

Berkeley and the Causality of Ideas-Looking at PHK 25.

A number of early modern philosophers deny that corporeal nature contains efficient (second) causes. For Berkeley the passivity of ideas, ideas construed as objects of sense, exemplifies this view. I therefore label the view ‘PI.’¹ My aim is to look at a number of possible arguments Berkeley makes (or others make in his behalf) for PI. I conclude that they are unsatisfactory. I’m particularly interested whether Berkeley’s distinctive doctrine that objects of sense are mind-dependent, i.e., the no corporeal object can exist unperceived supports PI. I conclude it doesn’t.

PI, as Berkeley would undoubtedly admit, is at first blush counter-intuitive. Language often uses causal verbs expressing that one thing makes something else happen. Susanna Siegel considers:

the relations of pushing, pulling, lifting, stopping, moving, supporting, hanging from, and preventing something from happening; . . . specific ways to cause something else to happen. There also seems to be a more general relation that these relations exemplify causation itself. There may be relations that are less specific than [the ones] I have listed. . . such as the varieties

¹ The passivity of ideas, as George Pappas reminded me, expresses as well that for Berkeley, unlike images, we don’t will objects of sense into existence.

of ‘launching’ discussed by Michotte.²

I return later to Michotte.³ Ken Winkler rightly notes that assessing PI requires distinguishing empirical from conceptual issues.⁴ Its truth may be in some straightforward sense empirical, or deducible from prior principles about objects of sense, such as for sensible objects their *esse is percipi*, a view taken, for example, by Jonathan Bennett, Winkler, and Galen Strawson. Since Bennett doesn’t develop the point, and the arguments of Winkler and Strawson seem much the same, I consider just Winkler’s.⁵ PI

² Susanna Siegal, “The Visual Experience of Causation,” *Philosophical Quarterly* 59 (2009) 519-540. There is, of course, a history in Philosophy of using these or comparable examples to criticize what’s taken to be Hume’s view of causality. Elizabeth Anscombe noted that we often use causal concepts in reporting what we observe; “I mean: the word ‘cause’ can be *added* to a language in which are already represented many causal concepts. A small selection: *scrape, push, wet, carry, eat, burn, knock over, keep off, squash, make* (e.g. noises, paper boats), *hurt*. G. E. M. Anscombe, “Causality and Determinism,” in *Causation and Counterfactuals*, ed. E. Sosa, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1975), 93.

³ Albert Michotte, *The Perception of Causality*, (1946), (trans. From the French by T. R. and Elaine Miles, (New York, Basic Books, 1963).

⁴ Ken Winkler, *Berkeley*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989), 115.

⁵ Jonathan Bennett, *Learning from Six Philosophers*, Vol. 2, (Oxford, OUP, 2001), 159-

might also follow from traditional premises Berkeley simply assumes. For example if only volition can be a strict cause, and objects of sense are mindless, then sensible ideas can't be strict or efficient causes. Or, the argument might be that strict causal connections are necessary connections, and if such, we should be able to (as we can't) deduce the alleged effect from the alleged cause without experiencing their deduction, ⁶The first argument harks back to Malebranche, the second anticipates Hume, and I consider both. I note, however, that neither of these arguments depends on Berkeley's distinctive idealism/immaterialism. ⁷

60. Galen Strawson, *The Secret Connexion*. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989). My comments on Winkler apply I believe to Strawson.

⁶ Of course there are eccentric cases; if we know an effect is a meteor creator, (not just imply called "meteor crater") we deduce its cause was a meteor.

⁷ Of Course, Malebranche also thought causes to be necessarily connected to their Effects. The connection for him that fit the bill was Between God's willing X occur and X occurring. For a good discussion see Sukjae Lee, "Necessary Connections And Continuous Creation: Malebranche's Two Arguments For Occasionalism," *The Journal Of The History Of Philosophy*, (October, 2008). Hume read and refers to Malebranche, and some commentators note he adopted ("lifted" is Walter Ott's term) the latter's view that perceiving a necessary connection between A and B requires perceiving

In PHK 25 Berkeley writes:

All our ideas sensations, or the things which we perceive, by whatever names they may be distinguished, are visibly inactive there is nothing of power or agency included in them. So that one idea or object of thought cannot produce or make any alteration in another. To be satisfied of this, there is nothing else requisite but a bare observation of our ideas. For since they and every part of them exist only in the mind, it follows that there is nothing in them but what is perceived; but whoever shall attend to his ideas, whether of sense or reflection, will not perceive in them any power or activity; there is, therefore, no such thing contained in them. A little attention will discover to us that the very being of an Idea implies passiveness and inertness in it, insomuch that it is impossible.

that A logically implies B. Walter Ott, "Re'gis's Scholastic Mechanism," *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science*, 39 (2008), 9. Ott quotes from Hume: 'Now nothing is more evident, than that the human mind cannot form such an idea of two objects, as to conceive any connexion betwixt them, or comprehend distinctly that power or efficacy by which they are united. Such a connexion wou'd amount to a demonstration, and wou'd imply the absolute impossibility for the one object not to follow, or to be conceived not to follow upon the other: which kind of connexion has already been rejected in all cases' (Hume, D. (1978). *A treatise of human nature* (2nd ed.) (L.A. Selby-Bigge, ed.; rev. by P. Nidditch, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978, (First published 1739)), 161-162. See also McCracken, 257-259.

for an idea to do anything, or strictly speaking, to be the cause of anything; neither can it be the resemblance or pattern of any active being.⁸

In PHK 26 Berkeley notes that since finite minds don't cause sensible objects,

[t]here is, therefore some cause of these ideas, [an infinite mind] whereon they depend and which produces and changes them. That this cannot be any quality or idea or *combination of ideas* is clear from the preceding section.

(see also PHK 53)

Thus neither mediate objects of sense, ordinary objects we label “rocks,” “trees,” or “billiard balls,” nor immediate sensory objects like colors and sounds have causal powers.⁹ In PHK 102 Berkeley, in the spirit of the time, rejects “inner essences” or “occult qualities” (for example, gravity) as causes and refers to PHK 25; arguing that

⁸ PHK, Turbayne edition

⁹ I note that George Pappas among others think Berkeley allows an immediate though non-conceptual perception of ordinary physical objects. Perceiving a tree under the concept tree, however, would be mediate perception. George Pappas, *Berkeley's Thought*, (Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 2000), 168-178. Also see Winkler, 157. I've argued against that view in Richard Brook, “Berkeley, Bundles and Immediate Perception,” *Dialogue*, Vol. XLIV, No. 3, (2005), 493-505.

”motion as well as all other ideas is perfectly inert.” In PHK 61, responding to the question why clocks need clockworks if God directly moves their hands, he argues materialists are worse off since PHK 25 shows, “solidity, bulk, figure, motion, and the like have no *activity* or *efficacy* in them so as to be capable of producing any one effect in nature.”

Regarding motion, Berkeley’s comments in *De Motu* (DM) ¹⁰ have some interest by apparently supporting PI without at least obvious appeal to immaterialism. DM 26 claims neither inertial nor uniform accelerative motion shows bodies possess active powers; the those powers equated with a body’s ability to change motion, to “stop [itself] or change the fixed proportion in which [it] moves.” Bodies in uniform motion,” he writes, “behave quite passively.”

It’s interesting to compare that passage with the following from Malebranche’s *Dialogues on Metaphysics and Religion*.

¹⁰ Berkeley, *De Motu*, (1721), ed. A. A. Luce, in A. A. Luce and T.E. Jessop, *Works*, Vol. 4, (Thomsas Nelson and Sons, 1951). References in text

[Theodore (representing Malebranche)]: Do you not clearly see
 that bodies can be moved but that they cannot move themselves?
 You hesitate. Well suppose then this chair can move itself. In which
 direction will it go, with what speed, and when will it decide to move
 itself? Give it then an intelligence as well, and a will capable of
 determining itself. In other words create a human being out of your
 armchair.¹¹

Like Malebranche Berkeley ultimately thinks that only agents strictly cause events to
 occur.¹² And, as Malebranche, he takes the “primary qualities” of bodies to be in
 themselves “indifferent to motion.” (DM 22, 29, 32) Even collision phenomena exhibit

¹¹ Nicholas Malebranche, *Dialogues on Metaphysics and Religion* (1688), ed. Nicholas Jolley and David Scott, Dialogue VII, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997), 110-111.

¹² Charles McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*. (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1983).

Also see Walter Ott, Causation, Intentionality, and the Case for Occasionalism. *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 90 (2) (2008), 165-187, and Nicholas Jolley, “Berkeley and Malebranche on Causality and Volition” In J.A. Cover and Mark Kulstad, eds., *Central Themes in Early Modern Philosophy: Essays Presented to Jonathan Bennett*, (Indianapolis & Cambridge, Hackett, 1990), 227-244.

no transfer of power. Berkeley writes in DM 26:

Again in strict and accurate speech, the same must be said of percussive bodies. Those bodies as long as they are being moved, as also in the very moment of percussion, behave passively, exactly as when they are at rest.

However, it's not clear that Berkeley is simply saying in PHK 25 that lacking volition sensible ideas can't be strict causes. Winkler writes:

When Berkeley infers from a 'bare observation of our ideas' that they lack causal power, it seems that he cannot simply be reporting that ideas are not volitions. That would make his argument too easy.¹³

Lisa Downing asks. "How can we be sure sensible properties are not active?"¹⁴ She

¹³ Winkler, p. 114.

¹⁴ Lisa Downing, "Berkeley's Case Against Realism about Dynamics." In *Berkeley's Metaphysics, Structural, Interpretive, and Critical Essays*, ed., Robert Muehlmann, (University Park, Penn State University Press, 1995), 201.

In another essay Downing also takes *De Motu's* argument for the passivity of body to be that the "known" qualities of bodies are sensible qualities, and those being passive, we can't perceive (therefore can't know) bodies exhibit forces. "Berkeley's

offers in Berkeley's behalf the following argument: (1) A sensible quality is just a quality as sensed (2) With qualities as sensed "we never directly perceive causal power," therefore, sensible bodies lack such power. She writes:

It's unclear how our sensory experience of the qualities of bodies could rule out those qualities being active, unless by "sensible quality" Berkeley *just means* "quality-as-sensed." If Berkeley were using "quality" in this special sense, it would follow from the *plausible* premise that we never directly perceive causal power, that none of the sensible qualities are active.¹⁵

Philosophy of Science." in *The Cambridge Companion to Berkeley*, Kenneth Winkler ed., (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1005), 246-247. Downing takes the view, I think correctly, that *De Motu's* critique of "dynamical realism" is in fact grounded in Berkeley's more general principle that sensible ideas are causally inert. In PHK 50 Berkeley claims the contemporary explanation of "things" doesn't appeal to "corporeal substance," but to "figure, motion and other qualities, which are in truth no more than *mere ideas and, therefore, can't be the cause of anything*, as has already been shown. See sec. 25." (my emphasis) This suggests Berkeley takes his idealism to rule out second causes in nature. But PHK 50, again, is compatible with viewing Berkeley's argument as (1) only volition exhibits causal power. (2) Sensible ideas lack volition. Therefore (3) sensible ideas lack causal power.

¹⁵ Ibid. Perhaps Downing is just claiming that causal power, as necessary connection, is

It's not clear however whether Downing thinks this *plausibility* reflects a general point about perception or a point Berkeley simply takes as an obvious premise. I consider this below.

Returning to PHK 25, the question then is what about the “bare observation of our ideas” shows, for Berkeley, they are causally inert? PI might be supported by ordinary introspection of our immediate and mediate ideas of sense, without again assuming what we seek examples of volition in un-minded nature. Call this ‘strategy one.’ Strategy two deduces PI from some more basic accepted principle, for example, that for sensible objects their *esse* is *percipi*, or one of the arguments mentioned above; that only volitions can be strict causes and objects of sense lack agency, or that causal connections are

not the kind of thing we can perceive in nature. But that might get things backwards. If we perceive an instance of causality, we perceive causal power. Or perhaps she means that immediate sensible objects, colors, sounds, tastes and the like, give no impression of causal power. But pain, after all is an immediate idea for Berkeley, and certainly appears often causally active in moving us to action.

necessary and therefore not observable since necessary connections are not observable.¹⁶

Indeed Berkeley's claim in PHK 25 that it's "*impossible*" for ideas to be efficient causes

that Berkeley has in mind some a priori argument for PI, and the suggestion that we

seriously seek second causes in our ideas of sense is just rhetoric of the sort; 'Well if you

really think you can do that . . . ' Indeed in PHK 137 Berkeley writes:

That an *idea* which is inactive, and the existence of 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. (Berkeley's emphasis)

Here Berkeley suggests that just analyzing the meaning of the expressions

"agent," "idea," and "subsist by itself" tells us that ideas aren't agents. This,

however, appears to take for granted the "too easy solution" that ideas of sense,

lacking agency, can't be strict causes.

It's important to note that if PI is just an outcome of the no the no volition, no

¹⁶ Concerning the argument from introspection, Bennett writes: "I cannot evaluate this, because I do not know what thought-experiment I am being invited to perform. How do I go about looking for an activity in my ideas?" Bennett, 159.

cause argument, or the no necessary connection, so cause argument, Berkeley's distinctive idealism/immaterialism is irrelevant to its support. PHK 25 could have been begun as follows:

All objects we perceive, by whatever names they may be distinguished,
are visibly inactive, there is nothing of power or agency included in them.
So that one sensible object cannot produce or make any alteration in another.
Certainly the view that corporeal nature is inactive—there are no second
(efficient) causes—has strong support particularly for religious reasons in the
scholastic and early modern period. Though we might note the perhaps minority
view that has God endowing even his un -minded creation with some strict casual
powers.¹⁷ For example, Thomas Aquinas, according to Paul Hoffman, takes efficient
causation to require final causation in the Aristotelian sense that only agents with

See F. Suarez, Suarez, F. (2002). "Causation, conservation, and concurrence"
Metaphysical disputations 20–22 trans. A. Freddoso, (South Bend Indiana: St.
Augustine's Press. Also Freddoso, "Medieval Aristotelianism and the Case against
Secondary Causation in Nature," 74-118, in Thomas V. Morris, ed. *Divine and Human
Action: Essays in the Metaphysics of Theism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press,
1988).

ends can strictly cause change. But Hoffman argues that Aquinas doesn't require that agents be conscious; it's sufficient (in Hoffman's view) that there be some non-deliberative 'natural inclination (tendency, but not necessarily intention) towards something.¹⁸ In this Aristotelian tradition, uniform motion in a straight line, or uniform acceleration (tending) towards the earth's center satisfies the teleological constraint, but certainly for Berkeley, in *De Motu*, both motions precisely illustrate (as they would for Malebranche) the passivity of corporeal nature.

In any case what I call "strategy (1)"—appeal to introspection of our ideas without assuming a search for volitions in sensible objects—apparently has its defenders. I. C.

Tipton notes Berkeley "was not being at all original" in thinking we have no experience

¹⁸ Paul Hoffman, "Does Efficient Causation require Final Causation," in *Metaphysics and the Good*, ed. Samuel Newlands and Larry M. Jorgensen, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, 295-313. Hoffman admits his "stripped down" version of Aquinas on final causes is controversial, But he quotes, among other passages, the following from the *Suuma Contre Gentiles*. "Nor does it matter, as to this, whether that which tends to an end be cognitive or not; for just as the target is the end of the archer, so is it the end of the arrow's flight." Hoffman, 299. I thank Jeffrey McDonough for the reference to Hoffman.

of efficient causality in nature. Tipton takes as illustration the following passage from

Geraud de Cordmoy. (1664)

When we say, for example, that the body B has caused the body C to move from its place, if we examine carefully what we know with certainty here, all we see is that B moves, that it meets C which was at rest, and that after this meeting, the first ceases to move and the second commences to move. But to say that we know that B gives movement to C, is in truth mere assumption.¹⁹

Robert Fogelin mentions Berkeley's "direct appeal to intuition in PHK 25."²⁰ Jeffrey

McDonough thinks the passage in PHK 25 beginning with "A little attention to our ideas"

¹⁹ I. C. Tipton, Berkeley, *The Philosophy of Immaterialism*, (Meuthen and Co., 1974), 303. The Passage is from Cordemoy's *Discernement de Corps et de l'ame*, quoted by R. I. Aaron, John Locke, *Essay*, 3rd edition, I (Oxford, 1971). Tipton relates Berkeley's views to Locke. *Essay* IIxxi. Though Cordmoy speaks of "knowledge" I take his point to be that in billiard ball collisions, for example, (percussive phenomena) we don't have even an immediate impression of causal power.

²⁰ Robert J. Fogelin, *Berkeley*, (London, Routledge, 2001), 66.

appeals to “brute intuition.”²¹ G. J. Warnock uses the following example:

We say, for example, that the heat of the fire causes the kettle to boil.

But Berkeley holds this is the wrong way to put it. For on inspection of his ideas he cannot anything find (just as Hume could not find anything in them) to be called ‘power’ or ‘agency.’ We feel certainly, the heat of the fire; but we do not feel or otherwise find, an additional something called the ‘power to make kettles boil’. What we actually observe is this: that the fire is in fact hot, and that in fact, if a kettle is put on it the water boils.

When we say that the fire *makes* the kettle boil, we are saying more than we find, for all that we find is in fact the kettle does boil.²²

However, the lack of spatiotemporal contiguity between alleged cause and effect in

Warnock’s case limits its evidential force. Moreover, the mere possibility of a

²¹ Jeffrey K. McDonough, “Berkeley, Human Agency and Divine Concurrentism,” *The Journal of the History of philosophy*, PDF document, p. 15.16

²² Warnock, Berkeley, Pelican 116-117. Michotte also mentions the boiling water case. He thinks, that unlike his “launching” cases, causality is not given in the example as an impression distinct from spatiotemporal relations, but rather inferred. Michotte, 257. The stove case probably has a long history. Here’s one example from Max Reiser, “Causation, Action, and Creation,” *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 37, No. 18 (August, 1940). Reiser writes: “I infer that the water boils “because” of the heating force of fire, but I don’t see the ‘because,’ this specific link termed ‘because’; . . .”

spatiotemporal re-description of a causal description, as in the example, seems irrelevant in the case. Unlike billiard ball collisions, spatiotemporal description arguably exhausts the phenomenal content of our observation.²³ We don't even seem to observe "power," or "one thing making another happen."

Interestingly, though Warnock, in his example, apparently uses strategy (1), appeal to what we perceive (or represent in perception), he ultimately thinks PI is a priori. He claims that Berkeleian ideas by definition lack volition. But if that's the point no example of "idea-Idea"²⁴ causation works. Warnock's claim, then, "[that] we do not *feel*, or otherwise find, an additional something called 'the power to make kettles boil'," is ambiguous; it may mean that we recognize no volitional agency in hot stoves, or that we really perceive nothing but regular succession between heated stoves and subsequently boiling water.

But suppose upon their becoming contiguous we "felt" that a moving billiard ball moved one at rest. As noted, Berkeley, as before him Malebranche, and later Hume,

²³ Warnock, 116.

²⁴ "Idea-idea causation" is McDonough's phrase; email communication.

thought we do, though mistakenly, represent (or seem to perceive) efficient causality in un-minded nature. And they offer the identical etiology for the illusion. We project into nature strong expectations that B follows A from experiencing them to be uniformly associated in the past. Berkeley writes in PHK 32:

For when we perceive certain ideas of sense constantly followed by other ideas, and we know this is not of our doing, we forthwith attribute power and agency to the ideas themselves and make one the cause of another, than which nothing can be more absurd and unintelligible.

One implication of the passage is that though Berkeley thinks that our attributing causality to nature is mistaken, he's doesn't seem to be asserting, at least here, that the mistake is attributing agent causality via volition to ideas of sense.²⁵ This perhaps gives some support to Winkler's point that the latter argument for Berkeley would be too easy.

In any case, Berkeley, as Malebranche and Hume, recognized we have at least an

²⁵ Unfortunately, this is not quite the case. He might simply be saying that we can't resist thinking to be true, what we know for other reasons to be absurd, that some ideas of sense can be efficient causes,

impression, of efficient causation, particularly with cases of colliding physical bodies,²⁶

One billiard ball seems to move another on contact. We can think of the work of Albert Michotte in the 1940s as regimenting the conditions to elicit this impression. Michotte did some experiments simulating mechanical interactions. For example, in what he termed “launching” (“lancement”) cases an image of a ball on a screen appears to contact an imaged stationary ball and the latter simultaneously appears to move off. The experiments demonstrated to Michotte that

[t]here are some cases ... in which a causal impression arises, clear genuine and unmistakable, and the idea of cause can be derived from it by simple abstraction in just the same way as the idea of shape or movement can be derived from the perception of shape or movement.²⁷

The results appeared robust in the following sense: First, subjects represented, or had a visual impression of, the interactions as causal, though believing they were simply

²⁶ I imagine everyone has that illusion; otherwise there wouldn't be a problem of accounting for it.

²⁷ Michotte, 270-271

viewing simulations of interaction.²⁸ Again Michotte:

The causal impression persists even in the face of direct opposition from the facts of past experience. We know perfectly well that a ‘real’ ball cannot ‘drive away’ or ‘launch’ a reflected image or a show. It is in defiance of this knowledge that we actually *see* the launching of one by the other²⁹

Brian Scholl and K. Nakayama recently write about Michotte’s launching cases:

Like the perception of faces or words, for instance, the perception of causality from collision events is phenomenologically instantaneous, automatic, and largely irresistible.

Second the impression appears independent of regular association of putative cause and effect. When scenarios eliciting claims that Ball A moved Ball B were mixed with cases

²⁸ I use “represent X as Y,” “have an impression that X is Y,” or more informally “see or hear” X as Y” as interchangeable. The implication in all cases is that the representation, impression, or perceptual content expressed as a proposition may be incorrect.

²¹ <http://openmap.bbn.com/~kanderso/Michotte/michotte.html>

where contiguousness occurred *without* B moving, the impression that A moved B *when B moved* didn't change. Third, when very some small time elapsed between A contacting B and B moving, the causal impression disappeared. These results have been allegedly duplicated and extended with adults and young infants.³⁰

Some comments about these results are in order. Certainly there are legitimate questions about the experiments themselves; for example, about the use of subject's verbal reports, questions about subject bias, the use of controls, habituation and

³⁰ Scholl, B. J., & Nakayama, K. (2002). "Causal capture: Contextual effects on the perception of collision events." (Psychological Science, 13, No. 6, November, 2002), 493. Also, "The origins of causal perception: Evidence from postdictive processing in infancy," George E. Newman *, Hoon Choi, Karen Wynn, Brian J. Scholl, Department of Psychology, Yale University, Cognitive Psychology 57 (2008) 262–291. See also

Alan M. Leslie and Staphanie Keeble "Do six-month-old infants perceive causality?" *Cognition*, 25 (1987), 265-288. They write: "But on the prior and more basic question, can infant visual processing parse an event as causal we now have some positive evidence. We can therefore hypothesize a visual mechanism, already operating at 27 weeks, which is responsible for organizing a causal percept. "

Johan Wagemans, Rob Van Lier, Brian J. Scholl, "Introduction to Michotte's Heritage in Perception and Cognition Research," *Acta Psychologica*, 123, (2006), 1-19.

dishabituation techniques in non-linguistic subjects. (e.g. infants, animals) ³¹ Although important, my concern is more hypothetical; that is, do the experimental results, if sound, bear on the truth of at least one interpretation of PI. Moreover, A better title for Michotte, as he admitted, would have been *The representation of causality in perception* since, by design, subjects believed they were witnessing only simulations of contact. Michotte's translator T. R. Miles put the point this way:

It was necessary for Michotte to produce illusions of causality to ensure

That his subjects made use of vision only; he wished to find out whether there was a visual impression of causality, not whether his subjects thought that mechanical work was in fact being done.³²

For Michotte we visually represent causality in the simulated collisions ³³ just as Berkeley

³¹ R.B. Joynson, "Michotte's Experimental Methods," *British Journal of Psychology*, 62, 3, (1971), 293-302. Also see Susanna Siegel, *The Contents of Visual Perception*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010), 117-120.

³² Michotte, 412.

³³ Michotte quotes from Malebranche: "When I see a billiard ball bump into another, my eyes tell me or seem to tell me, this first ball is really the cause of the movement which it transmits to the other." Michotte, 7 fn. 7. Interesting that in other passages Malebranche

might admit, that after association between proper visual contents, e.g., light and colors, and tactile experience, we visually represent objects, that is, apparently see them, as spread out in two and three dimensions.³⁴ In TDI Hylas concedes that as far as immediate objects of vision are concerned both a person who knows about Julius Caesar and one who doesn't would see the same pattern of light and colors. Though the first person's "thoughts," Philonous says, will be directed to Caesar, they strictly see the same thing. But the term "thoughts" here is misleading. Past association accounts for the sense of familiarity but no conscious judgment or inference is made.³⁵ Seeing a familiar face is phenomenally distinct from seeing a strange face precisely because it *looks* familiar.³⁶

seems to deny even this phenomenological point. Charles McCracken, using as texts, *The Search*, [S, VI 2-3, (Taylor Translation vol 2, 55), and *Meditationes Cretiennes*, V.5] writes: "Our senses show us (according to Malebranche) that when a body at rest is struck, it begins to move; but they show us no transfer of a "moving force" from one body to another.", McCracken, 242, It's not clear what it would be to "*show*" the "transfer of a moving force."

³⁴ Berkeley, *Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision*, sec 46 p. 40 Turbayne edition.

³⁵ See "Evidence for a Distinction between Judged and Perceived Causality," Anne Schlottmann *University of California, San Diego, California, U.S.A.* and David R. Shanks *MRC Applied Psychology Unit, Cambridge, U.K*

³⁶ TD 1, Turbayne edition, 144-145. Admittedly it's not certain that Berkeley would even attribute the familiar "look "of the painting to vision. In the passage Philonous

Helen Beebe argues we see causes as we hear the meaningfulness of ordinary language; an example interestingly comparable to Berkeley's claim that we see distance as we hear the meanings of familiar speech. Beebe writes:

Does the . . . fact that there is no way it sounds for a sequence of sounds to be a command to shut the door-give us any phenomenological grounds for holding that thick semantic experiences are impossible?

No. If phenomenology is to settle anything here, it certainly does

not support that claim. So long as both you and [your friend] are competent

claims the reason Hylas's "thoughts are directed to the Roman emperor, proceeds from not from "the ideas of sense," but from "reason and memory." "Consequently," he continues, "it will not follow from that instance that anything is perceived by sense that is not immediately perceived." However, interpreting Berkeley as claiming that we never represent visually what we don't properly and immediately see. (e.g., light and colors at "no distance from the mind.") can't be correct. He allows, for example, the existence of visible extension. (*Theory of Vision Vindicated* 54). Robert Schwartz notes we might judge distance (registered through kinesthetic and tactual experience), by associating distance from an object with smell intensity (assuming a correlation) without thinking odors and distance had anything in common. That seems right, though it's doubtful, even with a tight correlation, we would come to think we actually smelled distance.(Berkeley in fact in the *Notebooks* raises this question to himself.) "Qu: why not taste & smell extension?" *Notebook B*, #137, in Ayers, 263. But we do come to visually represent objects as in space. See Robert Schwartz, *Vision*, (Blackwell, Cambridge Mass, 1994), 25-27.

English speakers, it seems that your auditory experience represents

[your friend] as having told you to shut the door.³⁷

Berkeley *might* perhaps admit these points about phenomenology; using again his example, that after associations between tactile, kinesthetic and proper visual sense data we *visually* represent or have an impression of objects as in space. The mistake Berkeley thinks we make is to take spatiality (“outness” and “trineness”) to be an immediate or proper object of vision, what we would have (or a congenitally blind person made to see would have) without prior association of proper visual objects with tactile experience.³⁸

With respect to hearing, the “torrential” quality of unfamiliar speech exemplifies how background knowledge influences perceptual experience.³⁹ Since the phonological and semantic breaks don’t always match, such speech often sounds run-on though the auditory stimulus is identical for familiar and unfamiliar speech. Or just say the English word “crutch” over and over until the sounds dominate the sense of meaningfulness. The

³⁷ Helen Beebe, “Seeing Causes and Hearing Gestures,” *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 59, 236, (2009), 405-428.

³⁸ See Berkeley’s discussion of the “Molyneux” problem in NTV 132. Turbayne, 84.

³⁹ I believe the term “torrential” is used this way by Jerry Fodor, but can’t locate the reference.

word begins to sounds strange though again the auditory stimulus (sound waves to ear drum) is the same.⁴⁰ And though there are controversies about how much we can visually represent, particularly whether (or how much) past experience or knowledge affects visual content, we certainly visually represent more than retinal stimulations.⁴¹ The necker-cube, Schroeder-stairs, and other “ambiguous” diagrams are simple examples.⁴²

⁴⁰ See Richard Brook, “Berkeley’s Theory of Vision: Transparency and Signification,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 11 (4), (2003), 691-699.

⁴¹ See William T. Wojtach “Reconsidering Perceptual Content” *Philosophy of Science* 76 (1), 2009, 22-43. Wojtach addresses what’s termed the “inverse optics problem,” (phrase from Stephen Palmer, *Vision Science: From Photons to Phenomenology*.” (Cambridge, MA. MIT Press.1999); that if [retinal] “stimuli cannot uniquely indicate the source of the stimuli,” there is a problem of how observers usefully represent such sources. Wojtach refers to Berkeley (*The New Theory of Vision*) as one of the first to raise the problem.

⁴² <http://www.hypnosisnetwork.com/articles/the-necker-cube-an-experiment-in-perception>. <http://mathworld.wolfram.com/SchroederStairs.html>
<file:///localhost/Volumes/BERK/Necker%20cube%20on%20Vimeo.flv>

Robert Schwartz notes about the ‘Necker cube,’ and ‘duck/rabbit’ cases that (he uses the duck/rabbit example) they illustrate having two different visual perceptions though arguably the retinal stimulus is identical. This, in the context of his discussion whether and to what extent inference is involved in vision. Schwartz, 96-97. Those illusions where when we stare long enough at certain apparently two dimensional pictures they seem to “explode” into three dimensions illustrate how visual content can change with the same retinal stimulus. See N.E. Thing Enterprises, *Magic Eye*, (Kansas City, Andrews and McMeel, 1994). I thank Kurt Smith for a copy.

Therefore, as far as phenomenology goes, there is nothing I find in Berkeley's discussion that disallows *in principle* a visual representation of causality, comparable to a visual representation of spatiality. This commits one neither to the proposition that nature contains efficient causes, nor, in Berkeley's example, that nature is intrinsically spatial.⁴³

There is also the question whether visually representing that ball A moves ball B is in fact representing (having a visual impression) that A *causes* B to move, rather than just representing a case of A moves B. Jerry Fodor raises this question in the context of discussing Michotte's work, noting he (Fodor) would have liked to put the question to Hume.⁴⁴ It seems to me (as I believe to Fodor) that visually representing that [A moves B] in fact represents, in a *de re* or extensional sense that

⁴³ This question of visual representation is related to the question of what's called "cognitive penetrability," the question of how much knowledge affects perceptual content. Certain illusions like the bent-oar, or Muller-Lyer illusion, exemplify the resistance of visual content to knowledge. In the same way, Michotte's adult subject's knowledge that they witnessed simulations didn't remove the causal impression.

⁴⁴ See Jerry A. Fodor, *Hume Variations*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003), 77.

[A *causes* B to move] since A moving B exemplifies a causal relation. That is, one doesn't have to have a full concept of cause to recognize an instance.

Michotte type results, then, if sound, are evidence first, that the launching simulations give an immediate visual impression (representation) of causation. Second, the impression isn't grounded in experienced associations. There is a danger, I think, in stretching the regularity, or associationist theory to the point where it becomes virtually analytic. To say that as long as subjects tactually interact with their environment we rightly can invoke the regularity theory to explain Michotte's results puts the theory in danger of being unfalsifiable.⁴⁵ One needs to individuate instances of the associated A's

⁴⁵ Michotte thought the causal impression was innate, a controversial point among current researchers. D. W. Hamlyn believed Michotte misconceived the notion of cause as used by Hume. Hamlyn does take Hume to think that a necessary condition for perceiving that type A causes type B is experiencing a "uniform connection" between tokens of A and B, but believes this is a "conceptual point" not open to experimental disproof. Michotte's work, he believes, misses the point. Hamlyn writes: "Hume was not concerned with how things appear to us." D. W. Hamlyn, *The Psychology of Perception*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), 76-77. Now Hume may have believed "uniform connection" to be constitutive of *our* concept of cause. That is a conceptual point. But Hume apparently thought as well that experiencing uniform connections grounds our apparent impression of causality. Hume writes:

and B's with enough precision to re-identify them over time.

In sum, the first strategy to support PI, ordinary reflection on our ideas of sense, again, where the task is not thought of as seeking volition in sensible objects, doesn't support it. There seems to be a fundamentally basic impression or representation of one thing moving another. If the claimed results of Michotte type experiments are correct, subjects quite instinctively, and independent of past association, contrast spatiotemporal correlation with something over and above correlation; distinguishing, again, between (1) ball A move and becomes contiguous with Ball B, and B moves, and (2) A moves B.⁴⁶,

Of course if, phenomenologically we can't tell the difference between simulated and real billiard ball contact, (say on a pool table) could we ever, in fact, claim

"The mind feels no sentiment or *inward* impression from this succession of objects; consequently, there is not, in any single, particular instance of cause and effect, any thing which can suggest the idea of power or necessary connection." (Par 6. part I, sec. 7 of the *First Enquiry*.) This seems to be a psychological claim. Michotte's results are relevant to this claim, a point Michotte's translator, T. R. Miles makes against Hamlyn. (Miles' Commentary in Michotte, 414-415.)

⁴⁶ For Michotte the impression that A moves B is not an impression of succession but of a single event. See text.

to observe real causality? Georges Dicker offered the following interesting argument.⁴⁷

(1) We get the identical impression when ball (A) moves ball (B) as we do when there's a

Michottian simulation. (2) We don't observe causation in the latter (simulation) case. (3)

Therefore we don't observe causality in the example of real causality. This raises an

interesting epistemological problem, comparable perhaps raised by Gettier

counterexamples that challenge the traditional definition of knowledge as justified true

belief. But it's not, I think, relevant to whether simulations count against Berkeley's

view—or at least one interpretation of it—that ordinary reflection or introspection on

objects of sense shows them *to be inactive*. In Dicker's first case (ball A moves ball B)

our impression or representation is correct; we have observed an instance of causality. Of

course, if sensible objects can't be causes that case won't occur, but *that* it won't occur

doesn't follow from an inability to distinguish causes from simulations of causes.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Email correspondence.

⁴⁸ In practice we go on to distinguish causation from correlation, by counterfactual tests, manipulation of objects (where possible), looking for underlying mechanisms, using regularities. Perhaps it's mistaken to think we can get an analytic definition of causality; a complete set of necessary conditions for X to be a cause of Y. An article expressing this view, one to which I'm sympathetic, is Christopher Hitchcock's

Returning to PHK 25 then, the question remains why Berkeley thinks “the bare observation of our ideas” reveals their passivity, particularly if we reject the “too easy solution” (Winkler) that only volitions are true causes.⁴⁹ I return below to Winkler’s suggested argument. But we should at least look at the response that we can’t observe necessary connections between objects of sense, and since causal connections for Berkeley are necessary connections, we can’t observe causal connections.⁵⁰

Now Berkley, as far as I can determine, doesn’t explicitly use this argument, but perhaps it’s not implausible to think he would accept it. Winkler, for example, takes Berkeley in general, as Hume, to accept the “stock understanding” of necessary connection; that if A and B are necessarily connected, we can a priori—that is without experiencing the connection—deduce the occurrence of B from the occurrence of A.⁵¹

“Conceptual Analysis Naturalized: A Metaphilosophical Case Study,” *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. CIII, No. 9, (2006), 427-451.

⁴⁹ Winkler, 114.

⁵⁰ A point made to me by Marc Hight.

⁵¹ Winkler, 122. Winkler does note that Berkeley’s not always consistent here. Berkeley would likely take mathematical deduction to exemplify necessary connections, for example deducing theorems from postulates in Euclidean

Now although Berkeley might take a claim of necessary connection between A and B to be a priori—a license, as Winkler suggests, to deduce the occurrence of B merely from the occurrence of A—there is doubt, as Winkler notes, that Berkeley thought causal relations necessary in that sense.⁵² With respect to finite minds, Berkeley famously claims against the occasionalists that we experience the power of volition in moving our limbs; the experience of making something happen. But learning *that* by experience, as Winkler observes, is precisely to understand that my volitions (or willings, or tryings) to move my limbs can't necessitate my moving them; something Berkeley

geometry. See, for example Berkeley, *The Analyst*, sec.2, ed. A.A. Luce, in *The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne*, ed. Luce and Jessop, vol. 4, (London, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1951), 65-66. Though even here the deduction doesn't exemplify an analytic claim unless one took, as Berkeley doesn't, the postulates to implicitly define the basic terms, "point," "line," "circle," etc. of geometry.

⁵² Berkeley would certainly accept Malebranche's view that if God wills X to occur it's necessary relative to that volition (though not necessary in itself) that X occur. Tad M. Schmaltz has a good discussion of what he calls the "occasionalisms" of Malebranche and Berkeley in "Occasionalism and Mechanism: Fontenelles Objections to Malebranche," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 16 (2), (2008), 293-313. Schmaltz observes that Malebranche, like Descartes, thought certain principles of mechanics, for example, the first law of motion, followed necessarily from God's nature.

recognized early on.⁵³ The experience (intuition) of power likely comes rather from reflecting on the apparent control of our voluntary motions, an intuition that we can start or stop them at will. Something Malebranche's "armchair" couldn't evidently do.

The interesting question for me is whether Berkeley's idealism—that sensible objects are bundles or congeries of mind dependent ideas—implies that they can't be efficient causes. For example, here is a suggested potential *reductio-ad-absurdum* argument by Winkler: (1) An idea depends for its existence on being perceived. (2) There is nothing in an idea that is not perceived. (3) Therefore every feature of an idea depends on its being perceived. (4) If ideas were active "there would be events among ideas of which ideas themselves would be the cause." By (2) these causal features must be perceived by a mind. (4) By (1) and (3), some features of an idea, in this case being the

⁵³ Winkler, 120. In his early *Notebooks*, Berkeley writes: "There is a difference betwixt Power & Volition. There may be Volition without Power. But there can be no power without volition. Power implyeth volition & *at the same time a Connotation of the Effect 's following the Volition.*" (My emphasis) *Notebook A*, #699, in Michael Ayers, ed. *George Berkeley, Philosophical Works*, (London, J.M. Dent and Sons, 1975), 319.

effect of a cause, would depend both on another idea, and on being perceived. Winkler puts the possible problem in (4) as a question:

Can a causal relation in one direction be plausibly combined with ontological dependence in the reverse direction? ⁵⁴

Although a negative answer might secure the *reductio*, it needs defending. Why can't one billiard ball moving another be an object of perception even if the existence of the complex event/idea ball (A) moves ball (B) requires that it be perceived? This meets the condition that everything in the complex is perceived. To suggest (*pace* Warnock) that only spatiotemporal relations are directly perceived begs the question in favor of strategy one. Admittedly one ball apparently *moving* another, thought of as an event, is not a simple idea, that is, it's not a quale like a shade of red or a sour taste. But the causal impression isn't temporally complex, since we perceive it, for example, in Michotte's launching cases, as occurring simultaneously with A contacting B. Though the putative cause, as an event, tracks in from the past and the apparent effect, as event, tracks into the

⁵⁴ Winkler, 114.

future, the causal impression is perceived as instantaneous. (like a brick hitting a window and the window at that moment (to us) appearing to break.

We also should remember that Berkeley, both to distinguish human perception from imagination, and to account for the continuity of nature, requires God in some sense to “perceive,” and thereby uphold the existence of the world. (See PHK 3, 4 and 6 among other passages.) My perception of a tree, for example, or the books in the study, neither creates them nor causes them to remain in existence. For Berkeley as for Malebranche, God’s “perception” continuously creates and thereby upholds the world. The familiar thought here, which has nothing to do with idealism/immaterialism, is that if upholding the world at each instant is in fact recreating it, no room exists for corporeal objects to be efficient causes.⁵⁵

Now Berkeley, as far as I can tell, doesn’t explicitly use that argument, and, in any case, it apparently rules out finite agent causality as well. In this respect Jeffrey McDonough argues that Berkeley’s problematic view that voluntary motions can be

⁵⁵ Walter Ott argues that unless we distinguish divine conservation of the world from its continual recreation, there is really no room for second (efficient) causes. See “Regis Scholastic Mechanism,” 13.

causally attributed to finite wills – problematic because it suggests that besides ideas of imagination agents cause some ideas of sense—might be resolved by taking Berkeley to be a concurrentist. Divine and finite volition cooperate to cause human action.⁵⁶

McDonough cites passages' indicating Berkeley's acquaintance with concurrentism, though those passages, at least to me, don't convincingly show he approved it.⁵⁷

But suppose Berkeley did or could accept that divine and human volition somehow causally cooperate to account for human action. Could he have widened the extension of this concurrence to include efficient causation between natural objects, say, one billiard ball moving another? Take the passage from DM 33 where Berkeley claims that we know by introspection that spirit is a power of altering “our own state, *and that of*

⁵⁶Jeffrey K. McDonough, Berkeley, Human Agency and Divine Concurrentism,” JHP. See also Alfred J. Freddoso, “God's General Concurrence With Secondary Causes: Why Conservation Is Not Enough,” *Philosophical Perspectives* 5 (1991), a paper that McDonough often refers to.

⁵⁷ McDonough refers to PHK 145, PHK 66, TD 1. In my view these texts don't well support a claim that Berkeley not only was acquainted with the doctrine, but accepted concurrentism. A letter to Samuel Johnson does suggest Berkeley accepted a limited concurrentism or conservationism. See text.

other things.” Although too brief a passage to be clear what Berkeley’s means by “other things”, we might ask whether they could include the cue ball moved by my hitting it with the cue-stick, or even the eight ball moved by the cue ball? ⁵⁸

Of course if moving my arm is an efficient cause changing the position of the cue stick it is so only in part. The stick’s actual path, as the path of my arm, depends on other laws that express God’s will. Moving the stick in molasses, as opposed to air, changes its trajectory. Human and divine volition must concur then in causing the stick’s precise path. What of the cue ball’s starting to move after contact with the stick? We could say (1) God takes over at contact, or, (2) the cue stick’s power imparted to it by me and God causally cooperate to move the cue ball.

In the first interpretation I move only objects attached to my body. Yet even this might be a problem for Berkeley. Alfred Freddoso gives the example of moving my shoe

⁵⁸ Winkler suggests that if we can trace a series of connected motions to an agent’s moving her limbs, we have, for Berkeley, real as opposed to merely relative motion, (a distinction Berkeley makes in PHK 113 and in DM.) This seems to imply efficient causality all the way down the chain. Ken Winkler, “Berkeley, Newton, and the Stars,” *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science*, 17 (1986), 23-42.

by moving my leg. The difficulty is that PI entails that no corporeal body, e.g., my, leg, or arm, construed as bundles of ideas, can efficiently cause a state change of another corporeal body, my shoe, or the cue stick. Freddoso writes: “It seems to follow from what Berkeley says that I can move my leg and even my foot, but not my shoe!”⁵⁹ If that’s true then *a fortiori* PI precludes my moving (causing to move) the cue ball with the cue stick, or the cue ball moving the eight ball, etc. The second choice suggests an extended concurrentism; I, with God’s help, move objects attached to my limbs (shoes or

⁵⁹ Alfred J. Freddoso, "Medieval Aristotelianism and the Case against Secondary Causation in Nature," pp. 74-118 in Thomas V. Morris, ed., *Divine and Human Action: Essays in the Metaphysics of Theism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988). Freddoso thinks Berkeley might have finessed the problem by taking properties (Berkeley’s sensible ideas) to be only modes of consciousness. But it’s not clear how this surmounts the occasionalist challenge to Berkeley’s assertion that we “move our limbs ourselves.” Moreover, although some ideas, pain, for example, are arguably modes or states of consciousness, Berkeley explicitly rejects the view that ideas are modes. PHK 49. See a good discussion of the ontology of ideas in McCracken, and also Marc Hight. (*Idea and Ontology*, (University Park, Pennsylvania University Press, 2008), 209-217.

cue-sticks) and those objects with God's causal cooperation move (cause to move) other objects. We would have then an extended chain of efficient causality begun by an agent.⁶⁰

There remains, of course, the nagging feeling that even God couldn't share causal power with ideas. Berkeley writes in PHK 89 that ideas are

inert, fleeting, dependent beings which subsist not by themselves, but are supported by, or exist in minds or spiritual substances.⁶¹

\Taken one way, this suggests that ideas of sense are too unsubstantial, gossamer like, to be efficient causes.⁶² Yet Berkeley often observes that he didn't rid the world of corporeal objects by denying the existence of material substance. He writes in PHK 34:

In the sense here given of "reality" it is evident that every vegetable, star, mineral, and in general each part of the mundane system, is as much a

⁶¹ See also TD(3) where Berkeley comments that ideas are "perpetually fleeting and variable."

⁶² Marc Hight points out (email) that taking "ideas" to be "fleeting" was fairly common in the early modern period, and referred not to the intrinsic flimsiness of particular ideas, but rather to the fact that the sensible world appears to constantly changing.

real being by our principles as by any other. (Berkeley's emphasis)

Why then couldn't God share his causal power with a billiard ball? Berkeley does allow that God can share his power with other spirits. Responding to his American correspondent Samuel Johnson, Berkeley allows the existence of "spirits of different orders," causally active with "limited and derivative powers."⁶³ This isn't exactly concurrentism, but a limited "conservationism" where God delegates to finite minds some powers to act. Why couldn't God delegate power to ordinary non-minded objects, say natural kinds, like gold and water? One suspicion again is that since for Berkeley these ordinary objects are bundles or congeries of ideas, they can't as a matter of principle be causally active. But we still need an argument to show that idea-idea causation is impossible. I find nothing in the doctrine that for sensible objects their

⁶³ "Berkeley to Johnson," [first response, sec 2, (1729)] in Turbayne ed. *Principles, Dialogues and Correspondence*, 225. In sec. 3 Berkeley appeals to the "Schoolmen" to support the view that "conservation and creation differ only in the *terminus quo*." (he notes the minority opinion of Durandus (of St. Pourcain, (c. 1275-1334, See translation re second causes, on line by Freddeso.) Taking this as Berkeley's considered view, however, makes even the notion of limited powers (finite volitions) difficult to defend.

esse is *percipi* that rules out God's delegating or sharing power with corporeal bodies.

Berkeley adopts the bundle theory because he finds incoherent what he takes to be the alternative, material substance as substratum.

Some Concluding Remarks

If we take the passage in DM 33 prior to the section about our moving *other* bodies by moving our limbs, its point, which echoes *De Motu* as a whole, is (1) that corporeal motion of bodies, *as studied by mechanics*, doesn't require appeal to efficient causes; and (2) we have no causal impressions with respect to corporeal motion, whether uniform, accelerative, or consequent to impact. Therefore there is none.⁶⁴ Claim (1) expresses the belief, as Bertrand Russell put it in the early 20th century, that physics doesn't require appeal to forces.⁶⁵ But that view is consistent of course with forces

⁶⁴ The conclusion follows for Berkeley since, as Downing and others point out, he takes conceivability to depend on what can be sensed.

⁶⁵ Bertrand Russell, *Mysticism and Logic*, [1918] ed. Louis Greenspan & Stefan Anderson, Routledge, NY 1999), 104. On the controversial character of Russell's view see Hartry Field, "Causation in a Physical World." In Michael J. Loux & Dean W. Zimmerman eds. (*The Oxford Handbook of Metaphysics*, 2003), 435-446. The issue, in part, concerns the temporal direction of causality.

existing in nature. As for (2), Michottian studies, if sound, show that subjects quite early on visually represent efficient causality in simulated contact cases. Bodies seem to be causally active. And of course Berkeley admits as much in PHK 32. I view Michotte studies as making more rigorous the experimental set-up that elicits the causal impression. More importantly the experimental results rule out a popular early modern etiology for that impression; that it's the projection into nature of expectations engendered by regular association.

Berkeley writes in DM 40:

We actually perceive by the aid of the senses nothing except the effects or sensible qualities and corporeal things entirely passive whether in motion or at rest; and reason and experience advise us that there is nothing active except mind or soul.

Believing minds make things happen, then, is based partly on reflection on our own actions, (experience) for example, when by choice raising my arm I'm convinced I raised it. This is not a revelation of a necessary connection. More likely, as suggested above, when I voluntarily raise my arm, I'm convinced I have continuous control of its motion. I

could be mistaken. But that *only* minds are active is based as well on what Berkeley calls “reason.” Returning to PHK 137, he writes: “[we] need no other refutation than just attending to the meaning of the words or expressions “idea,” “agent,” “spirit,” “subsisting by itself.” But Berkeley’s realism is quite robust; he is talking about rocks and trees, rivers, mountains etc. So we can substitute in the list above (as Berkeley was inclined to allow) “thing” for “idea.” He takes as self-evident (at least for the learned) that corporeal nature contains no second causes. That sensible things are ideas, immediately, or mediately perceived, seems to me irrelevant.