking or underestimating the importance of a theory of "notions". Geoffrey Warnock's book, deceptively entitled Berkeley, is a case in point. After some two hundred

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[1] Unconscious Origin, p.110.

pages of text, we read, for example, the following remarks:

> "Berkeley's observations about 'spirits' have received, perhaps, more attention than they deserve; for the fact is that he had formed hardly any views at all on problems about the mind and its doings. It is clear enough that what first engaged his serious interest was 'our knowledge of the external world,' problems about perception and the nature of physical objects on which he found himself in such sharp disagreement with Locke. It was with this group of problems in mind that he first laid down his principle that 'knowledge and language are all about ideas.' But could he have maintained this principle in discussing our knowledge and language about people and their minds?
>
> At one time he certainly thought that this could be done. In P. C. 580-581 he wrote (anticipating Hume) that 'Mind is a congeries of Perceptions .... Say you the Mind is not the Perceptions but that thing which perceives. I answer you are abused by the words that and thing, these are vague empty words without a meaning.' " [1]

As Warnock continues his brief account of spirits, he acknowledges that Berkeley later flatly repudiated the views expressed in P. C. 580-581. But, in mentioning this, Warnock expresses some doubt as to Berkeley's wisdom in changing his mind on this point. In fact, Warnock concludes his remarks on spirits thus:

> "It is perhaps permissable to guess that the long delay in publication of his projected second volume, of which so many years later he lost the unfinished manuscript, was due in part to his inability to harmonize the outlook of his early work with his theological and metaphysical beliefs. In any event he did not do this, and indeed it seems likely that it could not have been done." [2]

In Berkeley's defense, it is perhaps equally permissable to observe once again that virtually disregarding "notions" is

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1 Geoffrey J. Warnock, Berkeley (London, 1953), p.204.

2 Ibid., p.206.

a serious handicap in making sense of Berkeley's thought. Warnock, holding as he does, that "relations" is a superfluous obscurity in Berkeley,[1] might well conclude that "'spirits' have received ... more attention than they deserve". But, I submit, that if one fails to concentrate merely on "ideas", then it is quite possible to see Berkeley in some guise other than that of a reluctant Hume. It is even possible to detect the allegedly unlikely harmony between Berkeley's "theological and metaphysical beliefs" and his philosophical writings. However, for a more extended account of spirits, it is better to refer to the earlier chapters of this essay, since a fair exposition of the question would seem to require more than the two pages allotted for its disposal by Warnock.

ii

The late J. L. Austin similarly seems to have underestimated the importance of "notions" for Berkeley. His assembled work, Philosophical Papers illustrates this oversight at some length. He tells us, for example:

> "'Relations are not sensed'. This dogma held by a very great number and variety of philosophers,[2] seems to me so odd that, like Mr. Maclagan, I find it difficult to discover arguments."
>
> "[2] Even by Berkeley, who jeopardized his whole theory by doing so." [2]

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1 Warnock, Berkeley, p.203.

2 J. L. Austin, Philosophical Papers, eds. J. O. Urmson and G. J. Warnock (Oxford, 1961), p.18 & n.2.

Throughout this paper, of course, the contention has been that Berkeley by no means "jeopardized his whole theory" by asserting that "relations are not sensed". On the contrary, it is held that he affirmed the notion of "relations" and the role of "relations" in his thought by this assertion.

To continue with Austin, we find:

> "To say something about 'concepts' is sometimes a convenient way of saying something complicated about sensa (or even about other objects of acquaintance, if there are any), including symbols and images, and about our use of them: though very different methods of translation will have to be employed on different occasions."
>
> "But we must 'be careful'. We must not say, for example, ' a universal is an image': Berkeley probably did not make this mistake, but Hume probably did: hence Hume is led, whereas Berkeley is not, into a theory about 'the origin' of our ideas." [1]

In the above quotation, the word "probably" deserves some mention. In this connection it would seem, that had Austin taken "notions" a little more seriously, he instead would have asserted without hesitation that Berkeley certainly did not make this mistake, of holding a universal to be an image.

That Austin's approach to Berkeley is somewhat peculiar can be seen in the following rather long footnote, again from the Philosophical Papers:

> "Berkeley, I think, maintains exactly the same position with regard to 'matter' as with regard to 'universals': these two are chosen as typical of the two most popular kinds of entities alleged to differ in kind from sensa. He expresses himself much more clearly about 'matter' than about 'universals', (though always suffering from a lack

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[1] Philosophical Papers, pp. 8-9.

> of technical terms). He holds (1) that the plain man's ordinary statements about 'ideas' or about 'material objects' are translatable into other statements which are solely about sensa (including symbols), (2) that the plain philosopher's theories about the 'nature' of matter (inert, &c.) and of universals (formed by abstraction, &c.) are nonsense: partly his descriptions of these entities are self-contradictory (e.g. in the way mentioned by Mr. Maclagan at the end of his section V), partly he can be shown simply to have misunderstood the nature of a 'logical construction'. In one sense 'there are' both universals and material objects, in another sense there is no such thing as either: statements about each can usually be analysed, but not always, nor always without remainder.
>
> Mr. Mackinnon seems to me to underrate the second line of attack. I do not think that Berkeley would have been by any means content simply to propound the view that matter is a 'logical construction' and then to abandon the plain man still asking for more: He patiently asks '<u>What</u> more do you want?', and laboriously shows that either what is asked for is nonsensical or else he has granted it already. And this, if we will not be content to let plain men work out their own damnation, is perhaps all that can be done. Nor do I think that Berkeley would say 'There <u>are</u> universals' quite so handsomely as Mr. Mackinnon makes him do: he would not maintain that there <u>are</u> universals in any sense in which he would <u>deny</u> that there is matter: Berkeley says that 'there are general ideas' meaning that statements like 'all demonstration is about general ideas' have a meaning -- but also, he says that 'abstract general ideas' i.e. general ideas as entities of a kind different from sensa, do <u>not</u> exist. (This does not mean 'general ideas are sensa'.) Mr. Mackinnon gives me the impression, perhaps wrongly, that he thinks 'abstract' general ideas to be a limited <u>class</u> of general ideas, which Berkeley denies to exist: but it is rather a <u>theory about the nature</u> of general ideas in general that Berkeley means to deny. (I omit the supplementary theory of 'notions'.)" [1]

It may not here be out of order to question Austin's rather grand omission of Berkeley's "supplementary theory of 'notions'." And we may even ask, how is it in fact possible to speak of universals in Berkeley, while at the same time ignoring "relations", of which it is quite clear that we have only <u>notions</u>? Moreover,

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1 <u>Philosophical Papers</u>, pp. 12-13 n.1.

it is not perfectly apparent that the terms "sensa" and "symbol" have equivalent terms in Berkeley's thought; and it does not suffice to quash this objection merely by saying that Berkeley was "always suffering from a lack of technical terms". We might also raise questions about the identity of the "plain man" and of the "plain philosopher". A perhaps more serious difficulty emanates from Austin's opening remarks when he launches the peculiar bi-polar attack: "these two [matter and universals] are chosen as typical of the two most popular kinds of entities alleged to differ in kind from sensa." This remark suggests strongly that Austin simply is confused. Not only does he fail to identify "sensa" with any single term in Berkeley's writings; but he also, for no apparent reason, insists that "matter" (which, in Berkeley, is never unambiguous unless identified with "material substratum") and "universals" (which demand for Berkeley, a concept of notions) are somehow comparable "kinds of entities". And, it is not only this passage that suggests a muddling of Berkeley. Later, in the same footnote, we see Austin proclaim: "he [Berkeley] would not maintain that there <u>are</u> universals in any sense in which he would <u>deny</u> that there is matter:". Here Austin is certainly correct in holding that Berkeley definitely would not maintain such a position. But, it is most unlikely that Austin's tacit assumption is true; i.e. that such an association of "universals" and "matter" would occur to Berkeley at all. Therefore it would seem that Austin's rather artificial comparison fails of its purpose, and for the

telling reason that the class of nouns falls far short of characterizing "universals" and "matter" in a fashion sufficient for distinctions crucial to Berkeley's philosophy.

Section C

The last commentator to be treated in this chapter is Samuel Alexander. Although his fame decidedly does not rest on his analysis of Berkeley, attention should be drawn to a constantly recurring problem for Berkeley which is effectively exposed in Alexander's writings. That is, what Alexander has said, and his particular approach to a problem treated by Berkeley, is characteristic if not symptomatic of even the fairest and best-informed discussion of Berkeleyan thought. To be brief, the following quotations from Alexander's Space, Time and Deity are offered for the purpose of showing a provocative questioning of Berkeley which unfortunately is obscured by the use of fundamentally different approaches to the same problem.

First, we have to relate Alexander's remarks to Berkeley specifically, and this, in fact, is done for us as follows:

> "When the prejudice is removed that an object, because it owes its existence as an object to a subject, owes to that subject its qualities of white or green and its existence; the appeal lies from Berkeley to experience itself. So appealed to, my experience declares the distinct existence of the object as something non-mental." [1]

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[1] Samuel Alexander, Space, Time and Deity (London, 1920), I. 16.

And again:

> "Nothing however can be further from the truth than the doctrine inherited from Locke that our ideas of primary qualities resemble their originals in things, while those of secondary qualities do not. The language of representation is not available for us and indeed is universally obsolete. For us ideas are things or partial selections from them (and, if we include imaginations and illusions, rearrangements of them), and we are at one with Berkeley except that whereas for him things were ideas and there are no things which were not ideas, for us reversely there are no ideas which are not, or do not belong to, things." [1]

In the first quotation, we see Alexander's statement that "the appeal lies from Berkeley to experience itself". This seems to me rather obscure, since I confess that I am by no means certain of exactly what is meant in the following sentence by the word "non-mental". But, it may be useful to look further for Alexander's view of Berkeley.

Turning then, to the second quotation we find a further discussion of "ideas" and "things". In view of the relations obtaining among "ideas" and objects (or things) for Berkeley, we can agree, I think, that "ideas are ... partial selections from" things, though certainly not identical with things. Invoking relations, of which we can have only "notions", it is clear that ideas and things are quite distinct for Berkeley, although ideas are, so to speak, components of things. In consequence of these considerations, we are therefore unable to agree that it is a fair statement of Berkeley's views to claim that "for him things were ideas and there are no things which were not ideas". On the

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[1] Space, Time and Deity II. 207.

contrary, in consideration of a theory of notions, we may assert for Berkeley the opposing view offered by Alexander that, in some important respects, "there are no ideas which are not, or do not belong to, things." However, this suggestion should be considered merely a suggestion, since it is far from my intention to become embroiled in developing a detailed theory of relations involving questions of "ideas" and things. It is sufficient, I think, to show the need for such a theory, and its plausibility as a component of Berkeley's thought, however limited his exact statements in this regard.

Bearing in mind Alexander's opposition of "Berkeley" and "experience itself", we come now to a discussion of other minds. It need hardly be remarked that "other minds" are very important in any exposition of Berkeley's theory of notions. Consequently, in the light of the earlier opposition expressed by Alexander, the following observations are easily construed as an attack on one of Berkeley's fundamental tenets, though not a specific charge against the bishop by name. And so, at considerable length, we read:

> "I shall now try to indicate what the experience is on the strength of which we believe in other minds than our own. For without some direct experience of other minds such recognition does not occur. The existence of other minds is commonly regarded as an inference by analogy from the outward behaviour of other persons' bodies. Their gestures, actions, and speech in various circumstances resemble our own in those circumstances, and we regard them, it is said, as proceeding from a consciousness like our own. Now it is true that when we already have the notion of other minds, we interpret outward behaviour on the analogy of our own experience, and can thus sympathetically enter into their minds in all

> manners of refined and subtle interpretation. But in the first place the doctrine in question cannot apply from the nature of the case to unreflective animals, such as dogs, who certainly appear in some of their behaviour to recognize other dogs as of the same kind as themselves.
>
> And in the next place it is flatly at variance with the history of our minds. It implies that we begin with a knowledge of ourselves and construe foreign selves in that likeness. Now it is almost a commonplace that the reverse is rather the case, that our reflective consciousness of ourselves arises in and through our consciousness of others. We are led, not of course to the enjoyment of ourselves but to noticing ourselves, through intercourse with others: the knowledge of ourselves and that of others grow up together. Our own individuality stands out for us against a background of other persons. Were we alone in a non-conscious world, we should enjoy ourselves and feel success and disappointment, but we should hardly experience ourselves as individual persons. But what is more important, mere inference by analogy cannot account for our original recognition of other minds. For the idea of a foreign consciousness, unless directly supplied by some experience to that effect, is something to which we have no clue in ourselves. We enjoy our own consciousness and our own consciousness only, and we do not contemplate it, but only our bodies. The idea of a consciousness not our own belonging to the body of some one else would be a sheer invention on our part. How should we invent such a conception of something totally new, if foreign consciousness were not in some manner revealed to us as such? For it is safe to assert that we never invent in that sense, but only discover, though we may combine the materials we already know in all sorts of new combinations. We have then to search for the experience which assures us not inferentially but directly of other minds." [1]

First, in behalf of Berkeley, it is highly questionable that "unreflective animals" have even the slightest inkling of "other minds"; and that, consequently, inferences from their behavior to what we would ordinarily call recognition of other minds is extremely doubtful.

Alexander's second point, however, sheds considerable light on the really peculiar features of this whole account of "other minds".

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[1] Space, Time and Deity, II. 31-2.

That is, in claiming that "the existence of other minds" "as an inference by analogy from the outward behaviour of other persons' bodies" is "flatly at variance with the history of our minds", he is quite clearly proceeding in his remarks from premises radically different from Berkeley's intelligible world of "ideas" and "notions". This is not to say that Alexander's account of other minds is thereby incorrect; but rather to suggest that although this account appears to be an argument against Berkeley, it is not one in fact; simply because the two lines of argument are formulated in different planes, intersecting only at the point called "other minds". Each account literally is peculiar only to itself, as we shall see.

There is little question, I think, that both Alexander and Berkeley ultimately agree that "other minds" and "other persons" or "other human beings" all are expressions indicating classes that have at some of their members in common. But, even if we then concern ourselves exclusively with these members in common, we still cannot superimpose Alexander's "history of our minds" as it is expounded, on any comparable account or concept in Berkeley. Nor can we dogmatically obliterate all of the distinctions that would be implied by Berkeley's use of the phrase "other persons' bodies". This seems to be the most useful passage for emphasis, because here, the force and complexity of Berkeley's analogy becomes clearer.

It is not that Berkeley would claim <u>simply</u> that we infer other minds from the behavior of "other persons' bodies". On the contrary, for him, there are at least several indispensable claims

prior to the one favored by Alexander's account. As we saw in the chapters treating finite spirits, the conviction that bodies and minds somehow are related is, for Berkeley, grounded equally in the passivity of ideas and in the clustering of them by a mind. That is, I am first, because undoubtedly, a mind or spirit, and only subsequently an embodied spirit. In my considered reflections on these matters (which is quite different from a detached and complete history of my behavioral patterns) I conclude to the existence of my body, though my conviction is afterwards unshakeable. Only then am I in a position to proceed in my thoughts to other finite spirits or other persons. As was mentioned previously, Berkeley would give an account which first noticed other collections of ideas called bodies, noting the similarities of appearance and behavior between these collections of ideas and the ideas called one's own body; and subsequently, he would conclude that other bodies are enspirited, or that there seem to be "other minds". That we are tolerably convinced that there are finite minds other than our own is, for Berkeley, the result of countless experiences reinforcing this concept. Presumably, there is no conclusive argument for other minds; and in consideration of this admission, we may, in fact, do well to immerse ourselves in the assurance of the "direct experience" of which Alexander speaks so eloquently. In any case, whichever our preference or experience, we need not deny foreign minds. And, as for the dissimilarity of behavior* also stressed by Alexander, it suffices

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* "In general the part which the two participants in the social situation play is not the same but different; the child's response to the mother is not the same as the mother's caresses. In some cases, as in struggle for food or fighting for a female, the acts may be in most respects alike. But the likeness of behaviour is not a necessary incident." Space, Time and Deity, II, 35-6.

to claim for Berkeley, and perhaps even for his partisans, a well-developed and empathetic imagination. At least, for a notedly benevolent bishop, this is a not improbable vantage point;* nor, in fairness to Alexander, can the "direct experience" for which he argues be disregarded.

In conclusion, it should now be apparent that these two notably different accounts of foreign minds are not mutually exclusive, but rather are complementary, both being simultaneously tenable. Having no common ground, the two arguments cannot come into conflict. And, failing to oppose each other, they further serve to indicate the literally incomparable quality of many of Berkeley's terms, a quality arising from the uniquely interrelated concepts of "notions" and "ideas".

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* The texts could be cited, if necessary; but the whole tenor of Berkeley's thought seems to suggest a turn of mind best described as empathetic.

Conclusion

The principal aim of this essay has been to support the related claims that: a) George Berkeley's written philosophy indicates that he entertained a theory of "notions" as well as of "ideas"; and b) the recognition of a theory of "notions" is of the utmost importance in understanding Berkeley's thought.

The course of developing these two themes has led from entanglements of alleged solipsism, through charges of a blissful ignorance of "reality", even to intimations of a peculiarly Freudian insanity. These accusations have, in earlier chapters, been duly noted and presumably answered.

On the positive side, even this very limited exposition has brought to light, or at least focused on, some not unrewarding concepts Berkeley could have held in regard to the role of spirits. We have seen, for example, that those finite bodiless spirits called "angels" can, in Berkeley's critical thought, be readily identified with natural forces prevailing in the sensual world. We have similarly seen that the unknowable operations of Infinite Spirit can be described for Berkeley in a less-biblical manner, by seeing in the God of Revelation the sustaining cause of the universe, the power that imposes finitude on individual human spirits. In both these conclusions, Berkeley's theory of notions has proved amenable to some expressed thoughts of Maimonides, and this factor perhaps indicates additional and not entirely obvious directions for further inquiry.

It would seem that two additional questions have arisen, somewhat incidental to an exposition of the notions of spirits. First, we have seen that there is undeniably a need for a more detailed examination of Berkeley's theory of "relations". Only through such a treatment can correct coincidences of "spirits" and "ideas" be determined in Berkeley's world. For instance, a developed theory of relations would finally produce for immaterialism the precise and related meanings of "external objects" and "concepts". And this eventuality, we may hope, would show beyond reasonable doubt the hollowness of much commentary on Berkeley down to our own time.

A second and most general question raised by Berkeley's theory of notions, and indeed by the immaterial hypothesis, is that of man's continuousness with his world. Berkeley's position that the universe is one of minds and Mind, or more correctly, of spirits and Spirit, suggests an ultimate intelligibility, perhaps too optimistic. On the other hand, his view is conspicuously more comfortable and it seems, longer tenable, than the judgment he opposed historically; the judgment that saw alien man confronted with a material substratum which lay hopelessly beyond the realm of "notions" and "ideas".

APPENDIX I

In order to complete the outline drawn thusfar of Berkeley's varied uses of "notion", we turn to his Siris. In this last major philosophical treatise, Berkeley not only elaborates on his concept of "notions", but also continues to use this most important term in a rather haphazard fashion.

To treat first of some of careful usages met with in the Siris:

Section 290 refers to both spirit and relations in the opening sentences.

> "Body is opposite to spirit or mind. We have a notion of spirit from thought and action. We have a notion of body from resistance. So far forth as there is real power, there is spirit. So far forth as there is resistance, there is inability or want of power; that is, there is a negation of spirit."

In Section 308, Berkeley affirms precisely, with regard to notions,

> "that there are properly no ideas, or passive objects, in the mind but what were derived from sense: but that there are also besides these her own acts or operations; such are notions."

But, in Section 355, Berkeley reverts to using the term "notion" loosely[1] in saying:

> "In things sensible and imaginable, as such, there seems to be no unity, nothing that can be called one, prior to all act of the mind; since they, being in themselves aggregates, consisting of parts or compounded of elements, are in effect many. Accordingly, it is remarked by Themistius, the learned interpreter of Aristotle, that to collect many notions into one, and to consider them as one, is the work of intellect and not of sense or fancy."

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[1] See also Sections 272 & 296.

It is the linking of the phrase "things sensible or imaginable" with "notions", which raises doubts about this passage. For, in essential agreement with Berkeley's concept of mind as an active unity, is the immediately following section in which Themistius is again noted, observing that "as being conferreth essence, the mind, by virtue of her simplicity, conferreth simplicity upon compounded beings."

At any rate, for Berkeley, "thought", "spirit", "mind", "action", "simplicity"; all of these words ultimately are bound up with a theory of "notions". And, true to his vision of a world compossible with Infinite Spirit, he continued to enrich this concept of "notions", down to the time of the Siris; though whether this enrichment is best thought of as growth rather than change, of evolution or revolution, is not here the question. That "notions" remained for Berkeley an important concept can hardly be doubted. Reflecting his continued interest, "notions" significantly does not grow moribund in Berkeley's thought, but as the bearer of true knowledge, implicitly serves in sounding a note of optimism at the close of the Siris. Thus we read:

> "The eye by long use comes to see even in the darkest cavern: and there is no subject so obscure but we may discern some glimpse of truth by long poring on it. Truth is the cry of all, but the game of a few. Certainly where it is the chief passion, it doth not give way to vulgar cares and views; nor is it contented with a little ardour in the early time of life, active, perhaps, to pursue, but not so fit to weigh and revise. He that would make a real progress in knowledge must dedicate his age as well as youth, the later growth as well as first fruits, at the altar of Truth."

APPENDIX II

From a purely historical point of view, it perhaps should be mentioned that the battle for prior claims on the word "notion", in a strict philosophical usage, has been waged quietly by G.A. Johnston and R. Grossmann, in behalf of John Sergeant and Sir Kenelm Digby, respectively. It is well that neither claimant has attempted to build a flawless case showing Berkeley's debt to these earlier writers, since an examination of their works readily exhibits important differences in the concepts entertained by all of the three concerned. See, for example, Digby's Of Bodies and of Mans Soul, Chapters I and V Of Mans Soul, and Chapter I Concerning Bodies; and also Johnston's Development of Berkeley's Philosophy pages 163-65 and "Appendix II, John Sergeant".

APPENDIX III

Commentators:

The following is a list of the major commentators of Berkeley, together with a very brief summary of their remarks concerning notions, especially notions having to do with spirit. In the event that the commentator's remarks have been treated in the text of the paper, only the name of the author and the title of his relevant work will appear in this section; e.g. Warnock.

The listing is in chronological order, to show both the development of interest in Berkeley's notions, and also to indicate the contradictory objections that have continually recurred among the major writers on Berkeley. In the cases of prolific writers on the subject, only their later works, and presumably mature opinions, are considered here. Their other, earlier writings most frequently are journal articles, and these are referred to in the bibliography at the end of this paper.

Fraser, A. C.
The Works of George Berkeley - 1901.

Fraser summarized his own view of notions in two comments on Berkeley's writings which read, in part:

> "'Notion,' in its stricter meaning, is thus confined by Berkeley to apprehension of the Ego, and intelligence of relations. The term 'notion,' in this contrast with his 'idea,' becomes important in his vocabulary, although he sometimes uses it vaguely." (I, p.307).

> "With Berkeley intellectual notions and ideas of sense are constituent elements of our knowledge. In his early philosophy, he concerned himself chiefly with the former; in Siris with the latter." (III, p.278).

Didier, Jean
Berkeley - 1911

Generally, Didier takes too little account of notions, especially of notions of relations. In consequence, from Berkeley's point of view, the functions of spirit are misaligned and experimental sciences, for example, are unduly threatened.

Johnston, G. A.
The Development of Berkeley's Philosophy - 1923

This volume is probably the finest general account of Berkeley's work available in English. As one might expect, the statements on notions are comparatively brief, as were Berkeley's own statements. The following quotations summarize Johnston's views on the subject.

> "To sum up. The important thing about the notion is its universal and conceptual character. Berkeley always asserts that of such objects as spirits, mental operations and relations we can have no perceptual knowledge; hence, if we are to know them at all, our knowledge must be notional or conceptual. Thus, he consistently sharply differentiates the sensational and perceptual knowledge which we have of things from the notional and conceptual knowledge which we have of spirits." (p.169).

The precise distinction between "mental operations and "relations" I find obscure. While insisting on some difference between the two terms, Johnston is nowhere clear on this point.

> "In Siris the supreme importance of the conceptual or notional element in knowledge is always implied; but very little definite information is given about it. Instead of the term notion Berkeley now prefers to use Idea. But Idea (spelt with a capital) in Siris is very different from idea in the earlier works. The new doctrine of Ideas,

which is not really a new one, but simply an old one rejuvenated, shows very clearly the influence of Plato and the Neo-platonists. Berkeley makes no secret of his indebtedness to Plato, ..." (p.256).

"(2) This gradual ascent from sense to reason may be exemplified, as Berkeley himself sees, in the progress of his own philosophical activity. Historically, the relation of Siris to Berkeley's early work is one rather of evolution than of revolution. He has travelled far since the days of the Commonplace Book, but he has made no volte face. His steps have always been turned in the same direction, and each one of his books marks a stage in his gradual progress. From the very first his architectonic conception has remained the same. The universe is an organic system dependent on God for its reality and its knowability. It is a spiritual unity, and the only forces that can work in it are spirits. This general Weltanschauung remains unchanged from first to last." (p.258).

Smith, N. K.
Prolegomena to an Idealist Theory of Knowledge - 1924
"Berkeley's Perverse Procedure".

In this section, Smith undertakes to show that Berkeley can give no sufficient reason for denying "that different minds can directly experience the same objects and can experience them as being, like the self, independent, causally efficacious existences." The argument, as presented, is a dubious one, and no doubt suffers from its brevity.

Calkins, Mary Whiton
Berkeley, Essay, Principle, Dialogues - 1929
Introduction

It is at least surprising that some of the assertions made by the author would appear in an Introduction to an edition of Berkeley's writings. For example, much is made of Berkeley's so-called "copy-theory of knowledge", a phrase as yet undetected in Berkeley's positive assertions. Certainly its coloring of

representationism is misleading. And this confusion is continued even to the point of Calkins asserting that, in the Three Dialogues, Berkeley "has throughout implied that knowledge consists in the possession of an idea like its object;". Thus holding the copy-theory, Calkins is unable to distinguish "notions" from "ideas", and significantly concludes the discussion speaking of evasions and "futile quibbles."

Hone, J. M. and Rossi, M. M.
Bishop Berkeley, His Life Writings and Philosophy - 1931

Perhaps because they tried to do too much (note title), the authors succeeded in producing a thorough-going mediocrity. Almost nothing is said of notions. The balance of presentation is questionable at best; there is a noticeable lack of key references; and the overall tone is best described as "chatty". This is a singularly undistinguished work.

Hicks, G. D.
Berkeley - 1932

This volume has long been acknowledged to be one of the better works on Berkeley. One of the more interesting questions raised concerns the relation of "notions" to Locke's doctrine of abstraction. Hicks holds that the concept of "notions" weakens Berkeley's argument against Locke. Another major point considered is the inter-relationship of: existence of mind, notion of mind, being conscious of notions, and implicitly, self-consciousness.

Luce, A. A.
Berkeley and Malebranche - 1934

The portion dealing with "notions" stresses the continuity of Berkeley's thought and affirms that Berkeley "was in the year 1744, as he had been in the year 1710, and as he remained till the closing scene at Oxford, an unrepentant immaterialist, anti-abstractionist, theist, and Trinitarian." (p.177).

Hedenius, Ingemar
Sensationalism and Theology in Berkeley's Philosophy - 1936

The relevant views expressed can be characterized in the following passage, together with the burden of its footnote.

> "To Berkeley the ideas of the real must embrace all real perception. When however, in his theory of spirits, he postulates a mode of perceiving other than perception by ideas, and even holds that all perception as such is fundamentally distinct from ideas, 'corporeal' and 'unthinking' things, this implies that sensationalism is contradicted by one of its own consequences and that, dialectically, it arrives at its antithesis. 9" (p.119).
>
> [9] "I here disregard Berkeley's assumption of perception by >notion>" ...,

Specifically, Hedenius rejects the doctrine of notions, holding it to be:

1) inconsistent with Berkeley's theory of ideas.
2) an "immediate consequence of the assumption of spirits" ... (which seems to be a disadvantage peculiar to Hedenius' line of thought).
3) not consistently maintained.

He further remarks that "recent critics ... seem prone to over-estimate its importance for the system as a whole. See for instance Johnston," ....

Wild, J.
George Berkeley, A Study of His Life and Philosophy - 1936

Generally, Wild seems to insist on his own categories of thought in interpreting Berkeley. The result is an artificial chasm forced between the Principles and the Dialogues, a break that serves to distort rather than clarify the questions at hand.

Luce, A. A.
Berkeley's Immaterialism - 1945

In general, this is an exposition of the Principles, to the exclusion of other writings of Berkeley. The theme, expressed in the Preface, is "Berkeley's refutation of material substance".

Bender, F.
George Berkeley's Philosophy Re-Examined - 1946

The relevant portions of this volume are largely quotations and exposition having a historical orientation. The chapter on "Berkeley's Spiritualism" has the definite merit of viewing Berkeley's writings as a unity, and Berkeley himself in the context of his historical interests.

Luce, A. A.
Aristotelian Society - Supplementary Volume - 1953
Berkeley and Modern Problems
"The Berkeleian Idea of Sense".

Here, Luce succinctly characterizes the idea of sense as "the non-mental other of mind."

Luce, A. A.
Hermathena, No. LXXXII - 1953
Commemorative Issue
"Berkeley's Search for Truth".

The article stresses the importance of precisely limiting the questions in Berkeley; e.g. emphasizing the inherent presentness of "esse is percipi". There is a further statement expressing the need for a developed theory of notions among commentaries on Berkeley.

Warnock, G.
Berkeley - 1953
(See text.)

Jessop, T. E.
Works (Co-Editor; see text). - 1948-57

Luce, A. A.
Works (Co-Editor; see text). - 1948-57

Bracken, H. M.
Philosophical Quarterly VIII - 1958
"Berkeley's Realisms".

Bracken here argues against the spirit-idea dichotomy which he attributes to Jessop and Luce, and further asserts that for Berkeley, all of our knowledge must be "quite literally about God's will."

Bracken, H. M.
The Early Reception of Berkeley's Immaterialism, 1710-1733 - 1959

Relevant to the question at hand, Bracken, in this dissertation, raises problems concerning the nature of God's ideas and indicates the peculiar kind of dualism that emerges in consequence. (p.84).

Davis, J. W.
The Review of Metaphysics - 1959
"Berkeley's Doctrine of the Notion".

In this article, some of the lines of cleavage in Berkeley's writings are most unhappily redrawn. For example, Davis speaks quite freely though obscurely of "knowledge by way of ideas", and he further tends to obliterate the differences between ideas of memory and those of imagination. Moreover, he is particularly impressed by the "serious and incisive criticism of the doctrine of the notion" by Calkins, already mentioned. The prevailing tone of the article is one of oversimplication and confusion.

Leroy, A-L.
George Berkeley - 1959
(See text).

Bracken, H. M.
Modern Schoolman - 1959-60
"Berkeley on the immortality of the soul".

In this article, the positive view expounded is, that Berkeley attempted to show the soul to be a "credible candidate" for immortality.

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The unpublished letter that is quoted in the sixth chapter is one received from:

T. E. Jessop, at The University, Hull; dated Oct. 21. 1961.