

# BERKELEY'S DUALISTIC ONTOLOGY

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## Abstract

In this paper I defend the view that Berkeley endorses a spirit-idea dualism, and I explain what this dualism amounts to. Central to the discussion is Berkeley's claim that spirits and ideas are "entirely distinct." Taken as a Cartesian real distinction, the "entirely distinct" claim seems to be at odds with Berkeley's view that spirits are substances that support ideas by perceiving them. This has led commentators to deflate Berkeley's notion of "entire distinction" by reading it as analogous to the categorical distinction between substance and accident. I argue that rather than taking Berkeley's notion of "entire distinction" in either of these ways (as a "real distinction" or else a mere categorical distinction between substance and accident), it ought to be understood as insisting upon a radical dissimilitude between spirits and ideas. This dissimilitude requires that ideas cannot be viewed as analogous to modes or accidents which inhere in a substance. Moreover, spirits and ideas cannot be understood in terms of a single, gradated scale of reality. Instead, for Berkeley spirits and ideas occupy two entirely different scales of reality and consequently the very term 'thing' applies to them in different (non-analogical) senses. In this way, Berkeley endorses a severe dualism that occurs at the highest level of his ontology.

KEY WORDS: Dualism; Ontology; Analogy; Berkeley, George.

## Resumen

En este trabajo defiendo que Berkeley sostiene un dualismo espíritu-idea y explico qué significa tal dualismo. Es central en la discusión la afirmación de Berkeley que los espíritus y las ideas son "totalmente distintos". Considerada como una distinción real cartesiana, la tesis "totalmente distintos" parece estar en tensión con la concepción de Berkeley de que los espíritus son sustancias que "support ideas by perceiving them". Esto ha llevado a los comentadores a disminuir la noción de Berkeley de "distinción total" leyéndola como un análogo a la distinción categorial entre sustancia y accidente. Yo argumento que en lugar de considerar a la noción de Berkeley de "distinción total" en alguno de esos modos (como una real distinción o como una distinción categorial entre sustancia y accidente), debe ser comprendida como insistiendo en una radical diferencia entre espíritus e ideas. Esta diferencia requiere que las ideas no se vean como análogas a modos o accidentes de la sustancia. Además espíritus e ideas no pueden ser entendidos en términos de una única escala graduada de realidad. En cambio para Berkeley espíritus e ideas ocupan dos escalas totalmente distintas de realidad y en consecuencia, el término mismo "cosa" se aplica en sentidos distintos (no analógicos). De este modo, Berkeley sostiene un dualismo severo que acaece al más alto nivel de su ontología.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Dualismo; Ontología; Analogía; Berkeley, George.

...for anyone to pretend to a notion of entity or existence, *abstracted* from *spirit* and *idea*, from perceiving and being perceived, is, I suspect, a downright repugnancy and trifling with words (PHK I 81).<sup>1</sup>

When Berkeley treats spirits and ideas as two fundamentally different kinds of being, he seems to be endorsing a species of dualism. Yet if Berkeley does endorse a form of dualism, it cannot be a substance dualism since ideas are not substances. The deeper problem is that a commitment to a dualism seems *prima facie* to conflict with the claim that spirits are substances which support ideas.<sup>2</sup> Certainly it seems that Berkeley's dualism cannot allow a Cartesian 'real distinction' where ideas are capable of existing independently of spirit. After all, the substantiality of spirit seems to be the backbone of Berkeley's idealism (the view that sensible things are mind-dependent). Any clarification of Berkeley's ontology requires that the nature of this dualism be elucidated. Specifically, it requires that this dualism be shown compatible with Berkeley's substantiality thesis (the view that spirits are substances which support ideas). This is the aim of this paper.

### **Part One: Was Berkeley a Dualist? *The Deflationary Interpretation***

One way to avoid the tension between Berkeley's substantiality thesis and his claim that spirit and idea are 'entirely distinct' is to deflate

<sup>1</sup> Citations of *A Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* [PHK] refer to part and section, of *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* [3D] to dialogues number and page, of *Philosophical Commentaries* [PC] to entry number, of *de Motu* [DM] to section number, of *Alciphron or the Minute Philosopher* [ALC] to dialogue number, section, and page, of *Siris* [S] to section number. All references to Berkeley are from Luce and Jessop (1948-57).

<sup>2</sup> As the view has been formulated, the Identity Principle (ideas are nothing but states of perception) is incompatible with the Distinction Principle (ideas can exist independently of spirits). While I doubt that Berkeley held the Identity Principle, even the view that ideas are in some way dependent upon spirits seems to conflict with the latter principle. For a discussion of the tension, see Grave (1964); Pitcher (1977), pp. 189-203; Winkler (1989), pp. 290-300; Muehlmann (1992), pp. 226-234; Brykman (1993), pp. 274-282.

<sup>3</sup> Pitcher understands ideas as ways of perceiving (ontologically distinct from ideas, but not capable of existing independently of spirit), Winkler reads ideas as object distinct from spirit and its acts (ontologically distinct, but analogous to accidents or modes). For a strong statement of this deflationary view see Beardsley (2001).

the second claim. This has been the strategy of commentators who would read Berkeley as serious about the substantiality thesis.<sup>3</sup> In this view, the distinction between spirit and idea is simply an instance of the ontological distinction between substance and accident; it is merely Berkeley's version of it. The move enables us to avoid viewing Berkeley's 'entire distinction' as a Cartesian 'real distinction' and it can explain why the distinction is taken by Berkeley as compatible with the substantiality thesis. The difficulty, however, is that it does not capture the degree to which Berkeley himself endorses a species of dualism.<sup>4</sup>

Berkeley's commitment to a dualism is emphatically indicated in *de Motu* where he places himself within a long tradition of dualists:

A thinking, active thing is given which we experience as the principle of motion in ourselves ... An extended thing is also given, inert, impenetrable, moveable, totally different from the former and constituting a new genus. Anaxagoras, wisest of men, was the first to grasp the great difference between thinking things and extended things, and he asserted that the mind has nothing in common with bodies, as is established from the first book of Aristotle's *De Anima*. Of the moderns Descartes had put the same point most forcibly (DM § 30).

To be sure, Berkeley is not here explicitly assuming his immaterialist philosophy. Nonetheless, what he says is compatible with it. Even in the *Principles*, he allows for the term 'corporeal substance' to have a common (non-philosophical) significance where it applies to combinations of sensible qualities (PHK I 37).

To see the nature of Berkeley's spirit-idea dualism more clearly, consider the following expressions of dualism. Let's start with Locke's weak formulation of it:

(1) There are but two sorts of Beings in the World, that Man knows or conceives. *First*, Such as are purely material, without Sense, Perception, or Thought, as the clippings of our Beards, and paring of our Nails. *Secondly*, Sensible, thinking, perceiving Beings, such as we find ourselves to be, which if you please, we will hereafter call *cogitative and incogitative* Beings ... (E. 4. 10.9, 622-3).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Most commentators have not taken Berkeley's dualism seriously enough. One exception to this is Charles McCracken (1988), pp. 609-610.

<sup>5</sup> Citations of *An Essay concerning Human Understanding [E]* refer to book, part, section, and page from Nidditch (1975).

Now consider Philonous' restatement of the claim that 'there is nothing in the world but spirits and ideas' (3D III 235). According to Philonous, '...there only things perceiving and things perceived.' Since the division is exhaustive –spirits are not perceived, and ideas do not perceive– it seems that Philonous has an almost exact analogue of the Lockean distinction between thinking and unthinking beings. Admittedly, Philonous gives the clear sense that this claim can be restated as '...every unthinking being is necessarily, and from the very nature of its existence, perceived by some mind' (236). Yet even here, the expression 'unthinking being' plays into this Lockean dualism. Berkeley's point is that, *pace* Locke, incogitative beings cannot ever exist unperceived. Now consider the more robust Cartesian dualism:

(2) Descartes: ...I recognize only two ultimate classes of things: first, intellectual or thinking things, i.e. those which pertain to mind or thinking substance; and secondly, material things, i.e. those which pertain to extended substance or body (*Principles of Philosophy* I §48; AT VIIIA 23, CSM I 208).<sup>6</sup>

(3) Malebranche: Mind, the substance that thinks, and body, the substance that is extended, are two entirely different and completely contrary kinds of beings – what belongs to the one cannot belong to the other (SAT B3, P3, Ch.10, p. 253).<sup>7</sup>

This is Berkeley:

(4) *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* (PHK I 89).

PHK I 89 seems very much like an attempt to articulate a species of dualism, quite in line with the preceding passages. Indeed, Berkeley seems to be echoing Malebranche in emphasizing the sharpness of the distinction: '*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' (PHK I 142). Such passages, I think, suggest that Berkeley is endorsing a species of dualism.

<sup>6</sup> Citations of Descartes are from Cottingham, Stroothoff and Murdoch(trans.) [CSM] (1984) and Adam and Tannery [AT] (1897-1910). Citations made by volume and page.

<sup>7</sup> Citations of *The Search after Truth* [SAT] from Lennon and Olscamp (1997).

The strongest evidence, however, that Berkeley takes spirit-idea dualism quite seriously can be found in his proof of the soul's natural immortality (PHK I 141). The core of the proof rests on the 'entire distinction' between spirits and ideas. The general idea is that since bodies are nothing but collections of sensible ideas, and spirits are entirely distinct from ideas, spirits will not be susceptible to the sorts of changes which befall bodies.

The proof brings out the difficulty with simply assimilating the distinction between spirit and idea into the ontological distinction between substance and accident. In such a view, Berkeley has rejected material substance, and maintained that there is nothing but spiritual substances (and their various accidents or properties). So there appears to be no further *need* to establish that the soul is incorporeal (and hence, naturally immortal), since the corporeal has been rejected altogether. In other words: Berkeley's immaterialism immediately establishes the incorporeality of the soul.

Not only does the proof not appear to be *needed* in this view, it is hard to see what it could possibly contribute. For the mere point that spirits and ideas are distinct as substances and accidents doesn't add anything important. Indeed, it doesn't fit with the points that Berkeley tries to make in this section. One of his main points is that while ideas (fleeting beings) may undergo change and decay, this is not going to be the case for spirits (since spirits are entirely distinct). But if ideas are accidents of spirit, then the very changes that they undergo *are* changes that a spirit goes through. If this proof is to be taken seriously, something more needs to be said about the 'entire distinction' between spirits and ideas. It isn't enough to read the claim as merely flagging an ontological distinction on par (if not tantamount to) the distinction between substance and accident.

### ***The Cartesian Interpretation***

If Berkeley's 'entire distinction' is not merely a distinction between ontological categories, but a distinction which is supposed to ground an authentic dualism, then to what could such a distinction amount? It seems evident that it can't amount to a Cartesian 'real distinction.' But here, already, caution is required. It is possible that, for Berkeley, a sensible idea is capable of existing independently of a particular finite spirit, while an imagined idea is dependent upon the particular finite spirits that produces it. In such a view, sensible ideas would be capable of existing independently of finite spirits, but not of the

Divine Spirit (God). Such a view has some textual support. For example, Philonous says in the Third Dialogue:

It is evident that the things I perceive are my own ideas, and that no idea can exist unless it be in a mind. Nor is it less plain that these ideas or things by me perceived, either themselves or their archetypes, exist independently of my mind, since I know myself not to be their author, it being out of my power to determine at pleasure, what particular ideas I shall be affected with upon opening my eyes or ears. They must therefore exist in some other mind, whose will it is they should be exhibited to me (3D III 214).

The passage suggests that Berkeley takes seriously the possibility that sensible ideas can exist independently of a finite mind. And this view—although a minority opinion in the literature—has been famously defended by A. A. Luce as well as others.<sup>8</sup>

Yet, whatever the merits of this non-standard interpretation of Berkeleian substance, it is unsuccessful as an attempt to explicate Berkeley's spirit-idea dualism. First, when Berkeley claims that spirits and ideas are 'entirely distinct' this is not applied *only* to sensible ideas, but to ideas *in general* (PHK I 89, 142). For example, when Berkeley argues for the natural immortality of the soul, he makes at least two claims: (1) that bodies are nothing more than ideas in the mind; and (2) that ideas are 'more distant and heterogeneous from them [spirits], than light is from darkness' (PHK I 141, my insert). Yet this last claim is applicable to *all* ideas, not just sensible ones.

The second problem is that the proof of the natural immortality of the soul does not hinge on showing that finite spirits can exist independently of bodies (and conversely). Rather, the proof dwells upon the *difference* between spirits and ideas. It is because spirits are not of the same kind as ideas, it is because they are so unlike ideas, that they are supposed to be exempt from the changes and decays which befall natural bodies. A 'real distinction' cannot, therefore, constitute an account of the 'entire distinction' between spirits and ideas.

<sup>8</sup> See Luce (1934), p. 84. See also Luce (1941). T. E. Jessop is known for a similar view. See Jessop, T. E., *Works II*, Introduction to the *Principles*, pp. 10-11. See also Berman (1986); Dancy (1987), pp. 41-56; Hight (2005); Pappas (1982) pp. 3-21, Pappas (2000) pp. 200-201; Raynor (1987); Yolton, (1984), pp. 132-137; Yolton, (1996).

## *The Challenge*

The preceding is important because it undermines one reason for deflating Berkeley's dualism. If the fear is that Berkeleian dualism must be understood as something like a Cartesian dualism, it is baseless; any appeal to a real distinction between spirits and ideas simply won't help us. Rather, in claiming that spirit and idea are 'entirely distinct', Berkeley means, in part, to do deny any *similitude* between them. It is because they are so *unlike*, that while ideas may undergo changes and decays, such a fate is inappropriately attributed to spirits.

This lack of similitude is consistently affirmed by Berkeley who claims that they differ in several respects. (1) While spirits are active, ideas are merely passive and inert (PHK I 89); (2) While spirits support ideas (by perceiving them), ideas do not likewise provide support (PHK I 135); (3) While spirits 'subsist in themselves', ideas are dependent beings (PHK I 137); (4) While spirits are indivisible; ideas are fleeting (PHK I 89).

Yet in order to secure a dualism in any interesting sense, Berkeley needs something stronger than the preceding list of differences since they are nothing more than parts of his substantiality thesis. So note that even if spirits and ideas have several features which are contrary, it does not follow that spirits and ideas have nothing in common *at all*. It is, however, this complete lack of similitude that Berkeley insists upon; and it is this latter, *stronger* thesis, I believe, which grounds Berkeley's dualism.

According to Descartes, while there are two general categories (one which includes things pertaining to thought, the other which includes things pertaining to extension), there are also things which are referred to both categories:

But we also experience without ourselves certain other things which must not be referred either to the mind alone or to the body alone....This list includes, first, appetites like hunger and thirst; secondly, the emotions or passions of the mind which do not consist of thought alone...and finally, all the sensations...(Principles of Philosophy I 48; AT VIII A 23, CSM I 209).

By contrast, Berkeley considers the possibility that though spirits and ideas differ in some respects, they are similar in others (PHK I 137). He says: 'Do but leave out the power of willing, thinking, and perceiving ideas, and there remains nothing else wherein the idea can be like a spirit....' (PHK I 138). His view is that spirits and ideas have *nothing* in common (except names such as 'thing'). This provides the basis for

understanding two key features of Berkeley's dualism: (1) ideas cannot be viewed as mere modes, accidents, or properties of spirit; and (2) spirits and ideas cannot be situated in a shared scale of being. In what follows, I explain these two features and show why they are consequences of Berkeley's claim that spirit and idea have nothing in common at all. The exercise will thereby put us in a good position to understand the nature of Berkeleian dualism.

## Part Two: Ideas and Accidents

In answer to the charge that the mind is extended and figured because extension and figure 'exist in it,' Berkeley claims that extension and figure do not exist in the mind 'by way of *mode* or *attribute* but only by way of *idea*' (PHK I 49). Philonous makes a similar point in the Third Dialogue: A 'sensible quality', he says, does not exist in spirit 'by way of mode or property,' but 'as a thing perceived in that which perceives it' (3D III 237). In the interpretation I wish to defend, Berkeley distinguishes between two types of support (existence by way of idea and existence by way of mode) and denies that ideas are modes, accidents, and so forth which *inhere* in the mind at all.<sup>9</sup> Rather, they are dependent in the sense that they are objects of perception (i.e. 'things perceived') which cannot exist unperceived.<sup>10</sup>

Here it is important to distinguish between the notion of ontological dependence in general, and the notion of *inherence* in particular. The latter is specifically bound up with the relationship between subjects and properties, property-instances, or property-like things and the notion of predication. Consider the view that finite things (such as human beings) are dependent on God for their on-going existence. The sheer recognition

<sup>9</sup> While Berkeley's claim that sensible things exist in the mind only by way of idea (not by way of mode) might seem to suggest that the only relation of support that Berkeley allows is the former, the text actually allows more latitude. See Beardsley (2001), pp. 272-273. For a related discussion see Cummins (2005), pp. 190-229. In this action, I aim to argue that given Berkeley's views about the entire distinction between spirits and ideas, he cannot view ideas as modes or accidents.

<sup>10</sup> For the most part, I agree with Ayers' formulation of Berkeley's account of spiritual substance. See his Ayers (1970). However, I resist any over-assimilation of Berkeley's account into the older ontological tradition. One of the central difficulties with this interpretation is explaining why perception should (for Berkeley) constitute a relation of support. For an account of the mind dependence of ideas, see Bettcher (2007), pp. 53-54.

of this hardly forces one into Spinoza's position of viewing such dependents as *modifications* of God (*Ethics* I Pr. 15).<sup>11</sup> There is no reason to believe this, no reason to construe Berkeleian mind-dependence as a relation between accident and substance.

In a natural reading of Berkeley, ideas are not dependent upon spirits as modes or accidents depend upon subjects. Rather, they are dependent in the sense that they cannot exist without being perceived by spirits. Blue (taken as an accident) cannot exist without a subject in which to inhere. This is to say, it is a repugnancy that there should be some blueness without something which *is* blue (i.e. in which that blueness exists).<sup>12</sup> Blue (taken as an idea) cannot exist without a perceiver to perceive it. This is to say, it is a repugnancy that there should be some blue existing unperceived by a mind. These appear to be two distinct relations of dependence, and there is no initial reason to suppose that Berkeley's commitment to the latter requires his endorsement of the former.<sup>13</sup>

If it is true that spirits and ideas lack all similitude, then the view that ideas are modes or accidents cannot be accepted. Were ideas mere modes of spirit, there *would* be some similitude *despite the fact that substances and accidents involve different categories*. To see this, consider that Descartes places both thinking substances and the modes of thinking substance - both extended substance and the modes of thinking substance *within the same categories*. He writes:

All the objects of our perception we regard either as things, or affections of things ... But I recognize only two ultimate classes of things ... Perception, volition and all the modes both of perceiving and willing are referred to thinking substance; while to extended substance belong size ... shape, motion, position, divisibility of component parts and the like (*Principles of Philosophy* I 48; AT VIII A 22, CSM I 208).

<sup>11</sup> Citations of *Ethics* from Shirley and Feldman (1992).

<sup>12</sup> According to Stillingfleet, it is 'a repugnancy to our first Conceptions that *Modes* and *Accidents* should subsist by themselves'. Stillingfleet (1967), p. 236.

<sup>13</sup> To be sure, one might attempt to explain this latter relation of dependence *in terms of* the former. See, for example, Edwin B. Allaire's 'inherence' interpretation, first formulated in Allaire (1963). For a discussion of this account, see Muehlmann's Introduction to *Berkeley's Metaphysics* (Muehlmann 1995) where he provides further bibliographical information of the various articles in defense and in criticism of this view. See also Pappas (2000), pp. 128-131. For 'the adverbial account' (according to which ideas are merely ways of perceiving) see Pitcher (1977), pp. 189-203, Atherton (1983), and Beardsley (2001). For critical assessment, see Winkler (1989), pp. 290-300 and Pappas (2000), pp. 124-128.

The similitude between a thinking substance and modes, of course, is clear: Since doubting is nothing but a determinate way of thinking itself, doubting has an evident similitude with thinking, and therefore a thinking thing itself which is constituted by that attribute.

Such considerations are not unique to the Cartesian account of substance. Consider a Scholastic/Aristotelian view. Aquinas claims that substances ('having essence most truly and fully') is the cause of accidents which 'share the nature of being secondarily and in a qualified sense' (BE 6.3, 67-8).<sup>14</sup> Now with the exception of a form 'whose being does not depend on matter' (such as the intellectual soul), all accidents 'have something in common' with both matter and form. And 'no accident results from matter without having something in common with form' (BE 6.4, 68). For example, 'knowledge of grammar' cannot be understood apart from *rationality*. The property and the attribute involve similitude. And insofar as rationality partially constitutes the definition of human being, it would seem that 'knowledge of grammar' and human beings have likewise a similitude between them. In denying that spirit and idea 'have something in common' (besides the name), Berkeley, therefore, is plainly rejecting such a Scholastic framework.

Even on a Lockean view, this similitude is evident. For the nominal essence of a particular sort of substance is nothing but a collection of the ideas of its different properties and powers. Thus the sensible quality 'hot' is part of the idea of the sun, and there is a similitude between the idea of the sun and the idea of heat (E. 2.23.6, 298). To be sure, we do not have the idea of the real essence of the sun. If we did, however, we could conclude the various properties that flow from it. And surely, in that case, the properties and the essence would have something in common. By contrast, Berkeley *denies* that spirit and idea have anything common to both natures (PHK I 142). Instead of placing them in one category (like Descartes), he places them in *two*.

Another way of understanding this is to recognize that knowledge of a thing's accidents and properties augments (and indeed constitutes) knowledge of the substance which bears them. As a consequence of the doctrine that 'nothingness possesses no attributes or qualities', Descartes concludes that '...wherever we find some attributes or qualities, there is necessarily some thing or substance to be found for them to belong to; and the more attributes we discover in the same thing or substance, the clearer is our knowledge of that substance' (*Principles of Philosophy* I 11; AT VIII A 8, CSM I 196).

<sup>14</sup> Citations of *On Being and Essence* [BE] refer to chapter, section, and page from Maurer (1968).

Berkeley by contrast, must surely deny this. Whereas a Cartesian mode of thought and a Cartesian mind have something common between their natures (i.e. thought itself), this simply cannot be the case on the Berkeleian view. It consequently *follows* from his claim that spirit and idea have nothing common in their natures that ideas are *not* modes, properties, states and the like. For if they were such items, knowledge of *them* would yield knowledge of *spirit*. Yet Berkeley goes to great pains to *deny this*. We do not know our own soul, as we do a triangle he claims (PHK I 142). But if such ideas (of triangles) are *states of perceiving* then we could know spirits as we know triangles. For knowledge of the latter would provide knowledge of the former.

An objection to this interpretation can be raised as follows. Consider the fact that in the case of substance/accident ontology, an accident has an incomplete definition and therefore an incomplete essence. According to Aquinas, '...they cannot be defined without including a subject in their definition' (BE 6.1; 66). If this is correct, then it follows trivially that substance and accident have something in common – namely the substance itself, which as subject must be included in the definition of the accident. This suggests a possible strategy for objecting to the proposed interpretation. Cannot the same thing be said of Berkeley's ontology? After all, when the terms 'spirit' and 'idea' are taken as general ontological categories, won't both of their definitions include an appeal to the other as relative terms - just as Lockean 'under-propping' and 'sticking on-s' and mutually defined relative notions (E. 2.13.20; 175)? A spirit is an active being which perceives ideas; and idea is a passive being which is perceived by spirits. Since there is definitional overlap, don't they have something in common?

In response to this objection, it is important to recognize that in the older view, the various particular *essences* of accidents are viewed as incomplete, and the definitions include reference to a subject. Thus 'snubness' can be defined as a curvature of the nose (BE 6.9; 70-1). Similarly, 'knowledge of grammar' will be defined as a certain condition of the intellectual soul. The issue does not merely concern ontological categories at the most abstract level, but the nature of particular kinds of accidents. Now, Berkeley himself is very unclear about his view on *essence* and natural kinds. But it is quite plain that his views are non-standard. Not only is there no one form shared by all members of the kind, there isn't even one abstract idea which corresponds to them all.

When we consider particular spirits and various kinds of ideas, no such overlap is present. When Berkeley speaks of spirits in the simplest

terms he uses the expression 'active being' (PHK I 27, 89). But there is nothing in the definition of that expression which itself involves any reference to ideas. Similarly, cherries, trees, and triangles (all of them congeries of ideas) will not include a reference to spirit in their definitions. For example, Berkeley defines a triangle as 'a plane surface comprehended by three right lines' (PHK Intro 18). There is, however, no mention of spirit. To be sure, complex items such as triangles and trees are composed of various different ideas such as colors, lights, shapes, sounds, and the like. However, it would seem that with respect to these more basic items (colours, sounds, odours, tastes, etc.) no definition is available *at all*. Berkeley nowhere provides a definition of a colour (or any particular colour), and one is hard pressed to see how he could. Ultimately, it seems, Berkeley must hold that certain terms which apply to ranges of ideas cannot themselves be defined. If so, in no case does Berkeley hold that specific sensible things (such as colours and sounds; tables and trees) include a definitional appeal to spiritual substance. This is sufficient, however, to show a disanalogy between the older ontology and Berkeley's. While accidents such as snubness include an appeal to a subject of inherence within the definition of their nature, ideas such as colours, sounds, and triangles do not.

This also sheds light on the concern that there is a definitional overlap between spirit (an active being which perceives ideas) and idea (a passive being which is perceived by spirit) at the general ontological level. Recognize that for Berkeley general knowledge is ultimately based upon knowledge of the particular. So any knowledge of spirits or ideas in general is going to proceed from particular cases. However, in particular cases neither spirits nor ideas involve definitional reference to each other.

To be sure, when Berkeley denominates sensible things such as colours and sounds as 'ideas', he is doing so because 'a necessary relation to the mind is understood by that term; and it is now commonly used by philosophers, to denote the immediate objects of the understanding' (3D III 236-7). However his decision to denominate particular things such as colours 'ideas' is based upon the prior recognition that such particular items are mind-dependent. The mind-dependence of a colour, therefore, does not obtain because it is denominated an idea; rather it is denominated 'idea' because it is mind-dependent. This particular mind-dependence, however, is not something which involves any definitional overlap.

Instead, Berkeley tries to capture the notion of mind-dependence by analyzing the meaning of the word 'exists' as it is applied to things

perceived by the senses. Famously, he says of sensible things – ‘their *esse* is *percipi*’. Now the Latin word ‘esse’ (the infinitive ‘to be’) has an interesting history; Boethius had used the word as a synonym for ‘form’ or ‘essence’.<sup>15</sup> However, for Aquinas the term is used to refer almost exclusively to the ‘act of being’.<sup>16</sup> For Berkeley, it seems that it is used interchangeably with ‘existence’. Thus, his claim is that the existence of a sensible thing (such as a colour) consists in being perceived. The point worth noting is that in defending this analysis, Berkeley does not appeal to the *essences* or *definitions* of sensible things (such as colours and trees). The point rather, concerns the very application of the word ‘exists’ to sensible things. In particular, for Berkeley, to say that a sensible thing exists *just is* to say that it is perceived. Similarly, Berkeley suggests that to say that a spirit exists *just is* to say that it cognizes (PHK I 98).<sup>17</sup> In both cases, however, the notion of essence does little or no work. Certainly, it is in the very nature of an idea to be perceived. From Berkeley’s equation of *esse* with *percipi*, it would appear that the very *existence* of an idea is included within the definition of an idea. However, it hardly follows from this that ideas exist necessarily.

Instead, one presumably obtains the notion of the relation of mind-dependence (i.e. perception) along with the relatives ‘perceiver’ and ‘perceived’ –through a process of comparison. For example, according to Locke, the idea of a ‘supporter’ is obtained by comparing the idea of something in general with a simple idea of some quality.<sup>18</sup> Since Berkeley allows that one has an awareness of one’s own existence as an active thing, the relative notion of perceiver can be obtained by comparing this active thing (i.e. oneself) with any of one’s ideas. The mind-dependence of ideas will involve recognition of the putative fact that no particular idea can exist without there also being an active being. Once one generalizes to the relative and quite *general* terms ‘spirit’ and ‘idea’, no similarity between oneself and one’s ideas has been yielded; any definitional overlap is strictly nominal.

<sup>15</sup> See Maurer’s Introduction to *On Being and Essence* (Maurer 1968), p. 15.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> There is a tension here since Berkeley claims that spirits perceive, will, and cognize. Does the existence of a spirit consist in all of these? If so, how can spirits be simple? The problem is only aggravated by Berkeley’s apparent insistence that finite spirits are both passive and active (Berkeley to Johnson IV § 3, *Works II*, p. 293). For a resolution of these tensions, see Bettcher (2007), esp. pp. 79-90.

<sup>18</sup> Locke (1697), p. 19, p. 21.

### Part Three: Analogy and The Great Scale of Being

The preceding discussion takes us some distance towards understanding the nature of Berkeleian dualism. According to Berkeley, ideas are not modes, accidents, or states of spirit. Not only are ideas not predicated of spirit, there is a similitude between substances and modes which spirits and ideas lack. That being said we have not explored the issues deeply enough. Although we can recognize key differences between Berkeleian ontology, and the older substance-mode ontology, these differences do not seem sufficiently strong to avoid treating ideas as somehow, at least, *like* modes or accidents.

In order to see this, consider the possibility that Berkeley retains the notion of an ontological hierarchy – a scale of being.<sup>19</sup> In such a view, spirits possess a higher degree of reality or being than ideas, or at least terms such as ‘thing’ ‘being’ and ‘reality’ apply to spirits primarily and ideas only derivatively. On the face of it, it is hard to see how Berkeley could maintain such a view while endorsing a dualism in any robust sense of the word. Does he endorse such a scale?

According to many Scholastic thinkers, ‘being’ is not a term that applies across the ten categories univocally. Rather, it applies analogically. ‘The analogated,’ according to Cajetan (an influential systematizer of Aquinas’ views on analogy), ‘are those whose name is common, and the meaning corresponding to that name is in one sense the same and in one sense different, or is the same in a qualified sense, and different in a qualified sense.’<sup>20</sup> For example, ‘healthy’ can be said of the animal, the food, and the urine. However, it is said in different ways. An animal is called healthy in virtue of the health which exists in it, while the food is called healthy in virtue of the fact that it causes the animal to have health. And according to Aquinas, ‘a being’ applies primarily and absolutely to substances and only secondarily and with qualification of accidents (BE 1.5, 32-3).

One way of situating Berkeley in this tradition is to read his ‘entire distinction’ principle as endorsing something like this. Perhaps his ‘nothing in common’ claim –while apparently indicating an insensitivity to the possibility of analogous terms– is simply an extreme nominalist way of putting the same point.<sup>21</sup> There are, however, several concerns with this interpretation.

<sup>19</sup> For a good statement of this position, see M. R. Ayers: ‘But what Berkeley does emphatically retain from Aristotelian theory is the conception of an ontological order of ranking, a scale of being’. Ayers (1986), pp. 571-572.

<sup>20</sup> Kendzierski and Wade (1964), Ch. 2, Q 3, § 21, p. 79.

<sup>21</sup> Ayers (1986) suggests this point. See his note 14, p. 573.

The central difficulty is that Berkeley's account of the difference between spirits and ideas seems to best capture the view that they are *pure equivocates* rather than *analogates*. For Scholastics, *pure equivocation* does not necessarily involve something as extreme as the difference between the financial institution (bank) and the river-side (bank). Rather 'dog' applies equivocally to the barking dog, the star, and the fish (*canis marinus*).<sup>22</sup>

According to Cajetan, 'By an *equivocal* name diverse things are so signified that, as such, they are united only by the external word' (NA §32, 30).<sup>23</sup> And according to Berkeley, spirits and ideas are so different that they have nothing in common 'but the name' (PHK I 89). Cajetan says, '...those natures – that of the dogfish and that of the ordinary dog – are entirely different in nature. For this reason whatever *dog* predicates of a dogfish it in no way predicates of an ordinary dog, and vice versa'(NA §63, 47-8). Berkeley says, '*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' (PHK I 142). Surely it is hard not to read Berkeley as endorsing the view that spirits and ideas are pure equivocates.

The view that Berkeley uses the 'entire distinction' as a way to express commitment to a scale of being largely because he is a *nominalist* is already problematic. Consider, for example, the views of William Ockham, who maintains that 'being' is applied *univocally* to God, substance, and accident.<sup>24</sup> So the fact that Berkeley is a nominalist provides little reason to believe that Berkeley's allegation that spirit and idea have nothing in common (but the name) is simply his own way of ranking spirit and idea on a scale of being.

Indeed, Berkeley explicitly treats of 'degrees of reality' in the *Principles*. According to him:

These latter [sensible ideas] are said to have more *reality* in them than the former [imagined ideas]: by which is meant that they are more affecting, orderly, and distinct, and that they are not fictions of the mind perceiving them... Whether others mean anything by the term *reality* different from what I do, I entreat them to look into their own thoughts and see. (PHK I 36, my inserts)

<sup>22</sup> Aquinas, *De veritate*, Q. 1, A. XI, d.7. Mulligan, McGlynn and Schmidt (1952-1954).

<sup>23</sup> Citations of *de Nominum Analogia* [NA] refer to section and page from Bushinski and Koren (1959).

<sup>24</sup> *Summa totius logicae*, I, c. xxxviii in Boehner (1990), p. 91.

Here Berkeley recognizes a scale of reality. However it is not one that can apply to spirits since it seems a category mistake to suppose that one could be more 'affecting, orderly, and distinct' than another. Rather than placing spirits and ideas on the same scale of being, it seems that for Berkeley they are even too dissimilar for *that*.

Moreover, the view that Berkeley is insensitive to the notion of analogical predication is in plain tension with Berkeley's explicit discussion of analogy in *Alciphron* (1732). There Berkeley has Crito argue that some have misunderstood the notion of analogy and that this has led them to deny that we have a direct and proper notion of God (no more than a blind man has of color).<sup>25</sup> He rehearses what is in fact Cajetan's account of analogy, and affirms that 'Knowledge, therefore, in the proper formal meaning of the word, may be attributed to God proportionably, that is, preserving a proportion to the infinite nature of God' (ALC IV 21, 170). What is interesting about this exchange, is that Berkeley affirms that God and finite spirits are analogates and that terms such as 'knowledge' and 'wisdom' may be predicated of God and finite spirit analogically. It appears that here Berkeley endorses a type of scale of being. However, this time, it applies only to spirits. Thus Berkeley's Crito remarks, 'God is a thinking intelligent being, in the same sense with other spirits; though not in the same imperfect manner or degree' (ALC IV 22, 171); and Euphranor says later '...there are innumerable orders of intelligent beings more happy and more perfect than man...' (ALC IV 23 172).

To be sure, one might suppose that when Berkeley originally wrote the *Principles* and *Dialogues* he had little understanding of analogy, only to develop a more thorough appreciation some twenty years later when he wrote *Alciphron*.<sup>26</sup> This supposition, however, is likewise problematic. First, while Berkeley does not assume his immaterialist doctrine in *Alciphron*, it seems that many of his key doctrines remain unchanged. Most importantly for our purposes, he continues to insist upon a radically dualistic ontology. Euphranor speaks of soul and body as '...things so very different and heterogeneous' (ALC VI 11.21). And so one doubts that Berkeley would countenance the possibility of analogical predication between the two.

Second, the concerns about analogy that Berkeley discusses in *Alciphron* are quite relevant to the young Berkeley of the *Principles* and *Dialogues*. After all, Archbishop William King had famously appealed to

<sup>25</sup> Berkeley is criticizing the views of Peter Browne and William King. For a discussion of these issues see Bettcher (2007).

<sup>26</sup> For a view that Berkeley's discussion of analogy in *Alciphron* marks a change from his *Principles* view, see Brykman (1993), pp. 382-383.

a type of analogical theory in *Sermon on Predestination* (Dublin, 1709)<sup>27</sup> according to which terms such as 'wisdom' applied to God only metaphorically just as a term such as 'finger'. This doctrine was subsequently exploited by free-thinker Anthony Collins in his *Vindication of the Divine Attributes* (London, 1710). And Berkeley expresses his unhappiness with King's doctrine to Percival:

'Tis true he holds there is something in the divine nature analogous or equivalent to those attributes. But upon such principles I must confess I do not see how it is possible to demonstrate the being of God : there being no argument that I know of for his existence, which does not prove him at the same time to be an understanding, wise, and benevolent Being, in the strict, literal, and proper meaning of those words (1709/10).<sup>28</sup>

Notably, the position here is the same position ultimately expressed by Crito '...the same arguments that prove a first cause proving an intelligent cause; intelligent, I say, in the proper sense; wise and good in the true and formal acceptation of the words' (ALC IV 22, 171). So it seems likely that Berkeley had already formulated his views on analogy much earlier than *Alciphron*.

However, the claim that 'being' applies to spirit and idea equivocally is stark, and so one wonders whether there isn't a way to avoid it. To avoid it would, of course, be to appeal to some sort of theory of analogy. Yet such an appeal is immediately undermined by the fact that any appeal to analogy requires some sort of similitude between spirit and idea and Berkeley denies that there is any such similitude. One of the motivations for wanting to claim a kind of analogy is that spirit and idea are not entirely unrelated. Spirits perceive ideas; ideas are perceived by spirits. Spirit produce ideas; ideas are produced by spirits. This connection, on the face of it, seems to suggest something less extreme than pure equivocality. In order to see clearly why this fails, let's consider two of the main types of analogy considered by Cajetan.

The analogy of attribution involves a primary analogate which enables other analogates to be similarly signified in virtue of some relationship (NA §8, 15).<sup>29</sup> For example, in virtue of the fact that a certain

<sup>27</sup> 'Divine Predestination Consistent With Freedom ... abbrv.'. Dublin. Reprinted as *Sermon on Predestination*, Carpenter and Berman (1976).

<sup>28</sup> Rand (1914), p. 73.

<sup>29</sup> See also Cajetan's *Commentary on Being and Essence*, Kendzierski and Wade (1964), p. 80.

kind of urine is the sign of a healthy animal, it is likewise called healthy. The important point for our purposes is that this sort of analogy involves a primary meaning which allows for derivative meanings secured through various relationships. It is this type of analogy which seems to be in play when 'a being' is predicated only secondarily of accidents and primarily of substances.

Yet Berkeley nowhere maintains that 'being' or 'thing' is applied to idea in a merely derivative or qualified sense. It is never, for example, recognized as merely 'a being of a being'. On the contrary, ideas are consistently referred to as 'things' 'beings' in what appears to be a full-blooded sense. Indeed, Philonous remarks, "You mistake me. I am not for changing things into ideas, but rather ideas into things" (3D III).

One is hard pressed to identify a contrast between the primary and derivative at all. Let's suppose that we may distinguish spirit and idea as perceiver and thing perceived. It is hard to fit such a case into the preceding model. What is the perfection that exists in spirit and is derivatively predicated of idea owing to its relationship with spirit? Where is the contrast between the primary and the derivative?

One way to draw the contrast is to recognize that in this kind of analogy, a reference to the primary analogate is included within the definition of the others with respect to the analogous name (NA §14). For example, we can only understand urine as healthy insofar as it is the sign for the health which exists in the animal. Yet in the case of spirit and ideas, as I discussed above, there appears to be no such contrast. As ontological categories, spirit and idea are mutually defined relative notions where any overlap is strictly nominal; with respect to specific kinds of ideas (such as colours and sounds) no such reference is included within any definition.

Another way to contrast the primary with the derivative is to recognize that for Cajetan, the analogy of attribution involves only extrinsic denomination: There is no corresponding perfection which exists in the urine; it is only called 'healthy' insofar as it is a sign of the health which exists in the animal. Yet when idea is said to exist, existence is applied to it intrinsically. This once again suggests that the relevant contrast cannot be drawn.

For Cajetan, however, the true notion of analogy – the analogy of proper proportionality – involves a similitude among relations rather than the things themselves (NA §24, 25). Thus, since there is a similitude between the relation of foundation to house and heart to the animal, both house and heart are analogously called 'principle' (NA §26, 26). This type of analogy is important in understanding how terms such as 'wisdom' can apply to God and finite intelligence analogically, despite the fact that God

is supposed to be infinitely above the latter. This type of analogy is also required between substance and accident (in addition to the analogy of attribution). For in order to say that accidents are *real being*, the extrinsic denomination of the latter as 'being' is clearly insufficient (NA §10, 16-7) According to Cajetan, in addition to the analogy of attribution which holds between substance and accident, there is also a similitude between the relation of substance to its act of being (its 'to be') and the relation of accident to its act of being (its 'to be') (NA §34-5, 31-2).

It seems plain that Berkeley cannot allow a relation of similitude between the relations of spirit to its perceiving and the relation of idea to its being perceived. Cajetan's theory relies on the Thomistic notion of participation. While God is being itself (*ipsum esse*), everything else has its being through participation (and imperfect resemblance of the Divine Cause).<sup>30</sup> No doubt Berkeley will want to accept the scriptural truth that we are created in God's image. This is why Berkeley thinks that our own soul provides a sort of 'idea' (in a large sense) of God (albeit grossly inadequate) (3D III 231-2). But that stands in stark contrast with God's creation of ideas which involves the creation of things *entirely unlike him*. This already marks a serious departure from Aquinas' view.

To be sure, ideas can be related to God through *perception*. By contrast, however, God cannot *perceive* finite spirits (since no spirit can be perceived) (PHK I 27). Ideas, when they are created by God involve God's *perception* of them. (Presumably we are to understand this as analogous to our own imaginative creations of ideas). Yet, it is unclear in Berkeley's writings how God creates finite spirits. He cannot create them in a way that involves perception. Indeed, if there is any specific relation between God and finite spirits that Berkeley explicitly discusses at all, it is that they are in *communication* with each other *through* ideas.<sup>31</sup> But how is communication between two spirits analogous to the perceptual dependence of ideas upon one spirit?

The problem is that while God and finite spirit admit of likeness, God and idea admit of no likeness whatsoever (not even the imperfect resemblance of participation). Additionally, the fundamental relations between spirits and God (on the one hand) and ideas and God (on the other) do not admit of a similitude. There is no way, therefore, that spirits and ideas can be analogates by proper proportionality. Rather they are fundamentally contrasting pure equivocates.

<sup>30</sup> Aquinas, *Quæstiones Disputæ de Potentia Dei*, Q. 7, A. 7.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, Berkeley discussion of the Divine Language in *Alciphron* IV §1-15, pp. 84-102.

## Part Four: Berkeleian Dualism Explained

### *Berkeleian Dualism and The Substantiality Thesis*

According to Aquinas, there are two major senses of 'being'. In the first sense, anything of which something affirmative can be said is called 'being'. Thus, one can say 'I am blind' or even 'I have blindness in the eye' (BE 1,2; 29-30). However, blindness is 'nothing positive in reality' (rather, it is the lack of something positive). In the second sense, then, only things that are 'something positive' are called 'a being.' In this way 'a being' is applied across the ten categories. Thus, we can say that Socrates' knowledge of grammar is 'something positive' (and for this reason is 'being'). Yet it is not, strictly speaking, a *thing*, rather, it is something positive in virtue of which a thing is said to be something or other.

This scheme is plainly inapplicable in the case of spirits and ideas. In the first place, the very reason for denying accidents full thinghood has been abandoned once mode ontology itself has been abandoned. Their failure to achieve full thinghood does not derive from their dependence upon substance. After all, finite beings are likewise dependent upon God and they nonetheless count as full-blooded things. Rather, accidents do not count as proper things because they are actually nothing but *qualifications* or *affections* of things. This ontology, however, has been rejected.

In the second place, the very reason for attributing a real being to accidents has also been abandoned. It seems that Berkeley is outright dividing the very notion of 'something positive': We may mean *either* 'something perceived' or 'something perceiving'. In other words, the rationale for attributing 'being' to accidents rests on an equivocation of 'something positive'. The question of degrees of reality only then emerges after the sense of 'something positive' has been fixed. In case we mean that there is something perceived, then the applicable notion of reality is 'affecting, orderly, distinct'. In case we mean that there is something perceiving, then perhaps the applicable notion of reality concerns the perceptual and productive strength of spirit.

The upshot is that Berkeleian dualism must be viewed as extreme. According to Descartes, while thinking substance and extended substance are really distinct, they nonetheless share things in common (such as sensations, appetites, and the like). And certainly Descartes affirms that 'substance' applies univocally to mind and body (while denying this univocity as 'substance' is applied to God) (*Principles of Philosophy* I 51-2; AT VIII A 24-5, CSM I 210-11). Indeed, according to Descartes one's idea of one's soul is sufficient to represent even corporeal substances (*qua* substance):

Admittedly I conceive of myself as a thing that thinks and is not extended, whereas I conceive of the stone as a thing that is extended and does not think, so that the two conceptions differ enormously; but they seem to agree with respect to the classification 'substance' (*Third Meditations*; AT VII 44, CSM II 30).

And even though Malebranche, unlike Descartes, denies that mind and body share anything common (like sensations, appetites, and the like), he too allows that mind and matter are equally *substances*. Indeed, even if one denies that the term 'substance' applied *univocally* to mind and matter, one might still hold that it applied *analogically*. For example, one could hold that mind is to its modifications (doubting, willing), as matter is to its modifications (shape, motion). Yet Berkeley even rejects this much. Spirit and idea do not belong to the same ontological category, and they are not even analogates which share a relational or structural resemblance. Berkeleian dualism is therefore far more extreme than Cartesian dualism insofar as it rejects all similitude whatsoever.

Moreover, Berkeleian dualism, unlike Cartesian, occurs at the highest level of the ontology. While Cartesian minds and matter share the category substance, Berkeley's dualism undermines the view that there is a shared concept of being that is, at the very least, analogical. Instead of the view that substances and accidents are analogously 'being', the very grounds for attributing being to accidents in the first place (as 'something positive') is itself divided into two. Thus the expression 'something instead of nothing' involves homonymy. On the one hand, we might mean 'something perceived', on the other, we might mean 'something perceiving'. Far from endorsing a traditional scale of being, therefore, Berkeley has split the very basis for such a scale into two.

Yet this extreme form of dualism in no way undermines Berkeley's substantiality thesis. Let's formulate that thesis as follows: Every idea (both imagined and sensible) is dependent upon a spirit for its existence insofar as it cannot exist without being perceived *by that particular spirit*. This formulation is fairly strong since it not only affirms that perception is a relation of support, it also requires that supported ideas be bound to some specific spirit.<sup>32</sup> Spirits and ideas are therefore not 'really distinct' since any idea is incapable of existing independently of a spirit.

<sup>32</sup> In a weaker interpretation, ideas could require spirits in order to exist (where perception is a relation of support) without it being the case that ideas are individuated per perceiver. Consider the analogy of several people who support a table, even though one strong person might be able to hold it on his own.

Yet this in no way undermines Berkeleian dualism – the view that spirit and idea are *entirely distinct*. This is no substance dualism; it is a dualism of being itself. There is no single concept of being (not even an analogical one) which is shared by all ‘things’. Rather at the most fundamental level of ontology, there are only spirits and ideas which are equivocally called ‘thing’ because they lack any similitude whatsoever. And because this split occurs at the highest level of the ontology, there is no way in which one can be prior to the other in terms of any scale of being. One cannot be called a ‘being’ in a derivative or secondary sense of the word; rather both are so-called as pure equivocals. To be sure, spirits have an ontological priority in that ideas depend upon them for their existence. But this does undermine the fact that spirits and ideas are also ontologically on par in the sense that the distinction occurs at the highest level and in the sense that ‘idea’ is not called a being in a merely derivative sense.

In an important respect, the substantiality thesis and the entire distinction between spirits and ideas are two sides of the same coin. On the one hand, the differences between spirit and idea are always differences which point to the ontological or causal dependence of ideas upon spirit, or at least the superiority spirits over ideas. They therefore express Berkeley’s substantiality thesis. On the other hand, the fact that there are no commonalities at all between spirit and idea leads to a very extreme dualistic ontology. While it is not a substance dualism, is it of serious import – not merely reducible to the trivial distinction between substance and accident. On the contrary, the complete lack of similitude between spirit and idea divides the very ‘real being’ which might have been extended to an accident in the first place.

### ***The Scale of Being Revisited***

Before I conclude, I want to re-consider the suggestion that Berkeley’s ontology is strictly situated within the older tradition of a unitary scale of being. While I think that the preceding arguments undermine this interpretation, I want to consider one passage which I think seems to run counter to my proposed interpretation. The remark occurs in Berkeley’s later work, *Siris* (1744):<sup>33</sup>

It cannot be denied that, with respect to the universe of things, we in this mortal state are like men educated in Plato’s cave, looking

<sup>33</sup> Ayers (1986) cites a portion of this passage to defend his reading. See p. 572.

on shadows with out backs turned to the light. But though our light be dim, and our situation bad, yet if the best use be made of both, perhaps something may be seen. Proclus, in this *Commentary on the Theology of Plato*, observes there are two sorts of philosophers. The one placed Body first in the order of beings, and made the faculty of thinking depend thereupon, supposing that the principles of all things are corporeal; that Body most really or principally exists, and all other things in a secondary sense, and by virtue of that. Others, making all corporeal things to be dependent upon Soul or Mind, think this to exist in the first place and primary sense, and that the being of bodies to be altogether derived from and presuppose that of the Mind (S §263).

First, it is worth worrying that *Siris* is the last and most unusual of Berkeley's works. It has not been uncommon for commentators to worry that it reflects a change in philosophical position (in particular, a move toward Platonism).<sup>34</sup>

Second (and putting the first concern to the side), it is also worth noting that strictly speaking, Berkeley is not outlining his own position in this passage. Rather, he is recounting what *Proclus* said. Of course, one might (rightly) believe that Berkeley takes himself to be the second kind of philosopher. But he doesn't actually *say so*. More importantly, in tacitly situating himself within this tradition, it is not clear that we are supposed to take seriously his complete agreement with Proclus. After all, in *De Motu*, Berkeley places himself in a long line of dualists, and he says that of the moderns, Descartes put the point most forcefully, leaving what was clear to be obscured by others (DM § 30). Yet despite his praise of Descartes, Berkeley disagrees with Descartes in important respects. And, in any event, when we turn to the passage in *Siris*, we realize that Descartes never affirmed that mind was higher in a chain of being. Since Berkeley plainly knows this, he cannot be that serious in endorsing Proclus' *exhaustive* distinction between the two sorts of philosophers. If Descartes counts as the second kind of philosopher (as he probably should), it is clear that the passage is not intended to be taken so literally. That makes some sense, of course, given the allegorical and poetic nature of *Siris* as a whole.

Third, and most curiously, a close reading of the passage reveals an interesting discrepancy. While Berkeley first draws a contrast between body (said to most 'really' exist) and mind (said to exist in a 'secondary

<sup>34</sup> For a discussion of these issues, see Luce (1937a, 1937b); and Luce (1943).

sense'), he does not draw the second contrast in quite the same way. In particular, while he does say that minds exist in a 'primary sense', he does not say that bodies exist in a secondary sense. Rather, he says that their *being* is derived from minds. This actually leaves the situation rather open. For it is entirely possible that bodies derive their being from mind (i.e. their being brought into existence by minds) without it being the case that they exist in only a derivative sense. And while it is true that Berkeley says that minds exist in a 'primary sense', it is not necessary to understand the primacy in terms of analogical predication. Rather, minds might be said to exist 'in a primary sense' simply because they are ontologically (and not semantically) primary. To be sure, the entire context of the passage may lead one to interpret the contrast between mind and body semantically. Yet –and this is the curious point– it is therefore strange that Berkeley *refrains* from simply making the point in those terms. Is it just a negligible omission? On the contrary, it appears to be most relevant.

After all, this passage clearly brings out the tension in Berkeley's ontology that has been the theme of this essay. Here, he is not merely appealing to something like a hierarchy of being. He is also emphatically outlining a dualism –a mind-body dualism. This passage, therefore, cannot merely be understood in the one way. It must be understood in both. Once it is, however, it isn't clear how strongly this passage supports the view that Berkeley's ontology is nothing but a simply instance of the older doctrine of a scale of being.

For by assimilating Berkeley's ontology into the older tradition, his dualism is at risk of being lost. It is only by denying any similitude between spirit and idea (and thereby denying any analogical predication between them), that Berkeley can be said to offer any interesting dualism at all. This, of course, does preserve the sense in which there is an ontological priority (and to that degree something like a scale of being) just as it preserves a commitment to substances (which support ideas by perceiving them). However, it also departs from the view in endorsing a fundamental and radical distinction which lies at the foundation of what is Berkeley's most peculiar *dualistic* ontology of spirit and idea.

This dualism is reflected in the fact that 'thing' applies to neither spirit nor idea derivatively. Rather, spirit and idea are pure equivocates. Strictly speaking, then, no degrees of reality or scale of being are shared between the two. On the contrary, being, at its very foundation, has been bifurcated into two distinct scales of reality. In this respect, Berkeley departs sharply from the older ontological scheme. This difference is marked by his ability to reconcile a radical

dualism of being itself with the traditional hierarchical view that some things are more basic than others.

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