Berkeley Newsletter
Number 8, 1985

Editors:
David Berman and E. J. Furlong
Philosophy Department, Trinity College, Dublin

Contents

Berkeley and Nieuwentijt on Infinitesimals ............. 1
On some marginal signs in the Philosophical
Commentaries ......................................... 7
Abstracts ................................................ 9
Recent works on Berkeley ................................ 21
Berkeley Tercentenary Events ........................... 22

One of Berkeley's purposes in criticizing the infinitesimal calculus was to defend revealed religion against the rationalistic attacks of free-thinkers and atheists. He tried to uncover the logical inconsistencies involved in fluxions, moments, infinitesimals etc. in order to show that the obscurity of the infinitesimal calculus (by most of his opponents regarded as a clear and rational procedure) is in some sense more untenable than religious mysteries: "But he who can digest a second or third fluxion, a second or third difference, need not, methinks, be squeamish about any point in divinity" (The Analyst, sect. 7).

However, there is yet another, less manifest, motivation behind his criticism of the calculus: Berkeley believed that the foundation of the calculus, the assumption of the infinite divisibility of extension, was itself one of the cornerstones of (atheistic) materialism. I think Berkeley reasoned as follows. Geometry has finite extension as its object. Every particular finite extension is an idea existing only in the mind, and consequently each part thereof must be perceived. Man, being finite, cannot resolve his ideas into an infinite number of other ideas, that is, these ideas are not infinitely divisible. Therefore finite sensible extension is composed of a finite number of minima sensibilia.

If finite extension really could be divided ad infinitum (into infinitesimals, moments, evenescent quantities) as some mathematicians supposed was necessary in the operation of the calculus (Principles (1710), sections 130 and 132), then a line would consist of innumerable unperceived and unperceivable parts, or, in general, there would exist objects without or
apart from being perceived. This would of course imply the confutation of the axiom that the esse of things is percipi. Berkeley clearly associated atheism with the belief in the existence of external matter (and conversely regarded his) immaterialism as a sound support for true religion (Principles, sections 90-94). “The great danger of making extension exist without the mind in it if it does it must be acknowledg’d infinite immutable external etc. (wch I think is dangerous) or an eternal, immutable, infinite increate being beside God” he wrote in entry 290 of the Philosophical Commentaries (1707-1708), and repeated in the Principles (sections 117 and 133). Elsewhere in the Principles he was even more outspoken about this connection: “How great a friend material substance hath been to atheists in all ages, were needless to relate. All their monstrous systems have so visible and necessary a dependence on it that, when this cornerstone is once removed, the whole fabric cannot choose but fall to the ground” (section 92). The same way of reasoning is to be found in the Three Dialogues (1713) and in Siris (1744). In The Analyst too we can find traces of this criticism of infinitesimal reasoning for presupposing materialism (absolute external extension, queries 7 and 20): it therefore may be regarded as the mathematical outcome of the insights developed some 25 years before (section 50).

Did Berkeley develop this criticism of the calculus independently from other critics? At the end of his essay ‘The Analyst controversy’ John Wisdom writes: “… it should be mentioned that prior to Berkeley a Dutchman put forward some criticisms of infinitesimals. There were thus two streams, perhaps partly parallel and partly intermixed” (Hermathena, no. LIV, 1939, p. 29). In fact, this Dutchman, Bernard Nieuwentijt (1654-1718), may even have provided Berkeley with the idea that there is a close connection between infinitesimal reasoning and atheism.

In the Considerations of 1694 Nieuwentijt criticized the first lemmas in Newton’s Principia in which it is supposed that infinitesimals may be disregarded, because this supposition leads to absurdities (pp. 9-15). Moreover he questioned the validity of the procedure Newton follows to obtain the basic rules of differentiation (pp. 24-27).

However, the bulk of Nieuwentijt’s mathematical work is devoted to proving that the use of higher-order infinitesimals (such as (dx)³, dxdy), and particularly the way in which Leibniz employs them, leads to contradictions and is dangerous from a religious point of view. Adoption of higher-order infinitesimals Nieuwentijt regarded as dangerous, in that it might lead to the assumption that man can grasp something of the infinite. This would obscure the fact that “while it was our Creator’s will that we are created in such a way that, although our comprehension can show us a quantity which is greater or smaller than whatever perceived quantity, we are still only able to perceive finite and determined objects; the human intellect is not capable of rising to a true and adequate understanding of the infinite itself” (Analysis infinitorum (1695), praefatio p. 4). Leibniz is criticized for not taking into account the unbridgeable gulf between the finite and the infinite, in that he ascribes finite qualities to higher-order infinitesimals many contradictions ensue from this presupposition.

Another reason for Nieuwentijt’s rejection of higher-order infinitesimals is that employing them presupposes that matter (finite extension) is divisible into infinitely small parts, which can be subdivided again etc, without ever reaching the point of being annihilated, suggesting that matter is indestructible, and therefore eternal (which for Nieuwentijt is the same as atheism). He believes that his own axiom, according to which anything that is multiplied by an infinite quantity and does not become a magnitude is a mere nothing (thus excluding the use of higher-order infinitesimals), avoids this danger while it expresses the fundamental truth that any quantity can be reduced to nothing by an infinite power, and conversely, that any quantity can be reduced to nothing, which points to the infinite power of God and the transitoriness of all matter. In the Considerationes Nieuwentijt even expressed the hope that this axiom “would provide us with an invincible argument... against the eternity of the world and other despicable dogmas of wretched atheism, and would defend the... power of the Creator of such great things against the blasphemous rages of the... philosophers, through an argument developed from creation and in conformity with revelation” (Considerationes, pp. 38-39).

Nieuwentijt and Berkeley advanced some strikingly similar
arguments against the calculus. Both of them regarded the assumption of higher-order infinitesimals as dangerous in that it might lead to materialism and atheism. They criticized the careless manner in which Newton and Leibniz neglected infinitesimals after differentiation. They stressed the limited capacity of human reason. Furthermore, they criticized the second Lemma in Book II of Newton's Principia on the same ground, viz. that Newton did not take the true increment of A and B (Considerationes, p. 26; The Analyst, section 9).

Despite these striking parallels, I am not yet convinced that Nieuwentijt directly influenced Berkeley's criticism of the calculus. There are several fundamental differences between them. In Nieuwentijt's writings nothing like Berkeley's immaterialism can be found. Nieuwentijt stressed the assumption of the eternity of matter in the higher-order infinitesimals, whereas Berkeley's criticism was more concerned with the presupposition of their mind-independent status. Presumably the most important difference is that while Berkeley rejected all infinitesimals, Nieuwentijt (rather inconsistently) accepted infinitesimals of the first order.

Still, if it could be proven that Berkeley had read Nieuwentijt's mathematical works, a certain influence cannot be denied. In the manuscript Of Infinites (1707) Berkeley refers to Nieuwentijt's controversy with Leibniz, and rightly criticizes him for his inconsistency: "Mr. Nieuwentijt allows infinitesimals of the first order to be real quantities, but the differentiae differentiarum or infinitesimals of the following orders he takes away making them so many noughts. This is the same thing as to say the square, cube, or other power of a real positive quantity is equal to nothing, which is manifestly absurd". In the Principles there is an indirect reference to Nieuwentijt, containing the same criticism (section 130). However, it cannot be excluded that Berkeley only read Leibniz' response to Nieuwentijt in Acta Eruditorum: his criticism of Nieuwentijt is almost a repetition of what Leibniz wrote.

NOTES

2. Philosophical Commentaries, entries 11, 21, 72, 75, 88, 247, 261, 314, 342; An Essay towards a New Theory of Vision (1709), sections 54 and 80-86; Principles, sections 123-132; The Analyst, queries 1, 2, 5, 10, 17, 19, 21, 22.
6. Analysis infinitorum, p. 2; praefatio p. 4.
7. See note 3.
On some marginal signs
in the *Philosophical Commentaries*

W. Breidert
University of Karlsruhe

There are some problems concerning the marginal signs in the *Philosophical Commentaries*. The exact original meaning of the signs is not clear in all cases. Fortunately Berkeley himself listed the meaning of some signs, the interpretation of some others seems to have conclusive evidence, but there are still cases open to question.

Even in the excellent edition by G. Thomas the “odd abbreviation” *ob* (only occurring in entry 36) is not interpreted. With reference to entry 244 I think it should be read as an abbreviation for “objection”.

Without doubt the sign *X* refers to mathematics in a broad sense (including optics), as Luce has remarked. Used without the additional signs (1, 2, 3, a) the respective entries deal with mathematics in general, mostly with infinity, continuity, divisibility, and infinitesimals. The combination of *X* with 1 and 2 designates entries concerned with the size of visibles (visual angle, moon in the horizon, *minimum visibile*). The combination of *X* with 1 and 3 designates entries concerned with the connexion of sight and touch (Molyneux Problem, perception of distance).

If one reflects on which sign *should* be used for a given entry one may be surprised. For, if each number has a definite meaning, it must be inconceivable that some entries are marked by combinations in which 1 occurs twice. If the accepted
interpretation is correct, the repeated 1 is senseless. For instance we consider entry 58. For reasons of content we expect the marginal sign 31X, but in the editions (including my own) we find 11X. A repeated look at the manuscripts shows that indeed the original marginal sign is 31X! The 3 is drawn very long and the two curves are not made very distinctly. Therefore Luce read erroneously I1X, and this error suggested the false reading for his successors.

In this case the marginal sign and its meaning could be cleared up, but there are other entries with pleonastic combinations of signs: 170, 231, 296, 441, 454, 501. In the marginal signs of the entries 220, 283, 384 a 1 is cancelled, therefore we have perhaps to consider these entries too. It is striking that there are no entries with double 2 or double 3 and that 3 is missing in the marginal signs of the entries 121 and 174. Regarding 231, 441, 454 the attempt to link the double 1 with the "Barrovian Case" fails. Luce suggested by reason of the marginal sign of entry 454 that Berkeley is considering judgements of distance, but as long as the meaning of the double 1 is not obvious, we should not deduce anything from such marginal signs.

Maybe it is impossible to find the complete and certain interpretation of the marginal signs, but it is possible to improve the hitherto given approximation.

Abstracts

of papers for the Berkeley Tercentenary Conference at Trinity College, Dublin, on 19–22 August 1985.

Berkeley and justification of beliefs

by Timo Airaksinen

Berkeley recognizes three different kinds of objects of (empirical) beliefs and of knowledge: ideas, finite spirits and God. I shall first introduce the classical definition of knowledge (knowledge as true and justified belief). Secondly, I shall make a distinction between belief acquisition and justification. My purpose is to ask how this technical conceptual machinery applies to Berkeley's theory of empirical knowledge and his important refutation of scepticism concerning the external world.

Ideas, as existing 'external' objects, are known immediately and inevitably, simply because they are imprinted in my mind. Some ideas are produced by one's active imagination. It is not quite clear how the difference between the external and the self-produced ideas should be made, although the existence of this difference is absolutely crucial as to the veridicality of our empirical beliefs. Ideas provide a foundation for our 'external' knowledge system but their separation from merely imaginary items must be effected by means of a coherence criterion (as it seems to me). Our 'internal' knowledge of finite spirits and of myself especially is self-evident to Berkeley: one's active mind cannot fail to grasp its own existence, because of its living activity. The knowledge of spirits is problematic, though.

The main problem is: ideas are passive and therefore they cannot actively or causally produce any beliefs, and, of course, beliefs are not ideas since we can have beliefs but not ideas which designate finite spirits. It is, accordingly, difficult to see how the human belief formation processes may work at all and how the classical definition of knowledge may apply throughout the epistemic system as presented in Berkeley's Principles.
Several arguments which Myles Burnyeat advances in "Idealism and Greek Philosophy: What Descartes Saw and Berkeley Missed" (Philosophical Review, XCI (1982)) and in other recent papers, are examined. I briefly question his discussion of the realist presupposition he finds in Greek thought versus the subjectivist shift he says is introduced by Descartes and which is then expanded into idealism by Berkeley. I claim that his 'realist' reading of Greek thought begs the question and that his thesis about Descartes' 'shift' ignores important features of medieval philosophical thought. I also argue that his reading of Berkeley is flawed by failures to examine Berkeley's own analysis of Pyrrhonism as well as Berkeley's and Descartes' commitments to realism. Finally, I speculate on an unexamined dogma about language which seems to have encouraged or allowed Burnyeat to produce his 'anachronistic misreading'.

Strata in Berkeley's Notebooks
by Bertil Belfrage

This paper is the third of three papers concerned with basic problems on Berkeley's Notebooks. The first two contain destructive criticism of doctrines that have been accepted in Berkeleyan scholarship for generations. This third paper is an attempt to start from scratch towards establishing a new alternative.

I intend to show what the early dated manuscripts tell us about Berkeley's early development in order to answer the question when different groups of entries were probably written. The main point can be summarized in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Stratum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1704</td>
<td>Berkeley writes a textbook in arithmetic, contributes to the field of geometry, etc.</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1705</td>
<td>He also applies a 'method of indivisibles'. There are entries on these themes at the end of Notebook B and beginning of Notebook A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>He no longer contributes to the field of mathematics, participates in a society &quot;to discourse on some part of the new philosophy&quot;, and reads the &quot;Of Infinites&quot; before the Dublin Philosophical Society. The last entry of the &quot;Of Infinites&quot; stage is No. 696.</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>He reads the first sermon, and considers non-cognitive language in No. 720. This is developed in the emotive theory of the Manuscript Introduction—the last certain reference to which is in No. 748. In No. 709 and 743 he refers to Locke's Familiar Letters.</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>He revises the Manuscript Introduction, which indicates that the work on the Essay on Vision had been finished—the work on this book is reflected in the main part of Notebook B.</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov.-Dec.</td>
<td>He returns to the work on the Principles with a new view on demonstration reflected in No. 750.</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the infinite God against the mathematics of infinity
by W. Breidert

One of the most important points in the history of science is the emphasis laid on the infinity as an attribute of God by mediaeval theology. The attached discussions prepared the
philosophers for the acceptance of the infinite as a subject of science. Since Augustine there was a theological reaction against the spread of the infinity, restrained a little by the scholastic Aristotelean philosophy for a time. The special position of God with respect to the infinity was compromised not only by the cosmological revolution but also by the development of the mathematics of infinity. The validity of the sentence “mathematica sunt finita” disappeared. Berkeley reclaimed the mediaeval theological relic usurped by the mathematicians. For the sake of reducing his contemporaries to “human” mathematics he called them back to the knowledge limited by sensation and therewith to all the problems of minima sensibilia and of the representation theory produced to avoid abstractions.

In spite of the Analyst-controversy Berkeley did not reach his original aim. He could not banish the infinite of mathematics. The concept of minima sensibilia did not succeed in mathematics. The compensation of error, a Berkeleayan reproach, was even accepted in vindication of the calculus by some mathematicians. Finally the calculus was corroborated to great satisfaction. In any case Berkeley could not restrain the famous reputation of the mathematicians.

Pleasure and pain versus ideas in Berkeley
by Geneviève Brykman

To scrutinize pleasure and pain as opposed to ideas in Berkeley is a way to question the status of passivity in his works.

Among scholars, it is everywhere known that ideas are passive—and inert—in Berkeley. By contrast, the mind is often stressed as active. Nevertheless human mind should be admitted as “passive as well as active”. From an analysis of Berkeley’s statements about pleasure and pain in the early works, we shall bring forth what exactly is the mind-passivity.

Passivity is so strictly correlative of activity that we shall be able to challlenge two tricky arguments of Philonous in the first Dialogue: (1) that we have a “simple and uncompounded idea” of intense heat and/or pain; (2) that we are “altogether passive” in the very perception of light and colour.

Leibniz on Berkeley
by Stuart Brown

Leibniz and Berkeley are commonly supposed to belong to two different ‘schools’ of philosophy. Yet Leibniz wrote at the end of his personal copy of Berkeley’s Principles: ‘much that is here is right and conformable to my way of thinking’. Indeed Leibniz went on to write as if Berkeley and he shared a common cause which Berkeley would have served better had he been less inclined to express himself paradoxically. Berkeley need not (according to Leibniz) have denied the reality of matter. It would have been enough to say that matter is no more than a well-founded phenomenon. (And so on.)

Superficially, at any rate, Berkeley’s metaphysics is more like that of Leibniz than it is like either Locke’s or Hume’s and Leibniz’s is more like Berkeley’s than it is like the metaphysics of Descartes or Spinoza. The paper will be concerned to explore how deep the similarities are and to identify the most significant points of divergence. Among the common constraints on their metaphysics are the assumptions that matter is inert and that only substances are active. Among the significant points of divergence are two noted by Leibniz: on Leibniz’s side, that whatever is ‘paradoxical’ (contrary to well-established opinion) is presumptively false and on Berkeley’s, his rejection of abstract ideas. Both philosophers shared Malebranche’s concern to give a good philosophical sense to the thought that the soul is immediately dependent on God and their accounts of causality belong within an appropriately Malebranchean problematic. Unlike Malebranche, however,
both are indebted to and to some extent part of the tradition of post-Cartesian scepticism. Both attempted, though not in the same ways, to moderate the extreme scepticism to which they believed Locke's philosophy led. In these respects Leibniz was right in thinking that there was much in Berkeley's Principles that was conformable to his way of thinking.

Ireland and the critique of Mercantilism in Berkeley’s Querist

By Patrick Kelly

The notion that a poor and dependent country might require different economic policies to a prosperous trading nation was clearly propounded in Petty's Political Anatomy, 1691; while John Law argued in 1705 that a carefully regulated paper credit could stimulate an impoverished economy more effectively than the expanded circulation of gold and silver that conventional Mercantilists considered necessary. In The Querist (1735-7) Berkeley combined these insights, together with the concept of 'moral economy' which he had advocated in his Essay towards preventing the Ruin of Great Britain (1721), in a scheme intended to render the Irish of all classes self-reliant and prosperous. The paper explores how economic conditions in Ireland served to expose for Berkeley the inadequacy of theories that accorded a uniquely privileged role to gold and silver as money, and also helped reinforce his conviction that luxury and extravagance (as advocated by Barbon and Mandeville) could not provide the basis for a healthy and stable society.

Berkeley’s conception of idea

by Charles J. McCracken

This paper examines changes that can be traced in Berkeley’s conception of ideas, as his views developed in the Philosophical Commentaries, and argues that the conception of idea that finally emerges poses serious problems for the ‘esse is percipi’ principle. Not surprisingly, changes in Berkeley’s views about ideas were correlated with changes in his views about spirits. Four successive stages can be distinguished in the Philosophical Commentaries: (1) initially, he took spirits to be the only existents, with ideas as mere modifications of spirits (“manners of the existence of persons”); (2) soon, however, he drew a sharp distinction between spirit, something “purely active” which he now identified wholly with the will, and ideas, something utterly passive which he identified with the understanding; this led him to “expel”, as it were, the understanding from the spirit (“the will and the understanding may very well be thought two distinct beings”) and to deny any distinction between an idea and the understanding’s perception of it; (3) in time, however, he restored the understanding to the spirit, but now treated the understanding as an active power of thinking and perceiving; (4) but in his final position, he recognized a passivity in the spirit itself—in addition to the “inertness” of the idea I perceive, I am myself passive, in certain respects, when I am perceiving ideas.

Now this creates a serious tension within his position. It was during the second of these four stages—when he denied that an idea could be distinguished from the understanding’s perception of it—that he discovered the esse is percipi principle, i.e., that the being of an idea consists in its being perceived. But when, in the last of these stages, he recognizes a passivity in the perceiving spirit itself, there seems no way for him to construe that passivity save as our passive perception of ideas—to distinguish, in short, between an idea and our perception of it.

Berkeley obscured the fact (perhaps even from himself) that he came to recognize two “passivities”—the passive idea we perceive, and the spirit as passive in the perception of an idea—by speaking indifferently of both as “sensations or passions in the soul”. But when it becomes clear that he in effect distinguishes the passive idea from the understanding’s passive perception of it (as becomes clear, for example, when Philonous replies to Hylas’s suggestion that the self is itself merely a collection of ideas), he seriously compromises the argument for esse is percipi. For, by implicitly distinguishing between an idea and the spirit’s perception of it, he opens the door to later critics like Moore and Broad who argued that if we can
distinguish between an idea and the perception of an idea, then we have no ground for asserting that without the latter, the former cannot exist.

Abstract Ideas and Unperceived Existent Sensible Objects
by George S. Pappas

In Principles 5 and 6 Berkeley draws a close connection between the doctrine of abstract general ideas and the thesis that non-perceiving objects do not exist unperceived. The latter tenet, he says, "... will be found at bottom to depend on the doctrine of abstract ideas." There are several ways to explicate this claimed dependence, and I examine each of them in this paper. I try to show that on one interpretation of these passages, Berkeley is offering independent support for the thesis that non-perceiving things do not exist unperceived. That is, this support by way of a consideration of abstract ideas is independent of the Master Argument of Principles 22-24. The interpretation has the additional benefits of shedding new light on the proper significance of the to be is to be perceived thesis, and in helping to solve the vexing puzzle of why Berkeley spent so much effort attacking the doctrine of abstract ideas.

Berkeley’s Master Stroke
by Ernest Sosa

(1) Berkeley’s master stroke is to remove the category of objective matter: to "remove" it in the sense of not allowing it any fundamental status in his ontology. And his leading edge is, I contend, the denial of any nexus or copula or true relation other than perceiving (understanding or conceiving), and willing, both of which relate a mind to qualities or combinations of qualities, or in turn to a mind’s being thus related to such.

(2) In proceeding thus, Berkeley passes by a more moderate conception espoused by each of Russell and Bradley at least for a time. He passes by the relatively moderate conception according to which, although there are no substrata, and thus no exemplification of qualities by substrata, still there is a relation or nexus of co-exemplification or "compresence" holding among qualities themselves. (Russell, Inquiry into Meaning and Truth (Penguin), pp. 218, 318; Bradley, Appearance and Reality (Oxford), p. 16.)

(3) Is Berkeley’s view about qualities (sensible, monadic properties) and their combinations into ideas to be extended to all properties of whatever sort or level? If so, then according to Berkeley not only is nothing qualified in any way but nothing is propertied in any way either. But there do seem to be many cases of exemplification, at least prima facie. Being an idea would seem to be exemplified by each idea, being a quality by each quality, being a spirit by each spirit. Et cetera. It is not really clear, therefore, how Berkeley is to dispense with all exemplification at the foundation of his ontology: how he can explain the intellectual appearance of exemplification at more superficial levels by reference to the minding (perceiving or willing) of ideas by minds (as opposed to their exemplification by instances).

(4) If exemplification is left standing as a further fundamental relation in addition to perception and volition, however, that weakens Berkeley’s position immeasurably. For he is no longer able to complain that the "support" of a substratum (e.g., a material substratum) for its qualities is neither that which columns give a roof nor any other he can conceive. If we can form a ("relative") notion of spirit as that which perceives and wills; if "... by the word spirit we mean only that which thinks, wills, and perceives", if "this, and this alone constitutes the signification of that term" (P 138: i.e., Principles, p. 138); then by parity we could surely form an equally good (relative) notion of body as that which exemplifies color and shape.

Berkeley could now complain that we have no direct acquaintance with any body, whereas we do with a spirit and with ideas. But the bearing of this is not obvious if we can now understand the notion of body (by exemplification relation to color and shape). And besides, given understanding of
body, Berkeley would now owe us an argument that he is not acquainted with a body already in being acquainted with himself. (What rules out that he himself now be a body, an exemplifier of color and shape?)

One could of course fall back on the arguments against objective secondary qualities and, by extension, against primary qualities as well. But these arguments seem subsidiary and mainly intended to rule out not really the possibility of qualities present without the mind so much as our knowledge of which qualities are thus present when and where. (P 14 and P 15 contrast such weaker arguments with earlier demonstration from a truth "...so near and obvious to the mind that a man need only open his eyes to see" it: namely, the inconceivability of supposed "subsistence without a mind," as P 6 has it.)

Yet Berkeley does need to hold firm against the possibility of exemplification as a fundamental nexus or true "relation" along with perception and volition. Remove that keystone denial and his system collapses. His best response is perhaps to reject any such supposed properties as being an idea, being a spirit, being constituted by conjunction, and the like. They all would then receive the treatment explicitly accorded their logical kin: Unity, Entity, Being, and Identity. These are all viewed as nothing more than tokens in algebraic language, which stand on their own for nothing real or in any way present in reality. Thus, about spirits and ideas we are told that there is "...nothing alike or common in them" (P 142) and that they "...have nothing common but the name" (P 89) of 'Being'—not even Being, presumably. (One may of course have one's doubts about such radical nominalism, but perhaps we see how Berkeley's rejection of exemplification is defensible by appeal to a large and independently introduced and supported feature of his philosophy.)

(5) Just how does God bear up the Universe down to its most secret recess? Berkeley's distinctive phenomenalism explored in light of the foregoing interpretation.

In a suggestive but somewhat sketchy paper in Philosophy 1965, George Davie attributed Berkeley's impact on Scottish philosophy in the 18th century to the influence of the Rankenian Club which flourished in Edinburgh from c. 1717 to 1771. I wish to propose some corrections to his account, but more particularly to report on new source materials which enable us to fill out the picture more fully.

In the absence of any documentary evidence of Berkeley's alleged correspondence with the Rankenian Club, we should perhaps assume that the real point of contact was the artist John Smibert, a founder member whom Berkeley first met in Florence c. 1718: they stayed close friends, saw a lot of each other in London, and went to America together.

That at least the following members all had an early interest in Berkeley can be documented, the documentation varying from single sentences to extensive remains: (Rev.) Robert Wallace, (Dr.) George Young, (Rev.) William Wishart, (Prof.) John Stevenson, (Prof.) George Turnbull, (Prof.) Colin Maclaurin. They were intrigued by the theory of vision, and the argument against matter, but they were rather more impressed by the theological framework of Berkeley's system. I shall sketch what is known about these people in the first half of my paper, but contend that the thesis that there is a direct transmission of Berkeleyan ideas through the Rankenian Club to Turnbull's pupil Reid is problematic.

I shall devote the second half to discussing more fully a satirical tract against Alciphron published by one of these Rankenians, William Wishart, in 1734, which I reported on briefly in the sixth Berkeley Newsletter; and to tracing further the implications of the discovery that they combined their early fascination with Berkeley with a strong attachment to another Irish philosophy—the Shaftesbury tradition of the Dublin Molesworth circle, which led them in due course into alliance with Hutcheson.
Unperceived Objects and Berkeley's Denial of Blind Agency
by Kenneth P. Winkler

What happens to Berkeley's table when there is no one in the study? One answer is that the table continues to exist because God perceives everything we don't. A second answer is that the table remains because Berkeley would perceive it if he entered. The second answer emphasizes Berkeley's phenomenalism and represents, I think, his considered view of real existence. In this paper I argue that the second answer actually entails the first. My argument turns on the denial of blind agency, a commonplace of seventeenth-century philosophy of mind (endorsed by Descartes, Malebranche, and Locke) which holds that a spirit cannot will what it does not perceive. The denial not only permits us to correct and reconcile the competing interpretations of Berkeley on unperceived objects, but suggests that Berkeley does not (as Jonathan Bennett contends) conflate causation and inherence in one of his proofs of God's existence. The denial also provides a suitably modest interpretation of Berkeley's views on archetypes. I conclude with a brief discussion of a problem that arises when the denial of blind agency is applied to the formation of ideas.

RECENT WORKS ON BERKELEY

(6) Shyamali Sanyal, "George Berkeley on the Problem of Universals" Indian Philosophical Quarterly 10 (1983) 7-12.
BERKELEY TERCENTENARY EVENTS 1985


The stamp being issued by An Post, the Irish Post Office, for the 300th anniversary of Berkeley's birth. The stamp, designed by Brendan Donegan, features a portrait of Berkeley by James Latham hanging in Trinity College, Dublin.

GEORGE BERKELEY
MANUSCRIPT INTRODUCTION
EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY BY BERTIL BELFRAGE

This edition makes it possible—for the first time—not only to follow the text in its first stratum (which was published by T. E. Jessop) but also to discover its various later stages. This means that it is the first complete edition, providing new material for students of Berkeley—unavailable in Jessop’s, and undiscoverable in Fraser’s, editions.

In the ‘Editor’s Commentary’, the Manuscript Introduction (sometimes called the Draft Introduction to the Principles) is shown to express an early philosophy, different from the doctrine that Berkeley published, and thus provide a deeper understanding of his early development.

Diplomatic edition limited to 500 numbered copies.

Price: Skr 300.— (c. $ 36.—, £ 27.—)

Doxa
Bredgatan 24
S-22221 Lund, Sweden
The Berkeley Newsletter appears once a year in late autumn. It includes notes on Berkeleian topics. A note should not normally exceed five pages and should be type-written. The Newsletter also lists items of Berkeley interest. Authors wishing to have their books, articles or notes listed should send the requisite information to the editors, who would be grateful for any other information relating to Berkeley publications.

The Berkeley Newsletter is indexed and abstracted in The Philosopher's Index.