The Concept of the Finite Self in the Philosophy of George Berkeley

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[Signatures]
TO

Mary
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. The Philosophy of George Berkeley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) General Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) George Berkeley’s Critique of Material Substance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) The Constructive Philosophy of George Berkeley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Thing or Idea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Finite Spirits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) God</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Descartes, Malebranche, and Locke</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Descartes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Malebranche</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Locke</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes to Chapter I</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Philosophical Commentaries</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Phase One</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Phase Two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Phase Three</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes to Chapter II</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Berkeley’s Mature Concept of the Self</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Introduction</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Introduction to the Principles</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Causality</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Concept of the Spirit in the First Edition of the Principles</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Berkeley’s Concept of Notional Knowledge</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) The Nature of the Finite Self</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Active Spirit and Passive Idea</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes to Chapter III</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Siris</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Introduction</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) The Relationship of Siris to Berkeley’s Earlier Philosophy</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) The Concept of Aether</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Berkeley and the Mind-Body Problem</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Conclusion</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes to Chapter IV</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V. Conclusion</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Introduction</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Analysis of the Three Major Criticisms of Berkeley's Concept of the Self</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Analysis of Hume's Criticism of Spiritual Substance</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Analysis of the Criticism that Berkeley's Arguments Against Material Substance are Equally Telling Against Berkeley's Concept of Spiritual Substance</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Berkeley and the Problem of Self-Identity</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Deficiencies in Berkeley's Concept of the Finite Self</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Berkeley's Anticipations of Contemporary Philosophy</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Significance of George Berkeley's Concept of the Finite Self</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes to Chapter V</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I

The Philosophy of George Berkeley

(1) General Introduction

The first uncritical reading of George Berkeley's philosophy usually leaves the student with the impression that Berkeley was either completely irrational, or, at best, a mystic who is only interested in the things of the mind. As Professor A.A. Luce said in his interesting biography of Berkeley, "Berkeley is often pictured as a crank or mystic, solely interested in things of the mind, and even asserting that nothing is, but mind."\(^1\) A more thorough reading of Berkeley's philosophy reveals a most clear, concise, and logical thinker. His youthful writings were very closely written and stand as paradigms of clear and logical thinking. He had a rare ability to set down his thoughts in a few pages without writing superficially. Because of the brilliance of his insights and the clarity of his presentation, Berkeley has held a commanding place in the history of philosophy.

Although George Berkeley has been accorded a high rank among thinkers in the Western tradition, he has never had much of a following. On the publication, in 1710, of his most important work, the Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge, one doctor diagnosed Berkeley as insane; a bishop in high circles deplored his vain passion for novelty; and some, more charitable perhaps, offered to excuse his paradoxes on the ground that he was an Irishman.\(^2\) The attitude of the majority of philosophers was adequately expressed by one of Berkeley's early critics, Beattie, who said,

Berkeley was equally amiable in his life, and equally a friend to truth and virtue. In elegance of composition he was perhaps superior. I admire his virtues: I can never sufficiently applaud his zeal in the cause of religion; but some of his reasonings on the subject of human nature I cannot admit, without renouncing my claim to rationality. \(^3\)
Berkeley was aware of the strange sound of his doctrines and in Alciphron admitted,

You are in the right. I see there is nothing in it, I know not what else to say to this opinion, more than that it is so odd and contrary to my way of thinking that I shall never assent to it. 4

Berkeley believed the reason the intellectuals of his day found his doctrines so repugnant was that they were so thoroughly captured by the prejudices they had acquired early in life. He admitted the prejudices were not easily gotten rid of, but he hoped that in each man there was a ray of common sense, "an original light of reason", 5 which would substantiate his teachings. Berkeley never pretended that his works contained the whole truth. He hoped that his writings would be the occasion for inquisitive men to discover the truth. He believed that his work might help kindle their minds into action, so that by their own thinking they would be led to the truth. 6

Berkeley's philosophy was not appreciated in his own lifetime. It has only been through the scholarly work and diligence of later philosophers that his insights have slowly come to light. Each generation of philosophers seem to find something new and exciting in his works -- something which could be successfully applied to the problems they themselves faced. His thinking has exerted a strong influence on Schopenhaur, Bergson, and Mach, 7 and some would argue that he influenced Kant a great deal more than the great German thinker would admit. 8 Also it has only been since the scientific rejection of the Newtonian world view that his criticisms of material substance could be most fully appreciated. More recently his insights into the nature of language and the problem of meaning indicate that he anticipated work carried on by the contemporary schools of linguistic analysis. Henri Bergson was of the opinion that all contemporary philosophers must first start by reckoning with the contentions of Berkeley. 9
The present study will explore yet another aspect of Berkeley's philosophy — one that has heretofore received comparatively slight attention. Here the attempt will be made to come to some understanding of Berkeley's concept of the finite self. Attention and analysis will be exclusively centered on Berkeley's thoughts concerning the nature of the finite self and how we come to know it. No attempt will be made to discuss the difficult problems concerned with our knowledge of other minds, and only slight attention will be paid to Berkeley's thoughts concerning our knowledge of God. Before launching into a discussion and analysis of Berkeley's concept of the finite self we must first supply the proper context of the problem, first, in Berkeley's philosophy and, second, in the thinkers that preceded him.

(2) George Berkeley's Critique of Material Substance

In the eighteenth century the majority of the reflective thinkers were under the spell of Newton and Locke. The philosophers and scientists of that day looked upon nature as a grand system of inert bodies, which existed in absolute space and time. The underlying assumption of philosophy and physics was that the bodies in nature were composed of very small bits of dead matter called atoms, whose properties were solidity, mass, motion, size, shape, absolute date, absolute place, and number. The atoms possessed not only the power of producing the orderly arrangement of our percepts, but also possessed the power which regulated the movement of bodies.10

In the course of their movements the material atoms suffered impacts and the groups of atoms called by the materialists organisms had sensations. The sensations occurred in the organisms or in the minds which supposedly permeated them. There were hot and cold sensations, sweet and sour ones,
and sensations running the entire spectrum of color. These sensations, Locke and others claimed, existed only in the minds of the perceiving organisms, for they were the effects of the powers in objects. Locke called these sensations "ideas" which were caused by the powers of bodies. However, there were also moving images, big and square pictures, sensations of solidity and the like. As Professor V.C. Aldrich claimed,

"Those in respect of their size, shape, motion, etc., though also existing in the mind, represent real physical properties of matter in the external world of nature, whose existence is in no way dependent on minds. By means of such ideas we 'know' the physical nature of things."

Locke argued that we had only a knowledge of "ideas" and never of the bodies that supposedly caused them. The ideas, however, were not flitting mental things, rather they were treated as concrete data of sense. Many philosophers believed that they could analyze them, combine them, abstract properties or qualities from them, and by doing this could increase our knowledge. Material substance, however, was never directly present to the perceiving mind, i.e., we never had an image or idea of the material substratum. Material substance was supposed to be that which held the primary qualities together. It was not known by sense; rather it was primarily an inference of reason. The argument went: the ideas, in themselves, could not account for their presence, and the primary qualities had to inhere in something, and that which with its inherent qualities caused appropriate ideas was material substance.

There was a tendency on the part of some thinkers to fit mind into a spatial frame of reference. They believed that the human mind was apprehended similarly to the manner in which an external object was apprehended. The belief was that the introspective mind's eye, which Locke referred to as an internal sense, became aware of the ideas of the
attributes of a spiritual substance, i.e., thinking, willing, and perceiving. They further believed that it was possible to form clear and distinct ideas of the individual mental qualities apart from each other and apart from the spiritual substance. Mind or spiritual substance, like material substance, was never directly present to the introspective sense, but was the inferred support of the attributes of the postulated bond that tied them together.

The above stated view held sway over an impressive number of philosophers and scientists of the eighteenth century, and it was this view that Berkeley opposed. Berkeley was alarmed at the prevalent atheistic attitude of his century, and he believed that atheism had gained ground because philosophers had given assent to the material hypothesis. The primary intention of George Berkeley was to destroy the concepts of materialism and atheism which had crept into philosophy. Although it was Berkeley's intention to restore nature to God, one does not have to accept his theistic conclusions to appreciate his brilliant critique of matter. Much of his merit as a philosopher lies in his massive analysis of the errors of the Newtonian world view. 12 Berkeley launched his criticisms shortly after Newton and Locke had completed their work. 13 "But all the same", as Whitehead put it, "he failed to affect the main stream of scientific thought. It flowed on as if he had never written." 14

Berkeley proceeded in two ways to carry out his mission of refuting the material hypothesis. First, he pointed out that the empirical method advocated by Locke, if rigorously applied, would not support the material hypothesis. Berkeley asked the questions: Of what do we actually have first hand knowledge? How do we distinguish between real and illusory ideas? Is it possible to have an idea of extension devoid of color and
vice versa? On what grounds did philosophers hold that there were unperceivable material entities resembling the things we perceive? What is actually given in introspection? Second, Berkeley thoroughly examined the definitions, concepts, contentions, and arguments of the material philosophers. By pursuing their contentions and premisses to their logical conclusions he not only showed that materialism led to scepticism, but that the material hypothesis contained a manifest inconsistency. On the one hand, Berkeley was the strict empiricist asking for empirical verification of the proposed material hypothesis; on the other hand, he was the skillful Socrates, analyzing the ramifications of the material hypothesis and pointing out the absurdities to which it logically led.

Berkeley was critical, indeed sharply critical of the Newtonian world view. However, he was not critical of science or the scientific method. He did not attack anything which legitimately belonged to the province of science, but reserved his criticism for what he thought the unscientific pretentiousness of science — its assertion of bad metaphysics.

In his analysis of the Newtonian world view Berkeley argued that his predecessors had committed the four following errors:

(a) Scientists and philosophers had mistaken abstractions of reason for the real things in nature. They had treated absolute space, absolute motion, absolute time, material substance, and mental substance as if they were concrete things. Berkeley claimed that these concepts might be excellent instruments by which scientists could explain the workings of nature. However, they went wrong when they assumed that their hypotheses and explanatory devices were descriptions of real things or relations.
For example, Berkeley argued in *De Motu* that concepts such as force, gravity, and attraction were useful for a scientist's reasonings about motions and bodies in motion. As he said, "As for attraction, it was certainly introduced by Newton, not as a true physical quality, but only as a mathematical hypothesis." However, the concepts should not be introduced in the attempt to understand the simple nature of motion itself or as indicating certain distinct unknown qualities in bodies. When the hypotheses were treated as descriptions, the problem immediately arose: What sort of knowledge do we have of the so-called metaphysical entities? This question is not so easily answered. For example, Berkeley pointed out, "Torricelli says that force and impetus are abstract and subtle things and quintessences which are included in corporeal substance as in the magic vase of Circe." When scientists and philosophers assumed that the concepts which were excellent for explanation were the names of existent entities in nature, they had no choice but to treat them as "occult" qualities of bodies.

(b) Berkeley contended that the materialists committed another error when they treated ideas, or the things we immediately experience, as if they were only copies or images of the bodies which exist in an unperceived material world. As Philonous said in the Third Dialogue,

> It is your opinion the ideas we perceive by our senses are not real things, but images or copies of them. Our knowledge, therefore, is no farther real than as our ideas are the true representations of those originals. But, as those supposed originals are in themselves unknown, it is impossible to know how our ideas resemble them; or whether they resemble them at all.

Berkeley's contention was that we never can know whether what we immediately experience conforms to the supposed archetypes in the unperceived world and that, therefore, if the very sense objects are unreal, then we have no knowledge beyond ourselves. The material hypothesis leads us into the rankest form of scepticism.
(c) The material philosophers committed their third error when they attempted to explain the cause of the ideas of sense and the movements of bodies.

(i) To explain the presence of ideas of sense Berkeley's predecessors had attributed active powers to bodies. They accounted for sense ideas in terms of mechanical causes, thus, they attributed the effects of secondary qualities to insensible movements among the primary qualities, i.e., the primary qualities were supposed to be the causes of the secondary qualities. Berkeley attacked this contention by pointing out that it is, at best, extremely difficult empirically to discern a body doing anything.

(ii) Many of the materialists also attempted to explain the movements of bodies in terms of imagined forces. They talked about such concepts as "attraction", "gravity", "action", and "reaction" as if they were empirically unknowable qualities of material substance. Berkeley claimed that this way of speaking may be suitable for the purposes of mechanical demonstration, but we cannot assume, simply because they are useful, that they are really qualities of bodies. He claimed that the terms should be understood in the same way as Newton's term "attraction" is understood: only as mathematical hypotheses and not as physical qualities. ¹⁹

Berkeley attacked the belief that material substance was the cause of the movements of bodies by pointing out that when they attributed active power to material substance the materialists committed a serious intellectual error. If they conceived of material substance as dumb and inert, then they could not say without contradiction that it possessed active power. Here Berkeley denied the existence of material substance on rational grounds, as he had also denied it on empirical grounds.
(d) The fourth error of the materialists, according to Berkeley, lay in the tendency to attribute physical characteristics to the mind. A number of philosophers, who were not materialists, first claimed that the mind was non-spatial and then they went on to talk about it as if it had a definite spatial location. For example, Descartes said,

I am not a collection of members which we call the human body; I am not a subtle air distributed through these members, I am not a wind, a fire, a vapour, a breath, nor anything at all which I can imagine or conceive. 20

Then in a later work he talked about the human mind as if it had a definite spatial location. Descartes claimed that the seat of the soul was in the pineal gland. 21 Because the mind had been spatially located it was easy for the materialists to talk about it in much the same way that they talked about a body in space. It was natural for the material philosophers to treat the mind as if it were a static inert object. Having localized mind they quite naturally supposed they could obtain knowledge of it and its operations in the same way that they gained knowledge of bodies. They were of the opinion that it was possible to form clear and distinct ideas of will, understanding, and intellect.

After exposing the four errors in the material hypothesis, Berkeley dug deeper to the root error from which these four grew, namely the misguided doctrine of abstract ideas. The material philosophers had assumed that it was possible to abstract properties from the ideas of sense and thus form abstract ideas. Through the mediation of abstract ideas we were supposed to gain some knowledge of things as they are. Berkeley attempted to show that the supposed process of forming abstract ideas was psychologically impossible. And pushing his analysis a step further, he traced the erroneous theory of abstract ideas to a faulty
theory of language or, more precisely, of proper names. The materialists
had assumed that every proper noun named a thing, and that for a proper
noun to have meaning there had to be an idea which was supposed to
provide a referent for the word. Berkeley concluded that if the abstract
ideas were psychologically impossible, then within their own theory of
meaning the abstractions of the materialists had turned out to be
meaningless. What philosophers had called material and spiritual
substances were nothing more than empty sounds. When unwary philosophers
used empty terms like "material substance" and "spiritual substance",
which did not refer to what was perceivable by sense or by reflection
and could not be understood by reason or even fashioned by the imagination,
then these sounds were bound to produce error and confusion.

Berkeley's arguments against material substance have been skillfully
summed up by Professor V.C. Aldrich in a delightful dialogue between
Locke and Berkeley,

**Berkeley:** If there is no sensory evidence for the existence of
this unknown material substance, why in the name of
heaven believe that it exists?

**Locke:** We must posit something as the external cause of the
sensations in our minds.

**Berkeley:** To be sure, but why posit matter as you have defined
it? If matter is genuinely to cause anything, it
must be active, and according to you it is completely
passive and inert, even when in motion. Furthermore,
will you explain how matter in motion causes a sensation
in a living organism? . . . It appears, Locke, that in
positing the existence of material substance as you
have conceived it, you have presented yourself with a
white elephant. It is an inactive cause, it 'causes'
sensations in an unknowable manner, and is itself in
essence unknowable. You are logic bound to be a sceptic
as regards the existence of material substance . . .
Why not leave this theoretically useless substratum out of our picture of nature, and paint another one?

Let this serve us too as the summary of this section.
(3) The Constructive Philosophy of George Berkeley

Berkeley's constructive philosophy clearly and logically emerges from his destructive work. If we asked what entities make up the universe, Berkeley would answer that it is composed of God, finite spirits or persons, and things or ideas. As C.M. Turbayne said concerning Berkeley's constructive work,

His constructive philosophy consists in putting Humpty Dumpty together again. It unscrambles the scrambled egg of abstraction. It reintegrates the disintegration caused by the metaphysical abstractions of the philosophers. That is to say, it puts back into their proper contexts the things that properly belong to mind and the things that properly belong to body. 23

In this section we will briefly consider what Berkeley meant by (a) a thing or idea, (b) a finite spirit, and (c) God.

(a) Thing or Idea

Regarding physical objects Berkeley contended that to be is to be perceived. When we talk about an object, say an apple, we describe it as red, sweet, hard, and round, i.e., in terms of what we see, touch, taste, and smell. Berkeley then quickly added that the immediately perceived, "are the real things . . . the things immediately perceived are ideas which exist only in the mind." 24 He agreed with the vulgar that what we perceive are real things, and with the philosophers that what we perceive are ideas, which exist when and as perceived. That a thing should exist which could not possibly be perceived is unimaginable. Any so-called underlying substance, labeled matter, which is not perceivable cannot exist.

Locke had argued that colors, tastes, sounds, and odors, which were the effects of secondary qualities or the powers of material objects, existed only in the mind.25 Extension, figure, solidity, and motion,
Locke further maintained, were inherent in bodies "whether we perceive them or not." The latter qualities Locke called the primary ones. Berkeley argued that the primary qualities were no less mind-dependent than the so-called effects of the secondary qualities. Therefore, we had no legitimate right to talk about any perceivable ideas inhering in anything that was not known by the mind. However, Berkeley qualified this argument by saying,

The question between the Materialists and me is not, whether things have a real existence out of the mind of this or that person, but, whether they have an absolute existence, distinct from being perceived by God, and exterior to all minds. 27

It should thus be unmistakably clear that when Berkeley says "existence in the mind", he means existence for the mind.

Berkeley argued that there are some ideas (mental images) which I can make and unmake at my own pleasure. But it is evident that I do not have like control over sensible ideas. I cannot choose the ideas that will be present when I open my eyes, nor can I alter their order and succession. I can, therefore, differentiate between my own conjured ideas and the ideas that are presented to my senses. There are, therefore, two distinctions, a metaphysical and a psychological, which Berkeley drew between the ideas of sense and imagination. Metaphysically speaking, the ideas of imagination or the mental images are of the mind's own framing, and they are also the images of things which they copy or represent. On the other hand, the ideas of sense are imprinted directly by God. They are less dependent on the finite spirits who perceive them because they are excited by the will of a more powerful spirit or mind. Psychologically speaking, the ideas of imagination and memory are fainter, less lively, less vivid, less distinct, less constant, less regular, and often they are excited at random. The ideas of sense are much stronger, more lively.
distinct, steadier, more coherent, and orderly. Now it is important to bear in mind that both kinds of ideas are "visibly inert", i.e., they have no perceptible (and hence no actual) power or agency within them. In this essay I will talk about both kinds of ideas, and, hereafter, for the sake of clarity, when I use the term to denote an object of sense, I will italicize the word, and when the word is used to denote an idea of imagination or purely mental object it will not be italicized.

(b) Finite Spirits

The world of Bishop Berkeley, as we have pointed out earlier, contains much more than the objects of sense and ideas. There are also finite spirits and the one infinite Spirit, God.

The essential feature of all spirits is activity. The finite spirit not only perceives given ideas, but in a limited sense, also creates ideas. We have an immediate and intimate acquaintance with our own mind as mental activity; but we do not perceive the mind as we do an object, and cannot have an idea of it. We have "notions" of our minds, Berkeley says, and he means thereby only that we understand the meanings of the words we use to talk about the various manifestations of the mental activity of which we are aware.

We cannot know the existence of "other spirits" except by their own operations or by the ideas that they excite in us. Berkeley said, "I perceive several motions, changes, and combinations of ideas, that inform me there are certain particular agents, like myself, which accompany them, and concur in their production." We do not, therefore, have an immediate knowledge of other spirits. The existence of other spirits is known mediately. Their existence is inferred from
their productive activity. I am aware of my own activity in operating and producing effects, and I perceive effects similar to those I produce. I infer, therefore, the existence of other finite spirits.

(c) God

Berkeley believed that the existence of God is known in two ways. First, the change, the essential activity and movement, among sensible bodies betrays God's immanence in the world. We have no ideas of God, for he is "invisible"; but we have notions of God. God is also known by an inference of reason, a variant of the so-called cosmological argument for God's existence. Berkeley had argued that there are some ideas which we can make and unmake at our own pleasure, these being the mental images that are contingent upon our minds. It is evident that I do not have like control over ideas. I cannot choose or alter the ideas that present themselves to sense. I can, therefore, differentiate between my own conjured ideas and sensible things. The ideas are stronger, more orderly, and coherent. The uniform connection and the very presence of ideas point unmistakably to a supreme mind. The uniform succession of them also indicate the benevolence and wisdom of the God or Mind who makes life possible.

The question is naturally raised, if Berkeley asserts that "to be is to be perceived", what then happens to the world? The answer is that man still perceives the world. This is a striking but not a shocking theory, for nothing has been changed. In other words, Berkeley's denial of material substance is not and never was meant to be a denial of the existence of a real objective world. Berkeley was clear on this point even in the Principles.
I do not argue against the existence of any one thing that we can apprehend either by sense or reflection. That the things I see with my eyes, touch with my hands do exist, really exist I make not the least question. The only thing whose existence we deny is that which philosophers call matter or corporeal substance.

In effect, Berkeley admits that the physical world exists independently of the finite minds which perceive it here and now. Objects do go on existing when this or that finite spirit does not perceive them; but they must be perceived by some mind, finite or infinite. The world exists and remains in existence because it is always an idea in the mind of God — is maintained by the creative activity of the Divine Spirit. When we sleep or do not perceive a part of the world, it still exists by being perceived by God. What cannot exist is something unknowable to any mind.

It is evident that for a proper and intelligent understanding of Berkeley's constructive philosophy one must understand what he meant by a spirit. Berkeley argued that the existence of the external world is dependent upon the mind of God, and that God is known primarily by an inference of reason. We infer that God is similar, although on a much grander scale, to our own minds. An understanding of Berkeley's concept of the finite mind (and our knowledge of it), therefore, becomes crucial to the correct appreciation of his entire position.

(4) Descartes, Malebranche, and Locke

It will help us to understand Berkeley's concept of the finite mind, if we compare it with what Descartes, Malebranche, and Locke had to say on the topic. These three thinkers each influenced Berkeley's thinking on the subject of the finite self, and it will be our task to indicate what Berkeley accepted, and what he rejected, in their views.
(a) Descartes

René Descartes aimed at finding a body of certain and self-evident truths. His methodology was constructed on the premise of systematic doubt. Although he was modern in intent, he still retained many of the categories of the scholastic tradition. He desired, as did his medieval predecessors, to discover essences; therefore, he attempted to discover the essence of body and that of mind. Through the use of systematic doubt Descartes relentlessly moved to the point where he could no longer doubt; he arrived at the insight that the very act of doubting was a mode of the essential actuality of a thinking thing. Accordingly, the activity of thinking was taken to define mind.

After attaining his desired insight concerning the essence of the human mind, Descartes turned his full attention toward the nature of the external world. A chain of reasoning brought Descartes to the conclusion that God not only existed, but was perfect. The nature of God, therefore, guaranteed the authenticity of the objects of sense. The question now at hand was what was the essential attribute of the external world? Descartes argued that we could vary all the properties of a body except one, that one being extension. Extension, then, was the essence of body. The essence of mind was thought, and as thought was not spatial it could not be extended. The essence of body was extension, but bodies do not think. Descartes, then, introduced into modern thought, with fateful consequences, the sharp distinction between mind and body.

There are several important points on which Berkeley and Descartes are in agreement. (1) They agree on the fundamental importance of the epistemological problem in any inquiry concerning the nature of reality.
(2) They agree that mind cannot be conceived in terms of spatial categories. (3) Berkeley's concept of reflection, whereby the mind takes notice of its own operations, had its origins in Descartes' philosophy. (4) They agree that thinking is an essential attribute of mind. (5) Berkeley accepted Descartes' views on the independent reality of the thinking substance. Descartes believed that thinking was the essential attribute of the spiritual substance, but Berkeley pushed a step further. He drew out the implications of the "res cogitans" and conceived of the active and willing self. Descartes had isolated thinking while Berkeley realized that thinking was a creative activity. "Berkeley marked an advance from Descartes' thinking substance toward the Kantian conception of the creative activity of thought." 35

(6) Berkeley was also sympathetic towards Descartes' treatment of the relationship between the soul substance and its faculties. Descartes said,

And the faculties of willing, feeling, conceiving, etc. cannot be properly speaking said to be its parts, for it is one and the same mind which employs itself in willing and in feeling and understanding. 36

The faculties for Descartes, properly speaking, are modes of the soul substance. The soul substance itself is known immediately as the subject of its various acts. Berkeley agreed with Descartes that the faculties were not parts of the self, but he also maintained that they were not modes. The spirit itself is immediately known by intuition. The terms "will", "understanding", and "perceiving" do not denote modes of the spirit, rather they are terms we use to talk about the active spirit. There is but one spirit which is characterized in many ways.

There are also a number of significant differences between Descartes and Berkeley. (1) Descartes not only attributed active power to mind but also to the external world of bodies. Descartes conceived of the
human body as a very delicate machine which was definitely affected by the external world. This forced him to face a very serious problem, i.e., what is the relationship between the active mind and the active body? Descartes was most ingenious in formulating the mind-body problem, but his ingenuity failed him in his attempt to find a satisfactory solution to the problem. Although he bequeathed to modern thought a new basis for epistemology, he also posed the extremely difficult mind-body problem. For Berkeley, there is no mind-body problem (in the Cartesian sense) for body has no active characteristics, rather body is completely mind-dependent. Berkeley, as we will elaborate more fully in a later chapter, could only conceive of causality in terms of agency, and bodies were not agents. There was no problem of attempting to understand how two active entities could be related. (2) Berkeley, unlike Descartes, did not attempt to give the spirit spatial location. Berkeley believed that when Descartes had located the seat of the spirit in the pineal gland he had taken the first step towards materializing it. Berkeley argued that when we give the spirit spatial location we naturally begin to treat it as if it were a spatial object.

In conclusion, we must say that Berkeley unquestionably started out from the Cartesian separation of mind and body. He was deeply influenced by Descartes' thinking concerning the mind as pure conscious activity, and he was careful never to talk about mind in other terms than these.

(b) Nicholas Malebranche

When George Berkeley first published his Principles a number of his contemporaries immediately linked him with Malebranche. Samuel Clarke
and William Whiston, the leaders in English thought in Berkeley's day, read the Principles a few months after its publication and associated the author with Malebranche and John Norris. Lord Bolingbroke, regretting he had missed seeing Berkeley, wrote to Swift, "I would not by any means lose the opportunity of knowing a man who can espouse in good earnest the system of Father Malebranche." Thomas Reid contended that Berkeley's arguments were founded upon the principles which had been formerly laid down by Descartes, Malebranche, and Locke. The claim was made by Berkeley's early critics that the two philosophers developed the same philosophical idea at about the same time on opposite sides of the English Channel, i.e., Malebranche was the French Berkeley or Berkeley the British Malebranche, your point of view depending on your national origin. The major reason for this claim is that both thinkers supported the contention that "In Him (God) we live and move and have our being". In this principle I would agree that Malebranche and Berkeley are one; but here the similarity seems to end, and from that point on there is a wide divergence between their respective positions.

Malebranche accepted Descartes' absolute dualism of mind and body. He believed that no direct intercourse between the mind and physical reality was possible. If we were to have any knowledge of physical things this knowledge could only come through ideas which represented these things. He admitted that by vision we claim to know physical objects. The question, however, is: how do we gain the visible ideas of objects? Malebranche believed that the only plausible solution to the problem was that we see all our ideas in God.

The human mind is wholly and directly dependent on God. The soul depends upon God not only for its creation, conservation, and salvation,
but also for its experiences, knowledge, and desires. The mind cannot be active in perception, and the only real contribution it makes to experience is being the soul that it is.  

Malebranche agreed with the Cartesians as to the certainty of the existence of the mind and its absolute distinction from body. Against the Cartesians he argued that we are utterly ignorant of the nature of the soul and have no ideas concerning it. All we know about the mind, through experience, are the modifications of which it is capable. Also we do not know the real relation of the body to the soul, nor do we know anything about the union. Morris Ginsberg ably summed up Malebranche's attitude concerning knowledge of the soul.

Since there is in the mind of God an idea of all things, there must be an archetype and model of all created souls; but this idea or archetype God does not disclose to us. We know by inner feeling we are; we do not know what we are. Malebranche concluded that mind and body were both substances, but we had no clear ideas concerning the natures of the substances.

We do know something about the mind, for otherwise we could not prove its immateriality, immortality, and liberty. Yet this knowledge falls very short of fullness and clarity. The fact of the matter is we do not know the soul as well as we know the body. If we knew the soul in its fullness, i.e., apart from the ideas God implants in us, we should see it as God does, and therefore we should be Gods.

Mind, for Malebranche, is essentially passive. Will is of secondary importance; it does not even belong among the mind's essential qualities. The distinctive feature of mind consists in its passive capacity to receive the ideas which God bestows.

George Berkeley, at least the youthful Berkeley, abhorred meta-
physicians and especially those who dealt with fine spun theories. He
looked upon Malebranche as one such thinker and did not want his
philosophy associated with that of the French thinker. Berkeley was
convinced that his philosophy, especially the main points, was vastly
different from Malebranche's theories. For example, consider,

As to what is said of ranking me with Father Malebranche and
Mr. Norris, whose writings are thought too fine spun to be
of any great use to mankind, I have this to answer: That I
think the notions I embrace are not in the least coincident
with, or agreeing with, theirs, but indeed plainly inconsistent
with them in the main points, insomuch that I know few writers
whom I take myself at bottom to differ more from them.
Fine spun metaphysicians are what I on all occasions declare
against, and if anyone shall show me anything of that sort in
my 'Treatise' I will willingly correct it. 45

It seems that the philosophical positions of Berkeley and Malebranche
do not represent two different sides of the same coin; rather, metaphorically
speaking, they are two different coins. Malebranche taught the existence
of matter although we have no direct knowledge of it. Berkeley, as it
has been pointed out, vehemently denied the existence of any substance
of which we do not or could not have any direct knowledge. Malebranche
also supported the concept of representative ideas which are supposedly
impacted to us by God, and, here again, Berkeley denied this point.
Malebranche denied the validity of sense experience, but this validity
is the rock on which, Berkeley, with complete docility toward the
evidences of the senses, constructed his entire system. 46 Berkeley,
then, constructed his system on the evidence of common-sense, which
Malebranche repudiated. Malebranche contended that we see all things
in God, while Berkeley claimed that God produces the ideas we see.
Malebranche retained the sense-world only because it was supported by
revelation and faith, while Berkeley gave a real meaning to creation
and held that on Malebranche's principles the sense-world would have
been created in vain.

In relation to Descartes, Malebranche seems to have developed the
mathematical and mechanical side of the Cartesian philosophy, while
Berkeley developed Descartes' concept of the self. Berkeley drew out
the implications of Descartes' principle that the essence of mind is
thinking. Berkeley centered his attention on the creative activity of
thought. By doing so he set himself in irreconcilable opposition to
Malebranche on the point of decisive importance.

Malebranche emphasized the passive nature of the mind as the
recipient of ideas imparted by God. Berkeley is prepared to talk about
the mind only in active terms. Malebranche claimed that in God's mind
there is an archetype or idea of the finite mind; Berkeley thought it
impossible that the mind could be known via any archetype, image or idea.
Berkeley and Malebranche are in profound disagreement about both the
nature of mind and our knowledge of mind.

(c) John Locke

The last philosopher we will consider, John Locke, had the most
decisive influence on Berkeley's thinking concerning the finite mind.
However, it was the most negative influence. An impressive number of
philosophers have been of the opinion that Berkeley's major attack was
levelled only against Locke's theory of knowledge and his beliefs concern¬
ing the nature of the external world, and that both philosophers were
in agreement concerning the nature of mind and our knowledge of it. But
the truth seems to be that Berkeley attacked Locke's concept of the self
with as much vehemence as he did his theory of the external world.
This is not the place to rehearse in detail Locke's general theory of knowledge nor his thinking concerning the nature of the external world. Still we must point out several aspects of his general theory which help us to understand his concept of the finite mind. We will consider Locke's concept of the self in some detail because this was the concept of mind to which Berkeley was fervently opposed.

John Locke believed that all our knowledge was concerned with ideas; however, the major difficulty in Locke's philosophy concerns what he meant by an idea. An idea, for Locke, was anything the mind perceived or the immediate objects of perception, thought, or understanding. He used the term with great latitude, and seemed to mean anything we wish to call an idea. He also used the term in reference to what we might today call a sensation.

Locke accepted and made use of the theory of representative perception, but as R.I. Aaron points out, "he accepts it with no great enthusiasm." It was held almost universally at the time, held even by a number of opposing schools of thought, for instance, Gassendists and Cartesians. Locke rejected the theory in regard to the effects of the secondary qualities, but held it regarding primary qualities because it seemed to be the most plausible theory for accounting for objects at a distance. The ideas of primary qualities were taken to be images of the objects in the external world, themselves not directly perceivable. The ideas were thought to picture the things they represented. Locke talked in this vein because he was also influenced by the contemporary theories of vision which held that objects gave off minute particles which traveled to the retina of the eye and made vision possible. Locke put it thus,
And since the extension, figure, number, and motion of bodies of an observable bigness, may be perceived at a distance by the sight, it is evident some singly imperceptible bodies must come from them to the eyes, and thereby convey to the brain some motion which produces those ideas we have of them in us. 50

Locke, then, seemed to have in mind scientific explanations. As Warneock said,

The scientific doctrine was that 'particles' or 'corpuscles' were reflected or emitted from the object, which by 'impact' upon the nervous system caused the idea of colour to arise in the mind. 51

There was a world of physical objects; and these had the power to cause ideas to arise in the minds of observers. Some of the ideas, namely ideas of primary qualities, were "copies" of the objects themselves. Locke said, "Ideas of primary qualities are resemblances of them and their patterns do really exist in the bodies themselves." 52 In this case the objects actually had the qualities which our ideas incline us to assign to them. However, in regard to the secondary qualities, there was nothing in the objects like the ideas we have. There is in the objects the power to cause ideas, but the ideas are not like the causes.

In one important sense Locke thought of ideas as mental images. He generally maintained this view, as, for example, when he talked about the decay of ideas, even those which had struck deepest in the mind. He contended that if these ideas were not renewed by repeated exercise of the senses or by reflection on the objects which first occasioned them, "the print wears out, and at last there remains nothing to be seen." 53

Our observation is employed with either external sensible objects or with the internal operations of our own minds. By perceiving the ideas given off by objects and by reflecting on the activities of the mind, the understanding is furnished with the materials for thought and knowledge. 54
Locke's philosophy not only involved the representative theory of perception but also the similar theory of knowledge. Truth involved a correspondence between the idea and the object, much as we would compare a photograph of a building with the building itself. However, the major problem which arose in both theories was that we were never able to get at the building to compare it with the photograph. For that reason all that we could know about the external world was the ideas.

Locke, as we have seen, made a distinction between primary and secondary qualities. The primary qualities were supposed really in the objects whether we perceived them or not. Of these qualities we had images, and we never had experience of the qualities themselves. Because of the insensible movements among the primary qualities which operated on the senses we supposedly had sensations of taste, color, sound, and smell. These were considered the effects of the powers of objects. For example, a flower is not yellow although I see yellow when I view it. The idea of yellow does not copy something, rather it represents the powers in the flower which causes me to see yellow. Locke also discussed tertiary qualities, but we shall not consider them here.55

Locke naturally supposed qualities to inhere in substances. He talked about material substance and assumed that we had some sort of general idea of it. This was a rather unsatisfactory idea, for Locke could find in it nothing but the thought of a supposed but unknown support of the qualities of a body. He argued that we could not think of qualities existing without some sort of support, and he claimed that we call "that support substantia; which, according to the true import of the word, is, in plain English, standing under, or upholding."56
Locke assumed that all proper nouns must refer to objects or entities while adjectives refer to qualities of the objects. This assumption was based on the belief that there was a correlation between the way we speak, or the structure of language, and the structure of reality. Locke further assumed that there was a structural correlation between reality and the subject-predicate proposition. For example, as adjectives predicate something of a grammatical subject, so do qualities inhere in an object. When we say "the grass is green", we are saying something about grass. The word "grass" supposedly denotes a substance which remains even if we were to abstract all the qualities of a particular blade. The word "grass" denotes an underlying material substratum which supposedly holds qualities together.

Locke believed that apart from the qualities of an object there is an underlying, unknowable "X". This "X" is what Locke called material substance. Locke made clear this assumption when he said,

"Only we must take notice that our complex idea of substances, besides all these simple ideas they are made of, have always the confused idea of something to which they belong, and in which they subsist: and therefore when we speak of any sort of substance, we say it is a thing having such or such qualities; as, body is a thing that is extended, figured, and capable of motion; spirit, a thing capable of thinking... These and the like fashions of speaking, intimate that the substance is supposed always something, besides the extension, figure, solidity, motion, thinking, or other observable ideas, though we know not what it is."

The first source from which our experience furnished the understanding was that of the ideas of the external world. The other source, Locke contended, was the perception of the operations of our own minds.

Mind takes notice of its own operations, but does not, apparently, know them directly, but has ideas of these operations as a consequence
of the notice it has taken of them. Here again Locke seems to be a representationalist, for he said,

By reflection, then, ... I would be understood to mean that notice which the mind takes of its own operations, and the manner of them, by reason whereof these come to be ideas of these operations in the understanding. 58

Locke also likened reflection to sensation when he pointed out,

This source of ideas every man has wholly in himself; and though it be not sense as having nothing to do with external objects, yet it is very like it, and might properly enough be called internal sense. 59

The mind, through reflection, furnishes the understanding with the ideas of perceiving, doubting, thinking, believing, reasoning, knowing, and willing.

Within the mind Locke recognized two powers or faculties — perception or thinking and volition or willing. The other operations of mind were taken to be modifications of these. Perception and willing were thought to be the primary attributes of the soul. Along with perception and willing Locke also included the capacity to feel pleasure and pain. The three main elements of Locke's psychology were then cognition, conation, and emotional feeling-tone. 60 Like Descartes and Berkeley, Locke did not assert that the different faculties existed as distinct entities in the mind. He pointed out,

The ordinary way of speaking is that the understanding and will are two faculties of the mind, a word proper enough if it be used, as all words should be, so as not to breed any confusion in men's thoughts by being supposed (as I suspect it has been) to stand for some real beings in the soul, that performed these actions of understanding and volition ... so many distinct agents in us which had their provinces and authorities and did command, obey, and perform several actions, as so many distinct beings. 61

Locke contended that the term "perception" could be used in a wide and loose sense. By perception he meant (1) perception of ideas in our
mind, sense perception, and perception of the ideas of reflection; (2) perception of signification of signs; (3) perception of the connection or repugnancy, agreement or disagreement, there is between any of our ideas. The last two senses are what Locke meant by understanding.

Perception was primarily identified with sense perception. The mind supposedly passively receives what is given. Mind, then, is passive, but it also takes notice. Sense-perception like the other faculties is also an activity. Locke said, "Whatever impressions are made on the outward parts, if they are not taken notice of within, there is no perception." The mind was an active entity possessing the power to become aware of the given.

Locke denied Descartes' principle that mind was essentially a thinking substance. He denied it on the grounds that if thinking were the essence it would be a permanent characteristic of mind and there would be no breaks in thought. Locke declared that there is no proof that the mind always thinks. Thinking, then, was one of the operations, but not the essence of mind.

Locke assumed that above and beyond all the faculties or qualities of mind there was also a spiritual substance. Therefore, he relied upon the concept of substance and accident in his discussion of the finite mind. Perceiving, willing, and the other attributes were thought to be accidents of the mental substance, i.e., they inhered in a spiritual substratum. In reflection we experience thinking, reasoning, willing, etc., "which we concluding not to subsist of themselves, nor apprehending how they can belong to body, or be produced by it, we are apt to think these the action of some other substance, which we call spirit." As with material substance, the mind does not have any direct and immediate
knowledge of the substratum. All that we can do, Locke concluded, is to form some sort of complex idea of the immaterial substance. This was supposedly done by combining the ideas of the attributes with what our language indicates to us. The completed abstract idea was then supposed to refer to some sort of "I know not what" which supposedly supports the attributes. 65

Berkeley pointed out that Locke's most serious error was that he allowed himself to speak of material and spiritual substances as if these words referred to some sort of existent realities in addition to the things we experience. Locke admitted that we had no clear ideas of either one of the substances, and for that reason, he should have concluded that they were empty or meaningless words.

Professor Aaron points out that Locke did attempt to get at substance much more adequately. Locke found behind the veil of ideas active and passive powers. In his corpuscular physics most of the qualities were really powers, and power played an important part in his concept of corporeal objects. 66 Locke said at one point, "Nor are we to wonder that powers make a great part of our complex ideas of substances." 67 Locke pointed out again in regard to secondary qualities,

Secondly, the sensible secondary qualities, which, depending on those (primary qualities), are nothing but the powers those substances have to produce several ideas in us by our senses; 68

Locke never identified substance with power, but he did half-way suggest their identification, so that a new conception of substance which was foreshadowed by Descartes and Locke fully emerges in Berkeley's philosophy. Locke was convinced that we could not know substances and did not develop the point. As Aaron said of the Lockian concept,
It is hidden from us and will remain hidden from us, until we gain faculties, which we do not now possess, whereby the inner nature of the being of things will be revealed. 69

Locke's concept of the finite mind and our knowledge of it involved several assumptions to which Berkeley was completely opposed. (1) It involved the assumption that the subject-predicate proposition mirrors the structure of reality. This tacit assumption involved Locke in supporting the belief that the attributes of mental activity were predicates of some sort of unknowable substratum, which was approached only via a confused idea. (2) Locke had the tendency to talk about mind in terms of spatial categories. He discussed the activity of will as if it were similar to a spatial motion. In Book II he talked about mind as if it were a thing in space.

Finding that spirits as well as bodies cannot operate but where they are, and that spirits do operate at several times in several places, I cannot but attribute change of place to all finite spirits. 70

Berkeley believed this confusion arose because Locke believed that we had ideas or images of mental activity. Locke assumed that mind could literally be an object to itself. He talked about reflection, also, as if it were a sixth sense. (3) Berkeley opposed Locke's use of the representative theory of perception. He correctly pointed out that within Locke's system we never had any knowledge of the real world, i.e., all knowledge being conversant with representative ideas. This left us in a somewhat vague and nebulous position, for we could never know the external world or ourselves. All knowledge was concerned with the veil of ideas, which supposedly bespoke of the reality behind them. In regard to ourselves, we had only knowledge of images of thinking, willing, and perceiving, and never a direct and immediate awareness of
ourselves. Within Locke's system we live forever in Plato's cave without the possibility of ever breaking the chains and gaining direct knowledge of the real world and ourselves. The most intelligent man would always be the one who could best describe the shadows.

We mentioned earlier that most philosophers have centered their complete attention on Berkeley's attack on Locke's concept of the external world, and have failed to consider that Berkeley also attacked Locke's concept of mind. For example, Warnock said,

> It is clear that what first engaged his serious interest was 'our knowledge of the external world', problems about perception and the nature of physical objects on which he found himself in sharp disagreement with Locke. 71

In fact, the consensus seems to be that Berkeley's theory of the self is quite similar to Locke's. As Warnock further asserted, "He appears in the end to have accepted Locke's opinion that a mind is an 'immaterial substance'." 72 Whatever has led Warnock and others to this opinion, it is certain that it was not Berkeley's published writings. It is true that Berkeley talked about spiritual substance, but he meant by the terms something vastly different than Locke.

Berkeley not only restored the external world to a place where it could be directly known, but he also attempted to accomplish the same task in regard to the mental realm. Berkeley's concept of the self stands as a criticism of the Lockian view. In the following chapters it will be our task to come to some understanding of what Berkeley meant by spiritual substance and by what means he thought we could have knowledge of it.

The attempt will be made to trace Berkeley's concept of the finite self from its earliest formulation, found in his youthful Philosophical
Commentaries, through his last major work Siris. Most attention will be centered on the Principles, Three Dialogues, and Alciphron, for here Berkeley presented his mature concept of mind.
Notes to Chapter I

5. WGB, IV, 512.
17. Ibid., #8.
21. Ibid., p. 347.
24. WGB, I, 484.
26. Ibid., II, viii, 23.
27. WGB, I, 452.
29. WGB, I, Principles #145.
30. Luce, Immaterialism, pp. 24-5.
31. Ibid., p. 22.
32. WGB, I, Principles #35.
40. Luce, Immaterialism, p. 73.
43. Luce, Berkeley and Malebranche, pp. 102-3.
44. Malebranche, pp. 21-2.
46. Ibid., IX, 12.
47. Kantonen, p. 485.
48. Locke, II, viii, 8.
50. Locke, II, viii, 12.
51. Warneck, p. 94.
52. Locke, II, viii, 15.
53. II, x, 5.
54. II, i, 2.
55. II, viii, 23.
56. II, xxiii, 2.
57. II, xxiii, 3.
58. II, i, 4.
59. II, i, 4.
60. Aaron, p. 123.
62. II, ix, 3.
63. II, i, 10.
64. II, xxiii, 5.
65. II, xxiii, 15.
67. Locke, II, xxiii, 8.
68. II, xxiii, 9.
69. Aaron, p. 173.
70. Locke, II, xxiii, 19.
71. Warneck, p. 204.
72. Ibid., p. 205.
II

Philosophical Commentaries

(1) Introduction

George Berkeley's *Commonplace Book* (or, as Luce renamed it, *Philosophical Commentaries*) was one of the extremely fortunate finds in the history of Western philosophy. The work which deals with mathematical, ethical, physical, and metaphysical subjects was found written in Berkeley's own hand among his papers in the middle of the nineteenth century. A.C. Fraser discovered the manuscript while editing Berkeley's works, and published it in 1871 as *Commonplace Book of Occasional Metaphysical Thoughts*. Luce contends that Fraser did not understand the notes it contained because he had referred to the work as a literary scrap-book.¹

Berkeley began the work while he was still a student at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, during the summer of 1707 and he finished it in the early autumn of 1708.² The *Philosophical Commentaries* contain Berkeley's thoughts concerning philosophical issues he set down for his private use. The *Commentaries* are full of enthusiasm for the new principle which he believed he had discovered and for the work he saw ahead of him. Here we can see Berkeley forging the weapons he was later to use against materialism and scepticism. More than this, Luce contends, the *Commentaries* also show us how Berkeley found definite ways of expressing the immaterialism which he had in mind before he began making the entries.³

The work consists of two notebooks. Notebook B contains much of the preliminary work for *An Essay Towards A New Theory of Vision* (1709); Notebook A deals with *The Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710), and these two works of Berkeley's brilliant youth contain his most original, most consecutive, and most influential writing.
In the *Philosophical Commentaries* Berkeley not only set down his own thoughts, but also comments on Locke, Malebranche, Hobbes, Spinoza, and others. He wrote about his literary plans and the difficulties he must face. He worked out his arguments, reconsidered and revised his views, examined in some detail the technical terms which he would later use; at the end he was starting to draft whole sections of his major works.

At first glance the student is left with the impression that Fraser was right and the *Philosophical Commentaries* is nothing but a scrapbook -- and a bewildering one at that. Professor Luce correctly pointed out that the book is not for hurried reading or skimming, rather, it is a book for meditation, which challenges the reader to think through certain problems as Berkeley did. The book would be difficult to understand unless one is already familiar with the *Principles*; on the other hand, close reading of the *Commentaries* will bring the student to a much deeper appreciation of what Berkeley attempted to say in the *Principles*.

The *Philosophical Commentaries* certainly indicates that the *Principles* was an even more closely written and carefully argued book than had been previously thought and that Berkeley knew the direction in which he was heading and what he was doing in his early works. The *Commentaries* also show unmistakably that Berkeley had already recognized and considered most of the major objections which critics were to bring against his system. Berkeley realized to what extent his theory would shock the intellectuals of his day. He attempted to anticipate and answer every criticism which could be brought against his philosophy.

This essay owes a special debt to the *Philosophical Commentaries*, because it has the utmost importance for understanding Berkeley's concept
of the finite self. In fact, his mature concept of the self, which is contained in the *Principles* and *Three Dialogues*, becomes fully clear only when approached through the *Commentaries*. In the course of writing the *Commentaries* he learned to reject panpsychism and accept the dualism of sense and spirit. He also learned — and this is extremely important — that mind is active, and ideas and sensible things are passive. The preceding insights enabled him to develop not only his concept of mind but also his concept of causality. In the *Commentaries* he also rejected abstract ideas not only in regard to sensible objects but also in regard to mind. He subsequently formulated his principles of *esse est percipi* or the meaning of sensible existence and *esse est percipere* or the meaning of spiritual existence.

In this chapter we will deal with the development of Berkeley's thought concerning the nature of the finite mind as he presented it in the *Commentaries*. Lucus pointed out, "Clearly it was a period of extremely rapid development of thought. Berkeley says things at the beginning of the period that he could not have said at the end and vice versa." For that reason Berkeley's doctrine of the finite spirit passed through several important phases which will require careful study.

We may say that Berkeley's thinking about spirits passed through three stages, which will be considered in separate sections. But there were also several recurrent problems which Berkeley encountered in each section: (1) What is mind? (2) How does the mind differ from the objects of sense and the contents of mind? (3) What is the relationship between the various faculties of the mind and the mind itself? (4) How do we know the mind?
(2) Phase One

A good many students of philosophy, and far too many professional philosophers, have been of the opinion that Berkeley's philosophical position is panpsychism or eventually leads to panpsychism. It is interesting to note that panpsychism was the earliest position Berkeley held and also the first position he rejected. In commentary #24 he said, "Nothing properly but persons, i.e., conscious things do exist, all other things are not so much existences as manners of ye existence of persons." In this section he undoubtedly equated sensible things with mind-stuff. Nothing exists but the mind, and there is no differentiation between mind and ideas. There is no problem concerning the nature of mind, for it is only the totality of what "I" experience. Berkeley rapidly moved beyond this position and soon accepted the existence of "other things" which were not mind nor only modes of mind. In moving beyond this position Berkeley faced the important question of what mind is and how it differs from ideas.

The early pages of the Commentaries clearly indicate that Berkeley was very much concerned with the question of attaining some sort of an adequate definition of mind or soul. In commentary #44 he asked,

Qu: Whether being might not be the substance of ye soul, or (otherwise thus) whether being added to ye faculties compleat the real essence and adequate definition of the soul? 9

Berkeley was here considering the possibility that mind was some sort of underlying substratum which supposedly supported or held together the attributes or qualities of mind. Berkeley continued to think in this vein for in commentary #80 he said,
I am more certain of ye existence & reality of Bodies than Mr Locke since he pretends onely to wt he calls sensitive knowledge, whereas I think I have demonstrative knowledge of their existence, by them meaning combinations of powers in an unknown substratum. 10

Now the unknown substratum Berkeley had in mind must be a spiritual substance.

In commentary #154 Berkeley elaborated his hypothesis by proposing the possibility that mind could be known through a complex idea which was composed of existence, willing, perception, and the other faculties associated with the human mind. 11 Mind could be known in the same way as a sensible object and could be defined. Berkeley believed that if the faculties were held together by a spiritual substratum, then it would be possible to form some sort of complex idea from the knowable qualities whereby we might gain some knowledge of the nature of the substratum.

The hypothesis concerning our knowledge of the spiritual substratum was soon questioned and finally rejected for a number of important reasons. Before we state Berkeley's criticisms we must first go back to several earlier thoughts he had concerning the nature of mind. The earlier thoughts were what led Berkeley to question his hypothesis.

In commentary #37a Berkeley first considered the possibility that mind is activity as he said, "thought seeming to imply action." 12 He must have recognized that we are aware of mental activity, for we always find the mind doing something either thinking, willing, imagining, or perceiving. The will seems to be the clearest manifestation of this activity, for as Berkeley said, "No active power but the will . . . " 13 The other mental manifestations, thinking, perceiving, and imagining, are intimately linked with their objects, so there is a problem as to whether the activity could be separated from the perceptions, ideas,
and thoughts. For Berkeley, will, therefore, became the guiding principle in considering the possibility that spiritual substance is activity. As Berkeley noted, "We cannot possibly conceive any active power but the will." 14

Berkeley argued in commentary #176 that speech is much more metaphorical than we usually think. Insensible things are for the most part expressed by words that have been borrowed from sensible things. We naturally do this, but this leads us into difficulties and mistakes. This habit prompts us particularly to talk about mental activity in terms of sensible concepts. Consequently, we are deceived by language into thinking that we have ideas of the operations of mind, when in truth our metaphorical use of language trips us up. As Berkeley concluded, "Certainly this Metaphorical dress is an argument we have not." 15

Berkeley, in commentary #176, suggested that it is impossible to define and talk clearly about mind because of the scanty nature of language. 16 Because of the limitations of language confusions are bound to arise. He pointed out that we are well aware of what we mean by mind, but that when we attempt to define mind or think about it in a philosophical vein, we are led into serious difficulties. Many of Berkeley's predecessors had been aware of the predicament and concluded that it results from the faulty nature of the human intellect. Berkeley argued that philosophers fail to understand the mind not because the intellect is too weak, but because language leads us astray. As Berkeley concluded,

We know many things when we want words to express. Great things discoverable upon this Principle, for want of considering which divers men have run into sundry mistakes endeavouring to set forth their knowledge by sounds, which confounding them they thought the defect was in their knowledge when in truth it was in their Language. 17
Following up the possible insight that the substance of mind is activity, Berkeley argued in commentary §230 that if mind was not a thing but only activity, then we could not have any ideas of it, nor could we construct any sort of complex idea in order to gain knowledge of the spiritual substratum. This does not reveal a defect in reason, for the very nature of mind precludes such a possibility. An idea is a passive thing and possesses no active qualities. Mind, if it is activity, could not be represented by any sort of passive entity. Berkeley argued, "Absurd that men should know the soul by idea ideas being inert, thoughtless . . . "

Berkeley concluded phase one of his development by breaking down reality in the following manner:

All things - by us conceivable are 1st thoughts 2dly powers to receive thoughts, 3dly powers to cause thoughts neither of which can possibly exist in an inert, senseless things. Berkeley later dropped the "powers" theory and began to change "thoughts" to ideas. He was on his way to his final position that reality is composed of spirits and ideas.

Phase one indicates that Berkeley had reached several interesting conclusions about the nature of mind and our knowledge of it. (1) He seemed to be convinced that mind was radically different from sensible objects and the contents of mind; activity became the key to understanding mind, and inertness became the key to understanding sensible things and ideas. (2) If the substance of spirit is activity, then Berkeley believed that it was impossible for us to have any ideas concerning it. (3) The primary reason mind has presented such a problem for philosophers was not deficiency of intellect but linguistic confusion. We run into difficulties concerning the nature of mind because we talk about it in the wrong way.
(3) Phase Two

Commentary #362 clearly indicates an important turning point in
the Philosophical Commentaries, because it reveals that Berkeley
definitely had moved from a monistic to a dualistic position; consider,
Whether I had not better allow Colours to exist without the Mind
taking the Mind for the Active thing wh I call I, my self. It
seems to be distinct from Ye Understanding. 20

Berkeley, as we noted previously, first maintained that all was mind;
thus, color had been only a modification of mind. Now, mind having
become agency, Berkeley realized that it must be distinguished from
its objects. Ideas must exist without the finite minds, but they
could not exist apart from any mind. Sensible things were mind
dependent, but they were not in the mind.

Berkeley contended that "Existence is percipi or percipere." 21
He did not mean that the activity of perceiving was the essence of
mind, but that activity was the essential and only feature of mind.
Berkeley was making a definite distinction between the mental and the
physical realms. The sensible things which were composed of passive
elements were now to be called ideas, and the active causative agents
were to be called spirits or minds. Berkeley concluded, "Impossible
any thing Besides that whc thinks & is thought on should exist." 22
Therefore, there were only ideas and mental activity, and no unknown
physical substance.

For Berkeley the term "mind" had now taken on the connotation of
activity, but it was not settled which of the faculties we usually
associate with mind were to be deemed manifestations of mind. Will,
Berkeley seemed to believe, was definitely a characteristic of mind,
but what about perception and understanding? He herewith faced the
problem of extricating the activity of thinking and perceiving from
involvement in the objects of thought and sense. The problem led
Berkeley to ask, "How is the soul distinguished from its ideas?
Certainly if there were no sensible ideas there could be no soul,
no perception, remembrance, love, fear, etc. no faculty could be
exerted." How dependent was the mind on ideas and sensible things?
Could it be thought of as something distinct from the inert things?

Berkeley still maintained his hypothesis that activity is the key
to understanding mind and that mind was radically different from objects.
"The soul is the will Properly speaking & as it is distinct from Ideas." In §490 he argued further that it would be better not to call the
operations of the mind ideas, for the term "idea" would only be used in
a technical sense where it meant the same as an inert object. Berkeley
said, "It seems improper & liable to difficulties to make the word
Person stand for an Idea, or to make our selves Ideas or thinking
things Ideas." Berkeley later believed that he solved his problem concerning the
relationship between the mind and its objects by insisting that mind
was not dependent on ideas and sensible things, but that they were
dependent upon mind. If there were no minds, then there would be no
ideas and sensible things. This did not mean that if the finite minds
were annihilated the world would vanish for God is the one who supports
ideas. Berkeley recognized that mental images did not construct them¬
selves, rather they were constructed by mental activity. Berkeley also
insisted that spirits were not subject to annihilation in the same way
an object was, rather they were created and sustained by God. Only God
could destroy a finite spirit.
Commentaries 576 to 581 are perhaps the most important ones in the Philosophical Commentaries, and for this reason they will be quoted in full and analyzed in some detail. The passages are extremely interesting and have aroused a good deal of speculation as to what Berkeley had in mind. Fraser was of the opinion that Berkeley had definitely considered the possibility that mind means only the "congeries of perceptions" or the objects of thought. In this respect, Fraser concluded, Berkeley had definitely anticipated Hume. A.A. Luce offered two possible interpretations, (1) Berkeley had not quite rid himself of his early panpsychism. Ideas, then, in a major sense, were still thought to be modes of the existence of the soul, i.e., Berkeley had not yet made a clear cut distinction between mind and ideas; (2) Luce also proposed that the commentaries are the result of an earlier technique Berkeley used which was later discarded. When Berkeley spoke of mind or the soul he used the word as a collective term which included the passive contents. Although there are some grounds for accepting Fraser's and Luce's interpretations, it seems to me that there is another way in which the commentaries may be interpreted, a way which I believe follows consistently the line Berkeley had adopted in the previous sections.

Berkeley was aware that philosophers had traditionally lined up into opposing camps concerning the nature of mind. On the one side are found the philosophers who have held that mind is a substance (not a physical but an immaterial substance) which holds together the states of consciousness, sensations, emotions, thoughts, and pains. They have contended that mind is something more than its contents for they insist
that the contents are dependent upon mind. When we talk about mind we mean some sort of transcendent unifying substance and not just the "congeries of perceptions".

On the other side are found the philosophers who have argued that mind is nothing more or less than the sum total of a man's individual experiences, i.e., his thoughts, pains, sensations, and even his dispositions to think and feel. They argue that to insist upon something more called a self introduces an entity which is logically impossible to verify.

It seems that Berkeley, in this section, was attempting to analyze these two positions and point out that both parties have been mistaken, and mistaken, very importantly, for the very same reason. It will be necessary to analyze this section, commentary by commentary, to illustrate the argument between the two sides. For the sake of clarity I will put the debate in a contemporary idiom and call the philosopher who holds that mind is a mental substratum a metaphysican and the other philosopher an analyst. Berkeley points out that the question the two are debating is whether the word "mind" has a referent, and if so, what sort of referent is it.

In commentary 4576 Berkeley paraphrased the belief of the analyst by saying, "We think we know not the Soul because we have no imaginable or sensible Idea annex'd to that sound." The analyst, Berkeley points out, contends that since we have no idea or referent for the word "mind" or "soul", then we can have no knowledge concerning any such thing, and even more than this the word is meaningless. Berkeley points out, very interestingly, that the analyst's argument "is the Effect of
The prejudice in question is an assumption about the meaning of nouns to which we shall return later.

Berkeley further elaborated the analyst's argument.

Certainly we do not know it. This will be plain if we examine what we mean by the word knowledge. Neither doth this argue any defect in our knowledge no more than our not knowing a contradiction.

The analyst argues that we do not know mind for there is neither an observable idea nor an imaginable idea to which the term refers. The reason we do not have knowledge of mental substance is not that the intellect is weak or defective, but that to talk about an unperceivable idea or entity is to state a contradiction. If mind is an idea, a substance or an entity, then it must be knowable by introspection. If there is no known referent for the term "mind", then the word is meaningless.

In commentary #577 Berkeley pointed out what the analyst means by mind, "The very existence of Ideas constitutes the soul." The analyst asserts that if we mean by the word "mind" only the ideas or objects present to the introspective sense, then the word does have meaning. The word "mind" simply means "the congeries of perceptions", or the totality of mental states. Only in this sense, the analyst contends, can the term have meaning for it now has a referent.

The metaphysican answers the analyst by arguing that there must be something which introspects, and likewise something which is conscious and perceives. The acts of introspection, consciousness, and perception infer us that there is something which does these things, and this something more is what the metaphysican calls "mind". The metaphysican, then, puts the emphasis on the activity of mind but assumes that the activities are but manifestations of an unknown spiritual substratum.
In commentary #578 Berkeley put forward the analyst's counter-argument, "Consciousness, perception, existence of Ideas seem to be all one." The analyst contends that it makes no sense to talk about introspection, perception or consciousness apart from ideas and sensible things. Without an idea to perceive it would make no sense to talk about perception, and to be conscious one must certainly be conscious of something. The point is, the analyst argues, we are never aware of any sort of mental activity without an object being present. If one were to take away the objects, the activity would also be removed. Accordingly, mind could only be the "congeries of perceptions".

Berkeley, in commentary #579, summarizes the analyst's argument:

Consult, ransack yr understanding wt find you there besides several perception(s) or thoughts. Wt mean you by the word mind you must mean something that you perceive or yt you do not perceive. A thing not perceived is a contradiction. To mean (also) a thing you do not perceive is a contradiction. 33

The analyst has argued that if we inspect the region of mind, all we ever come upon are the ideas, perceptions, sensations, and thoughts, and nothing else. We never encounter anything called "soul" or "mind" among, apart from, or behind the objects. Now if we are to use the term "mind" in any meaningful sense, then it must be the name of something we perceive or do not perceive. If it is a thing we perceive, then where is it? If it is a non-perceivable entity, then this is only a sophisticated way of saying that it is nothing at all, for it makes no sense to talk about a thing which is not perceivable. To argue that there is a "thing", entity, or referent of this kind for the word "mind" which is not knowable is a contradiction. Berkeley remarked in the last sentence of this commentary, "We are in all this matter strangely abused by words."
There is a difficulty involved in both theories of mind, and Berkeley believed that it was a linguistic one.

The metaphysician replies to the analyst's argument in commentary #580, "Mind is a congeries of Perceptions. Take away Perceptions & you take away the Mind put the Perceptions & you put the mind." The analyst had argued that mind is only the "congeries of perceptions". The metaphysician then says that if you take away the perceptions, then you take away the mind and vice versa. The metaphysician can also ask the embarrassing question: what constitutes self-identity? Who is the continuing person, or is the person annihilated when he sleeps or loses consciousness and then a new person when he awakes or regains consciousness? The metaphysician contends that the analyst can give no legitimate answer to this question, and concludes that the analyst is not even talking about mind, i.e., the one who perceives, thinks about ideas and draws relationships between them, imagines and wills.

The metaphysician argues that we cannot think of the activities of thinking, willing, perceiving, and imagining as existing alone; rather, there must be someone or something which thinks, perceives, and imagines. The activities indicate that there must be something that does these things, and this something is what the metaphysician calls mind, self, "I" or the soul. To be sure, the spiritual substance is difficult to know. But from the attributes, thinking, willing, and perceiving, we are able to form some sort of complex idea concerning the nature of the spiritual substance. The self, soul or mind remains a mystery, but we can know something about it, and if we possessed infinite intelligence or another sense, we could know it completely. The term "mind" has for its referent the complex idea which in turn refers somewhat vaguely to the transcendent unifying spiritual substratum.
Commentary #591 contains the analyst’s rebuttal.

Say you the Mind is not the Perceptions, but that thing weh perceives. I answer you are abus’d by words that & thing these are vague words wth out a meaning. 36

The analyst argues that if the metaphysician is going to use the terms "that" and "thing" in place of "mind", then he must also provide or produce referents for them. The analyst concludes that it does little or no good at all for the metaphysician to claim that our intellect is weak and then to posit something called a transcendent unifying substratum.

Berkeley has summed up the controversy between the metaphysician and the analyst, and it certainly seems as though the analyst had much the better case. However, Berkeley did not accept the analyst’s conclusions for he pointed out that both philosophers have worked themselves into an intolerable position. The analyst, it seems, is really not talking about what we call mind at all, while the metaphysician, to elude the concise criticisms of the analyst, resorts to entities or substances, which are not directly knowable, to provide a referent for the term "mind". Berkeley argues that both philosophers are mistaken because they have both made an untenable assumption concerning the nature of language. As Berkeley pointed out.

The chief thing I do or pretend to do is onely to remove the mist or veil of Words. This has occasion’d Ignorance & confusion. This has ruin’d the Scholemen & Mathematicians, Lawyers & Divines. 37

The assumption made by both parties, Berkeley maintained, is "the effect of prejudice." 38

Both philosophers acknowledge the fact that the word "mind" is a noun. They concluded that if it is to be a meaningful term, it must denote something. The question then is, what does it denote? The belief
led one philosopher to assert that the term "mind" denotes only the "congeries of perceptions", and the other philosopher to argue that it denotes the unknown subject of the mental attributes.

Berkeley indicated in the previous commentaries that there were several reasons which led philosophers to this assumption about the meaning of mental terms. In the first place many philosophers had looked upon visual perception as the clearest manner of gaining knowledge. As Berkeley said,

Two things are apt to confound men in their Reasonings one with another. 1st words signifying the operations of the mind are taken from sensible Ideas. 2dly. Words as Used by the Vulgar are taken in some Latitude, their signification is confused. Hence if a man use them in a determin'd settled signification he is at a hazard either of not being understood or of speaking improperly. All this remedied by studying the Understanding.

Thus, it becomes natural for philosophers to think in terms of spatial concepts. Philosophers, then, have been led to think and talk about mind in terms of spatial concepts.

The primary cause of our perplexity in talking about mind is that we assume that when we are thinking about mind, it is literally an object of thought. Berkeley said,

The Grand Cause of perplexity & darkness in treating of the Will, is that we Imagine it to be an object of thought (to speak wth the vulgar), we think we may perceive, contemplate & view it like any of our Ideas whereas in truth 'Tis no idea. Nor is there any Idea of it. tis teto coelo different from the Understanding, i.e. from all our Ideas. If you say the will or rather a volition is some-thing I answer there is an Homonymy in the word thing un apply'd to Ideas & volitions & understanding & will. All ideas are passive, volitions active ... 40

Many thinkers have imagined that they could perceive mind through introspection and contemplate it in the same way they perceive an image of an apple, horse, house or chair. Mind, Berkeley later pointed out, cannot
be the object for an introspective sense at all. Mind is not an object, nor does it vaguely resemble one. Berkeley argued that we are aware of mind, i.e., we are aware of activity; and the terms we use to talk about it are meaningful. Problems and complexities arise because the assumption is made that "mind", "will", "imagination" and the other words we use to refer to mind are names of either a mental substratum or attributes. When this assumption is made philosophers are off in a vain pursuit after the entities which are supposed to be the referents for the terms.

In the Philosophical Commentaries Berkeley was laying the groundwork for considering mind and the way we talk about it in a totally different way. In the next chapter we will consider in some detail Berkeley's criticisms of the Leckian theory of language and Berkeley's thoughts concerning the various ways words take on meaning.

George Berkeley, in an earlier commentary, said regarding substances,

I take not away substances. I ought not to be accus'd of discard¬ing Substances out of the reasonable world. I onely reject the Philosophic sense (wch in effect is no sense) of the word substance. 41

The philosophic sense of substance that Berkeley was opposed to was that of an unknown something supporting accidents. Commentary #637, however, indicates that Berkeley's thinking was in a fluid state because he here considers the possibility that mind is an underlying spiritual substratum, "something unknown wch perceives & supports & ties together the Ideas."42 He says further that if we can show that there is any need for such a substance, then we shall have it. "I dare not take away any thing I can see the least reason to think should exist." Berkeley realized that if he postulated a spiritual substance, in the philosophic sense, this would leave his concept of spirit open to the very same criticisms he was to bring against material substance. He realized that if he was
going to use "spiritual substance" he would have to make clear what he meant by the terms. Consider his thinking in the following commentaries.

I affirm 'tis manifestly absurd. no excuse in ye world can be given why a man should use a word without an idea. Certainly we shall never find that wt ever word we make use of in matter of pure reasoning has or ought to have a compleat Idea annext to it, i.e., its' meaning or sense we take it in must be compleatly known. 43

Tis demonstratable a Man can never be brought to Imagine anything should exist whereof he has no Idea. Whoever says he does, banters himself with Words. 44

Berkeley's difficulty concerning spiritual substance has to do with the relationship between the mental attributes and the spiritual substance. In reflection we experience thinking, reasoning, and perceiving, but we do not experience something else which ties them together. I realize the oneness by realizing they are mine. Thus, we seem to be conscious of a self rather than a something "I know not what".

(4) Phase Three

In the concluding pages of the Philosophical Commentaries Berkeley turned his full attention to what we mean by a faculty of the mind. As we have noted before, he had been troubled over the question as to which of the faculties were to be included in mind. From time to time he asked whether what we call thinking or understanding and perceiving could be differentiated from their objects.

Berkeley had rejected the belief that all is mind and also the hypothesis that mind is only the "congeries of perceptions". Therefore, he made the distinction between thinking and the object of thought, but perception caused him some difficulty. We are undoubtedly active when
we think, but we are passive when we perceive, for we have no control over what is perceived by the senses. Instead of saying, "I am perceive-
ing an idea" Berkeley would say, "there is an idea present". If the idea could not be disassociated from the act of perceiving, then perceiving could not be a manifestation of mind because if mind is activity, and only activity, then it could have no passive characteristics.

This entire line of thinking bothered Berkeley because perceiving obviously partakes of an active character. One can follow his train of thought as he attempted to work out this problem.

There is somewhat active in most perceptions, i.e. such as ensue upon our Volition, such as we can prevent & stop v.g. I turn my eyes towards the Sun I open them all this is active. 45

To be sure or certain of wt we do not actually perceive (I say perceive not imagine) we must not be altogether Passive, there must be a disposition to act, there must be assent, wch is active, nay wt do I talk there must be Actual Volition. 46

Perceiving is disassociated from the idea perceived and becomes a manifestation of mental activity. The finite mind is active in perception, but it has no constructive characteristics. The point is that we cannot choose the ideas which are present to us, and, in this sense, perception is passive. However, we can choose to attend, and we can choose that which we wish to concentrate attention upon. We cannot choose not to view the forest God has placed before us in the sense of altering the ideas present, yet we can choose whether we will look at all, and we can select which particular tree we will concentrate our attention upon. Therefore, willing, thinking, and perceiving have all become manifestations of what we call mind or mental activity.

Berkeley was now in position to attack the vexing problem of the relationship between mental attributes and spiritual substance. Locke,
as we have pointed out, used the concept of substance and accident in
his analysis of mind. Berkeley rejected Locke’s theory when he said:

I must not mention the understanding as a faculty or part of the
mind, I must include understanding & will etc in the word spirit
by which I mean all that is active. I must not say that the
understanding differs not from the particular ideas, or the will
from the particular volitions. 47

by the term “volitions”, in this particular context, Berkeley seemed to
mean the effects of the will. Berkeley said again in another commentary,

We see no variety or difference betwixt the volitions, only between
their effects. This one will one act distinguished by the effects.
This will, this act is the spirit, operative principle, soul, etc. 48

For Berkeley there is one active principle, soul, spirit or mind, which
is talked about in different ways.

Berkeley has rejected the concept of an underlying spiritual
substratum. Thinking, willing, and perceiving are not separate faculties
nor attributes of an unknown substance, but are various ways we may
legitimately and meaningfully describe the one active principle. The
difference between thinking and willing is due not to their own
particular natures, but to their effects; or as Berkeley put it,

Will, understanding, desire, hatred etc. so far forth as they are
acts or active differ not, all their difference consists in their
objects, circumstances. 49

The active principle, mind or spiritual substance fully manifests itself
in many different ways, i.e., the mind does not give orders to a faculty
called will which then acts, rather, when we say the mind thinks, this
means the spirit fully manifests itself in thinking. Thinking, willing,
and perceiving are then the various ways we classify the unified
activity we call mind.

Spiritual substance which is different from ideas will be retained,
but it is not a substance in the Lockian sense. For Berkeley spiritual
substance is equated with activity which can be fully known as it thinks, imagines, perceives, and wills. Spiritual substance is the essence or the "true nature" of a real existent being. The terms "spiritual substance" denote the functioning we call mind. Berkeley made this point clear when he said,

Substance of Spirit is that it acts, causes, wills, operates, or if you please (to avoid the quibble ye may be made on ye word it) to act, cause, will, operate. Its' substance is not knowable not being an Idea. 50

Mind is pure spirit which is not imaginable, in no sense the object of the understanding, and not perceivable. Berkeley, in his later works, claimed that we have immediate knowledge of spirit by reflection or feeling consciousness.

Berkeley is now in possession of his view of reality. He is sharply dualistic and cannot be understood as a panpsychist for he simply does not hold to the theory that reality is nothing but mind. He unequivocally made his position clear,

Bodies exist without the Mind, i.e. are not the Mind, but distinct from it. This I allow, the Mind being altogether different therefrom. 52

Berkeley was of the opinion that his predecessors had been unable to understand mind because they had been confused over the meaning of mental terms. They had distorted the meaning of mental words by assuming that the words we use to refer to and talk about mind are substantive nouns which denote hidden substrataums and accidents. Disputes had also arisen because many of them relied to heavily on spatial metaphors in their attempts to analyze mind. They attempted to fit mind into ready-made concepts instead of constructing their concepts from what is actually given in the immediacy of experience. His predecessors,
Berkeley maintained, had gone wrong because they had divorced the self from the living mind.

(5) Conclusion

The Philosophical Commentaries clearly indicate that Berkeley was much concerned over the problem of mind. The work marked a definite advance in Berkeley's thinking concerning the nature of mind. His development can be summed up through stages: Having rejected the metaphysical reality of matter, Berkeley at first tried to take the simplest alternative — that persons were the sole existent beings. He moved beyond this panpsychistic belief to the theory that mind or soul meant only a complex idea which was composed of existence, willing, and perceiving; therefore, mind could be known and defined. This hypothesis was modified and eventually rejected once the contrast of active spirit and passive idea came into the center of his attention. Berkeley concluded that it would be absurd to suppose that a man could know his mind via an idea, for an idea was inert and thoughtless. He then faced the problem of differentiating the activities of understanding and perceiving from their contents or objects. His solution — and last position — was that willing, understanding, and perceiving were all activities and thus inseparable. Thus, there was one activity under different names, and this activity was spiritual substance. Reality, therefore, was to be composed of spirits, ideas and objects of sense. There were no hidden substrata or anything which would escape the senses and, as Berkeley pointed out later, introspective awareness.

The Philosophical Commentaries settled the issue: henceforth mind and inert things were to be sharply distinguished from one another in Berkeley's philosophy. Mind would be active, and ideas would be passive.
Barkeley, therefore, became an uncompromising dualist. He was willing to take the things of experience into the mind, but he would not allow under any circumstances the things to become the mind, nor infect it, nor merge with it. Ideas and mind were to be two different kinds of things which have nothing in common with one another.

The work of the Philosophical Commentaries profoundly affected Berkeley's doctrines of knowledge, of being and change, and of language. Knowing, for Berkeley, became a relationship between the active subject and the passive object without any sort of merging between them. Being, for him, was the existence of spirit and idea, and there was nothing else. Change became the effect of a real active cause; causality would be identified with agency. There would be causes and effects; the causes could only be spirits, and the effects or ideas were causally inert. Berkeley had also taken a critical look at language and concluded that problems concerning the nature of the self arose primarily out of linguistic confusions.

The Commentaries are of crucial importance for understanding Berkeley's concept of the finite self. They indicate that Berkeley was very clear about his beliefs concerning the nature of mind, and that his beliefs would not contradict his esse est percipi principle.
Notes to Chapter II


2. p. 4.
3. p. 3.
4. p. 4.
5. p. 5.
6. p. 5.
7. p. 5a.
8. 2/24.
9. 4/4.
10. 8/0.
11. 154.
12. 37a.
13. 131.
14. 155.
15. 176a.
16. 178.
17. 223.
18. 230.
19. 228.
20. 362a.
21. 429.
22. 437.
23. 478.
24. 478a.
25. 523.
29. 576.
30. 576a.
31. 577.
32. 578.
33. 579.
34. 579.
35. 580.
36. 581.
37. 642.
38. 576.
39. 544.
40. 643.
41. 537.
42. 537.
43. 638.
44. 639.
45. 672a.
46. 777.
47. 848.
48. 788.
49. 854.
50. #829.
51. #828.
52. #863.
53. A.A. Luce, "Development Within Berkeley's Commonplace Book", *Mind*, XLIX, 193 (January 1940), 45.
III

Berkeley's Mature Concept of the Self

(1) Introduction

In the Principles Concerning Human Understanding, The Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonus, and Alciphron, George Berkeley put forward his mature concept of the finite mind. In this chapter it will be our task to make clear what Berkeley meant by a particular human self or mind, how we have knowledge of our mind, and how we talk about it. These various topics will be treated in six sections.

The first section will examine Berkeley's thinking on the nature of language, for that is most important for understanding his concept of the finite mind. In the second section we will briefly discuss Berkeley's beliefs concerning causality. The third section will explain Berkeley's concept of mind as he presented it in the first edition of the Principles and the first and second editions of the Dialogues. The fourth section analyzes Berkeley's teachings concerning our knowledge of mind as put forth in the third edition of the Dialogues, the second edition of the Principles, and Alciphron. The fifth section will examine Berkeley's beliefs concerning the nature of the mind. The sixth section will contain a discussion of Berkeley's distinction between the active mind and passive ideas. But, first of all, we must place Berkeley's three major works in their philosophical and historical contexts.

Bishop Berkeley is best known to contemporary philosophers through his major work A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge. The Principles, undoubtedly, is a very closely written work and for that reason has been taken by many as a model of logical
argument. From the first word in the introduction to the closing sections Berkeley relentlessly carried forward his arguments. Each word was carefully chosen to project one guiding thought. The logical rigor and relentless argument is now seen to depend upon the spade work Berkeley did in his Philosophical Commentaries.

The Principles, although written around 1708, was first published in Dublin, Ireland, in May, 1710, when Berkeley was only 25 years old. The work was republished only once by Berkeley, in London about 1734, but in this edition Berkeley included some very important changes concerning finite spirits. Like Hume's Treatise, Berkeley's work did not at first attract a great deal of written attention. In fact, his philosophy did not become the subject of written controversy until he had published Alciphren in 1732. He was first known, and throughout his lifetime was referred to, as the author of Alciphren. While his fame was still fresh, he reprinted his Principles and Three Dialogues.

As has been mentioned earlier, the Principles was intended as the first volume of a projected four volume work, which would cover the science and philosophy of Berkeley's day. In the preface to the Three Dialogues, published in 1713, in the second edition, published in 1725, and in a draft letter to Leclerc (1711), Berkeley promised a second part to the work. The second volume was to deal with what Berkeley called moral philosophy and was to include sections on metaphysics. As Jessop stated in the introduction to his edition of Berkeley's Principles, "It was to treat of the distinction between the corporeal and the mental, the nature of God, the freedom of man, the commonplaces of ethics, and apparently a nominalistic logic of demonstration, arising out of the claim that 'morality may be demonstrated as mixed
mathematics. 2 Jessop claims that Berkeley promised a third volume concerning natural philosophy, which Berkeley mentioned in #583 of his Commentaries, and Jessop further speculates that there was to be a final volume concerning mathematics, which Berkeley mentioned in commentaries #853 and #676. 3

The Three Dialogues Between Ryleas and Philenus, published first in May, 1713, republished without change in 1725, and published a third time, with significant changes concerning spirits, in 1734, is a semi-popular introduction to the Principles. In the Dialogues Berkeley does not develop new doctrines, but expounds his central ideas in the lively style of vigorous discussion. The ground covered in the Dialogues corresponds to what is contained in the first half of the Principles, sections 1 to 84. The topics of the second half of the Principles are not dealt with in detail and are, in fact, only touched on very lightly from time to time. 4

Alciphron, according to Professor Jessop, was the "Fruit of an unwanted leisure". 5 Berkeley wrote the dialogue at Newport, Rhode Island, while waiting for Parliament to provide funds for his projected college in Bermuda. The dialogue was completed in October, 1731, and published in London in February of 1732. Alciphron was the first of Berkeley's works to provoke a literature of dispute about his ideas. 6 It is his longest work and a superb example of Christian apologetics. Some readers consider Alciphron and the Three Dialogues the best examples of formal dialogue since Plato.

In Alciphron Berkeley reaffirmed the philosophic ideas he had set down in the Principles and Three Dialogues and used them to support his contention that sense-experience is the very language God uses to speak
to man. Berkeley, in the dialogue, presented a really new proof for the existence of God. He expanded his ideas concerning visual symbolism, which are found in his essay on vision, into a universal sense symbolism, by which man, in recognizing the ordered sequence of the material world, encounters the language of the Omnipotent Spirit, who governs all. Through Euphranor, in the Fourth Dialogue, Berkeley attempted to show that the phenomena perceived by sight are so connected with our tactual, muscular, and motor experience, that we can literally read this experience in terms of what we see and feel. Berkeley argued that the power of God immanent in nature is virtually speaking to us in all visual phenomena. Consequently, we have the same sort of evidence that God exists as we have that a man exists who addresses us in spoken or written symbolism.

(2) Introduction to the Principles

Professor Warnock holds the Introduction to Berkeley's Principles to be, in many ways, his most original and lively contribution to philosophy. This seems to be a just estimation of its importance, although the value of this section of his philosophy was overlooked, so that the section has received comparatively little attention from philosophers. Careful attention must be payed to the arguments it contains, for it is here that Berkeley not only criticizes "abstract ideas", which is a weak point in Locke's theory of knowledge, but also, more importantly, indicates a definite weak point in Locke's theory of language. In fact, many philosophers, otherwise sympathetic to Berkeley's arguments seem to have missed the essential point in Berkeley's criticism of Locke's concept of abstract ideas. For example, Johnston said in regard to the Introduction,
Now Berkeley believes that this dust has been raised partly by our use of language, but mainly by the doctrine of abstract ideas. In order to clear away this dust which blinds the eyes of philosophy, Berkeley draws attention, in the Introduction to the Principles, to (a) the ambiguity and unsuitability of ordinary language as a philosophical medium, and (b) the confusion caused in philosophy by the doctrine of abstract ideas. With regard to (a) nothing need be said: Berkeley's critique of language follows thrice-familiar lines. 10

Johnston concluded that Berkeley's thoughts concerning language were of relative unimportance, and that his arguments against "abstract ideas" had little to do with language. However, this does not seem to be the case, for Berkeley believed that the doctrine of "abstract ideas" was the natural result of the misuse of language. In fact, he said in regard to abstract ideas, "I come now to consider the source of this prevailing notion, and that seems to be language," and further in the same section,

The truth of this appears, as from other reasons, so also from the plain conclusion of the ablest patrons of abstract ideas, who acknowledge that they are made in order to naming; from which it is a clear consequence that if there had been no such thing as Speech or universal signs there never had been any thought of abstraction. 11

The Introduction illuminates Berkeley's overall philosophy, and in addition it is crucial for coming to a sound understanding of what Berkeley meant by a self and of how we can know and talk about it. Careful attention must be paid to his arguments.

Berkeley began by asserting that many of the difficulties in philosophy and science were not due to the imperfections of the human intellect, but were difficulties of our own making.

Upon the whole, I am inclined to think that the greater part, if not all, of those difficulties which have hitherto amused philosophers, and blocked up the way to knowledge, are entirely owing to ourselves. We have first raised a dust and then complain we cannot see. 12
The dust which Berkeley speaks of was the smog of linguistic confusion. He insisted that if we could once see how these problems arose, we would find that they are no longer puzzling. In fact, the puzzles will be not solved but dissolved. Many of the doctrines about which philosophers had disputed turn out to be meaningless rather than baffling. Berkeley argued that the philosophic doctrine of substance was really a meaningless doctrine based on the misuse of language.

Berkeley maintained that Locke had held a mistaken theory of language. Locke had been concerned with the question of how a word takes on meaning and just how we can understand or come to understand the meaning of a word. Berkeley argued that Locke did not give a wrong answer to this question alone, but that his entire account of language was faulty and, therefore, led to confusion.

Berkeley attacked Locke's theory of language at the softest, most vulnerable point, namely, Locke's beliefs concerning abstract ideas. Fraser and others have argued that Berkeley was actually attacking a straw man. For example, Fraser asserts that Berkeley's attack is based on an ambiguity in the term "idea". As he pointed out,

He supposes that Locke means by idea only a concrete datum of sense, or of imagination; and he argues that we cannot without contradiction abstract from all such data, and yet retain idea. Fraser then concluded, "This polemic against Locke is therefore one of verbal confusion." Fraser maintained that Berkeley's arguments in the Introduction are not really devastating; in fact, that Berkeley had entirely missed Locke's point. However, it seems that when Berkeley was attacking "abstract ideas", whatever they may be, Berkeley was getting at a far more serious confusion on Locke's part, i.e., the assumption that all nouns, general or particular, take on meaning by being the names
of entities. Berkeley pointed out that Locke was confused about the relationship between the definition of a word and the denotation of a word. This will be discussed later on.

When Berkeley attacked abstract ideas and more importantly "abstract general ideas", he did not argue that there were no such things as general ideas; rather, he rejected a particular theory about the meaning of general terms -- the theory being the one that he attributed to Locke.

Locke was of the opinion that men could frame abstract ideas. He asserted that we are able to pick out the similar characteristics of several objects, say, flowers, and with these characteristics frame a general idea of that kind of objects. We could abstract the qualities which all flowers had in common and reject those which were possessed by some flowers but not others. After we had framed this idea, we could then assign it a name. The term "flower" was not considered the name of any particular flower, instead it was the name of an idea, an abstract general idea. The referent for a general term was an idea which we had in our mind, and if we had an abstract general idea corresponding to the word, then our general term had meaning.

The difficulty in Locke's account, which Berkeley attacked, was what exactly was meant by an abstract general idea or the finished product. The question is: what is the nature of an abstract idea? Locke was never wholly clear about what he meant by an idea, much less an abstract idea. In fact, Locke seemed to mean anything we wish to call an idea.

An abstract general idea was supposed to represent many similar particular things, i.e., the abstract idea was particular in existence.
and general in signification. Locke never made clear what he meant by such a thing and sometimes complained that it was something imperfect which could not exist. However, he still maintained (and it was extremely important for his theory of meaning) that abstract general ideas exist. Yet, there could be no object which could be like one for the ideas could not resemble any particular objects. A particular flower must have a particular shape, odor, color, and other qualities characteristic of it, but an abstract general idea could have no particular qualities but only general characteristics. As far as Locke's writings are concerned, philosophers are still very much in the dark as to precisely what "abstract general ideas" are supposed to be.

Berkeley, as Varnock said, "does not choose to let Locke escape into a thicket of vagueness". Berkeley, then, stated what Locke supposedly meant by an abstract general idea. Berkeley contended that Locke must have meant a concrete datum of the imagination. He believed that if Locke had meant this, then his account immediately became vulnerable.

Berkeley asked the very embarrassing question of whether it was possible to form an abstract general idea. Berkeley took as an example Locke's so-called abstract general idea of triangle. Locke had maintained that the abstract general idea could neither be oblique, rectangular, equilateral, equiangular, nor scalene, but it had to be all and none of these at the very same time. Thus, Locke had argued that when we frame an abstract general idea, we must disregard the particular aspects of, say, an equilateral triangle, and concentrate attention on what is familiar to all triangles. Berkeley contended that when we got through with our process of abstraction we had no idea at all, if by idea we
meant some sort of mental image. Berkeley further argued that if someone could do such a thing, then it would be absurd to attempt to argue him out of it, but Berkeley further said.

All I desire is, that the reader would fully and certainly inform himself whether he has an idea or no. And this, methinks, can be no hard task for anyone to perform. What more easy than for any one to look a little into his own thoughts, and there try whether he has, or can attain to have, an idea that shall correspond with the description that is here given of the general idea of a triangle, which is, neither oblique, nor rectangle, equilateral, equicrural, nor scalene, but: all and none of these at once. Berkeley insisted that an idea must have some particular shape, color, and other particular proportions and qualities.

After Berkeley attacked Locke's concept of abstract general ideas he attempted to do two things. (1) He attempted to provide the outline for a new theory of meaning for words. (2) He attempted to point out the reason why philosophers came to embrace the doctrine of abstract ideas, or as Berkeley said, "I come now to consider the source of this prevailing notion, and that seems to be to be language." Berkeley, as we noted earlier, did not argue that there were no general ideas, but that there were no such things as "abstract general ideas", i.e., the kind described by Locke. Berkeley argued that a general idea was only a particular used or considered in a general way. Generality was not a species of ideas, rather it was part of the way an idea was used. A general idea is an example, for we use a particular idea to talk about a whole class of things. For instance, when a mathematics professor is teaching the properties of triangles, he uses the drawing of a particular triangle to demonstrate the properties of all triangles. What Berkeley did in calling a general idea an example was to emphasize the use of an idea. A general idea was then a particular used in a certain way for a definite purpose.
By seeing how ideas become general we come to a proper understanding of general terms. A word does not become general by naming an "abstract idea", for there are no intrinsically general ideas. Again, Berkeley emphasises the use,

But it seems that a word becomes general by being made the sign, not of an abstract general idea, but of several particular ideas, any one of which it indifferently suggests to the mind. 19

There are no such things as general ideas to which general terms refer, but generality is a part of the way we use language. "It is that things, names, or notions, being in their own nature particular, are rendered universal." 20

Locke would maintain that "George" is a proper name and "rock" is a general term. The word "George" denotes a particular person and "rock" denotes an abstract idea. As Warnock pointed out, Locke located the distinction between a particular and general term in the nature of the things named. 21 Berkeley located the difference in the use of the words. By "George" Berkeley would agree that we denote a particular person, but by "rock" we denote any rock. The essential feature of a general term is that it can be applied to any object of a certain nature. "Rock", then, is not the name of anything. To say that a word is general, is not to say what entity it names, but how we use the term.

Berkeley, as we have indicated earlier, attacked Locke's concept of "abstract general ideas", because it was the best way to get at a much more fundamental problem. Berkeley tried to point out that Locke had been confused over the way a word takes on meaning. Thus, Locke's assumptions concerning the nature of language led him astray. Locke believed that each word should have a settled signification or meaning,
and by this he meant that each word should denote one idea and ultimately each idea should refer to either one object or to the general features of several objects. Locke assumed that for a word to have a settled meaning meant that the word had to name a determinate entity. Berkeley did not object to the belief that each word should have a precise and settled meaning, and he pointed out that general terms have meaning but not by denoting general ideas. Berkeley said,

It is thought that every name has, or ought to have, one only precise and settled signification, which inclines men to think there are certain abstract, determinate ideas which constitute the true and only immediate signification of each general name. Berkeley argued that it is one thing for a word to retain the same definition and another the same denotation.

For example, a 'triangle' is defined to be 'a plain surface comprehended by three right lines' by which that name is limited to denote one certain idea and no other.

A definition, Berkeley pointed out, is not anything like what Locke had called an "abstract idea". In a definition we are not required to say anything about the size of the surface, whether the sides are short or long, equal or unequal, nor what angles they are inclined to each other. The definition, also, can be made as general or specific as we please to guide proper denotation. Thus, a definition could be general enough whereby we could correctly denote any triangular figure. But, it is also possible to restrict the denotation of a word by qualifying the definition. However, Berkeley made clear that a definition is not an idea, image or anything a term names, rather a definition serves quite another purpose. Berkeley then pointed out,

It is one thing for to keep a name constantly to the same definition, and another to make it stand everywhere for the same idea; the one is necessary, the other useless and impracticable.
Berkeley, therefore, pointed directly to the root source of Locke's confusion, for Locke had been confused over the distinction between the denotation of a word and the definition of a word. The word "triangle" does not name or denote a definition. The definition is not an abstract idea which a general term names, rather the definition provides the rules for the proper and consistent use of a term. The definition provides the rules for denotation. Locke, we must point out, was certainly aware of the function of his abstract idea, for through it a word could refer to particular objects. Yet, he failed to realize that a general term does not name or denote a definition.

Berkeley, therefore, pointed out that words not only denote but also designate. The word "cow" denotes "Elsie", "Bossy" and all the other things to which the word is applicable. A word, however, also designates a set of characteristics, the characteristics which a thing must have in order for a word to be applicable. The designation or definition is most important, for it governs the use of the word. If we know the definition of a word we know the conditions of applicability. We know under what conditions we can or cannot apply the word. The definition, then, gives the word meaning for it supplies the rules for proper usage. Meaning, therefore, is primarily a relationship between a word and its definition or rules of usage. Hence, I may say that I know the meaning of my words if I use them correctly (according to rule) to denote aspects of experience of which I am aware.

Berkeley also criticized Locke's assumption that language had no other end than the communication of ideas. Locke's theory assumed that the only use of language was to convey information and that the speaker's aims were achieved when and if the listener had understood what he had
said. Berkeley argued,

Besides, the communicating of ideas marked by words is not the chief and only end of language, as is commonly supposed. There are other ends, as the raising of some passion, the exciting to, or detering from action, the putting the mind in some particular disposition. 26

Language, then, serves a multitude of purposes, such as, the giving of orders, asking of questions, and inciting of emotions, as anyone will agree who has attended any sort of political rally or a good many church services. The chief end of most politicians and ministers is not to convey information but to arouse in the audience emotions, practical attitudes, or certain frames of mind.

Locke's theory of language was misleading in a more important way according to Berkeley,

Unless we take care to clear the First Principles of Knowledge from the embarras and delusion of Words, we may make infinite reasonings upon them to no purpose; we may draw consequences from consequences, and be never the wiser ... 27

If each word is supposed to stand for or name an idea in the speaker's mind, this causes a good many perplexities. Philosophers ask unanswerable questions about the sorts of entities to which general terms presumably refer. If each word is the name of an idea, then it should be possible for us to pick out and examine the idea the word names. Berkeley argued (this is extremely important) that many words separated from their contexts cannot lead us to any sort of worthwhile conclusions. For instance, I may say in reference to a bird flying in the sky that the bird moves, and I would certainly be understood. However, within Locke's framework it is permissible to extract the words from the context and ask about the ideas or entitites to which the names supposedly refer, i.e., we could ask questions about the idea of motion apart from any context.
A little reflection shows us that this leads to all sorts of perplexities. Berkeley insisted that we can perfectly well understand the meanings of our words in context, but reasoning about many words apart from any sort of context leads us into nothing but infinite difficulties.

Locke's theory of language leads us to perplexities in fields we are familiar with. Scientists, in Berkeley's time, Warneck pointed out, complained because they could not understand motion and force. Yet, they were perfectly familiar with planetary motion and certain forces in nature. The trouble was that they were in search of the thing that was motion and force. The mistake entered the scene by way of the belief that there must be something to which each word refers, whether it be an idea, entity, or object. Philosophers had assumed that every word was a name.

Abstract ideas and the theory of language it rested on, opened a door which, should be kept closed. Berkeley insisted that we are directly aware of the external world and our own functioning minds. The words we use to describe what we experience, if they are to have meaning for us and be useful in our language, must refer to what we can experience. If this were not true then we could never learn the meaning of our words. If we could only talk about words that refer only to ideas, and we are never able to know the objects to which the ideas were supposed to conform, then we could never understand or know the meaning of our words.

Locke talked about material and spiritual substance and admitted that they were something we knew not what. He did not conclude that these words were meaningless; rather, he seemed to be caught in his assumptions about language. The important point is that if all the
words we use refer only to ideas which are in the mind, and never refer directly to the external world or the mind, then everything is out of reach. We do not live in a real world, nor do we have any knowledge of it, rather, we are forever prisoners of a world of appearances, and our knowledge is confined to shadows. Locke’s theory of language led to difficulties because it permitted words to refer to things that we do not experience. Berkeley contended that the concepts of material and spiritual substance were the results of the Lockian theory of meaning.

In conclusion we may say that words, for George Berkeley, take on meaning in a variety of different ways. (1) Proper names like “George” refer to a particular person or persons whose name it is. (2) There is another use for words, namely, the influencing of conduct and action; which may be done either by forming rules to act by, or by raising certain passions, dispositions, and emotions in our minds. (3) Context, many times, governs the meaning of words. Names are often used like letters in algebra. Although something is denoted by each word, yet to proceed correctly, we do not assume that at each step the words suggest something to thought. Thus, words, quite often, take on meaning by the grammatical purpose they serve in a sentence. (4) General terms are not the proper names of anything, rather in accordance with rules of usage they denote a number of similar particular objects.

Berkeley, throughout his philosophical development, made use of his insights into the nature of language. In De Motu Berkeley pointed out that scientific terms like “attraction”, “action”, “reaction”, “impetus” and others could be meaningfully used although they do not denote anything. The terms could be defined as mathematical hypotheses which could aid
scientists to mathematically explain the workings of all natural phenomena. The words only become meaningless when scientists assume that they are the names of real qualities in bodies. Then they become the names of occult qualities which are impossible to discover. As will be pointed out later, Berkeley’s insights into the nature of language and meaning are of the utmost importance for understanding the concept of notional knowledge.

(3) Causality

The philosophy of George Berkeley is not just the denial of what philosophers had called matter, nor was it just a commonsense theory of perception; rather, it seems that Berkeley’s entire position, in a major sense, was a speculation that perhaps spirits or spiritual substance (as defined by Berkeley) are the only possible causal agents in reality. That is, his position can be taken to mean that causality is only meaningful in terms of agency.

In the reply to Johnson’s first letter, Berkeley attempted to make clear what he meant by causality. He contended that causality could be understood in a wide variety of senses. However, what he called a properly active or efficient cause, could only be conceived of as pure spirit or mind. In other words, Berkeley did not believe there could be any action, strictly speaking, except where there was present some will. He further argued that this concept did not hinder scientists from talking about what he referred to as "occasional causes" which were nothing but sighs. The signs, he maintained, were all that was needed for physics.

Berkeley believed that to argue for some sort of unthinking agent as a cause, could be of no possible value in any physical explanation,
and beyond this he did not believe that such a concept was even thinkable. Berkeley argued that to attribute causality to matter was useless and logically inconceivable, or as Philonus asserted,

\[\text{... And though it should be allowed to exist, yet how can that which is inactive be a cause; or that which is unthinking be a cause of thought? ... I do by no means find fault with your reasoning, in that you collect a cause from the phenomena; but I deny that the cause deducible by reason can properly be termed Matter.}\]

What happened, Berkeley argued, was that men talked as if one idea was the efficient cause of another, and they had therefore mistaken the inferences of reason for the perceptions of sense. Consequently, they had attributed active powers to bodies or the objects of perception, and then they wondered why they were not able to discover the seat of agency in the bodies. Berkeley pointed out,

The cause of these ideas, or the power of producing them, is not the object of sense, not being itself perceived, but only inferred by reason from its effects, to wit, these objects or ideas which are perceived by sense. From our ideas of sense the inference or reason is good to power, cause, agent. But we may not therefore infer that our ideas are like unto this Power, Cause, or Active Being. On the contrary, it seems evident that an idea can be only like another idea, and that in our ideas or immediate objects of sense, there is nothing of power, causality, or agency included. Hence it follows that the Power or Cause of Ideas is not an object of sense, but of reason. Our knowledge of the cause is measured by the effect; of the power, by our idea.

Berkeley insisted that spiritual agency, both human and divine, finite and infinite, could be the only efficient and final causes of motion in the world.

Berkeley contended that there could be no material or unthinking causes. The only true or real causes are spirits. God is the true cause of the changes that take place in the external world, and the finite spirits have a derived and very limited causal power. Nature, or the external world, is only an ordered system of effects which are not true
causes. Here Berkeley definitely anticipated Hume: because of the orderliness, regularity, and uniformity of natural events, one event serves as a sign of another event with which it is customarily conjoined. What happened, Berkeley argued, was that philosophers had called the signs causes, but, in truth, they were not causes at all. Philosophers had improperly used the term. Berkeley contended that when we talk about "natural causes" we mean only, by these words, customary signs.35

It would appear that Berkeley, in terms of his beliefs concerning causality, was far ahead of his time. His attack on the Newtonain world view was brilliant, and it is evident that his views on what we call "causal laws" definitely anticipated the beliefs of contemporary physics. V.C. Aldrich pointed out the relationship between Berkeley's views and those of contemporary physics.

It is interesting to think that the upshot of this view is in accord with the findings of quantum theory in recent physics, which asserts that between events in nature there is no real interaction, no strict or dynamic causation, but only correlations or coexistences on the basis of which certain general averages are statistically obtained to serve as the "causal laws" of nature. Berkeley would have been delighted to learn that physicists, by their own machinations, had chanced across such a view of physical causation, with the category of physical force ruled out. 36

So then, for Berkeley, causality could only be conceived of in terms of agency. Spirit, then, is the only causative agent in the universe. We know that God is the causative agent in the external world via our reason, but we are intimately aware of our own limited but causative powers. Imagination reveals most fully our causative power as we have the ability to construct mental images. In thinking, willing, remembering, and perceiving, we are also aware of our causative powers as we are able to draw relationships between ideas, recall past events, and put our
limbs in motion. The ability to do these things, Berkeley argued, gives us a clue to the nature of mind.

(4) Concept of the Spirit in the First Edition of the Principles

In Chapter II and the two preceding sections we have attempted to lay the necessary groundwork for Berkeley's concept of the finite self. In those sections the attempt was made not only to trace the evolution of Berkeley's thinking concerning the finite self but also to point out his views concerning language which will enable us to understand what Berkeley meant by a mind and how we are able to talk meaningfully about it. In this, and the following sections, we will analyze Berkeley's mature concept of the finite self and his concept of notional knowledge.

The dictum that Berkeley is most famous for is esse est percipi. This principle was stated in the first section of the Principles. Berkeley argued that the sensible ideas, or the objects of the external world, could exist only in relation to minds. They did not exist apart from mind, for the sensible things could not exist in anything that could not sense.

Sensible objects were not the copies or images of anything. There was not a hidden material world which supposedly lay beneath the veil of ideas; rather, the ideas were the real things, i.e., an idea for Berkeley meant an object which we experience. Berkeley did not accept Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities, for ideas were ideas and they could not be experienced apart from each other. By sense, Berkeley argued, it is evident that we could only know ideas.

Berkeley's claim has been widely misunderstood up to the present day. To take a recent example, Jean-Paul Sartre in his famous Being and Nothingness objected that, in addition to the perceived being, there
must be a perceiver\textsuperscript{37}—just as if Berkeley had ever supposed otherwise. Sartre's argument indicates that he never read beyond the first section of the *Principles*, for in section 2 Berkeley argued that besides the variety of objects of the external world, there is something which knows or perceives them. This perceiving agent also exercises many operations about *ideas*, for it wills, imagines, and remembers ideas. The perceiving active being is what Berkeley called mind, the spirit or soul, or what we refer to when we talk about ourselves. The terms we use to talk about mind do not denote any one idea or "congeries of ideas", rather, mind is something which is completely different from an idea.\textsuperscript{38}

Berkeley had three reasons for believing that mind is something different from its contents: (1) Berkeley insisted that mind was not a mere hypothesis nor even just a reasoned conclusion, but it was an inescapable fact of first-person experience. When we are conscious of thinking, willing, and perceiving, we become aware of mind, for we are aware of mental activity. (2) Mind could not be an idea for the essential quality of an idea is that it is passive. It would imply a manifest contradiction to argue that the activity we call mind is the result of a passive entity, which Berkeley technically referred to as an idea. (3) *Ideas* are perceived, and the very fact of their being perceived demands the existence of a subject which perceives them. If the *ideas* are realities, and Berkeley argued that they were, then the subject perceiving them must also be an existent reality. If the *ideas* are known to be real beings and what they are by the very nature of their passivity, then the knowing subject is also a real being and what it is by reason of its activity.
The very nature of ideas and the contents of mind inform us that there is mind or spirit. Mind or spirit is the essential activity which is given in the immediacy of experience. Spiritual substance is the essential activity of which we are aware in first person experience. There are spirits and ideas, and they are radically different beings.

Spiritual substance, for Berkeley, is not an unknowable spiritual support of supposed attributes or mental qualities. Spiritual substance is directly knowable, but it is not an idea or like one. The activity of mind is the spiritual substance. Berkeley insisted that we can talk about mental substance if all we are referring to is mental activity. We cannot talk intelligently about a substance, either physical or mental, of which in principle we cannot have first hand experience.

Spirit or mind is a simple, undivided active being, "as it perceives ideas it is called the understanding, and as it produces or otherwise operates about them it is called the will." 39 The terms "will", "understanding", and "perceiving" are not the names of spiritual attributes, but they are terms that we use to talk about, to order, and to classify the activity we call mind.

An idea could never be formed of a spirit because all ideas are passive and inert, and it is impossible that they could ever represent to us "by way of image or likeness, that which acts". Berkeley further argued in the same section that a little reflection would make it plain to us that to talk about having an idea which is supposed to be like "that active Principle of motion and change of ideas is absolutely impossible." 40 The nature of spirit precludes the possibility that it could ever be represented by an idea.
In section 2 Berkeley called upon the reader to establish his claim, for he asked the reader if he could frame any sort of idea of an active being or whether "he has ideas of two principles of power, marked by the names will and understanding, distinct from each other, as well as from a third idea of Substance or Being in general, with a relative notion of its supporting or being the subject of the aforesaid powers -- which is signified by the name soul or spirit." The words "will", "understanding", "mind", "soul", and "spirit" do not denote, nor are they the names of, different ideas. Such words do not denote anything like ideas, but denote something which is vastly different from an idea; and because they are the terms we use to characterize the way an agent functions, they could not themselves be represented by any sort of idea.

Berkeley argued that our term "mind" denotes mental functioning, for the only knowledge we have of mind is that of activity. When, through prejudice, we assign passive characteristics to mind and active characteristics to ideas, we find ourselves faced with perplexing problems. When we realize that mental activity cannot be squeezed into spatial categories and that we cannot talk about mind as if it were an object, the difficulties will fall away. Mind is a totally different kind of being and must be talked about in a different way.

In arguing that the substance of spirit is activity, Berkeley insisted that the soul always thinks, or rather, is always active. He further said, "And in truth whoever shall go about to divide in his thoughts or abstract the existence of spirit from its cogitation, will, I believe, find it no easy task." What Berkeley seems to have in mind is that we cannot abstract the existence of spirit from its active manifestations, for we
cannot conceive of spirit as an underlying substratum. Thinking is not a faculty of spirit, rather it is one way spirit fully manifests itself.

In Alciphron and the Three Dialogues Berkeley made explicit a point he had considered in the Philosophical Commentaries. He made clear a difficulty we face when we attempt to understand the finite mind. Berkeley argued in Alciphron that we usually imagine before we reflect, and we perceive by the senses before we imagine. Now the sense of sight being the most clear, distinct, and comprehensive of all the senses, it becomes natural for us to assist our thinking by imagination, and imagination by the senses, and the senses by sight. We feel at home in using spatial metaphors in our discussions and in the construction of our concept of mind, for it becomes agreeable to use corporal metaphors to illustrate what we mean by spiritual things. We talk about mind in a figurative sense and express the operations of mind by allusions and terminology borrowed from sensible things. Berkeley said,

Nor is there anything in this but what is conformable to the general analogy of language; most part of the mental operations being signified by words borrowed from sensible things; as is plain in the terms comprehend, reflect, discourse, etc., which, being applied to the mind, must not be taken in their gross, original sense.

Trying to clarify our thinking regarding mind we lead ourselves into difficulties because we forget our metaphorical use of language and metaphors are then treated as descriptions. In the last part of the Principles Berkeley pointed out the false doctrines which have arisen because of the spatial conceptualization of mind.

Because philosophers have used spatial metaphors, they have talked about mental activity in the same way one would talk about the movement of an object. This way of speaking has led to the belief that mind is an
object which possesses qualities. The assumption is that mind is something more than its manifestations. Berkeley, however, insisted that willing, perceiving, and thinking were not faculties of mind, but various ways the mind fully manifests itself. The spiritual substance is only activity and not an unknown support of accidents. Berke

y maintained that such a search was fruitless, for it was just as reasonable to suppose one could comprehend a round square as to have an idea of or to perceive the so-called entity mind. The trouble was that philosophers had been caught in the web of a faulty theory of language and were forced to introduce unknown entities to support a false theory of meaning.

Because of the opinion that mind could be known via a sensation or idea, many thinkers had been led to scepticism concerning the existence of mind. The sceptics claimed that mind was simply the "Congeries of perceptions" because we never had an idea of mind itself. Berkeley said,
That an idea, which is inactive, and the existence whereof consists in being perceived, should be the image or likeness of an agent subsisting by itself, seems to need no other refutation than barely attending to what is meant by those words. 47

Berkeley considered the possibility that though an idea could not resemble mind in its thinking, acting or subsisting by itself, perhaps it could resemble it in some other way; for, in fact, it was not necessary that an idea should resemble the original in every respect. 48 Berkeley simply asked the question of what would happen if we left out the power of thinking, willing, and perceiving from our idea of mind. What then would be left for the idea to resemble? Obviously there would be nothing left, for as Berkeley said,

by the word spirit we mean only that which thinks, wills, and perceives; this, and this alone, constitutes the signification of that term. If therefore it is impossible that any degree of those powers should be represented in an idea, it is evident there can be no idea of spirit. 49

Mind, self or spirit is the mental activity which is entirely distinct from ideas. The essential characteristic of spirit seems to be volition; but volition or will is not separable from the other manifestations. Rather, in thinking, imagining, and perceiving, the volitional characteristic is present. The spirit or mind is the causative agent which exercises real productivity in the world. Everything a spirit does is pervaded by and accompanied with the volitional activity. 50

Berkeley believed that after what he had stated, it should be evident that mind could not be known in the same way an inactive object is known. Spirits and ideas are things which are completely different, and when we say "they exist", "They are known", or the like, "these words must not be thought to signify anything common to both natures." 51 There is nothing common about the two aspects of reality, and, we cannot expect
to know spirit by enlargement of the faculties used to know ideas. To believe that we could know spirit by an idea is as absurd as the belief that we could see a sound or touch a smell.52

(5) Berkeley's Concept of Notional Knowledge

In the first edition of the Principles, Berkeley contended that we have ideas, in the larger sense, of mind. What he meant is, "We understand the meaning of the word, otherwise we could not affirm or deny anything of it."53 In the second edition of the Principles, however, Berkeley argued that we had notions of mind. The term "notion" first appeared in section #27 where Berkeley said,

Though it must be owned at the same time that we have some notion of soul, spirit, and the operations of the mind, such as willing, loving, hating, -- inasmuch as we know or understand the meaning of these words. 54

No other part of Berkeley's philosophy has caused philosophers more trouble than what Berkeley meant by the term "notion". This section, and the others where the term was inserted, have provided the subject matter for a good deal of speculation as to what Berkeley meant by the term.

The French thinker, Georges Lyon, interpreted this passage and the others to mean that Berkeley was using the term "notion" to reintroduce abstract ideas. He argued that Berkeley moved to a position that mind is able to form some sort of abstract idea of spiritual substance. If this is true, then Berkeley's concept of spiritual substance is open to the same criticisms Berkeley brought against Leake's concept of material substance. It is evident in light of Berkeley's philosophy that his interpretation is not true. Berkeley pointed out that the mind is known directly and not through the mediation of an abstract idea.
G.A. Johnston mentioned that Edmund Husserl offered an interpretation of Berkeley's term "notion".

Berkeley's notions, says Husserl, are identical with Locke's Ideas of Reflexion, and include both the Simple Ideas of Reflexion and the Complex Ideas of Reflexion. 55

Johnston points out that Husserl's interpretation, though suggestive, does not fit the facts. Locke had asserted that reflection was an internal sense which is not true for Berkeley. Notional knowledge is different from any type of perception.

Johnston was of the opinion that when Berkeley was talking about notional knowledge he meant universal meanings or a kind of conceptual knowledge. Johnston equated perceptual knowledge with particulars and notional knowledge with universal or conceptual knowledge. Professor Luce argued against Johnston's interpretation,

Now the passages inserted in the second edition never mention universality or suggest it; Berkeley is not thinking of universal and particular, but of active and passive; he wants to avoid of speaking of an idea of spirit, which for him is a contradiction in terms, like a round square, and he thinks that a notional knowledge of spirits, acts, and relations, will get around the difficulty. But notional knowledge here has nothing whatever to do with conceptual knowledge. It would be sheer nonsense to say, 'I have a conceptual knowledge of myself, or of Mr. Jones'; that is not what Berkeley intends when he says that he has a notion of himself or other spirits. He simply means that he knows himself and knows other minds, but not in the same way as he knows things of sense. 56

However, when we attempt to evince from Luce anything more concerning the meaning of the term "notion", we have little success. Luce, Johnston, and the others point out that Berkeley meant by the term something other than an idea but they do not quite know what Berkeley meant.

Berkeley's critics have not been quite so understanding. They point out that the inability of those sympathetic to Berkeley's thought to explain what the good Bishop meant by the term indicates that Berkeley
himself did not know. Therefore, they go on to say that Berkeley can give no adequate account of self-knowledge.

It seems that the reason philosophers have had so much difficulty understanding what Berkeley meant by notional knowledge, is that they failed to consider two important points in Berkeley's philosophy. The task before us is to understand what Berkeley meant by notional knowledge and to do this we must first clear up the relevant points of his epistemology.

The first point we must mention is that Berkeley very definitely broke with the representative theory of vision. He contended that the ideas are not mental images which stand between us and reality, but the ideas are the real things. This did not mean that the ideas were in the mind, rather they were mind dependent. Without a knowing or perceiving mind it makes no sense to talk about an object, for all we know about them are the perceivable qualities. The objects of the external world are bundles of perceivable qualities.

Thus, for example, a certain colour, taste, smell, figure, and consistence having been observed to go together, are accounted one distinct thing, signified by the name apple; other collections of ideas constitute a stone, a tree, a book, and the like sensible things; 57

Knowing, then, in one sense for Berkeley is a relationship between the active mind and passive ideas. The question is then raised, can I, who has knowledge of inactive ideas, also, and in the same sense of the word, know the active spirit or mind? In light of his philosophy Berkeley answered this question in the affirmative. Mind and ideas are directly known, but this does not mean they are alike. 58

Berkeley asserted that we have a direct and immediate knowledge of ourselves. We are able to comprehend or gain a direct knowledge of our
own existence by what he called "inward feeling or reflection". Berkeley argued that we are directly and immediately aware of mental activity. We are aware of the activities of thinking, willing, perceiving, and the other functioning processes we call mind. The contents of mind cannot account for the activity because they are visibly inert, or, as Berkeley said, "all the unthinking objects of the mind agree in that they are entirely passive, and their existence consists only in being perceived." The functioning with ideas, the drawing of relations between ideas, the process of constructing mental images, the moving the body into action, all inform us of the essential activity of mind, and of this activity we are directly and immediately aware. As Berkeley said, "... the being of my self, that is, my own soul, or thinking principle, I evidently know by reflection." The activity and only the activity is what Berkeley called mind or spiritual substance. "What I am myself, that which I denote by the term I, is the same with what is meant by soul, or spiritual substance." There is no underlying substratum which supposedly does these things. The activities we call willing, perceiving, imagining, and thinking are all we know about mind, and, for Berkeley, this is mind. By "inward feeling", Berkeley seemed to mean something very similar to what Bergson meant by intuition. We have what Johnston called a "feeling consciousness of activity". This is not a mysterious or occult form of knowledge; rather, it is an immediate seeing or a direct awareness.

What many philosophers have failed to consider is that George Berkeley was not just an empiricist, but he was a radical empiricist carefully attending to what is given in the immediacy of experience. Note what he said in the Introduction to the Principles,
The largest views are not always the clearest, and that he who is short-sighted will be obliged to draw the object nearer, and may, perhaps, by a close and narrow survey, discern that which had escaped far better eyes. 64

One aspect of reality is static and inert while the other is sheer activity or a vibrant functioning. Both aspects are known, directly known, but known in different ways. Berkeley said in De Motu.

"Something thinking and active is a fact, and we experience it in ourselves as a source of motion. We call it soul, mind, or spirit." 65

We have first hand knowledge of our own minds, but this does not mean that we perceive it. Mind is an indivisible, unextended, non-spatial activity, which can be described as thinking, perceiving, and willing. Mind, then, is not like an idea, nor can it be represented by an idea. Berkeley's entire concept of mind as activity is at stake here. To argue that you could have an idea of the mind or spirit would confound the distinction between inert effects and active causes. Berkeley said,

Whereas a soul or spirit is an active being, whose existence consists, not in being perceived, but in perceiving ideas and thinking. It is therefore necessary, in order to prevent equivocation and confounding natures perfectly disagreeing and unlike, that we distinguish between spirits and idea. 66

If we had ideas of mind, we would have passive representations of activity, which is impossible. Luce cogently summed up one major point in Berkeley's epistemology when he declared,

... he is attacking representative ideas of spirit ... he is attacking the Lockian concept of the soul ... He insists that we really know ourselves and know God and finite spirits, but have no pictorial sketch or copy of the essential activity of spirit. 67

The second, and most important point, which must be mentioned is that when Berkeley talks about "notions" he always alludes to the meaning of words. For example, consider what he said in section #27,
Though it must be owned at the same time that we have some notion of soul, spirit, and the operations of the mind, such as willing, loving, hating, in as much as we know or understand the meaning of those words. 68

again, in §140 he said,

In a large sense, indeed, we may be said to have an idea or rather a notion of spirit; that is we understand the meaning of the word, otherwise we could affirm or deny anything of it. 69

If one carefully analyzes the sections in the Principles, Three Dialogues, and Alciphron where Berkeley discusses notions, it becomes evident that when Berkeley says we have notions of mind he is talking about the meaning of our mental terms. Now the only place that Berkeley ever discusses the meaning of words is in the Introduction to the Principles and briefly in the seventh dialogue of Alciphron. Therefore, we will have to go back to the Introduction and consider again what Berkeley had to say about the meaning of words.

The Introduction to the Principles clearly indicates that George Berkeley believed that there was an integral relationship between knowledge and language. He said,

Language is of excellent use, in that by their means all that stock of knowledge which has been purchased by the joint labours of inquisitive men in all ages and nations may be drawn into the view and made the possession of one single person. 70

Although knowledge has been aided by language it has been seriously perplexed and obscured by the abuse of words. Berkeley contends that words have often imposed themselves on the understanding and led philosophers astray. Berkeley argued that he intended to make clear to himself what he meant by his key terms,

Whatever ideas I consider, I shall endeavor to take them bare and naked into my view; keeping out of my thoughts, so far as I am able, those names which long and constant use hath so strictly united with them. 71
By adhering to a methodology of radical empiricism Berkeley believed he could accomplish two tasks: (1) Clear away verbal confusions by basing concepts on what he discovered in the immediacy of experience; (2) extricate himself from the fine and subtle net of abstract ideas. He would not talk about or claim to have knowledge of anything of which he nor any other person could have no first hand knowledge. Now it is interesting to note that Berkeley believed that the attainment of these particular advantages presupposed a deliverance from the deceptive character of language. He realized this would be no easy task, and was not foolish enough to believe that he could fully succeed. "So difficult a thing it is to dissolve a union so early begun, and confirmed by so long a habit as that betwixt words and ideas."  

Berkeley, therefore, realized that the increase and dissemination of knowledge was fully dependent on language. He realized that we must use language to communicate what we experience, but this meant that we must use language very carefully. Language, then, to be of use had to convey what is actually the case. Thus, it was important to discover just how words do take on meaning.

By adhering to a method of radical empiricism Berkeley attempted to discover the relationship between what is known or given in first person experience and how the given could be adequately conveyed in language. His inquiries led him to the discovery that words take on meaning in a number of different ways, and that meaning does not necessarily involve the denotative function of a word, but that the meaning relationship is primarily between a word and its definition. He further pointed out that the word does not name or denote a definition, rather the definition provides the proper rules for denotation. If we
know the definition of a word, then we know how to use the word properly. A word, then, Berkeley believed, could have meaning although it does not denote any one thing. For example, words used in scientific discussions can have meaning although they do not denote anything. They are meaningful terms if they are consistently used according to their definitions. General terms, also, do not denote any one thing, rather they are used according to rules (definitions) to denote a number of similar things. Words that are meaningless are not necessarily words that do not denote something, rather they are words that have an inconsistent definition.

Now the question at hand is: what did George Berkeley mean by "notion"? He talked about having (1) notions of the mind, (2) notions of the operations of mind, (3) notions of relations. We will treat each of these in separate sections.

(1) Notions of the Mind

The best way to explain what Berkeley meant by "notions" of the mind is to analyze his remarks on the subject which are contained in the Third Dialogue between Hylas and Philomus. Hylas pointed out,

You admit nevertheless that there is spiritual Substance, although you have no idea of it: while you deny there can be such a thing as material Substance, because you have no notion or idea of it. Is this fair dealing? To act consistently, you must either admit Matter or reject Spirit. What say you to this? 73

And what did Berkeley answer to this cogent criticism? In the first place, Berkeley pointed out, he did not deny the existence of material substance because it is not known in first person experience, but because the very definition of the terms "material substance" is inconsistent. It is repugnant to reason to suppose that there could be such a thing. "Any things, for aught I know, may exist, whereof neither I nor any other man hath or can have any idea or notion whatsoever."74 It is
possible that there could be centaurs and gremlins for all we know, although no one has ever seen one. "But then these things must be possible, that is, nothing inconsistent must be included in their definition." Thus, there could be centaurs, gremlins, and any number of other creatures of imagination. As long as there is nothing inconsistent in the definition of a mythical being it is possible that it could exist. However, there could not be any "round squares" or "triangular circles", not because no one has ever seen one, but because the very definition of such terms necessarily prohibit the possibility of their existence. Now, although we can believe that gremlins and centaurs could exist, we must have some reason for such a belief. But we have, Berkeley pointed out, absolutely no good reason for the belief in material substance. "I have no immediate intuition thereof: neither can I immediately from my sensations, ideas, notions, actions, or passions, infer an unthinking, unperceiving, inactive Substance — either by probable deduction, or necessary consequence." Therefore, "in the very notion or definition of material substance, there is included a manifest repugnance and inconsistency." It is not only impossible that material substance should exist, but also the very words are meaningless.

Berkeley then asserted that like charges cannot be brought against the notion of spirit. That ideas should exist in what does not perceive, or be produced in what does not act, is utterly repugnant to reason. But it is not repugnant to define a thinking, active being as the subject of ideas, or the cause of them. Thus, the definition of the word "spirit" makes it a possible being. There is nothing in the definition which is repugnant to reason, and, thus, the word spirit is not only a meaningful term but it is also possible that such a thing could exist. Berkeley,
however, pointed out that a "spirit" is not in the same class with "gremlins" and "centaurs", but that the word also denotes something which we can experience. "Whereas the being of my Self, that is, my own soul, mind, or thinking principle, I evidently know by reflection." 78

Hylas, however, not fully convinced by Philemus' arguments further objected,

Notwithstanding all you have said, to me it seems that, according to your own way of thinking, and in consequence of your own principles, it should follow that you are only a system of floating ideas, without any substance to support them. Words are not to be used without meaning. And, as there is no more meaning in Spiritual Substance than in Material Substance, the one is to be exploded as well as the other. 79

Berkeley points out again that the term "spirit" does denote something given in experience. "How often must I repeat, that I know or am conscious of my own being; and that I myself am not my ideas, but something else, a thinking, active principle that perceives, knows, wills, and operates about ideas." 80 I know or am immediately aware that I perceive colors, and sounds. Reason tells me that from the very nature of colors and sounds, that they cannot perceive each other, and that mental images do not construct themselves, nor do ideas relate themselves and bring about conclusions. I am aware that I am an individual principle, which is distinct from sensible things. But, I am not conscious of the existence of matter or the essence of it. For I realize that nothing inconsistent can exist, and material substance, as defined, is inconsistent. However, there is nothing inconsistent about the definition of the word "spirit", and it denotes something of which I am intimately aware. It is a meaningful term which can be used meaningfully to describe what I immediately experience.
When Berkeley said we have notions of the mind he meant that we can use language meaningfully to convey what is revealed to us by intuition. I am aware of mental activity and I can use my language adequately to convey this insight. If my terms are meaningful and I use them correctly in referring to what I experience, I can say that I have knowledge of my mind. Notional knowledge, therefore, is concerned with the proper conveyance in language of what we do in fact experience.

(2) Notions of the Operations of Mind

Berkeley also said that we have notions of the operations of our minds. "Though it must be owned at the same time that we have some notion of . . . the operations of the mind, such as willing, loving, hating." And once again notice how Berkeley alludes to the meaning of words, "inasmuch as we know or understand the meaning of these words." Berkeley had been careful to point out that thinking, willing, and perceiving are not actual faculties of the mind; rather, they are some of the ways in which spirit fully manifests itself, "as it perceives ideas it is called the understanding, and as it produces or otherwise operates about them it is called the will." A spirit or self then "is one simple, individual, active being." Thinking, willing, and perceiving are not the names of separate faculties, rather they are ways in which we talk about or describe spirit. The question is naturally raised, if I say "the spirit thinks", then am I not making a distinction between the spirit and thinking? This naturally leads us to assume that there is a division between a spirit, soul, or mind and its faculties or attributes. Berkeley pointed out that this way of thinking is primarily due to an assumption about language. That is, the assumption that Locke made that each word names an idea. Thus, underlying every
proposition, for Locke, should be a chain of ideas which provide the referents for each word. Berkeley argued that words, many times, serve only a grammatical function to make a sentence meaningful. Therefore, that the word "mind" serves as the grammatical subject in a proposition for the predicate "thinks" does not mean that the two stand in an existential substance-attribute relationship. The word "mind" in this proposition is only the grammatical subject of the propositions we use to convey information about the various ways the mind operates.

To say "the mind thinks" is not to name a property of mind, but to describe one of the ways the mind functions. The word "thinking" is a meaningful term in that it has a definition which guides proper denotation, and the word denotes that kind of activity we classify as thinking. The term "thinking" like the words "willing", and "imagining" can be meaningfully used to describe aspects of experience of which we are directly aware. Here again we may say that we can use our language meaningfully to convey information about what we do in fact experience. For Berkeley this is notional knowledge.

(3) Notions of Relations

Berkeley has insisted that we are aware of much more in experience than just ideas. "In like manner, we know and have a notion of relations between things or ideas; which relations are distinct from the ideas or things related, inasmuch as the latter may be perceived by us without our perceiving the former." In experience we perceive ideas or things, and as rational beings we also recognize that they are related. Thus, I may very well say in regard to two objects, "the table is to the left of the chair". When we analyze this proposition we discover that we have two objects and the relation "to the left of". The phrase "to the left
of" does not denote an idea or entity between the chair and the table, nor is it a property of either one. The phrase is not the name of anything, rather the words "to the left of" is a way we use our language to describe the relationship between two objects. Berkeley had pointed out that context frequently governs the meaning of many words. If we were to take the phrase "to the left of" and ask what it means out of context, then indeed it would not mean anything. But if I say "the chair is to the left of the table", then the phrase does have meaning. We may say that we have knowledge of relations inasmuch as we are aware that objects are related, and if we can meaningfully convey in language what we experience. Thus, here again, we may claim to have a notional knowledge of relations.

What then did Berkeley mean by "notions"? He made clear that a good deal more than objects is given in experience. The major problem, however, is how can we adequately convey in language what is given? If we are not careful our language may trip us up. We are aware of mental activity and as rational beings that things are related, and we can meaningfully talk about what we experience. We can use our language to convey what we experience only if our words have meaning, and if our words denote aspects of experience of which we are aware. If we use our language adequately and correctly to convey what we experience, then we may be said to have "ideas" in a large or general sense of mind and relations. This only means that we know how to use our language consistently and correctly to convey our insights. And if we can do this, then it is a good indication that we know or understand what we are talking about.
(6) The Nature of the Finite Mind

In the first chapter we pointed out that Bishop Berkeley was not only a very strict empiricist but also an adroit rationalist. In fact, his major argument against material substance was not that it is empirically unknowable, but that the very definition is rationally inconsistent. Berkeley not only relied on rationalistic arguments to destroy materialism, but freely used them in his constructive philosophy. His rationalism is most evident in his beliefs concerning the nature of the finite mind. Berkeley takes the greatest pains to make certain that his doctrine of spiritual substance does not contain any rational inconsistencies.

In this essay we have talked a good deal about spiritual substance. The question is, what exactly did Berkeley mean by spiritual substance? Berkeley made clear that it was not "a thin vital flame, or a system of animal spirits." For Berkeley there is nothing in the slightest way material about spiritual substance. In one definite sense spiritual substance is a substratum, i.e., the substratum of ideas. It is not a substratum or support in the sense that it underlies ideas; rather, spiritual substance, in general, is the generative source of ideas. Ideas are not modes, properties, or attributes of the substance, although they exist only in relation to it.

It is therefore evident there can be no substratum of those qualities but spirit; in which they exist, not by way of mode or property, but as a thing perceived in that which perceives it. 86

Spiritual substance, for Berkeley, is also not the substratum of mental qualities. It seems that Berkeley used the word "substance" in another sense whereby he meant the real essence of an existent being. Berkeley
pointed out that when we analyze thinking, perceiving, imagining, and willing we discover that they are all activities. The essence of a finite being is not thinking, perceiving, nor willing, but it is activity, and activity, for Berkeley, is spiritual substance.

I find I can excite ideas in my mind at pleasure, and vary and shift the scenes as oft as I think fit. It is no more than willing, and straightway this or that idea arises in my fancy; and by the same power it is obliterated and makes way for another. This making and unmaking of ideas doth very properly denominate the mind active. Thus much is certain and grounded on experience. 87

Berkeley definitely has a hierarchy of spirits. At the top is God, the Pure Spirit. God is the generative source of all being, both of the finite spirits and ideas. Ideas, however, are not modes or attributes of God's mind, rather they are created and sustained by God. Berkeley argued that God perceives nothing by sense, for no external being can affect him. He is absolute and independent, and he causes all things, but is thwarted or limited by nothing. 88

Below God exist the finite minds or spirits. They are limited and dependent beings, who are liable to impressions of sense and the effects of the external agents. Finite spirits are chained to bodies, and through God's will they are forced to remain in them until God sees fit to release them. The finite spirit is a pure but limited activity, and thus is a limited source of efficient causality. The finite spirit, therefore, makes a real difference and exercises genuine productivity in the world. The finite spirit is not only a source of efficient causality but also a generative source of being. The finite spirit can, in a very limited way, construct ideas or mental images. It can also form mental images of things it has experienced and retain them in memory. The finite spirit is a rational agent. It learns to read the language of
God, the ideas, and interpret its meaning. God speaks directly, through ideas, to the finite spirits, and not only instructs them on practical matters, but reveals his very presence to them. The universe is literally the "Great Book of Nature" whereby the rational author comes into contact with the rational readers.

The defining or essential characteristic of the finite spirit is will, because in willing the spirit most fully manifests itself. Will, however, like understanding and perceiving, is not a separate faculty of spirit, rather the spirit as willing is the will. The spirit as willing exercises real productivity in the world, and thus willing is the causative manifestation of spirit. The spirit as will is not determined by outside forces, for as Berkeley said in the Commentaries, "Folly to inquire what determines the will". Thus, the spirit is free from any sort of mechanical determinism.

Again we may say that the finite spirit is not a host or multiplicity of separate faculties, but the spirit, self, or rational volitional personality is a unity. Activity is the essence of spirit or mind, i.e., rational, percipient activity. As the spirit is cognitive it is called understanding and as it is cognitive it is called will. But, as Johnston said, "But will and understanding are simply names for the operations of the self in different aspects of its life."90

The mind, spirit, or soul, Berkeley argued, is an indivisible, unextended being which thinks, acts, and perceives. He contended that it is indivisible because it is unextended. An extended thing can only be divisible. A spirit, then, is an unextended thing, "because extended, figured, moveable things are ideas, and that which perceives ideas, which thinks and wills, is plainly itself no idea, nor like an idea."91
Berkeley also contended that "The natural immortality of the soul is a necessary consequence of the foregoing doctrines." Berkeley did not believe that the finite spirit could not be annihilated, for obviously it is within God's power to do this; rather it could not be broken or dissolved by the ordinary laws of nature and motion. Ideas are seen to decay and pass away, thus, they are subject to the ordinary laws of nature. But Berkeley believed that spirits were radically different kinds of beings and thus not subject to the same fate. As the soul is indivisible, incorporeal, and unextended, it is, consequently, incorruptible.

Nothing can be plainer than that the motions, changes, decays, and dissolutions which we hourly see befall natural bodies (and which is what we mean by the course of nature) cannot possibly affect an active, simple, uncompounded substance: such a being therefore is indissoluble by the forces of nature: that is to say, the soul of man is naturally immortal.

It is plain to see that the more Berkeley appears as the Bishop the more rationalistic his thought becomes. Now Berkeley may have succeeded in demonstrating the incorporeal nature of the self, but it is doubtful whether the Bishop has in any way demonstrated the "natural immortality" of the soul. Simply because a spirit or soul is not dissolved in the same way an idea is, does not thereby prove that a spirit cannot be dissolved in some natural way. It could very well be that the power or activity of spirit could gradually diminish through a temporal span. At any rate it is difficult to conceive how Berkeley can support this contention without introducing Biblical texts.

Although Berkeley has had something to say about a finite spirit, he has had nothing to say about what I call "me". What is meant here is that he has not come to grips with what we mean by a human being or a personality. Berkeley could have discussed this in the last part of the work.
of the *Principles*. However, we may generally speculate that what he had to say would probably have been based on his concept of a rational, free agent, who in a very real sense communicates with his maker.

(7) **Active Spirit and Passive Idea**

It has been the intention in this essay to discuss the criticisms and weak points in Berkeley's concept of the finite spirit in the concluding chapter. However, for two reasons it would be well to pause here and discuss Berkeley's thinking on the relationship between active spirit and passive ideas. (1) The distinction between active spirit and passive idea has undoubtedly raised some questions in the mind of the attentive reader. (2) This discussion should set the stage for the next chapter, on *Siris*.

A proper and intelligent understanding of not only Berkeley's concept of the finite self but of his entire system rests on the proper understanding of the relationship between active spirit and passive ideas. The sensible things or ideas depend upon God for not only their creation but for their continued existence, and the contents of mind depend on the finite spirit. An annihilation of finite spirits would then mean only the passing out of existence of the contents of mind. An annihilation of the Infinite Spirit, however, would mean the total destruction of the universe. The only beings, then, that have an independent existence are spirits. The things or ideas possess only a relative and dependent existence. They do not exist in any unperceived material substratum, rather they are fully dependent on a knowing or generating spirit.

Berkeley also stripped ideas of any active characteristics. In fact, they are completely inert. The essence of an idea is inertness. As Johnston said, "Thus any reality that may be ascribed to things is merely
a courtesy-title: they are real only by the grace of God." In one sense, the only thing that can be said about them is that they are there. Their presence is a "brute-fact", but beyond this their presence, in one distinct sense, makes very little difference. Berkeley, of course, points out that ideas constitute the language of God. The world is simply the mode of communication God chooses for speaking to his creatures. Beyond the role of language the world means nothing. In itself, apart from a rational mind, the world makes no difference. Thus, it is possible to ask Berkeley why we should speak of it being anything at all?

If ideas, by their very nature, are inert, then God is always active in the world performing the most mundane tasks. He not only performs the majestic task of moving the planets, which is fitting to his nature, but he is also busily engaged in growing trees, and in our mechanized age is the efficient cause of the movements of every machine. Of course, Berkeley could argue that God delegates these tasks to angels or intermediate spirits. Thus, wherever there is movement, growth, or decay there lurks a spirit busily at work. In fact, it is difficult to understand why there is anything but spirits, i.e., can Berkeley escape the charge of panpsychism? In one sense he can, as long as ideas do exist.

The distinction between active and passive also raises the thorny problem of the relationship between the finite spirit and its body. The body of the finite spirit is simply a collection of perceptible qualities, but the qualities are not dependent on the finite spirit. The spirit exerts an influence upon the body, but the body does not in any way affect the spirit. God, then, has to be the one who causes my head to ache, my feet to hurt, and the heart to beat. What we call the natural
functioning of the body is actually the work of some other agent.

When we analyze Berkeley's radical distinction between active spirit and inert ideas we find that things are not as commonsensical as Berkeley makes them out to be. Berkeley insists that he agrees with the vulgar, but do the vulgar agree with him? Obviously, there is something strange about the relationship between me and my so-called body. This unity of perceptible qualities is not so much mine as I once thought. It is rather eerie to think that there is another spirit lurking in this body performing all the so-called natural functions.

I believe that problems like these definitely influenced Berkeley's thinking in the writing of Siris. Perhaps, Berkeley realized that his distinction between active spirits and inert ideas was much too sharp, and that his concept of "aetherial fire" may have been a conscious attempt to agree with the vulgar.
Notes to Chapter III

2. p. 5.
3. p. 6.
4. p. 151.
5. III, 1.
6. III, 1.
7. A.C. Fraser, Berkeley and Spiritual Realism (London, 1908), pp. 11-12.
9. See chapter 4 of G.J. Warnock's Berkeley for a more thorough exposition of Berkeley's thoughts concerning the nature of language and the problem of meaning.
11. WOB, I, Introduction, 118.
12. 118.
13. 118.
18. 113.
19. 115.
20. 115.
22. WOB, I, Introduction 118.
23. 118.
24. 118.
25. 118.
26. 20.
27. 20.
29. WOB, II, Alcinbon, 327.
31. 280.
32. WOB, I, Three Dialogues, 430.
34. 111.
38. WOB, I, Principles 112.
39. 27.
40. 27.
41. 27.
42. 27.
43. WOB, II, Alcinbon, 342-3.
44. WOB, I, Three Dialogues, 470.

46. WGB. I. Principles #136.

47. #137.

48. #137.

49. #138.


51. WGB. I. Principles #142.

52. #142.

53. #140.

54. #17.

55. Johnston, p. 163.


57. WGB. I. Principles #1.


59. WGB. I. Principles #89.

60. #139.

61. WGB. I. Three Dialogues, 449.

62. WGB. I. Principles #139.


64. WGB. I. Principles #14.


66. WGB. I. Principles #139.

67. Luce, Immaterialism, p. 98.

68. WGB. I. Principles #27.

69. #140.

70. WGB. I. Principles #21.

71. #21.

72. #23.

73. WGB. I. Three Dialogues, 449.

74. 449.

75. 449.

76. 449.

77. 450.

78. 449.

79. 450.

80. 450.

81. WGB. I. Principles #27.

82. #27.

83. #27.

84. #39.

85. #141.

86. WGB. I. Three Dialogues 455.

87. WGB. I. Principles #28.


89. Luce, Immaterialism, p. 48.


91. WGB. I. Three Dialogues, 448.

92. WGB. I. Principles #141.

93. #141.

IV

Siris

(1) Introduction

George Berkeley entitled his last major work *Siris: A Chain of Philosophical Reflexions and Inquiries Concerning the Virtues of Tar-Water, and divers other Subjects connected together and arising One from Another*. *Siris* was written in the Bishopric of Cloyne in the closing years of Berkeley's life. It first appeared in 1744 and immediately went through several editions. The title *Siris* is a Greek word, "the diminutive of Seira" which means "a cord or chain" and, coincidentally, the word is also the ancient Egyptian name for the Nile.¹

Berkeley wrote and published *Siris* because he believed he found a panacea, but he appealed to time and experiment to bear out his beliefs. The work is concerned with tar-water, of which Berkeley believed he had learned the medicinal virtues, while in America (1728-31). Because of the sickness and mortality in his Bishopric, which resulted from the famine that began in Ireland in 1739, Berkeley became interested in tar-water and its possible curative virtues.² There were few doctors and even fewer known cures for the diseases which plagued not only Ireland but Europe as a whole. In his capacity as Bishop, Berkeley was called upon to relieve the suffering and to aid the people in his Bishopric Cloyne. The response to his publication of *Siris*, at least to the first half, which dealt with the preparation, use, and effects of tar-water, was nothing short of sensational. The drinking of tar-water became the vogue almost overnight.

The work is not a treatise, but rather a meditation which, although it takes the reader off into many obscure corners, does have a definite
direction. Berkeley's interest in tar-water led him, in the second part of *Siris*, into speculation about the nature of reality. The meditation led him from the curative aspects of tar-water to the giver and sustainer of life, God. His guiding principle throughout the work is that there is a chain which runs through the whole system of beings and that physical nature is unified by aetherial fire, which is God's instrument in giving and sustaining life. Berkeley started from the world of sense experience and moved relentlessly upward.

In this chapter we will complete the exposition and analysis of Berkeley's concept of the finite self. The chapter will be concerned with three distinct subjects. In the first section the attempt will be made to point out that the philosophical ideas contained in *Siris*, although going beyond the earlier empiricism of Berkeley, do not contradict it. In the second section we will discuss Berkeley's concept of aether, which has a definite bearing on his concept of the self. In the third section Berkeley's position on the relationship between the mind and the body will be discussed and analyzed.

(2) The Relationship of *Siris* to Berkeley's Earlier Philosophy

*Siris*, like most of Berkeley's writings, has aroused a good deal of speculation as to what Berkeley really wanted to say. There seems to be two different views as to the significance of this work. Professor Jessop pointed out in the introduction to his edition of *Siris* that Professor Fraser, in recalling attention to Berkeley's metaphysical work, maintained that it contradicted Berkeley's earlier position. Fraser argued that the empiricist Berkeley had become a rationalist, and that the abstractions he had earlier rejected were reinstated as the only true realities. Fraser also maintained that the formerly dismissed corporeal
causes were now reinstated. Now if Fraser is correct, then *Siris* represents a repudiation of Berkeley's early empiricism. Jessop and Luce, on the other hand, contend, "Every general doctrine, and virtually every particular doctrine of his *Principles* (1710) is reaffirmed in *Siris*."2

It seems to me that *Siris* does not represent a repudiation of Berkeley's earlier empiricism, but it goes far beyond his earlier works. In one sense it represents a carefully worked out metaphysics on certain premises Berkeley had laid down in his earlier works. Berkeley still argues that the existence of ideas consists in their being perceived. He still maintained that there were no abstractions in thought and nothing corresponding to them in reality, hence, no absolute space, motion, no unknowable material and spiritual substances. Also, for our own particular interests, bodies and minds are still radically different kinds of beings. Bodies are still inactive, and science does not, properly speaking, deal with causes, but only with uniformities in nature. However, it seems that the place where Berkeley diverged the widest from his earlier views is concerning causality. Berkeley, in his early writings, asserted that there were no corporeal causes. He meant that bodies do not possess any active characteristics or qualities. Natural causes were to be understood as sign and thing signified, i.e., science noted and described the uniformities in nature. Berkeley later broadened his views when he argued that scientists could introduce concepts like "attraction", "force", and "impetus" as mathematical hypotheses, whereby they could assign mathematical quantities to these supposed entities, and use them in mathematical deductions. However, the words were meaningless if they were supposed to be the names of
existent qualities of bodies. In Siris Berkeley introduced "aetherial
fire" which is supposed to be the instrument of causal power, and he
seemed to believe that it was a power itself, though a derived or
instrumental power. The concept of aether was not a mathematical
hypothesis, nor was it a quality of bodies. Berkeley believed that it
was an existential reality, but it was not a corporeal cause. Aether,
for Berkeley, is the "life force" created by God, and used by him to
activate reality. Yet, though aether is active it is not a spirit and
can be distinguished from one. Instead of contradicting or repudiating
his earlier empiricism, I believe that Berkeley was attempting to build
a satisfactory cosmology from the insights he had attained from his
method of radical empiricism.

(3) The Concept of Aether

George Berkeley, utilizing his methodology of radical empiricism,
noted that a good deal more than ideas is given in experience. On the
one hand we are aware of static, inert objects. However, we are also
aware of our own active, rational being. Yet, in nature, we notice
organisms, plants, and animals which cannot be understood in terms of
mechanical principles alone.

Some corpuscularian philosophers of the last age have indeed
attempted to explain the formation of this world and its
phenomena by a few simple laws of mechanism. But, if we
consider the various productions of nature, in the mineral,
vegetable, and animal parts of the creation, I believe we
shall see cause to affirm, that not any one of them has hither¬
to been, or can be, accounted for, on principles merely
mechanical. 5

The evident purposiveness, growth and generation among organisms
indicates that there is a life force which animates reality. The
presence of anima which animates the given. The purposive character
indicates the presence of a guiding, governing rational Mind. Aether,
for Berkeley, is taken to be the life principle or instrument which has been created by God and used to animate reality. Yet, the aether is not mind, and can be distinguished from mind.

In the natural world there exists a rarified fire or aether, an elastic, restless element, which acts unceasingly in all the things that have life, from vegetables to animals. This aether is supposedly contained in fire. It is not an attribute of body, but enters into bodies and animates them. The aether is called a "pure invisible fire" and "the first natural mover", but Berkeley always took care to point out that he was using the terms "agency" and "cause" in a very different, subordinate and, strictly speaking, improper sense. He still remained true to his earlier teachings that the only true cause in nature or the only real mover was the divine spirit. Berkeley made this point abundantly,

The order and course of things, and the experiments we daily make, show there is a Mind that governs and actuates this mundane system, as the proper real agent and cause; and that the inferior instrumental cause is pure aether, fire, or the substance of light, which is applied and determined by an Infinite Mind in the macrocosm or universe, with unlimited power, and according to stated rules, as it is in the microcosm with limited power and skill by the human mind. We have no proof, either from experiment or reason, of any other Agent, or efficient cause, than Mind or Spirit.

The rarified fire which works in the world is the instrument of God whereby he animates things. Berkeley pointed out very clearly that we are not able to account for the phenomena of nature without admitting the immediate presence and "immediate action of an incorporeal agent, who connects, moves, and disposes all things, according to such rules, and for such purposes, as seems good to him."

The healing power which Berkeley believed he had found in tar-water indicated not only the presence of aether but of God.
The aether, or what Berkeley called "pure invisible fire", is the most subtle and elastic of all corporeal entities, and, thus, could not be a spirit or even resemble one. The aether pervades and expands itself throughout the whole universe. Berkeley maintained that air seemed to be the immediate agent or instrument in all natural things and that it was from the aether which pervaded the air that the air derived its power. It is evident that Berkeley believed the aether to be active for he asserted that it is everywhere and ready to break forth into action, but that it is guided and restrained by the greatest wisdom. Berkeley called aether the "Vegetative Soul or Vital Spirit of the World".

God is the presiding and efficient cause in reality, but the immediate instrumental cause, that moves or animates all its parts, is aether. This aethereal instrument, according to Berkeley, receives impressions or its causal power from the First Mover, and animates reality. The movement of bodies is still the province of science or physics, which, strictly speaking, does not deal with efficient causes, but only with the uniformities in nature. However, organisms and plants cannot be simply understood in terms of mechanical principles. Rather, they seem to be pervaded by a life force. Yet, the life force cannot account for the purposiveness in life. The rational, purposive direction of life indicates that the aether is controlled and guided by a Mind.

Berkeley, therefore, enlarged his views of reality. (1) There is mind which is still the only true and efficient source of causality. Mind, however, is not only characterized by its causal power, but primarily by its rational character. (2) Berkeley introduced aethereal fire which is the instrument of God and the finite spirits. Its power is derived only from God or the presiding Mind, and the aether is directed
primarily by God. It seems to be a twilight entity which exists between ideas and spirits. It has no rational characteristics, and is simply the created instrument whereby God animates reality. The presence of the aether is what distinguishes organisms from inanimate objects. (3) There are ideas or the inanimate objects which are static unless God chooses to pervade them with the aetherial fire.

Berkeley used the concept of aether in his analysis of the natural functioning of the human body. It was common parlance in Berkeley’s day for philosophers and scientists to speak of “animal spirits” which were supposed to be the entities which brought about the movements of bodies. Descartes claimed that the “animal spirits” were the entities whereby the mind and body interacted on each other. Berkeley argued that there were animal spirits in the human body, which was the instrumental or physical cause of sense and motion. Berkeley said,

The calidum innatum, the vital flame, or animal spirit in man, is supposed the cause of all motions in the several parts of his body, whether voluntary or natural. That is, it is accounted the instrument, by means whereof the mind exerts and manifests herself in the motions of the body.

Although the animal spirits or aether was an existent reality, the eye had not been able to perceive it otherwise than by its effects. Here Berkeley was definitely treading on very dangerous ground for he seemed to be re-opening the very door which he wished at all cost to keep closed. He was not only raising the possibility that unperceivable bodies could exist, but that these bodies could act. Yet, Berkeley did not argue that the animal spirits were, in principle, incapable of empirical verification but that so far they had not been discerned by the human eye. However, although it is quite possible, within Berkeley’s framework, to talk about bodies as yet unperceived, how can Berkeley get
around the introduction of active entities other than spirits?
Berkeley's major argument against material substance was that it is
impossible that such a thing could exist, i.e., it implies an
inconsistency to attribute active powers to an inactive entity. Although
Berkeley wants to introduce aether as the "animating force" or "life
principle", it seems extremely difficult to reconcile these things with
his earlier position.

Berkeley argued that finite spirits must act by instrument from
necessity, for they could not act on their bodies by any other means
than the animal spirits. This restriction does not apply to God & the
Mind which presides over the universe. God acts by instrument freely.
What Berkeley means here is that without instrumental causes we could
have no set course of nature. Without the regular course of nature,
experience would not be comprehensible and "mankind must always be at a
loss, not knowing what to expect, or how to govern themselves, or direct
their actions for obtaining of any end." 24 Because God is not restricted
to acting through the aether, this leaves room for miracles whereby God
can bring about events which do not follow the accustomed course of nature.
However, God in his benevolence freely chooses to act through instruments
so that nature will be understandable to mankind. Because of God's
benevolence man is able to direct and order his actions.

Berkeley believed that it was possible to understand the movements
of the human body in terms of animal spirits. He recognized that many
of the natural functionings were not controlled by the finite spirits.
However, the movement of the lungs, and the beating of the heart could
not be simply understood in terms of mechanical causes. Rather, Berkeley
believed that there was a "vital flame" or "life spirit" which could
account for these activities. This was a matter of empirical verification
in-so-far as we judged the effects of the aether, although the possibility
was not ruled out that we could someday empirically verify the existence
of the "life force". However, mind, spirits or efficient rational causes
were incorporeal beings and were not the subjects of any physical
considerations. They are not objects, and, thus, could not be perceived,
measured, weighed, or understood in the same way an object is understood.

The introduction of the concept of aether raises a problem which
will have to be carefully considered. If Berkeley wishes to introduce
a "life principle" which can adequately explain the workings of nature
and human bodies, then why must we look for a cause of the instrumental
cause? Why not simply stop with the aether and say it is the true cause
or efficient agent? Berkeley was aware of this problem and attempted to
answer it by making a distinction between empirical and rational knowledge,
or truths of experience and truths of reason.

Philosophers argued long before Berkeley's time and long after his
time, that certain aspects of reality could be known, not directly by
the senses, but by reason. Many of these philosophers, primarily Plato,
argued that the real world is not known at all by the senses; rather,
it is known through the faculty of reason. As we noted earlier, the
materialists argued that material substance was not known empirically
but by an inference of reason. They believed it was that in which
perceivable qualities inhered. This belief, we stated earlier, was based
partially on the peculiarity of language and partially on Aristotelian logic.
In other words, they believed that as an adjective is always the grammatical
predicate of a subject, so the qualities of an object were predicates,
attributes, or accidents of an object.
The materialists contended that matter was the cause of the sensuous impressions or ideas. They argued that we are presented with ideas, and ideas are neither dependent on us nor caused by us. Therefore, they were believed to be the effects of some cause. According to their thinking, every thing that comes to be must have a cause; hence, there must be a cause of ideas. It was then logical to assert that the cause of ideas was matter.

Berkeley’s dispute with the materialists was not over the belief that ideas must have a cause, but over the identification of the cause. He rejected matter not only on empirical grounds but on rational grounds. He found the concept unacceptable, because he believed it involved a serious intellectual inconsistency, to wit, if it were dumb and inert, it could not be a cause.

Berkeley, in company with many philosophers, believed that genuine knowledge was a knowledge of causes. He argued that the senses by themselves could not provide us with knowledge of real causes. Berkeley said,

As understanding perceiveth not, that is, doth not hear or see, or feel, no sense knoweth not: and although the mind may use both sense and fancy, as means whereby to arrive at knowledge, yet sense or soul, so far forth as sensitive, knoweth nothing. 16

Throughout his entire development Berkeley used the senses to aid reason, which would ultimately provide knowledge of the true cause of ideas. He assumed that efficient causality could only be conceived of in terms of agency. The senses acquaint us with the course of appearances or the natural effects, but thought, reason, or intellect informs us of their cause. 17

Berkeley had argued that our only first-hand knowledge of efficient causality was of the workings of the active mind. We note that we possess
the peculiar power of making and unmaking mental images. We recognize that the objects of perception resemble mental images; yet, the ideas are steadier, more lively, and coherent. We also note that ideas come into existence, change, and pass away, but the change among them is more orderly, rational, and coherent than the flux and change among the mental images. Reason informs us that the ideas must be caused by some mind, and the movement directed by a rational mind, but a mind on a grander or infinite scale. God, therefore, is known via an inference of reason.

In Alciphron, Principles, and Three Dialogues, Berkeley had argued that God was immanently present in the universe. The movement and presence of the ideas betrayed his presence. The ideas could not account for the activity, thus, we knew it must be the work of an infinite mind. In Siris God has relegated the activity to aether which he controls. God has become more transcendent who betrays himself in the rational design of the universe. God, therefore, can only be known via a rational agent.

The finite mind, nevertheless, is known directly. In fact, the direct and immediate knowledge we have of mental activity is the first step in the chain of reasoning which leads us ultimately to God. Bodily movements are primarily the work of the animal spirits, but the workings of the human mind cannot be understood in terms of instrumental causes.

The activity of perception which Berkeley never satisfactorily explained involved the instrument of aether. Berkeley realized the activity of perception was intimately linked with the physiology of the eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and limbs. Perception, therefore, could be partially explained in terms of secondary causes. In regard to the
activities we call imagining, willing, and thinking, the concept of aether was not involved, rather those activities were direct manifestations of the finite spirit.

In Siris Berkeley constructed a cosmology which was ultimately dependent on and explained by the workings of mind. He introduced a new concept, that of aether, to explain more adequately the movement and activity of organisms. Thus, the world is not full of secondary spirits who are at work, rather, there is present a "life force" which is God's instrument for animating the universe. This concept of a universal activating aether not only links Berkeley with Plato and Plotinus, but also, rather interestingly, with the vitalist philosophers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

(4) Berkeley and the Mind-Body Problem

The Mind-Body problem, for a number of important reasons, has proven to be a definite thorn in the side of many philosophers. The problem originated, or rather was first called to light, by Descartes who proved far more able in propounding than in solving it. Since Descartes' time a number of solutions have been offered -- interactionism, parallelism, epiphenomenalism, the double-aspect theory, and the identity theory to mention only major alternatives.

Berkeley undoubtedly would have treated this problem with the attention it deserves in his last second volume of the Principles, but in his published work he never discussed the problem at all. In light of his published philosophy it appears that the mind-body problem is not a major problem for him at all and that his philosophy could offer a plausible solution.

Berkeley, like Descartes, argued that the human spirit, although
embodied, could not be thought of as an extended entity like a body in space. A spirit could not be located like a piece of matter, so there was no sense in looking in the brain or any other part of the body for the seat or residence of mind. Berkeley argued that mind through the aether animates the body in every part so that body is completely pervaded by mind. However, we will go astray if we are led into the belief that the sentient, thinking, agent occupies a place in some or even in every part of the body. It makes no sense to speak of the shape of a volition or the color of a thought, unless we are speaking in a poetic vein. The point is, the conscious active person cannot be conceived of as existing in any place, although its body must.

The key to Berkeley's concept of the finite self, is that mind must not be thought of as an entity. We go astray if we think that there must be either some idea or entity which is the supposed referent for the term "mind". Difficulties arise when mind is thought of in terms of spatial concepts, i.e., when mind is discussed and thought of in the same way an object is discussed and thought about. Spirit is the efficient cause of the animated body. The body, however, is not the finite spirit although the spirit, by means of the animal spirits, pervades it. My body, like any other sensible object, is nothing but a bundle of qualities whose existence depends on a perceiving or knowing mind. The mind my body is dependent upon is God. Consequently, my body exists because God in his benevolence chooses to allow it to exist.

Mind is indivisible, incorporeal, unextended, and incorruptible. The motions, changes, decays, and dissolutions which hourly befall the natural bodies cannot in any way affect spirit. A spirit cannot be dissolved by the forces of nature, and Berkeley believed that this
indicated, "the soul of man is naturally immortal."\textsuperscript{19}

For Berkeley there is no problem arising out of the dualism between mind and body. There is no problem because Berkeley argued there is no independent realm of matter which must be brought into relation with mind.\textsuperscript{20} Half the problem was solved because Berkeley was not faced with Descartes' independent realm of matter, which must be reconciled with mind. Sensible objects are independent of finite minds in the sense that finite minds have no real control over what we call the external world. Berkeley believed the external world is ultimately an idea in the mind of God.

Berkeley seemed to take his stand on the two given realities, mind and body. Because there is no such thing as matter, there could be no problem of mind and matter. Because mind is active and body is passive, Berkeley made no attempt in the finite realm to derive the one from the other. Ideas could not act on spirits, but the spirit through aether acts on objects. Mind and body do not in any way merge or blend with each other, but Berkeley did not believe there is some sort of antagonism between the two realms, although in \textit{Sirius} he spoke of the body holding down or chaining the finite spirit. Berkeley seemed to believe that they were meant to harmonise and agree with each other,\textsuperscript{21} insofar as ideas are the symbols God uses to speak to man.

One of the most difficult problems connected with the mind-body controversy involves the belief that there are two active substances which must be reconciled. Descartes and others argued that bodies have the power to cause sensations in the mind. When this assumption is made, the difficult problem is faced as to how the sensations can be translated into spiritual activity. The problem works the other way around, for
the question occurs as to how spiritual directions can be translated into bodily movements. Where in such a case would spiritual activity cease and bodily activity begin? This is also a problem for Berkeley because the question is naturally raised as to the relationship between the mind and instrumental animal spirits.

Some philosophers believed that animal spirits were intermediate between mind and body. They were supposed to be tiny, subtle, fast moving beings which travelled instantaneously from the sense organs to the seat of the mind in the brain. They were supposed to be subtle enough to make contact with the mind and spur it into action. Berkeley talked about animal spirits or aether; but, properly speaking, they were only the instruments mind used to act on the body. In a major sense, aether was the life principle which pervaded the organic aspects of reality. Aether accounted for the natural functioning of the body that the finite mind had no control over. Berkeley believed that organisms could not be understood simply in terms of mechanical principles, and introduced the "life principle" to explain the natural functioning of organisms.

Although Berkeley is not faced with Descartes' problem of reconciling two active substances, he escapes the problem only by making ideas dependent on mind. In one sense, his position is the antithesis of materialism whereby everything is ultimately explained in terms of mind. His position is only saved from panpsychism because of the "brute presence" of ideas.

(5) Conclusion

Siris does not indicate either a contradiction or a reaction on Berkeley's part to his earlier empiricism. Rather, he expanded his views
reality by introducing the principle of aether to account for organic life.

In regard to Berkeley's concept of the finite self, we may conclude that his thinking was not materially changed or contradicted. It seems evident that Berkeley consistently maintained one concept of mind throughout his entire philosophical development. The insight he arrived at in the *Philosophical Commentaries* remained materially the same, and throughout his philosophy Berkeley attempted only to elaborate on it. Spirit or mind is neither an underlying substratum, nor a "congeries of perceptions", rather, it is, for Berkeley, the sheer mental activity of which we have direct and immediate awareness. We have no ideas or images of mind, rather, we have notions which means only that we are able to describe the activity of which we are immediately aware.

The exposition and analysis of Berkeley's concept of the finite self is complete. In the remaining chapter the task will be to reach some conclusions concerning it.
Notes to Chapter IV

2. vi-vi.
3. 12.
4. 12.
7. WGB, III, Siris #154.
8. #237.
9. #152.
11. WGB, III, Siris #153.
12. #156.
13. #159.
14. #160.
15. #247.
16. #305.
17. #264.
19. WGB, I, Principles #141.
V

Conclusion

(1) Introduction

The preceding chapters have been concerned with an exposition and analysis of Berkeley's concept of the finite self. The final chapter of this essay will be concerned with several topics which will be considered as follows: The first section will state and analyze the three major criticisms philosophers have leveled against Berkeley's concept of the self. The second section will point out and discuss the weaknesses in Berkeley's view of mind. The third section will show the influence on contemporary philosophy of Berkeley's thinking concerning the problem of the self. The concluding section will consist of an evaluation of the significance of Berkeley's concept of the finite self.

(2) Analysis of the Three Major Criticisms of Berkeley's Concept of the Self

G.J. Warnock stated one common objection, which apparently rests on a misconception.

Berkeley's observations about 'spirits' have received, perhaps, more attention than they deserve; for the fact is that he had formed hardly any views at all on problems about the mind and its doings.

It is certainly true that Berkeley never treated the question of the finite mind and the problems related to it in any one systematic study. Because of this, a good many philosophers, Warnock included, have ignored Berkeley's teachings concerning the nature of the mind and our knowledge of it. In the preceding chapters the attempt was made not only to point out that Berkeley in his published works had a good deal to say about the subject, but also, even more importantly, that his entire constructive philosophy hinges on what is meant by mind or a causative agent.
The three major criticisms which have been brought against Berkeley's concept of the finite self are: (a) The charge has been persistently maintained that Hume's analysis of the human mind stands as a damaging criticism of Berkeley's concept of spiritual substance; (b) the arguments Berkeley used so effectively against Locke's concept of matter can be used just as effectively against Berkeley's concept of spiritual substance; and (c) Berkeley, in terms of his published philosophy, is unable to account for self-identity.

(a) Analysis of Hume's Criticism of Spiritual Substance

In his essay, On the Intellectual Powers, Thomas Reid frequently argued that both Hume and Berkeley were sceptics. Berkeley, because of his refutation of Locke's concept of matter, was supposed to be sceptical about the existence of the external world, and Hume, because of his alleged criticism of Berkeley's concept of spiritual substance, was supposed to be sceptical about the existence of the human soul. Here the attempt will be made to evaluate Hume's so-called criticism of Berkeley's concept of spiritual substance.

Hume maintained that the operations of our own minds are intimately present to us, but when we attempt to make them the objects of reflection, they become very obscure. Because of the obscurity we are unable to discover the boundaries which distinguish them from one another or, more importantly, from the contents of mind.² Hume felt obliged to conclude,

For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pleasure or pain. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception. When my perceptions are removed for any time, as by sound sleep; so long am I insensible to myself, and may truly be said not to exist . . . ³
Mind, then, metaphorically speaking, is a theatre, where we are aware of only the successive passage of appearances. The appearances "pass, repass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations." 4

Hume also rigorously analyzed the concept of substance. He claimed that we are unable to form or have any idea of physical substance, and likewise we had no ideas or knowledge concerning any sort of spiritual substance. Yet, Hume pointed out, the concept of spiritual substance was burdened with many more difficulties than physical substance. Because each idea must be derived from some precedent impression and if we are supposed to have some sort of idea of mental substance, then it is logical that we must have some prior impression of this substance. But, Hume correctly argued, any such impression is at best extremely difficult to discover and probably impossible to conceive. Hume asked, "for how can an impression represent a substance, otherwise than by resembling it?" 5 Hume concluded that all that was necessary to put an end to the arguments in favor of substance, either mental or physical, was to ask the philosophers what they meant by the word. 6

An impressive number of philosophers have argued that Hume's analysis of spiritual substance stands as a damaging or even devastating criticism of Berkeley's concept of the finite self. Yet, it seems that instead of denying or refuting Berkeley's concept of the self, Hume offered a strong proof for it. Berkeley had argued that the finite mind was neither an underlying substratum, nor simply the congeries of ideas. Berkeley contended that mind was simply the mental activity of which we are immediately and directly aware. Mind was mental activity which he described with the verbs willing, knowing, understanding, remembering,
and perceiving. The term "mind" was not the name of a metaphysical entity but a term which denotes mental activity. Hume actually assumed the only kind of self Berkeley ever talked about. This assumed self is very active which Hume said, "enter(s) . . . stumble(s) . . . catch(s)". The probing activity of introspection is what Berkeley would call mind or self and when we are aware of what we are doing we are aware of mind.

Berkeley would certainly agree with Hume's contention that if we enter the region of the mind through an act of introspection with the expressed intention of discovering some sort of substance which supposedly holds the faculties together or supports the ideas, then we will certainly discover nothing.

Hume had also argued that mind was something similar to a theatre where we are aware of only the successive passage of appearances. The appearances pass, repass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of situations. Berkeley contended that if we analyze and inspect the ideas or appearances we can see that they are not the cause of the passing, gliding, and mingling, for the ideas cannot account for mental activity. Ideas are inert entities which possess no active characteristics. Therefore, the essential flux and activity among the contents of mind indicate the presence of mind. When we center attention on the activity, we become immediately aware of the mind.

It seems that Hume was not criticizing Berkeley's concept of the self, rather, he was in league with Berkeley in attacking the Lockian concept of mind. Hume and Berkeley were criticizing the concept of unknowable substances. Hume, however, never fully took into consideration
Berkeley's radically empirical distinction between the contents of mind and the essential activity among the contents, or as Johnston said,

There is something which is lost sight of when we analyze experience into a mere succession of ideas; and this element which is the feeling-consciousness of activity guarantees the existence of personality. 7

(b) Analysis of the Criticism that Berkeley's Arguments Against Material Substance are Equally Telling Against Berkeley's Concept of Spiritual Substance

Far too many philosophers have been of the opinion that Berkeley's arguments against Locke's concept of material substance prove equally destructive when applied to Berkeley's concept of spiritual substance. They say that if Berkeley has shown that the materialists had no legitimate right to talk about material substance, then Berkeley has no legitimate right to talk about spiritual substance. If we are to accept Berkeley's conclusions concerning material substance, then it logically follows that we must accept the same conclusions regarding spiritual substance. 8 Let us examine the arguments Berkeley used against material substance to see if we may use them as a double-edged razor to destroy his concept of mind.

Berkeley first argued that the materialists had mistaken abstractions for the real existing things in nature, a fallacy which Whitehead would later christen "the fallacy of misplaced concreteness". They talked about material and spiritual substance, which by admission were not objects of experience, as if they were real things, in fact, as if they were the only real things. They contended that the postulations of reason were existences. Mind and matter were supposed to be substrata of which we had knowledge only through the mediation of abstract complex ideas.
The materialists believed they could abstract from the data of sense and reflection and form some sort of ideas of things as they really are. Berkeley pointed out that the supposed process of abstraction was psychologically impossible, since we never are able to construct the abstract ideas the materialists had talked about. Berkeley did not stop here but carried his assault further by pointing out that the doctrine of abstract ideas was the result of an erroneous view of language. According to that view each noun names some thing. When confronted with a proposition such as "the mind thinks", they had the problem of discovering something to which "mind" could refer. They were led to believe that the term "mind" referred to something which existed apart from all the empirically known mental phenomena. They assumed that we could have some knowledge of the mysterious mental substance through the mediation of an abstract complex idea.

It is evident that this argument does not apply to Berkeley's concept of the finite self. Berkeley never argued that mind was an unknown, underlying support of the so-called mental attributes. Mind was simply the mental activity of which we are directly and immediately aware. For Berkeley there was no need to form an abstract idea from the empirically known mental manifestations in hopes of gaining knowledge of the underlying substratum. The term "mind" denotes the mental activity. Consequently, Berkeley's first argument against material substance does not destroy his concept of the finite mind.

Berkeley's second argument against matter was aimed at the belief that the material substance was the cause of ideas. The materialists had mistakenly attributed active power to bodies. They believed that the motion and change in the primary qualities was the causative agency
which produced the effects of the secondary qualities. Berkeley contended first, on empirical grounds, that we never discover a physical body doing anything. Yet Berkeley showed that the materialists committed a far more serious error in their reasoning, for after defining material substance as dumb and inert, they attributed active qualities to it; thus Berkeley said, "In the very notion or definition of material substance, there is included a manifest repugnance and inconsistency."9

The question is, can this same argument be used against Berkeley's concept of spiritual substance? Berkeley argued that spiritual substance, or mind, was only the mental activity of which we are directly and immediately aware. Introspection informs us that mind is simply activity which partakes of no passive characteristics. The concept of material substance involves an intellectual inconsistency yet Berkeley said:

But this cannot be said of the notion of Spirit. That ideas should exist in what doth not perceive, or be produced by what doth not act, is repugnant. But, it is no repugnancy to say that a perceiving thing should be the subject of ideas, or an active thing the cause of them... spirits are (not) on a foot with material substance. 10

It is perfectly legitimate and intellectually consistent, within Berkeley's system, to assert that spirit is the cause of ideas, for this involves no contradiction. Berkeley's point was that as long as the materialists persisted in defining or conceiving of material substance as dumb and inert, it is intellectually inconceivable that it could be the cause of anything. This argument is ineffective when applied to Berkeley's concept of spiritual substance, because it involves no intellectual inconsistency to say that an active being is the cause of something.

Berkeley's third argument against materialism was concerned with
our supposed knowledge of material substance. The materialists developed
the theory that ideas were images of an unperceived material object. Yet
they had treated the image as if it were a concrete objective datum which
possessed primary qualities and the power of producing the effects of
the secondary qualities. The only empirically unknown things were
material and spiritual substances. Material and spiritual substance
were not objects of sense, rather, they were postulations of reason.

Berkeley argued that ideas are not the replicas of unperceived objects;
all we had knowledge of were the ideas, and had no way of getting behind
or beyond them. Consequently, we had no legitimate right to talk about
anything existing behind the ideas. Berkeley claimed that the ideas
were the real things, i.e., ideas were the concrete objects of the
external world. Reality, in one sense, was only the totality of
empirically knowable bodies. Berkeley claimed that if the objects of
sense were unreal, then we could have no knowledge beyond ourselves.

Berkeley argued that if the term "material substance" had meaning
it would have to refer only to the objective data present to the senses.
But if the term meant something lurking behind the data, then it was
empty and meaningless. The same criteria applied to our knowledge of
the mind. The term "mind" must mean something that is directly knowable
or the term is meaningless. The major point in Berkeley's argument was
that what we talk about must be what we have a direct and immediate
knowledge of, or what we could have a direct knowledge of.

Let us now see if the third argument proves destructive to Berkeley's
concept of mind. Mind, for Berkeley, was not an idea nor was it known
via an idea or mental image. Mind is not perceivable, for only an idea
is perceivable. We have no ideas of mind, rather, we are intimately
aware of the functioning we call mental activity. The mental activity, and the mental activity alone, is what Berkeley called mind. Mind was not an underlying spiritual substratum which possesses attributes or qualities. Berkeley was not introducing a metaphysical entity which could not be known via first person experience. The terms we use such as "willing", "thinking", "remembering", are not the names of mental attributes, rather, they are terms used to characterize and classify the various manifestations of mental activity. Technically speaking, we have notions of mind. "Notion" means that we know how to use our language to convey what we do in fact immediately experience.

It seems evident that the charge that Berkeley's system topples under the weight of the arguments used against matter is completely false. Philosophers have failed to recognize the important point that Berkeley was not attempting to introduce an unknowable spiritual substratum. Berkeley was willing to retain the term "substance", but only if the use of the term was clarified. If we meant by the term something of which we are directly and immediately aware, then the word certainly has meaning. The term is only meaningless if we say that it refers to some unknowable metaphysical entity. Many critics have also failed to recognize that Berkeley made a rigid, clear-cut distinction between inert ideas and the activity called mind. In making this distinction Berkeley was able to assert that ideas and mind are directly knowable and can be talked about meaningfully, but they are knowable and talked about in different ways.

(c) Berkeley and the Problem of Self-Identity

Many critics of Berkeley's philosophy have pointed out that Berkeley was not only silent, but notoriously silent, about the problem of self-
identity. The reason which his critics give for this reticence on his part is that he was unable, in terms of his own position, to give any sort of adequate answer to this problem. Berkeley was not completely silent about the problem, for he did consider it in *Alciphron*. It is quite true that Berkeley never treated the problem in any systematic fashion, although he would perhaps have discussed it in his lost second volume of the *Principles*. Yet his concept of the finite self offers insights which could be used in a solution to the problem of self-identity. Before discussing Berkeley's thinking concerning the problem, it would be well to first examine the two major solutions which have been offered to the problem.

A number of philosophers have held that mind is a substance, not a physical, but a non-material something which underlies and holds together the states of consciousness, sensations, emotions, thoughts, pleasures, and pains which we experience as a self. They maintain that mind is a substance in the same sense as matter is a substance, for it is an underlying metaphysical substratum in which attributes inhere.

Another group of philosophers, led primarily by David Hume, hold that mind is simply the sum total of our experience. They assert that to posit something more, an underlying substratum, involves the postulation of an entity which is logically impossible to verify. They claim that we may use the term "mind", but the word can only mean the totality of empirical statements we are able to make about it.

The major problem in both theories of mind can be summed up in the question: what makes your mental states your own and not another person's? To put the problem in another way, what unites the series of mental states
which we experience into a consistent history which we may call our
own? Both schools have attempted to answer these questions, and the
answers involve their respective theories of the nature of mind.

The philosophers who have argued that mind is an underlying
substratum claim that there is no problem of self-identity involved
in their theory of mind. They maintain that although the attributes
of mind and the objects present change, vary, and pass away, the
substratum remains the same. Personal identity consists in the unity
of the substratum.

The philosophers of the Kumian school have argued that memory is
the key to self-identity. The ability to remember past events and ideas
provides a link with our past history. What would happen if we had no
memory from one second to the next? Then it would surely seem that
there would not be a continuous person living through a temporal span,
but a new person born and annihilated every instant. Other philosophers
of the Kumian school have claimed that not only memory but the body
must also be taken into consideration in attempting to solve the problem
of self-identity. We can speak of the body as a continuing principle
even when we are asleep or suffer amnesia. We can talk about personal
identity both in terms of body and memory, and it would make no sense
to talk about a person who has neither a body nor a memory.

Berkley accepted neither of the two alternatives concerning the
nature of the mind. He maintained that a person is not an underlying
substratum which always remains out of reach. The person or mind also
had to be more than the sum of the contents of mind. Self-identity,
then, did not consist in what a person could remember of the past.
Alcohon attacked this theory of self-identity.
In the seventh dialogue Alciphrren argued that there is no mystery concerning the problem of self-identity. Euphranor (representing Berkeley) asked in what self-identity consists, and Alciphrren replied in consciousness. Euphranor put Alciphrren's thesis to the test when he asked.

We will suppose now (which is possible in the nature of things, and reported to be fact) that a person, through some violent accident or distemper, should fall into such a total oblivion as to lose all consciousness of his past life and former ideas. I ask, is he not still the same person? 11

Alciphrren replied that he is still the same man but not the same person.

Alciphrren further argued,

You ought not to suppose that a person loseth its former consciousness, for this is impossible, though a man perhaps may; but then he becomes another person. In the same person, it must be owned, some old ideas may be lost, and some new ones got; but a total change is inconsistent with identity of person. 12

Euphranor asked Alciphrren if a man is the same person although he forgets what he knew in the past. We may illustrate Euphranor's argument in an example Berkeley used. Suppose a man has present to his mind a number of ideas and memories. Let us call this state A. Ten years later, which we will call state B, he retains only half of the ideas and memories he originally had in state A, and he has now gained in his present state one half more so that in state B he has half new and half old ideas and memories. Ten years following, which we will call state C, he has lost the remainder of the ideas he had in state A, while retaining half of the ideas gained in state B. The man certainly has a link with state B, but the question is raised as to whether he is the same man as in state A? Now if self-identity consists in the consciousness or remembrance of past ideas and memories, then Berkeley would say that self-identity could not consist in consciousness. 13
Berkeley, like the Human school and the group arguing for the
spiritual substratum, argued that self-identity could only be considered
in terms of what the mind or self is. Berkeley's philosophy can account
for self-identity, but it does not account for it only in terms of what
is remembered. One remains the same person although the world of sense
and the contents of mind change. Berkeley argued that we are only
aware of ourselves when we realize we are active and not passive.
Self-identity, then, not only consists in what we can remember and the
continued permanence of our body, but it primarily consists in the
continuity of mental activity. The emphasis in the Berksonian concept
of mind is placed on what mind does or how it functions and not on what
can be remembered. Self-identity primarily consists in the consistent
activity of remembering, willing, thinking, and perceiving. If mental
activity ceased, there would no longer be a person; if the mental
activity manifested itself differently than it had in the past, then
there would no longer be the same person.

Self-identity, then, is more fundamentally dependent on the
volitional rather than the cognitive aspect of a person's being.
Berkeley consistently maintained that the mind was not to be associated
with its contents, so self-identity could not be understood or conceived
of simply in terms of what could be remembered. He laid the important
stress — rightly — on the continuity of mental activity. A person may
forget — people do forget — what he has done and what he has known
in the past, but a person is still able to function. If a person could
no longer remember, think, perceive, or will, then it would make no
sense to talk about him as a person, for a person presupposes the ability
to do these things.
It seems that Berkeley in talking about mind as only mental activity hit upon an important point for considering the problem of self-identity. In shifting the importance from what a person knows, to what a person does or how a person functions, he placed the problem on an entirely different plane. When one realizes this point the entire problem is thrown into new relief. If mind is the functioning activity of which we are immediately aware, then when we talk about mind, we must discuss it in terms of what mind does and not what mind is. Self-identity can be accounted for in terms of the consistency of mental behavior.

In summation we may say that the criticisms which have been leveled against Berkeley's system seem to have resulted from either a misunderstanding or a misreading of what Berkeley actually had to say. This does not mean that Berkeley's concept of the finite self does not contain weaknesses. In the next section the attempt will be made to point out the major deficiencies in Berkeley's concept of the finite self.

(3) Deficiencies in Berkeley's Concept of the Finite Self

From time to time in the preceding chapters we have reminded the reader that we labor under a difficulty in presenting and analyzing Berkeley's concept of the self. Because Berkeley never fully worked out his concept of the finite self, it makes it exceedingly difficult to criticize his thinking on this subject. All that can be done is to point out deficiencies in his concept of the finite self as it stands in his published work. The intention will be to point out the problems Berkeley would have been faced with and how he might have dealt with them. Just exactly how Berkeley would have treated the problems will
always remain unknown; but we may surmise, in light of what he said about mind, the direction he would have taken.

A.A. Bowman seems to have pointed out the major deficiency in Berkeley's concept of the mind. Bowman argues that Berkeley's system is primarily an exposition of the object rather than the subject. Berkeley's philosophy deals with ideas of which the world consists, and these are objects of consciousness organized in uniform collections and sequences. However, the ideas have already been thought and organized, and the finite mind thinks only what has been previously thought by God.

Bowman believes that Berkeley has no adequate conception of the finite spirit as the subject of experience. "A mode of being which defines itself in terms of percipient activity, whether volitional or otherwise, is wanting in that immateriality of nature, that permanency, continuity and depth which are the essence of subjective selfhood." Berkeley, Bowman believes, provides a thinker only in a verbal sense. Berkeley has posited a soul or percipient being without a self. In other words, he failed to show that individual acts are coordinated (along with other mental processes and conditions) into unity of a subjective system. Berkeley, therefore, failed to come to grips with what is really meant by a person or a self. As Bowman concluded, "Berkeley's system is on the whole an exposition of nature rather than of spirit."

Bowman's criticism is certainly correct so far as it goes. Berkeley, within his published work, does not really come to grips with what is meant by a self. However, the important question is: Could Berkeley adequately deal with this problem? I believe that he could, for there
is nothing within his system which would preclude this possibility. Hume, on the other hand, could not deal with the problem, for within his system there is no self, i.e., no rational, conative being. Berkeley believes that a rational, conative being is revealed directly in experience. Thus, it would be possible for Berkeley to develop a rational, conative, unified personality.

A second major deficiency in Berkeley’s concept of the finite self involves the general notion that the esse of mind is percipere. When this notion is analyzed, two problems arise concerning perception: (1) Is perception the essential feature of the mind? (2) Is perception active or passive, or does it belong to the realm of mind or ideas?

The first problem will not be difficult to clear up. When Berkeley speaks of esse est percipere it is usually where he has been speaking about esse est percipi. Thus, when Berkeley argues that the essence of mind is perception, he means only that the essential distinguishing characteristic of mind is activity. Mind is simply the functioning activity we characterize not only by the term “perceiving” but also by the words “imagining”, “thinking”, and “willing”. In saying that the essence of mind is perceiving, Berkeley said no more than the essence of mind is activity.

The second problem involves a serious weakness not only in Berkeley’s concept of the finite self but also in his entire system, for it concerns the question of whether perception is active or passive. Johnson said in a letter to Berkeley, "There is certainly something passive in our souls, we are purely passive in the perception of our ideas." The question is whether mind is active in perception or merely the passive
receiver of ideas. On this point it is difficult to extract a clear answer from Berkeley. He insisted that the finite mind has no control over the ideas present to the senses, for ideas are dependent on the infinite mind rather than on the finite minds.

Berkeley could overcome the weakness concerning the status of perception in three ways. (1) He could distinguish between the activity of perception and what is perceived. We cannot choose what is present to our senses, but we can direct attention where we please, and we can choose to perceive or not to perceive. (2) Berkeley could say that perception is an activity because the self or mind is conscious or aware of its perceived content. This certainly narrows the term "activity". In both cases perceiving is a different kind of activity than the other manifestations of mind. Thinking, willing, and imagining indicate that mind is doing something, for it is drawing relations between ideas, constructing mental images, moving the body into action. In the act of perception the mind does not alter the position of the ideas, construct them, or move them into action. Perception seems to be either a very limited kind of mental activity or a different kind of mental activity. (3) There is another way in which Berkeley could overcome the difficulty. It is quite true that perception is a different kind of activity in the sense that it is not willing or imagining. However, for Berkeley, perceiving implies a cognitive activity. Percipere, which is an active verb, seems to imply not only sensation but judgment as well.

The question concerning the status of perception leads us naturally to a second weakness in Berkeley's concept of the finite self. What is the relationship between the contents of mind and mental activity. Hume
and his disciples have argued that if one removes the contents of mind, one removes the mind itself, for it makes no sense to talk about willing, thinking, imagining, or even perceiving, apart from an object thought about, an idea imagined or a quality perceived. The Human philosophers have made the mind dependent on the contents.

Berkeley, like Kant, proposed a "Copernican Revolution" by reversing the emphasis. Mental activity, for Berkeley, is not dependent on the ideas, rather, the ideas are dependent on the mental activity. Berkeley argued that without a knowing or perceiving mind, it makes no sense to talk about an object, for an object is only a bundle of perceivable qualities. However, in talking in this way Berkeley's system takes on the haunting air of panpsychism, which many philosophers, otherwise sympathetic to his position, find repugnant.

Although Berkeley argued that the ideas were mind dependent, he insisted that the objects of sense were not dependent on the finite minds. The only objects dependent on the whims of finite minds are mental objects, i.e., mental images, remembered ideas, and other subjective objects. Berkeley recognized that mental images are subject to the whims and fancies of mental activity, for the images did not construct themselves, rather, a mind had to be present to do the constructing. As far as the finite mind is concerned, Berkeley does not seem to be involved in a great deal of difficulty.

Another weakness in Berkeley's concept of the finite mind involves the question of how the mind can be both subject and object at the same time, for Berkeley had made the distinction between mental activity and the awareness of mental activity. It is very difficult to understand how the mind can be an object to itself, but this difficulty raises the more
troubling question of what is the mind; is mind the mental activity of which I am aware; or is mind the awareness of the mental activity? When one examines this question another equally trying problem arises.

For instance, if I say that I am aware of mental activity, then I must also say that I am aware of the awareness, and aware of the awareness of awareness and so on ad infinitum. To analyze mind in this way seems to lead logically to an infinite regress.

Berkeley would probably say that I am both the activity of which I am aware and the activity of awareness. It is only for the purposes of analysis that we make the distinction between the activity and the awareness. The distinction itself does not mean that there is a natural mental bifurcation. A problem only arises when we think of mind as passive or think about it and attempt to analyze it in terms of static categories. Some philosophers, primarily the existentialists, have assumed that there are natural mental levels, i.e., that one can be thinking and aware that he is thinking at the same time. However, is this true? I may be thinking and then become aware that I was thinking. The interval of time is so minute that it deceives us into thinking that one could be aware that he is thinking and thinking at the very same time. The problem arises when we mistake an abstraction for the purposes of analysis for an existing state of affairs.

The problem of the infinite regress also disappears when we think of mind as activity. For example, when I am aware of thinking I am aware of something I have been doing, and not something that I am now doing. It involves no regress to say I am aware that I was thinking, and that I am aware that I was aware that I was thinking, and so on. All that I am reporting is what I did in the past and not what I am
doing at the present time. The difficulty of the infinite regress arises because we think of mind as if it were static. When we not only realize that mind is activity, but also talk about it as activity, then a good many of the traditional difficulties disappear, or appear in a new light.

The last weakness in Berkeley's concept of the finite mind concerns the nature of mental activity. Berkeley nowhere adequately distinguished between different kinds of activities. He talked about mental activity, but he also discussed the change and flux among the sensible things. Berkeley would argue that it would make no sense to talk about motion apart from a moving object, for when we say a body moves, we are not attributing motion to the body as another quality, rather, we are describing the way an object functions. When we talk about mental activity, we are naturally led to ask whether there is something mental which acts.

Berkeley insisted that we run into difficulties when we attempt to understand and talk about mind in terms of spatial categories. We go astray when we think of the mental activity as if it were a moving body. However, Berkeley still leaves us in the dark as to what sort of activity the mental activity is supposed to be, although he hinted at the possibility of conceiving of mind in terms of human behavior.

In summation we must repeat that it has been extremely difficult to put forward any definite criticisms of Berkeley's concept of the self, because the subject was never fully treated by him. The attempt has been made to point out the weaknesses in the theory as it stands in his published work, and in doing so we have tried to indicate the areas where Berkeley was never quite satisfied. How Berkeley would have treated the
weaknesses can never be answered with any finality, but it seems that
he could have approached the problems along the lines indicated. The
second volume of the *Principles* has been a great loss to the history of
Western thought for it seems that Berkeley's concept of the finite self
opens some rather interesting possibilities for considering the problem
of the human mind. In our time there is a philosophical movement afoot
which treats mind very similarly to the way Berkeley treated it in his
published writings. The concluding sections will point out the areas
where Berkeley's insights have anticipated some of the work of
contemporary philosophers.

(4) Berkeley's Anticipations of Contemporary Philosophy

The philosophers who are proceeding along lines of analysis
anticipated by Berkeley attribute no indebtedness to him. Here the
testament will be made to indicate the similarity of their analysis to
Berkeley's philosophy.

George Berkeley, like all the great philosophers, had more impact
on succeeding generations than on the thinkers of his own day. His
philosophy provides great delight to students primarily because of the
simplicity of his presentation and the novelty of his views. However,
the casual student quickly moves beyond his position with the opinion
that the good Bishop, although adept at formulating paradoxes, was some-
what muddle-headed and confused. In fact the almost universal appraisal
of his philosophy, by those experts who have had two courses in philosophy,
is that he is the one who denied the existence of the external world.
Yet, there is a strange and compelling vitality and persistency in
Berkeley's system which is not accounted for simply in terms of its
novelty. To the serious student Berkeley's philosophy represents a
brilliantly worked out scheme of thought which has hardly been appreciated,
This is why, I believe, his philosophy has had such an impact on most varied schools of thought. Berkeley's influence on Schopenhauer cannot be overestimated, and British empiricists look upon him as one of the charter members of their school of thought. Strange as it may sound, Berkeley has proven valuable to both rationalists and empiricists, an honor which few philosophers may claim to. Here I shall attempt to point out the influence of Berkeley's thinking on some twentieth century philosophers. As I have said before most of them acknowledge an indebtedness to his thinking, although their approach to philosophical problems was definitely anticipated by Berkeley.

Berkeley's arguments for knowledge without ideas was a major turning-point in the history of modern Western thought. His philosophy represents the first positive break with the concept of representational knowledge. Berkeley's epistemology was an assertion of radical empiricism, whereby both the external world and the human mind are directly and immediately known. In breaking with the representational theory of knowledge Berkeley found himself in the position of being able to abandon a number of troublesome concepts which not only were associated with the theory, but drew much of their strength from it. First, he was able to move beyond the philosophic concept of substance. Therefore, he was in a position to reject not only material but spiritual substance. In his Introduction to the Principles, Berkeley argued that the concepts of material and spiritual substance were the results of a faulty theory of language, and he suggested the outline for a new theory of language, whereby it would be possible to talk meaningfully about the finite mind and the external world without the burdensome assumption that each noun had to refer to either an entity or an abstract idea.
Berkeley pointed out that mind cannot be squeezed into convenient spatial concepts, but that mental concepts had to be constructed on what is given in first person experience. We must first inform ourselves of what we are actually and intimately aware. He argued that we are directly aware of mental activity, and the activity is not even vaguely similar to a thing. In talking about mind, we must discuss it in terms of how it functions and not in terms of what it is. The words we use to talk about mind have meaning, i.e., they are meaningful terms we use to convey our insights in language. The terms are not the names of qualities of a mental substratum; they are terms we use to order, clarify, and classify the various ways mind fully manifests itself.

A number of contemporary philosophers, led by Gilbert Ryle, although disagreeing with Berkeley on a major point talk about mind in a similar way. They recognize, like Berkeley, that many of the difficulties encountered concerning the nature of mind are linguistic. They argue that mental terms are used to describe human behavior and are not the names of mental entities. For example, the term "intelligence" is not the name of an occult entity, as a quality of a spiritual substance; it is a term used to describe the way an organism behaves. They argue, like Berkeley, that we must talk about what mind does and not what mind is. They say that when we talk about intelligence, moods, and other so-called mental states, we are not talking about mental states at all, but we are describing the behavior of an organism. Thus, many of them go beyond Berkeley and assert that there is no such thing as mind, i.e., as a metaphysical entity which exists entirely apart from the body!

Berkeley would say that the linguistic analysts understand how mind should be talked about, but they go wrong when they assert there
is no such thing as mind. He would say that our mental terms are used to describe the various manifestations of the human mind or spirit and not simply the way an organism behaves.

As we pointed out previously, Berkeley insisted that we run into serious difficulties when we attempt to fit mind into spatial categories. He argued that we naturally use spatial concepts, because we treat visual perception as the clearest type of perception. Therefore, spatial metaphors enter our discussions and explanations of mind. Errors and confusions arise when we treat the metaphor as a description, because we are then tempted to think of mind as an object similar to objects of sense perception. Two philosophers of widely different tempers have exploited Berkeley's insights on this subject. Bergson, the famous French vitalist, contended that we fall into error when we attempt to fit the mind into spatial or what he called "intellectual categories". Like Berkeley he seemed to conceive of mind as sheer activity or flux which could not be easily understood in terms of spatial concepts.

The second philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein, made use of the same insight. He stated in his *Philosophical Investigations*:

> Misleading parallels: psychology treats of processes in the psychical sphere, as does physics in the physical. Seeing, hearing, thinking, feeling, willing, are not the subject of psychology in the same sense as that in which the movements of bodies, the phenomena of electricity etc., are the subject of physics. You can see this from the fact that the physicist sees, hears, thinks over, and informs us of these phenomena, and the psychologist observes the external reactions (the behavior) of the subject.

Wittgenstein also independently worked out and developed many of Berkeley's insights concerning the nature of language and the problem of meaning. Both philosophers seemed to be convinced that the use of words has a great deal to do with their meaning.
(5) **Significance of George Berkeley's Concept of the Finite Self**

The concluding section of this essay will contain not only an appraisal of the significance of George Berkeley's concept of the finite self, but at the same time provide a summation of the results of this study. The intention will be to show that his concept of the self not only sheds new light on Berkeley's place in the history of Western philosophy, but also, more importantly, is relevant to many of the problems philosophers are dealing with today.

It is evident that Berkeley's concept of the finite self links him much more closely to Descartes than has been previously thought. In one important sense Berkeley's concept of the finite self is a development of Descartes' insight that the activity of thought is the essential characteristic of mind. Berkeley took Descartes' insight and developed it without relying on the philosophic concept of spiritual substance.

Of even greater importance Berkeley's concept of the finite mind throws new light on Berkeley's relationship to both Locke and Hume. Philosophers have usually thought of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume as a tradition. Locke, the first genuine empiricist, claimed that all knowledge is derived from experience, and that the things we experience are either the effects or images of an unperceived material object or spiritual substance. Berkeley, then, attacked Locke's concept of matter, but retained his concept of spiritual substance. Hume, the argument concludes, carried Locke's empiricism to its ultimate conclusion in destroying Berkeley's concept of spiritual substance.

The above stated analysis has stood the test of time and remains today as the usual interpretation of the relationship between Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. However, when one analyzes this argument, a very
subtle ambiguity, which is often overlooked, immediately comes to light. Philosophers have argued that Berkeley never fully developed a concept of mind. The question is then raised as to which theory of mind Hume attacked. Because Berkeley supposedly never put forward a fully worked out theory of mind, the assumption has been made that he held a theory of mind similar to that which Locke held. However, it seems evident in light of Berkeley's published philosophy that he was not only opposed to Locke's concept of material substance, but that he also attacked Locke's concept of spiritual substance. If this is the case, then Hume's criticism applies to Locke and not to Berkeley. This, it seems, calls for a new interpretation of the relationship between Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.

Why have philosophers failed to understand Berkeley's concept of the finite mind? The failure is not likely to be due to any natural dullness on the part of philosophers, and so must stem from other causes. As important as any others is the apparent custom of reading mainly the Principles and Three Dialogues. It is easy to see that misunderstandings could then arise, since Berkeley's concept of the self, as it stands in the Principles and Three Dialogues, is somewhat vague. His concept of the finite self emerges only when one also takes into consideration his development in the Philosophical Commentaries.

The Philosophical Commentaries, however, were not discovered until the latter half of the nineteenth century and received little close attention prior to Luce's scholarly work in the last 20 years. The Commentaries clearly indicate that Berkeley had done a good deal of thinking on the subject of the finite mind. In the second chapter of this essay we attempted to trace Berkeley's thinking on the subject of the nature of
the finite mind and our knowledge of it. It seems that Berkeley's concept of the self, as it appears in the Principles and Three Dialogues, cannot be adequately understood and appraised until one has first traced his thinking in the Philosophical Commentaries.

The Introduction to the Principles, which is also of the utmost importance for understanding Berkeley's concept of the finite self, has not been treated as carefully as it should. Traditionally it has been looked on as only Berkeley's attack on abstract ideas. Attention has been centered on Berkeley's psychological arguments against abstract ideas. The claim has been made that Berkeley was simply attacking a straw man and the investigation of the Introduction has been left at that. Philosophers have failed to recognize that Berkeley was attacking abstract ideas primarily to get at a faulty theory of language. The Introduction also contains Berkeley's excellent insights into the nature of language and the problem of meaning. However, we cannot be too hard on philosophers for their failure to adequately appreciate Berkeley's ideas on these subjects, for these questions have only become vital issues in the last thirty or forty years. It has only been through the work of Moore, Russell, Wittgenstein, and the logical positivists that attention has been focused on the problems of language and meaning.

Berkeley's insights into the nature of language indicate a definite anticipation of many contemporary philosophical movements. His thinking on the nature of language enables us to see that many of the difficulties which have obscured philosophical thinking on the nature of the human mind are primarily of a linguistic nature. He pointed out that we are led into difficulties in our attempts to understand and increase our knowledge of the human mind because our language has led us to ask the
wrong questions. Berkeley warned us that we must first make clear to ourselves what we are aware of immediately and intimately, and from our immediate experience we are to carefully construct our mental concepts. We cannot hope to attain clarity and increase our knowledge by attempting to force all experience into one framework. We cannot hope to understand the human mind if we insist on thinking about it and talking about it as if it were similar to a static spatial object. When we once recognize that mind is activity, then we are forced to conclude that it must be thought about and talked about differently than a spatial object. Also, when we realize that mind is the mental activity of which we are aware, then it is possible to approach the traditional problems concerning the nature of mind in a radically different way.

Berkeley's concept of mind as activity presents the contemporary philosopher with a new tool whereby he may approach many of the old vexing problems related to mind. In the preceding chapters that attempt was made to show that Berkeley's concept of mind could aid us in solving the problem of self-identity and the difficult question of how the mind can be both subject and object to itself. It seems that philosophers have been led astray either because they have conceived of mind as if it were simply the static, inert contents, or because they have conceived of it being an unknown substance which manifests itself in mental activity. When we conceive of and think about mind as activity then many of the old problems appear not to be problems at all, rather, they turn out to be the natural result of an unnatural conceptualization.

In conclusion I wish to say that the primary intention of this essay has been to recall attention to the philosophy of George Berkeley. It seems that philosophers have scarcely scratched the surface of his
system, and that we too may find new levels or strata of understanding as have philosophers in the past. We are today, thanks to the work of many contemporary philosophers, in a position to understand and appreciate many of Berkeley’s bold and speculative insights.

This essay has been an attempt to understand Berkeley’s concept of the finite self. The object has been to report as objectively as possible what Berkeley actually had to say on the subject of the finite mind. However, there were times when it was necessary to go beyond what Berkeley actually said and speculate on what he might have said on the problems related to mind. This is always dangerous for the skilled philosopher, but even more precarious for the student, because the possibility always remains open that one may be led to false conclusions. I have tried to point out that Berkeley was not as silent on the subject of the finite mind as has been traditionally thought.

The hope is, therefore, that this essay may provide a faint incentive to others to re-read, and think through the concepts Berkeley attempted to develop. As Berkeley himself said,

I had no inclination to trouble the world with large volumes. What I have done was rather with a view of giving hints to thinking men, who have leisure and curiosity to go to the bottom of things, and pursue them in their own minds. 20
Estates to Chapter V

8. p. 196.
10. 450.
11. WGB, II, Aleiphra, 334.
12. 334.
13. 334.
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