

"Marvellous Emptiness': Berkeley on Consciousness and Self-Consciousness"¹
(Draft)

*Tis not to be imagin'd wt a marvellous emptiness
& Scarcity of Ideas that man shall descry
who will lay aside all use of Words in his Meditations.
(Philosophical Commentaries 600)*

1. Introduction

In 1710, when Berkeley's *Treatise concerning the Principles of Knowledge* first saw the light of day, it included a general "Introduction" of twenty-five numbered paragraphs, followed by the 156 paragraphs of "Part I." In the second edition of 1734, the last edition to appear in Berkeley's lifetime, the "Part I" label remained, but no further part was ever published. Berkeley was certainly planning on Part II in 1713, when he announced to readers of the *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* that "the business" of that book was to "treat more clearly and fully of certain principles laid down" in Part I of the *Treatise*, "before I proceed to publish the Second Part" (*Works 2*: 167-8).² He may have held to the plan as late as 1725, when the preface making this announcement was republished. But by 1729, when Samuel Johnson told Berkeley how keenly he was awaiting Part II's publication (*Works 2*: 277), the plan had been abandoned. "I had made considerable progress in it," Berkeley told his friend, "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" (*Works 2*: 282).

Part II was to cover some of what we now call the philosophy of mind, as the following entries, from the private notebooks Berkeley kept between 1706 and 1708, evidently indicate:

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| Mo. | 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. | 508 |
| M. | 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: | 878 |

Berkeley's philosophy of mind strikes even sympathetic readers as the weakest part of his immaterialism. It seems to many of them, as it seemed to Hylas, that repudiating material substance while insisting on spiritual substance is not "fair dealing"—that "to act consistently," Berkeley "must either admit matter or reject spirit" (Third Dialogue, *Works 2*: 232). This very natural reaction may give rise to a suspicion: was Berkeley really too busy, as he breezily suggests, to write twice on the same subject, or did he recognize, however dimly, that his first draft wasn't worthy of recovery, and that the safest course was to let the subject lie?³ The present paper, a limited defense of the scant philosophy of mind that Berkeley left us, is an effort to allay that suspicion. I'll concentrate, as my title suggests, on what Berkeley saw as the "emptiness" of consciousness, by which I mean (and I think Berkeley means) its relative emptiness of content or objects. The passage from Berkeley's notebooks that I've taken as a motto is one of many, published and unpublished, warning against the assumption that every meaningful word stands for an object of consciousness (or what Berkeley calls an *idea*). Because of that assumption, "a

great number of dark and ambiguous terms presumed to stand for abstract notions, have been introduced into metaphysics and morality, and from these have grown infinite distractions and disputes amongst the learned" (PHK 143). Berkeley of course condemns the doctrine of abstract ideas, but it was, in his view, an understandable response to an incontestable fact: consciousness is too poorly stocked with objects to supply meanings, in the form of ideas-to-be-signified, for many of our words. "The doctrine of *abstract ideas*" assures us that ideas corresponding to *mind* and *will*, for example, are after all present in consciousness; the effect, when we discover we cannot find them, is to render "intricate and obscure" the sciences "particularly conversant about spiritual things" (PHK 143). Berkeley's aim is to promote a very different (and, he hopes, radically simplifying) way of thinking. If consciousness is consciousness of objects, then "self-consciousness"—knowledge of one's own mind, and of its acts and operations—is not, for Berkeley, a form of consciousness at all. Berkeleyan self-consciousness is knowledge based on experience (or on what we might call "phenomenological fact"), but it is not (insofar as it is *self-consciousness*) object-involving. In its clearest and most unmistakable form, it is the experience of free acts of will: acts that are, inevitably, directed towards objects, though they themselves can never be made into objects. Berkeley's view is close to one defended in our own day by Brian O'Shaughnessy, who writes that "our fundamental relation to our own actions" (which for him include "mental actions" such as visualizing, even though he is mainly concerned with bodily actions) "is non-observational."⁴ This seems right to me. I have, nonetheless, some criticisms to make of Berkeley. What's most admirable in his philosophy of mind is its denials, and there may be central Berkeleyan assumptions standing in the way of its positive development.

2. *The emptiness of mind*

To provide some sense of the pressures to which Berkeley was responding, I'd like to begin by examining an interesting thread in his notebooks, in which he questions whether knowledge of the mind is even possible. This discouraging possibility is emphatically denied in Berkeley's published writings, as I'll later document.

The thread begins with an entry explaining why many suppose we do not know the soul:

S We think we know not the Soul because we have no 576
 imaginable or sensible Idea annex'd to that sound.
 This the Effect of prejudice.

Berkeley numbered every entry in his notebooks, which were entered on the right-hand (or "recto") side of its folios. Second thoughts, marked by the letter "a", were entered on the left-hand (or "verso") side, and keyed to the entry that prompted them. (Letters in the left margin classify entries by topic: according to Berkeley's own index, "S" stands for *spirit*, "M" for *matter*, "G" for *God*.) Here is Berkeley's surprising comment on 576; the italics are my own.

S *Certainly we do not know it.* this will be plain if 576a
 we examine wt we mean by the Word knowlege.
 Neither doth this argue any defect in Our knowlege
 no more than our not knowing a contradiction

The thread continues with a series of entries on the will, or on spirit insofar as it is active:

S If by Idea you mean object of the Understanding. 665
 Then certainly the Will is no Idea, or we have no
 idea annex to the word Will.

M.S	The Substance of Body we know, the Substance of Spirit we do not know it not being knowable. it being purus Actus [pure act].	701
S	The Will is purus actus or rather pure Spirit not imaginable, not sensible, not intelligible. in no wise the object of ye Understanding. no wise perceivable.	828
S.	Substance of a Spirit is that it acts, causes, wills, operates, or if you please (to avoid the quibble yt may be made on ye word it) to act, cause, will, operate it's substance is not knowable not being an Idea.	829

Berkeley's notebooks are, of course, full of trials and experiments. I am not suggesting that the unknowability of mind or spirit was ever his settled opinion. But as the notebooks come to a close, the question raised by these entries continues to haunt him. There these entries are suggestively connected to others, which I hope we can examine later, about freedom of the will:

S.G.	Qu: whether the Will can be the object of Praescience or any knowlege.	875
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The entries I've quoted contemplate two claims: (i) spirit is not (and cannot come to be) an object of the understanding; and (ii) spirit (or its substance) is not (and cannot be) known. But we can only guess at the reasoning behind them. Of the two, (i) does seem to be more basic: if spirit is not (and cannot come to be) an object of the understanding, it follows, on the assumption that the understanding is the faculty by which we know, that spirit is not (and cannot come to be) something known. Entry 576 tells us that the truth of claim (ii) will be plain if we examine what we mean by knowledge. If Berkeley is working, at this point in the notebooks, with a Lockean understanding of knowledge as the perception of the agreement or disagreement of ideas (perhaps a reasonable assumption in view of entry 522: "All knowlege onely about ideas. V. Locke B. 4 c. 1."), (ii) will follow from (i), given "what we [Lockeans] mean" by knowledge. (i) itself might be defended on phenomenological grounds, or on the basis of ambitious further claims about the understanding (for example, that its object must be passive).

Whatever Berkeley's reasoning was, by the time he published the *Treatise*, claim (ii) at least had been decisively rejected. Some recent scholars (in unpublished work) have questioned this, so the evidence may be worth reviewing. The main theme of the closing sections of the *Treatise* is our knowledge of spirits. Berkeley introduces these sections with the following words:

Having dispatched what we intended to say concerning the knowledge of *ideas*, the method we proposed leads us, in the next place, to treat of *spirits*: with regard to which, perhaps human knowledge is not so deficient as is vulgarly imagined. (PHK 135)

"The great reason that is assigned for our being thought ignorant of the nature of spirits," he continues, "is, our not having an idea of it. But surely it ought not to be looked on as a defect in a human understanding, that it does not perceive the idea of *spirit*, if it is manifestly impossible there should be any such *idea*. And this, if I mistake not, has been demonstrated in *Sect. 27*." It seems that Berkeley intends to reject claim (ii) while retaining claim (i). Given what he identifies (in his 1709 *Essay on Vision*) as a prevailing modern understanding of *idea* ("any the immediate

object of sense or understanding" [§ 45]), (i) is equivalent to the contention that we have no idea of spirit.

As the sections on spirit continue, the evidence for Berkeley's optimism regarding knowledge of spirit only mounts. "From the opinion that spirits are to be known after the manner of an idea or sensation," he explains, "have risen many absurd and heterodox tenets, and much scepticism about the nature of the soul" (PHK 137). The opinion he is condemning is not that spirits are known, but that they are known in a certain fashion. According to PHK 140, "we know other spirits by means of our own soul." "After what hath been said, it is I suppose plain" he writes two sections later, "that our souls are not be known in the same manner as senseless inactive objects." To say they are not known in the same manner as ideas is not to say they are unknown or unknowable, but to imply that they are known, though in a different way. The *Three Dialogues* is, if anything, more clear: "My own mind and my own ideas," Philonous tells Hylas, "I have an immediate knowledge of" (Third Dialogue, *Works* 2: 232). "How often must I repeat," he says a bit later on, "that I know or am conscious of my own being; and that I myself am not my ideas, but somewhat else, a thinking active principle that perceives, knows, wills, and operates about ideas" (*Works* 2: 233).

Although there is, in my view, no question that Berkeley wants to deny (ii), there is a passage later in the *Treatise* that does confuse the picture. The theme of the passage is the vast difference between spirit and idea:

Spirits and ideas are things so wholly different, that when we say, they exist, they are known, or the like, these words must not be thought to signify anything common to both natures. There is nothing alike or common in them: and to expect that by any multiplication or enlargement of our faculties, we may be enabled to know a spirit as we do a triangle seems as absurd as if we should hope to see a sound. (PHK 142)

If the two kinds of "knowledge" have only the name in common (if they are, to borrow an example from Spinoza, no more alike than a dog and the dog star), then it looks as if spirits are not known, if ideas are. There is an ancestor of this passage in the notebooks:

S	The grand Cause of perplexity & darkness in treating of the Will, is that we Imagine it to be an object of thought (to speak wth the vulgar), we think we may perceive, contemplate & view it like any of our Ideas whereas in truth 'tis no idea. Nor is there any Idea of it. tis toto coelo different from the Understanding i.e. from all our Ideas. If you say the will or rather a Volition is something I answer there is an Homonymy in the word thing wvn apply'd to Ideas & volitions & understanding & will. all ideas are passive, volitions active.	643
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I want to save Berkeley from the claims he seems to be making in this entry and in the published passage descending from it because they make nonsense of his optimism in the closing sections of the *Treatise*. If our knowledge of spirit really has no more than a name in common with our knowledge of idea, then he might as well speak of it as ignorance. His bold hope, announced on the title page of the *Dialogues*, "plainly to demonstrate the reality and perfection of human knowledge," will be crushed. In supposing that he has to conduct his thinking in terms of the notion of homonymy, Berkeley makes conspicuously poor use of what the tradition passed on to him. What he needs but ignores is the honorable ancient notion of *paronymy*. This is the notion

that enabled Aristotle to say that a healthy body and a healthy diet have more in common than a name.⁵ If, as entry 429 of the notebooks tells us, "Existere is percipi or percipere," then "exists" in application to spirit is not a homonym of "exists" in application to idea, but a paronym. A very similar (but somewhat more complex) point can be made about "is known." If we adopt Russell's distinction between knowledge of things and knowledge of truths⁶, the passages I've quoted leave us with no choice but to say that Berkeley takes us to have knowledge of truths about spirits, just as he takes us to have knowledge of truths about ideas. (Note that PHK 142 says nothing about knowledge of truths; it speaks only of knowledge of two kinds of *things*, spirits and ideas.) It also seems clear that for each domain, Berkeley takes our propositional knowledge to derive from our knowledge of (that is, our acquaintance with: knowledge by description seems not to be at issue) the associated things. This means that *spirits are known* and *ideas are known* have more in common than a name: however much the underlying cognitive relations differ, they serve in each case to make propositional knowledge possible. Thus "is known" in application to spirit is not a homonym of "is known" in application to idea, but (at least) a paronym.

Berkeley makes another unfortunate appeal to homonymy earlier in the *Treatise*, but the surrounding material makes the appeal less troubling. The passage is PHK 89, where Berkeley writes that "*thing* or *being* is the most general name of all, it comprehends under it two kinds entirely distinct and heterogeneous, and which have nothing common but the name, to wit, *spirits* and *ideas*." This appeal is less troubling than the one in PHK 142 because the present passage, in the second edition, goes on to indicate that they do have something vital in common, because both are known. (In the second edition of the *Treatise*, Berkeley adds several new passages saying that we have a "notion" of spirit, even though we have no idea of it. As he writes in a passage added to PHK 27 in the second edition, "it must be owned . . . 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." Commentators agree that this is a change in vocabulary, rather than in doctrine.)

We comprehend our own existence of inward feeling or reflexion, and that of other spirits by reason. We may be said to have some knowledge of 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 everything we know or have any notion of. (Berkeley alludes to this passage in the closing line of PHK 142, also added in the second edition: "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.")

If Berkeley in his published works rejects claim (ii)—if he holds, despite what he says in the notebooks, that we have knowledge of spirit—we are left to ask what form he thinks that knowledge takes. My view is that he continues to accept claim (i), and that our knowledge of spirit, if we choose to speak of it as consciousness, is not *object-consciousness* but *subject-consciousness*. The acts and operations of the mind are not known insofar as we contemplate and view them; they are known insofar as we perform them. The mind itself is also not an object that we contemplate and view, but a thing known through the same performances. Berkeley writes in the notebooks that the substance of spirit is "to act, cause, will, [and] operate" (829). I am proposing that to know spirit is to experience oneself as acting, willing, and operating—to experience oneself as the subject of acts, rather than as an object. That is why consciousness, seen

as it really is, and not as the doctrine of abstract ideas tells us it should be, is empty—empty of the objects a prejudiced mind would expect to find.⁷

All this is, I have to grant, far from explicit in the texts. Berkeley's constructive remarks on self-consciousness are crude and formulaic.⁸ In the *Treatise*, he says that "we comprehend our own existence by inward feeling or reflexion" (PHK 89). In the *Dialogues*, Philonous tells Hylas that we perceive ourselves by a "reflex act" (*Works* 2: 232). "I do not perceive [spirit] as an idea or by means of an idea," Philonous says later, "but know it by reflexion" (*Works* 2: 233). In *De Motu* (1721), Berkeley writes that we know souls or thinking things by "a certain internal consciousness" [*conscientia quaedam interna*]" (§ 21). These remarks do not take us past the terms of art that figure in them: *reflexion*, *reflex act*, and *conscientia*. All of these terms are borrowed by Berkeley from his predecessors. Reflection (of which "reflexion" is simply a variant spelling, more revealing of the word's etymology) is Locke's label for our experience of our own selves. Locke speaks of a "reflex act" at *Essay* II xxvii 13, where he predicts that "till we know what kind of action it is that cannot be done without a reflex act of perception accompanying it, and how performed by thinking substances, who cannot think without being conscious of it," we cannot determine whether "the consciousness of past action can be transferred from one thinking substance to another." Gerard De Vries, in his *Diatribes de ideis rerum innatis* (1695), to which Berkeley refers in the last two entries of his notebooks, uses *conscientia* as a label for inner sense.⁹ Its French cognate, *conscience* (standardly translated as "consciousness"), is very prominent in Malebranche, who also calls it "inner sensation." *Conscience* is, according to Malebranche, our only source of knowledge concerning the soul, of which we have no purely intellectual representations (or "ideas," in Malebranche's carefully circumscribed sense of that expression).¹⁰ Berkeley takes up these views of Malebranche in entries 230 and 888 of the notebooks.

Berkeley's sources do tell us something about self-consciousness as Berkeley understands it: it is not a purely intellectual operation, but a form of experience: a variety of inner sense. This is confirmed by Berkeley's use of the more everyday expression "inward feeling," which he himself uses in *Alciphron* (*Works* 3, Dialogue 3, section 5) as an alternative for "passion," as well as by *De Motu* 30, where Berkeley says that "a thinking, active thing is given which we experience as the principle of motion within ourselves." Our only other certainty about Berkeleyan self-consciousness is that it is not idea-involving, as Berkeley repeatedly emphasizes:

A spirit 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*. Hence there can be no idea formed of a soul or spirit: for all ideas whatever, being passive and inert, *vide Sect.* 25, they cannot represent unto us, by way of image or likeness, hat which acts. A little attention will make it plain to anyone, that to have an idea which shall be like that active principle of motion and change of ideas, is absolutely impossible. Such is that nature of *spirit* or that which acts, that it cannot be of itself perceived, but only by the effects which it produceth. . . . [T]he 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. (PHK 27)

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. (PHK 89)

A spirit has been shown to be the only substance or support, wherein the unthinking beings or ideas can exist: but that this *substance* which supports or perceives ideas should itself be an *idea* or like an *idea*, is evidently absurd. (PHK 135)

By the word *spirit* we mean only that which thinks, wills, and perceives; this, and this alone, constitutes the signification of that term. If therefore it is impossible that any degree of those powers should be represented in an idea, it is evident there can be no idea of a spirit. (PHK 138; see also 139 and 142.)

My proposal—that Berkeleyan self-consciousness is subject-consciousness, an awareness of acts and operations presenting themselves not as objects before the mind, but as the mind's own undertakings—is consistent with all that Berkeley says, but goes beyond it in supposing that ideas are the mind's only "objects," and that acts and operations that cannot be known as objects (because they cannot be known as ideas) must instead be known from within, as the mind's own performances. I think this is, in view of the role of claim (i) in the notebooks, a plausible elaboration, but I must admit it is a guess.¹¹ It has, however, interesting implications that Berkeley seems to accept, and this may lend it some measure of confirmation. But before turning to those implications I must consider two objections.

My proposal has it that in his published writings, Berkeley in effect identifies *idea* with *object of the mind*. This is plausible in view of Locke's definition of *idea* as "whatsoever is the object of the understanding when a man thinks" (*Essay* I i 8), as well as passages in Berkeley's published writings (for example NTV 45, already quoted) where *object* and *idea* are, if not identified, very closely linked. The problem is that there are passages prying them apart. In PHK 142, for example, a passage I've already considered in another context, "ideas, spirits and relations" are all classified as "the *object* of human knowledge and subject of discourse" (my emphasis). The most interesting passage along these lines is the opening section of Part I of the *Treatise*:

It is evident to anyone who takes a survey of the objects of human knowledge, that they are either ideas actually imprinted on the senses, or else such as are perceived by attending to the passions and operations of the mind, or lastly ideas formed by help of memory of imagination, either compounding, dividing, or barely representing those originally perceived in the aforesaid ways. (PHK 1)

The grammar of this sentence has occasioned a great deal of commentary. If the antecedent of "such as are perceived" is the closest appropriate noun, it looks as if Berkeley is saying that the passions and operations of the mind are ideas, but as we've seen, this is (according to Berkeley) just what they are not. Michael Ayers and David Berman have both proposed that in PHK 1, Berkeley is, for strategic reasons, temporarily portraying himself as more of a Lockean than he is really is.¹² I myself think it is at least as likely, as G. A. Johnston and T. E. Jessop long ago suggested, that Berkeley wants "such" to pick up *objects* rather than *ideas*.¹³ But on either reading, the passage treats passions and operations of the mind as objects, which seems to undercut my suggestion that a commitment to claim (i) carries over from Berkeley's notebooks to his published writings.

I think this objection can be met by distinguishing two senses of "object." In one sense, an object is simply a subject of discourse, or a thing with which we are somehow acquainted (and concerning which we can therefore have propositional knowledge). Insofar as spirits and their acts are known and meaningfully discussed, they qualify as objects in this undemanding sense. But they are not objects in a second, phenomenological sense: they are not present to the mind in the way (for example) sensory images are. As Robert M. Adams very helpfully puts it, we are not aware of

them "as of objects distinct from us, over against us" ("Berkeley's 'Notion' of Spiritual Substance," p. 50). Objects in the first sense are the concern of what I earlier called object-consciousness; objects in the second sense (and not the first) are the concern of what I called subject-consciousness. I hope the distinction between two kinds of objects (and two kinds of awareness or consciousness) is clear enough to leave me free to say that for Berkeley, the mind is emptier of objects than we might at first expect.

A second objection to my proposal is based on PHK 27, where Berkeley writes that "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." If to say that spirit cannot itself be "perceived" is to say that it cannot itself be experienced, my proposal must be on the wrong track. But PHK 27, so understood, is flatly incompatible with Berkeley's repeated declarations to the contrary (and with the otherwise puzzling PHK 1, where Berkeley speaks of the objects "perceived by attending to the passions and operations of the mind"). I think it is all but certain that in PHK 27, "perceived" is being used in a sense that goes hand in hand with "idea." In that sense, only ideas can be perceived (as Philonous for example asserts in the Third Dialogue, *Works* 2: 234). The main burden of PHK 27 is to argue that there can be no idea of soul or spirit. This is not to deny that it can be experienced or known in a non-idea-involving manner.

3. *Personal identity*

I turn now to the first of the implications of my proposal that Berkeley seems to accept: personal identity cannot be a matter of ideas—a matter, that is, of object-consciousness. Berkeley (through his representative Euphranor) makes the point in *Alciphron* (1732), by means of an example that became better known (in a somewhat different form) as Thomas Reid's "brave officer" objection.

Let us then suppose that a person hath ideas and is conscious during a certain space of time, which we will divide into three equal parts, whereof the later terms are marked by the letters A, B, C. In the first part of time, the person gets a certain number of ideas, which are retained in A: during the second part of the time, he retains one half of his old ideas, and loseth the other half, in place of which he acquires as many new ones: so that in B his ideas are half old and half new. And in the third part, we suppose him to lose the remainder of the ideas acquired in the first, and to get new ones in their stead, which are retained in C, together with those acquired in the second part of time. (Dialogue 7, section 8, *Works* 3: 299)

If this is possible, Euphranor contends, he can "demonstrate that personal identity doth not consist in consciousness." For A and B will be the same, "being conscious of common ideas," as will B and C, for the same reason. From this it follows that A is C. "But the person in C hath no idea in common with the person in A. Therefore personal identity doth not consist in consciousness"—that is, object-consciousness.

I don't think it can be doubted that Berkeley is positioning Euphranor to address Locke. Euphranor opens the discussion with the amnesia objection entertained by Locke in *Essay* II xxvii 20, to which Alciphron replies by making the same distinction between *man* and *person* made by Locke in his own reply. Yet the example of the ABC man may be unfair, because Locke's account is not clearly framed in terms of object-consciousness. What makes me the same as an earlier person, in Locke's view, is not (say) my consciousness of the overflowing Thames, but my consciousness of having observed it (*Essay* II xxvii 16)—that is, my consciousness of *my* having observed it. This seems to be a matter of subject-consciousness, not object-consciousness. I wonder, though, whether Berkeley states the Lockean view as he does because he suspects Locke

is unentitled to this distinction. Because Locke treats every immediate object of thought (in the broad sense of "object") as an idea (or object in the narrow sense), my consciousness of having observed the overflowing Thames threatens to become, if not simply an idea of the overflowing Thames, an idea of its observed overflowing, rather than a consciousness of *my* having observed it. There doesn't seem to be anything in a Lockean idea, even a Lockean idea of reflection, that marks it as my own.¹⁴

In the end I'm not sure that a Lockean idea of reflection does fall short of what it should be, but Berkeley's concern seems to me to be genuine. Perhaps a brief look at Hume's search for the relations among perceptions that induce belief in personal identity will help to establish its force (*Treatise* I iv 6). Hume thinks there are two such relations, resemblance and causation, and that causation is by far the more important. Consider, though, what he says about resemblance. "What is the memory," he asks, "but a faculty, by which we raise up the images of past perceptions? And as an image necessarily resembles its object, must not the frequent placing of these resembling perceptions in the chain of thought, convey the imagination more easily from one link to another, and make the whole seem like the continuance of one object?"¹⁵ The qualitative similarity of perceptions is a matter for what I've called object-consciousness. A high degree of it might well incline me to view a succession of perceptions as one object (as in Hume's account of our belief in the identity of body at *Treatise* I iv 2), but why should it lead me to view that one object as *myself*? It seems that qualitative similarity, like any other feature of perceptions or ideas that we contemplate or view, isn't fit for the task Hume assigns to it. Berkeley comments on qualitative similarity and personal identity in a notebook entry eerily consonant with what he says a quarter-century later in *Alciphron*: "No identity other than perfect likeness in any individuals besides persons" (192). A deleted later comment (192a in the Thomas edition: "When there is no difference intrinsecal or extrinsecal of moment") makes it clear that by "perfect likeness" Berkeley means exact qualitative similarity. He goes on to ask, in entry 194a, "Whether Identity of Person consists not in the Will." Berkeley's point here may be that qualitative similarity, even when exact or perfect, is insufficient for the numerical identity that persons (perhaps uniquely) enjoy. He therefore wonders whether it resides in the will, an object of subject-consciousness concerning which questions of qualitative similarity cannot be raised, because a will is not the sort of thing whose qualities can be contemplated and compared to the qualities of other things.

Even if suppose that Locke can appeal to subject-consciousness, the objection in *Alciphron*, suitably revised, remains telling. Suppose B is conscious of his having performed an action of A. And suppose C is conscious of his having performed an action of B. C will then be B and B will be A, entailing that C is A. Suppose further, though, that C is not conscious of his having performed any action of A. It follows that C is not A. (Revised in this way, Berkeley's objection coincides exactly with Reid's.) Berkeley's own view is that personal identity does not consist in consciousness, but in sameness of substance. (Berkeley's commitment to spiritual substance will be taken up below.) I assume it is his view, though, that it can be ascertained by subject-consciousness. This epistemological outlook is, however, not open to the revised version of Berkeley's ABC objection. B can know he is the same as A because he is conscious of having performed some thought or deed of A, and C can know he is the same as B because he is conscious of having performed some thought or deed of B. This perhaps entails that C can know (or have good reason to believe, say on the basis of testimony left by B) that he is A. But C's failure to recall performing any thought or deed of A does not mean C is not A, that C has no reason to believe he is A, or even that C does not know he is A, so there is no contradiction.

Before leaving the topic of personal identity I want to take note of some other entries in the notebooks that are critical of Locke's account and consonant with my proposed interpretation of

Berkeleyan self-consciousness. In entry 200, Berkeley asks "wherein consists identity of Person." He answers:

not in actual consciousness, for then I'm not the same person I was this day twelvemonth, but while I think of wt I then did. Not in potential for then all persons may be the same for ought to know.

Two entries later he writes, "two sorts of Potential consciousness Natural & praeternatural in the last § but one I mean the latter" (202). In entry 200, in contrast to *Alciphron*, Berkeley seems to be thinking of subject-consciousness ("I think of wt I then did"). His objection is that personal identity cannot consist in actual subject-consciousness, unless we're willing to repudiate many ordinary judgments of self-identity. But if it consists in potential consciousness it is unknowable. Entry 202 suggests a way around the latter point: perhaps personal identity consists in *naturally* potential consciousness. But if we do not know where the limits of naturally potential consciousness lie, Berkeley's objection may still stand.

4. *The bundle view*

A second implication of my interpretive proposal (and one that is, like the first, accepted by Berkeley) is that we can easily look within ourselves and fail to discover everything we should, because we wrongly confine our attention to the objects of consciousness, narrowly understood. "For my part," Hume writes at *Treatise* 252, "when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception. 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, not 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." I am, he concludes, "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement."

Berkeley would certainly object that Hume should have cast his net more widely. He entertains a view like Hume's in the notebooks:¹⁶

- + Consult, ransack yr Understanding wt find you there 579
besides several perceptions or thoughts. Wt mean you
by the word mind you must mean something that you
perceive or yt you do not perceive. a thing not perceived
is a contradiction. to mean (also) a thing you do not perceive
is a contradiction. We are in all this matter strangely
abused by words.
- + Mind is a congeries of Perceptions. Take away Per- 580
ceptions & you take away the mind put the Perceptions
& you put the mind.

The plus sign marking these entries indicates material Berkeley (for whatever reason) decided not to use. In this case we can safely conclude that Berkeley took the bundle view of the self to be mistaken. Hylas imputes the view to Philonous, who decisively rejects it:

HYLAS. Notwithstanding all you have said, to me it seems, that according to your own way of thinking, and in consequence of your own principles, it should follow that you are only a system of floating ideas, without any substance to support them. Words are not to be used without a meaning. And as there is no more meaning in spiritual substance than in material substance, the one is to be exploded as well as the other.

PHILONOUS. How often must I repeat, that I know or am conscious of my own being; and that I myself 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: that a colour cannot perceive a sound, nor a sound a colour: that I am therefore one individual principle, distinct from colour and sound; and, for the same reason, from all other sensible things and inert ideas. (*Works 2: 233-4*)

Some readers of Hume have suggested that Humean perceptions are not objects of perception but acts. If they are right, it may seem wrong to say that Hume illicitly restricts his introspective awareness to object-consciousness. But even if we grant that Humean perceptions are acts, his awareness of them, as he describes it, falls short of subject-consciousness as Berkeley understands it. For Berkeley, immediate awareness of an act of mind is, as Philonous indicates, awareness that *I am warm, or cold, or in love, or full of hatred*. When Hume looks within he may never "stumble" across himself, but that self is there nonetheless, and it is known in or through every perception, whether act or object.

5. Substance

Berkeley does not simply deny the bundle view of self or spirit; he confidently affirms that spirits are substances—indeed, the only substances (for example at PHK 7).¹⁷ The present section is a speculative attempt to determine how robust an ontology of substance we can eke out of Berkeleyan subject-consciousness. (Berkeley's ontology of substance may in part depend on other considerations, but in this paper I put them to one side.)

Berkeley describes our knowledge of our own selves as immediate (Third Dialogue, *Works 2: 232*).¹⁸ I think Robert Adams is right when he suggests that for Berkeley, the immediacy of self-knowledge, like the immediacy of our knowledge of ideas, confers infallibility ("Berkeley's 'Notion of Spiritual Substance,'" 56). If, then, I am conscious of my perceiving both a color and a sound, I can conclude that both color and sound are united in my consciousness (as in the Third Dialogue at *Works 2: 233-4*, quoted just above). More significantly, if I am now conscious of a gently flowing Thames, and I recall being conscious of the river when it overtopped its banks, I can conclude that I've existed at different times, between which I underwent a change.¹⁹ One traditional mark of substance is that it is an enduring subject of change. It is, as Aristotle put it, able to receive contraries.

The same considerations establish that a spirit has hidden potential: it is, characteristically, always more than it has so far become. In an idea, by contrast, everything is manifest or open to view: part of the reason Berkeley deems ideas "visibly inactive" (PHK 25) is that they cannot vary from the ways in which they appear at any moment to be. Change of ideas is possible, but change *in* ideas is not. The point might also be put by saying that ideas are nothing but surface: they have no inner depths. Although I find this very hard to spell out, I think the inner depth of a spirit, when compared to an idea's lack of depth, has something to do with its (comparatively greater) independence—independence being another traditional mark of substance. As ideas come and go, I remain the same. What Berkeley calls the "fleeting" character of ideas (PHK 89 and the Second Dialogue, *Works 2: 216*, where in each case it is linked with dependence)²⁰ is a sign of their diminished purchase on reality. I do not think the deliverances of consciousness can show by

themselves that ideas are dependent on spirit. But they may give us a reason to judge that an idea is unable to support the existence of anything other than itself. An idea cannot support another thing covertly, because nothing about the idea is hidden. But it seems no better able to do so openly, because "x supports y" can be true only if x's absence would entail the absence of y, and no such power can be found in x.²¹ We cannot be sure, as I've granted, that spirits support the existence of ideas, but their hidden depths at least hold out that possibility.

Perhaps, then, Berkeley can eke out of an infallible subject-consciousness both the capacity of spirit to endure through change and the bare possibility that spirit supports ideas. Some of the other marks of substance for which Berkeley seems to be reaching—simplicity, activity, and stronger forms of independence—cannot so easily be had. I want to say something in particular about at least some of these marks, but in his attempts to gain hold of them Berkeley encounters a common problem. Precisely because spirit has hidden depths, subject-consciousness cannot assure us that spirit does not have parts, that its changes (or the changes it triggers) have their source within spirit itself, or that its apparent independence isn't compromised by a hidden dependence on something else. Earlier I advised that we follow Adams in treating Berkeleyan subject-consciousness as infallible. I took this to mean that anything disclosed by subject-consciousness is present there. But it cannot follow from this that spirit is *transparent* to the mind: that everything present there is disclosed (or even disclosable) by subject-consciousness.²²

Let me conclude this section with some particular remarks about simplicity and activity.

The deliverances of subject-consciousness do seem to be partly responsible for Berkeley's conviction that spirit is simple. In two late notebook entries, he voices his sense that what differentiates one state of mind from another is not spirit or anything internal to spirit, but the objects or upshots of those states:

- | | | |
|---|---|-----|
| S | We see no variety or difference betwixt the Volitions, only between their effects. Tis One ill one Act distinguish'd by the effects. This will, this Act is the Spirit, operative, Principle, Soul etc. | 788 |
| S | Will, Understanding, desire, Hatred etc so far forth as they are acts or active differ not, all their difference consists in their objects, circumstances, etc. | 854 |

Something like the view expressed in these entries nearly found its way into Berkeley's published writings, but not quite. The closing sentences of PHK 138, in the first edition of 1710, read as follows. (Words omitted in the 1734 edition are bracketed.)

For by the word *spirit* we mean only that which thinks, wills, and perceives; this, and this alone, constitutes the signification of that term. If therefore it is impossible that any degree of those powers should be represented in an idea [or notion], it is evident there can be no idea [or notion] of a spirit.

The manuscript (spanning from section 85 through the opening sentence of 145) continues with these words:

Again the soul is without composition of parts, one pure simple undivided being. Whatever distinction of faculties or parts we may conceive in it arises only from its various acts or operations about ideas. Hence it is repugnant that it should be known or

represented in some parts and not in others, or that there should be an idea, which incompletely resembles it. (*Works* 2: 104)

The thought expressed here resembles the thought expressed in the notebook entries, but the match is not exact: the entries say that spirit is diversified by its objects or effects, while the manuscript says it is diversified by its own acts or operations. An obvious objection to the notebook view, however true it may be to some of our experience, is that the difference between a volition and a perception is internal. (Descartes speaks of the difference as one of "form." It is not only a matter of "objective reality" or worldly effect.) Although the deleted manuscript lines deftly avoid this objection, Berkeley elected not to use them. Why?

I believe his decision had to do with an internal intellectual struggle that had not come to an end even by the time Berkeley published the *Treatise*. I will say more about the details of that struggle in the next (and final) section of my paper; here I hope it is enough to say that the struggle left Berkeley uneasy about even the slightest suggestion that understanding and will are distinct. His official view is that "understanding" and "will" are labels for the same simple thing. "A spirit," he announces in PHK 27, "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*." He goes on to deny that we have "ideas of two principal powers, marked by the names *will* and *understanding*, distinct from each other." By acknowledging a "distinction" between the "various acts or operations" of the mind, the manuscript lines convey the very impression Berkeley hopes to avoid. In the following very late notebook entry, it is almost as if he has the manuscript lines in mind:

S	I must not Mention the Understanding as a faculty or part of the Mind, I must include Understanding & Will etc in the word Spirit by wch I mean all that is active. I must not say that the Understanding differs not from the particular ideas, or the Will from particular Volitions.	848
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When Berkeley writes in PHK 27 that a spirit is "one simple, undivided, active being," he very strongly suggests that it is active in every one of its aspects—in perceiving no less than in willing. As we'll see in the next section, the notebooks conclude that the spirit is active even insofar as it understands (entry 871). When, earlier in the notebooks, Berkeley first persuaded himself of the thoroughgoing activity of spirit, he described it as "pure act" (701), but in entry 871 he cautions himself against using that expression:

S	I must not give the Soul or Mind the Scholastique Name pure act, but rather pure Spirit or active Being.	870
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He was wise not to use it in print, because strictly speaking "pure act" applies solely to God, the only being who is fully perfected and without unrealized potential. Samuel Johnson brings out the dangers when he explains to Berkeley that "the Schoolmen, it is true, call the soul *actus* [act] and God *Actus purus* [pure act]; but I confess I never could well understand their meaning, perhaps because I never had the opportunity to be much versed in their writing" (*Works* 2: 288). Berkeley responds by assuring him he has "no doubt" that "the soul of man is passive as well as active" (*Works* 2: 293). I take this to be a deliverance of Berkeley's subject-consciousness. As he says at PHK 29, the ideas he perceives by sense are not dependent on his will:

When in broad day-light I open my eyes, it is not in my power to choose whether I shall see or no, or to determine what particular objects shall present themselves to my view; and so likewise as to the hearing and other senses, the ideas imprinted on them are not creatures of my will.

It follows that subject-consciousness does not unequivocally support the simplicity of spirit. Experience testifies that we are passive (in sense-perception) and active (in willing), and to the extent we follow its lead, it seems we should conclude that spirit is complex rather than simple.

I turn now to activity. Berkeley portrays spirit as essentially active and ideas (or things) as essentially passive. Along with the dualism of finite and infinite, this is probably the most fundamental dualism in his thinking, and in the next section I will explore a difficulty to which this gives rise. My present goal is to understand more fully why it is that subject-consciousness cannot reliably disclose the activity of spirit. Consider the traditional distinction between active and passive power, made for example by Locke (at various points in *Essay II xxi*).²³ In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the distinction was often illustrated by the contrast between the active bodily power of *originating* motion and the passive bodily power of *transferring* it. Inertia was viewed as a merely passive power, capable of explaining why a body moves when another body collides with it, and why the body set in motion can move another body in turn. The active power of originating motion was ascribed by everyone (or virtually everyone) to God rather than to body, and by most (Locke, for example, but not occasionalists such as Malebranche) to finite minds. If Berkeleyan subject-consciousness is to disclose a similarly active power in spirit, it must show that spirit can *originate* change among ideas, just as a Lockean mind can originate bodily motion. But to assure us that the change we seem to originate truly has its source in spirit, subject-consciousness has to rule out the existence of any more ultimate cause from which our power to bring about change has been transferred. Even if subject-consciousness is infallible, though, it is very far from being able to rule out all such causes. I suppose it could be objected to this argument that we have no clear conception of how it is that the power to cause change among ideas could be transferred from something else to our own selves. I would be the last to claim to have such a conception, but the effect of this concession may not be to save the belief that finite spirit can originate change among ideas, but to cast doubt on our very ability to investigate the question fruitfully. In this connection it may be worth recalling that many early modern philosophers, Locke among them, found even the transfer of motion very puzzling. The difficulties they encountered would not have persuaded them that the distinction between origination and transfer could not be sustained.

Spirit's activity, conceived as originating change, is, for Berkeley, closely related to its freedom, a topic examined at length in the seventh and final dialogue of *Alciphron*, where Berkeley's spokesman, the farmer-philosopher Euphranor, claims to have "inward evidence" of freedom that can withstand Alciphron's elaborate arguments for what we now call hard determinism. There have been philosophers, Euphranor observes, who try to prove that there is no such thing as motion. "Walking before them," he says, "was thought the proper way to confute" them (*Alciphron* 7.18, *Works* 3: 314). "It is," he then adds, "no less evident that man is a free agent":

So long as I am conscious of my own actions, this inward evidence of plain fact will bear me up against all your reasonings, however subtle and refined. . . . It is evident to me, in the gross and concrete, that I am a free agent. . . . I am conscious that I am an active being, who can and do determine myself. (*Works* 3: 314)

For reasons akin to those I've already stated, the deliverances of subject-consciousness cannot prove I am an uncaused cause of change.²⁴ Later, Euphranor attempts another defense of freedom, but it seems to involve a different conception of the notion:

EUPHRANOR. To determine [the] question, ought we not first to determine what is meant by the word *free*?

ALCIPHRON. We ought.

EUPHRANOR. In my opinion, a man is said to be free so far forth as he can do what he will. Is this is so, or is it not?

ALCIPHRON. It seem so.

EUPHRANOR. Man, therefore, acting according to his will, is to be accounted free.

(*Alciphron* 7.19, *Works* 3: 316)

Alciphron admits the conclusion in a "vulgar sense," but insists that a philosopher "goes higher." Euphranor mocks this suggestion, but his own earlier appeal to self-determination or agent-causation conveys the same basic thought.²⁵ In the notebooks, whose reflections on freedom seem closely linked to Berkeley's emerging conception of the self as active, the kind of compatibilist freedom at work in Euphranor's exchange with Alciphron is, at one point at least, condemned as superficial:

+	In moral matters Men think (tis true) that they are free but this freedom is only the freedom of doing as they please, wch freedom is consecutive to the Will, respecting onely the operative faculties.	156
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Throughout the notebooks Berkeley seems to be seeking a freedom *internal* to the will, rather than consecutive to it. Entries such as the following suggest that the will itself is determined by nothing but itself:

S	Folly to enquire wt determines the Will. Uneasiness etc are Ideas, therefore unactive, therefore can do nothing therefore cannot determine the Will.	653
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In view of his commitment to spirit's activity such self-determination (implying determination by nothing else) is just the kind of freedom he should be seeking, but bare appeals to subject-consciousness cannot, I think, secure it.

6. *Is understanding active or passive?*

In the notebooks, as we have seen, Berkeley concludes that the mind is active in understanding, but in the *Treatise* he seems to be of two minds about the point, sometimes denying it (as at PHK 29) and sometimes hinting at its truth (as at PHK 27). He struggles long and hard with the question in the notebooks. Early on, in entry 286, he says that the mind is passive in sensation or perception. In later entries, perhaps unhappy with the suggestion that the mind can in any way be passive, he identifies the whole mind or spirit with the will:

S	The soul is the will properly speaking & as it is distinct from Ideas.	478
S	The Spirit the Active thing that wch is Soul & God is the Will alone The Ideas are effects impotent things.	712

Elsewhere he acknowledges that there is more to spirit than will, but suggests that whenever we perceive by sense, the active will collaborates.

- S While I exist or have any Idea I am eternally, constantly 791
 willing, my acquiescing in the present State is willing.
- S It seems there can be no perception, no Idea without 833
 Will, being there are no Ideas so indifferent but one
 had rather Have them than annihilation, or annihilation
 than them. or if there be such an equall Ballance there
 must be an equal mixture of pleasure & pain to cause
 it. there being No ideas perfectly void of all pain &
 uneasiness But wt are preferable to annihilation.

In an especially interesting entry, he suggests that whenever there is certainty, "We must not be altogether Passive, there must be a disposition to act, there must be assent, wch is active, nay wt do I talk There must be Actual Volition." In still other entries the activity of understanding is simply asserted, without supporting argument (808, for example).²⁶

Although Berkeley's take on the activity (or passivity) of the understanding was not entirely settled by the time he wrote the *Treatise*, the passivity of sense perception is emphatically reasserted in a long and puzzling exchange in the First Dialogue.²⁷ The exchange raises a challenge to the interpretation of subject-consciousness I have put forward in this paper.

As the exchange begins, Hylas proposes a distinction between object and sensation (*Works 2*: 194). "If I take you right," Philonous says, "you distinguish in every perception two things, the one an action of the mind, the other not." The exchange then runs as follows:

PHILONOUS. When is the mind said to be active?

HYLAS. When it produces, puts an end to, or changes any thing.

PHILONOUS. Can the mind produce, discontinue, or change any thing but by an act of the will?

HYLAS. It cannot.

PHILONOUS. The mind therefore is to be accounted active in its perceptions, so far forth as volition is included in them.

HYLAS. It is.

PHILONOUS. In plucking this flower, I am active, because I do it by the motion of my hand, which was consequent upon my volition; so likewise in applying it to my nose. But is either of these smelling?

HYLAS. No.

PHILONOUS. I act too in drawing the air through my nose; because my breathing so rather than otherwise, is the effect of my volition. But neither can this be called smelling: for if it were, I should smell every time I breathed in that manner.

HYLAS. True.

PHILONOUS. Smelling then is somewhat consequent to all this.

HYLAS. It is.

PHILONOUS. But I do not find my will concerned any further. Whatever more there is, as that I perceive such a particular smell or any smell at all, this is independent of my will, and therein I am altogether passive. Do you find it otherwise with you, Hylas?

HYLAS. No, the very same.

PHILONOUS. Then as to seeing, is it not in your power to open your eyes, or keep them shut; to turn them this or that way?

HYLAS. Without doubt.

PHILONOUS. But doth it in like manner depend on your will, that in looking on this flower, you perceive white rather than any other colour? Or directing your open eyes towards yonder part of the heaven, can you avoid seeing the sun? Or is light or darkness the effect of your volition?

HYLAS. No, certainly.

PHILONOUS. You are then in these respects altogether passive.

HYLAS. I am.

PHILONOUS. Tell me now, whether seeing consists in perceiving light and colours, or in opening and turning the eyes?

HYLAS. Without doubt, in the former.

PHILONOUS. Since therefore you are in the very perception of light and colours altogether passive, what is become of that action you were speaking of, as an ingredient in every sensation?

(Works 2: 196-7)

What troubles me about this passage is not that Philonous denies that sense-perception is an act, but that he (and through him Berkeley) seems to have no use for the distinction between the object of perception and the state (let me grant that it is passive) of the mind perceiving it. In the absence of such a distinction, my distinction between object-consciousness and subject-consciousness cannot (in the case of sense-perception) acquire a foothold. One quick way out of the difficulty is to say that Philonous is not rejecting every distinction between object and sensation, but only the particular distinction made by Hylas,²⁸ but I do not find this entirely satisfying. Hylas puts forward the distinction for a very simple reason: he is trying to create room for saying that although a sensation may be unable to exist "without the mind," the same needn't be true of its object (Works 2: 194). If Philonous manages to defeat this maneuver only by treating the sensation as a full-fledged action, rather than as the actualization of a (possibly passive) capacity, he hasn't really addressed Hylas's underlying concern. Yet I do have to grant that at times in the *Dialogues*, Philonous seems more interesting in scoring debater's points than in advancing his interlocutor's understanding. This may be another of those times.²⁹

The passivity of the Berkelyan mind is, in any case, more widespread than either the *Treatise* or the *Dialogues* acknowledges. It is passive not only in sensation, but when undergoing suggestion or association, the mechanism at the heart of Berkeley's theory of vision.³⁰ Phenomenologically, an expectation seems no less distinct from the idea that is its object than an act of will is from the idea that it excites "at pleasure" (PHK 28). My concern is that in the exchange from the First Dialogue, Berkeley papers over a distinction that inward experience should incline him to recognize, and that accords with his dualism of spirit and idea.³¹

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¹ This (hurried) draft was prepared for the NYU Mind and Language Seminar for February 14, 2006. Please do not circulate it without my permission.

² I quote throughout from *The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne*, ed. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop (London: Nelson, 1948-57), except in the case of Berkeley's notebooks, where I use the edition identified in footnote 9. This edition employs the same numbering as the somewhat less accurate edition in volume 1 of the *Works*. I refer to *A Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (PHK) and *An Essay towards a New Theory of Vision* (NTV) by numbered section, to *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* (DHP) by dialogue (followed by page number in volume 2 of the *Works*), and to *Alciphron* by dialogue and section number (followed by page number in volume 3 of the *Works*).

³ See the final paragraph of Charles J. McCracken, "Berkeley's Notion of Spirit," *History of European Ideas* 7 (1986): 597-602, 602.

⁴ *The Will: A Dual Aspect Theory*, two volumes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 2: 1.

⁵ Aristotle, *Categories* 1. Technically, paronyms have different endings, but I put aside that complication here, if only because two words with the same ending in one language might best be translated into another language by words with different endings. James F. Ross discusses paronymy and related phenomena in *Portraying Analogy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

⁶ See for example Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 44.

⁷ Robert M. Adams defends a similar view in "Berkeley's 'Notion' of Spiritual Substance," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 55 (1973): 47-69. Adams speaks of "two modes of awareness" (48): one of ideas "as of objects distinct from us, over against us" (50); and one of spirits and their acts.

⁸ Berkeley's formulaic pronouncements leave many questions unanswered. Does every act of mind, for example, carry awareness of itself along with it, or does such awareness require a separate reflex act? If separate reflex "acts" are required, are they active or passive? Berkeley's allusions to doctrines of inner sense suggest that they might in some way be passive, another indication (see the final paragraph of the paper) that the Berkeleyan mind may be more passive than he is willing to admit.

⁹ See A. A. Luce's notes on 328-9 of George Berkeley, *Philosophical Commentaries*, ed. George H. Thomas (Alliance, Ohio: Mt. Union College, 1976).

¹⁰ See especially Nicolas Malebranche, *The Search after Truth*, trans. Thomas M. Lennon and Paul J. Olscamp (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1980), Book 3, part 2, chapter 6, section 4, "How we know our own soul," 237-9.

¹¹ I see no basis for Jonathan Bennett's report that there are "indications that [Berkeley] thinks that his own existence is inferred from ideas which are immediately given, through the principle that there cannot be unowned ideas" (*Learning from Six Philosophers* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001], 2: 156). Nor do I agree that "this is what he ought to think, . . . given his insistence that he has no idea of himself."

¹² Ayers, "Was Berkeley an Empiricist or a Rationalist?," 47-8, and Berman, "Berkeley's Life and Works," 22-3 in *The Cambridge Companion to Berkeley*, ed. Kenneth P. Winkler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Ayers seems to take a somewhat different view in his edition of George Berkeley, *Philosophical Works* (London: Dent, 1992), 77.

¹³ See Jessop's footnote to the passage in volume 2 of the *Works*, 41. For further discussion, critical of Jessop's suggestion, see E. J. Furlong, "An Ambiguity in Berkeley's *Principles*," *Hermathena* 94 (1960): 84-102. There is another, less ambiguous Lockean survival in PHK 25: "But whoever shall attend to his ideas, whether of sense or reflexion, will not perceive in them any power or activity." I suppose it is possible that Berkeley is thinking specifically of pleasure and pain, which according to Locke are ideas of both sensation and reflection (*Essay* II vii 1, 2, xx 1, 15). It isn't obvious to me that Berkeley shouldn't interpret internal pains and pleasures just as he interprets external ones: as ideas, rather than as acts or operations of the mind.

¹⁴ Here it's worth taking note of the impersonality in Locke's accounts of ideas of reflection. Consider for example *Essay* II vi 1-2. There Locke makes what Berkeley would view as a promising beginning. The mind, he writes in § 1, "turns its views inward upon it self" and "observes its own Actions" concerning the ideas received by sense. But the "other *Ideas*" it "takes" from these are, in § 2, impersonally characterized. In § 1 Locke insists that ideas of reflection "are as capable to the Objects of [the mind's] Contemplation, as any of those it received from foreign things," but it's hard to see how any "objective" feature of an idea—any feature we contemplate or view—can be the source of our consciousness of it as our own. Berkeley takes issue with impersonal conceptions of mental acts and operations in PHK 143: "Men have imagined they could frame abstract notions of the powers and acts of the mind, and consider them prescinded, as well from the mind or spirit it self, as from their respective objects and effects."

¹⁵ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, second ed., revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 260-1.

¹⁶ See also entries 587, 614, and 615.

¹⁷ His sincerity in this has been doubted, for example by Robert Muehlmann in *Berkeley's Ontology* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992), chapter 6. For a convincing effort to put such doubts to rest see Phillip D. Cummins, "Berkeley's Philosophy of Mind and Agency," in the *Cambridge Companion*, 209-18.

¹⁸ It is curious, though, that at PHK 144, where, having said in PHK 140 that "we know other spirits by means of our own soul, which in that sense is an image or likeness of them," Berkeley chooses to contrast our knowledge of other minds, which he describes as "not immediate," with knowledge of our own ideas, rather than with knowledge of our selves.

¹⁹ I am assuming, perhaps controversially, that Berkeley can take subject-consciousness of the past to be infallible.

²⁰ In the first edition version of PHK 89, Berkeley contrasts "*indivisible, incorruptible substances*" with "*inert, fleeting perishable passions, or dependent beings.*" The "or" may be one of apposition or alternation, but if so, Berkeley does not reveal the reasoning behind it.

²¹ Could the relevant power exist in *y*? Not if *y* is an idea. But if *y* is a non-idea that has the power, I wonder whether its presence in *y* (as opposed to *x*) would undercut any reason we might have for thinking that *y* depends on *x*. *y*'s dependence on *x* would in such a case be the upshot of *y*'s nature alone, making it a very unusual sort of dependence.

²² The distinction between infallibility and transparency makes intuitive sense, but unless some control is exerted over what it is that can be known, the distinction is in danger of collapse. Suppose I am infallible, and claim to detect that spirit is not-*F*. Then it seems that being *F* cannot be hidden in its depths, which suggests that my infallibility has more bearing on spirit's transparency than it should have. A natural first step would be to stipulate that the objects of infallible knowledge be positive. But how are positive objects to be distinguished from negative ones? "Independence" nicely illustrates the difficulty: it is, like "infinite," negative in form, but arguably positive in meaning.

²³ Scholastic treatments of this distinction, which (to judge from the notebooks) may have influenced Berkeley, are extremely complicated. For helpful discussion see Jorge J. E. Gracia, *Suarez on Individuation* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1982), 178-9, 238-9, and Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 146-51.

²⁴ The context of Euphranor's appeals to inward evidence suggests that Berkeley may see them as components of a wider attempt to show that belief in our freedom is (as we now say) "properly basic." But he frames that attempt very sketchily.

²⁵ For further evidence of a change in heart between the notebooks and *Alciphron*, compare entry 797 ("Hobbs in his object. 3. ridicules those expressions of the Scholastiques the Will wills etc so does Locke. I am of another Mind") with *Alciphron* 7. 19 (*Works* 3: 316: "Whether he can will as he wills? I know not how philosophical it may be to ask this question, but it seems very idle").

²⁶ For an especially helpful survey of the early Berkeley's developing thoughts on spirit, see McCracken's "Berkeley's Notion of Spirit."

²⁷ In "Berkeley's Active Mind," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 71 (1989): 335-43, Robert McKim defends the view that the Berkeleyan mind is active in sense-perception.

²⁸ This is McKim's way of dealing with the passage (340-1).

²⁹ So much is actually suggested by the lines that immediately follow the exchange as I have quoted it. There Philonous finishes off the argument in a very odd way, apparently in order to

saddle Hylas with a contradiction. Although I haven't looked into the matter closely, my feeling is that the *Dialogues* is deliberately shaped by the theory and practice of academic disputation.

³⁰ In footnote 13 I asked why "internal" passions cannot be as passive as external ones. If an intense heat is also a pain, as Philonous contends in the First Dialogue, why can't intense loneliness also be a pain, and one as passive as the other?

³¹ As McKim for example astutely recognizes, to the extent that the Berkeleyan mind is passive, it seems that there could after all be an idea of it (337). He later observes that "if the mind is entirely passive in sense-perception, then Berkeley's crucial distinction between minds and ideas risks erosion, and his close association, if not outright identification, of the existence of a spirit with its perceiving is undermined" (343).