

Berkeley's Christian Neoplatonism, Archetypes, and Divine Ideas

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COMMENTATORS HAVE long noted that Berkeley's doctrine of archetypes plays a role in his explanation of how God perceives and how different finite minds can be said to have the same ideas. Understanding what that role is, though, is complicated by the fact that Berkeley uses "archetype" sparingly and recognizes that talk of archetypes invites comparisons with Malebranche that often distract readers from seeing how archetypes function in his immaterialism. Still, by appealing to the vocabulary of archetypes, Berkeley shows that Malebranchian insights, when properly understood, can focus attention on the distinctly Christian Neoplatonic way in which ideas can be said to exist "in" the mind of God.

These invocations of Malebranche and Christian Neoplatonism hint at how Berkeley's treatment of archetypes opens up much larger issues about how minds are related to their ideas. His references to those issues appear in his early unpublished *Philosophical Commentaries* (1707-8) and in his *Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710) and *Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* (1713), but it is not until his late work *Siris* (1744) that he situates his notion of mind in an explicitly Christian Neoplatonic context. In that context he shows how archetypes can be used to circumvent some of the difficulties that seem to arise out of his earlier portrayal of minds as discrete substances that "contain" ideas. Indeed, his later comments on archetypes reveal how Christian Neoplatonism (and specifically Trinitarian thought) provides a model for understanding why he (in contrast to Descartes or Locke) thinks that mind (spiritual substance) and ideas (the objects of mind) cannot exist or even be thought of apart from one another.

Instead of interpreting *Siris* in terms of Berkeley's well-known works in epistemology, I propose to consider the *Principles* and the *Dialogues* in light of his

Christian Neoplatonic metaphysics. I suggest that that metaphysics is already present in his early works and is most noticeable in his attempts to adapt a Lockean vocabulary to Neoplatonic doctrines about mind and archetypes. However, those attempts inevitably appear forced because in the metaphysics of Descartes and Locke, minds can be considered apart from their ideas, God can be considered apart from his creation, and (though in a more mysterious way) the three Persons of the Trinity can be considered apart from one another.

In the Christian Neoplatonic mentality that Berkeley adopts, this isolation of a mind or subject from the relations by virtue of which it has its identity is inconceivable. For Berkeley, there are no ideas apart from minds (“for an idea to exist in an unperceiving thing is a manifest contradiction”), there are no minds apart from ideas (“take away the perceptions and you take away the mind”), and both minds and ideas are significant or meaningful only in relation to one another.¹ To explain how God and other minds can have the “same” ideas, we cannot begin with the assumption that God communicates ideas *to* minds that somehow exist prior to or independent of the communication. As Berkeley remarks, “Say you the mind is not the perceptions, but that thing which perceives. I answer, you are abused by the words ‘that’ and ‘thing’: these are vague, empty words without a meaning” (*PC* 581). To assume that God’s communication of ideas is distinct from his creation of finite minds is already to think of minds and ideas as if they were distinct entities apart from their relation to one another. That would assume that God’s ideas or the archetypes of our ideas are themselves intelligible apart from our perceptions and that they exist in some sense “in” God’s mind. But such an assumption would make it difficult to explain how *my* ideas are the same as God’s ideas or, for that matter, the same as the ideas of other minds.

To avoid these difficulties I suggest that we have to think of archetypes from an entirely different perspective—one that requires that we no longer think (e.g., with Locke) of God and minds as things that exist or have identities apart from their relations to ideas. Instead, we have to understand the triad of mind, ideas, and their union in terms of the Christian Neoplatonic model of how the Persons of the Trinity are related. I argue that by appealing to the model of the Trinitarian doctrines of the Cappadocian Church Fathers we can understand how, for Berkeley, divine ideas are related to human ideas in terms of archetypes. Furthermore, I suggest that it is not accidental that one of the most explicit anticipations of Berkeley’s immaterialism is found in the

¹ George Berkeley, *A Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* [*P*], in A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop, ed., *The Works of George Berkeley* [*Works*] (9 vols.; London: Thomas Nelson, 1948–57), 2: § 7; and George Berkeley, *Philosophical Commentaries* [*PC*], in Michael R. Ayers, ed., *George Berkeley: Philosophical Works* [*PW*] (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle, 1992), *PC* 580. Citations of *P* refer to section numbers.

writings of the Cappadocian thinker Gregory of Nyssa (c. 331–396 A.D.). Like Gregory, Berkeley shifts the discussion from a human perspective of treating mind and its objects as intelligible apart from one another to how God creates minds and ideas simultaneously and comprehends them in terms of their essential unity. To the extent that we recognize this shift, we retrieve a sense of what Berkeley calls “the true system of the world” which is lost in Aristotelian, Cartesian, and Lockean accounts.

1. THE TRINITARIAN ACCOUNT OF MIND

Berkeleyan archetypes are typically understood as exemplars of our own ideas that exist in the mind of God. According to some commentators, if archetypes exist in the mind of God, they are in effect God's ideas.² This can mean, A. A. Luce notes, that archetypes are either Platonic ideas that coexist eternally in the mind of God or the created originals on which our ideas are modeled.³ However, Berkeley is reluctant to speak about God's *ideas* because for him ideas are fleeting, passive objects of mind (*D* 240–41). Since nothing about God is passive, to think that God has ideas like we have ideas is simply wrong. Nonetheless, as Robert Muehlmann points out, if (as Berkeley says) God impresses ideas on finite minds, he must have archetypes of those ideas in his own mind; otherwise, he acts blindly.⁴ In addition, if archetypes are ideas in the mind of God, that might explain how things can continue to exist when no finite mind perceives them. In short, God's archetypal perception of sensible things could serve as the basis for their being perceived as things in the first place and could account for the possibility that those things are perceived as the same at different times, by different minds, and even when they not are perceived by any finite mind at all.

However, it is doubtful that God's perceptions can provide any continuity or uniformity between the present and past perceptions of a finite mind or between the perceptions of different finite minds because God simply does not perceive what we perceive. As Berkeley makes clear, God “perceives nothing by sense as we do. . . . God knows, or hath ideas; but His ideas are not conveyed to Him by sense, as ours are. . . . God knoweth all things as pure mind or intellect; but nothing by sense.”⁵ If God's perceptions are not the same as our

² See C. C. W. Taylor, “Berkeley on Archetypes,” *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 67 (1985): 65–79, esp. 73–74; David Berman, *George Berkeley: Idealism and the Man* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 51.

³ A. A. Luce, “The Philosophical Correspondence between Berkeley and Johnson,” *Hermathena* 56 (1940): 93–112, esp. 101.

⁴ Robert G. Muehlmann, *Berkeley's Ontology* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992), 259, 263.

⁵ George Berkeley, *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous [D]*, in *Works*, 2: 241; and *Siris [S]* § 289, in *Works*, vol. 5. Citations of *D* refer to page numbers, citations of *S* refer to section numbers.

(sensible) perceptions, then the tree that God perceives in the quad when no one else is around is not the same as ours, because our tree is certainly one that is sensed. It would seem, therefore, that Berkeley's appeal to the tree's archetypal existence in the mind of God does not resolve the question of identity. Indeed, it highlights a problem in Berkeley's account that, according to several commentators, threatens to undermine Berkeley's entire philosophy.⁶

George Thomas suggests that the obvious solution here is to conclude that, for Berkeley, God does not *perceive* at all.⁷ According to Thomas, when Berkeley says "all things are known or perceived by God," he really means only that "all objects are eternally known by God" (*D* 212, 252). The "perceives" is inserted only to head off charges of skepticism or unorthodoxy. Of course, in a sense, Thomas is correct, for God does not passively sense objects the way we do. But even if God's knowledge/perception differs from ours (which, of course, it does), that does not mean that the two are unrelated.

For Berkeley, the way out of this dilemma consists in recognizing that archetypes cannot be understood simply as more elaborate versions of our own ideas, for that would not explain how our ideas are themselves originally identified. To provide such an explanation, Berkeley argues, we have to show how ideas are intelligible and discernible in virtue of God's activity. But in order to explain what it means to say that God creates minds and ideas, we first have to understand what it means to say that God has a mind and ideas. And that is where Berkeley turns to Christian Neoplatonism.

As early as in his *Philosophical Commentaries*, Berkeley indicates how the question of a person's identity cannot be divorced from a consideration of the relations of the Persons of the Trinity (*PC* 310, 713). In *Alciphron* (1732) he raises the issue of personal identity within a broader discussion of how the early Church Fathers attempt to resolve problems relating to the doctrine of the Trinity.⁸ But Berkeley's most developed treatment of explicitly Neoplatonic themes occurs in *Siris*, a work that is often dismissed as unimportant for understanding the central ideas he develops in his earlier writings.⁹ In *Siris* he notes how the notion of God as a Trinity is approximated in Plotinus' doctrine of

⁶See Paul J. Olscamp, *The Moral Philosophy of George Berkeley* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 127, 233; Charles J. McCracken, "What Does Berkeley's God See in the Quad?" *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 61 (1979): 280–92, esp. 280–81; Kenneth P. Winkler, *Berkeley: An Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 228; and Berman, *Berkeley*, 40, 51.

⁷See George H. Thomas, "Berkeley's God Does Not Perceive," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 14 (1976): 163–168, esp. 166. Cf. Peter Hutcheson, "Berkeley's God Perceives," *Southwest Philosophical Studies* 8 (1983): 81–88, esp. 85–87.

⁸See *Alciphron* [*Alc*] VII. 8–9, in *Works*, 3: 296–301.

⁹A notable exception is John Wild, *George Berkeley: A Study of His Life and Philosophy* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), 444–89.

three hierarchically ordered hypostases and corrected in the doctrines of later Christian thinkers who portray the Persons of the Trinity as co-equals (S 341–63). Drawing on their ideas, Berkeley says that God the Father is the One, the source or principle of all being and perfection (τὸ ἕν); the Son is Mind (νοῦς), the supreme reason, order, or λόγος; and Spirit is the Soul or life of all that is. He further remarks that, just as the three hypostases are linked in an “eternal necessary emanation,” so also are the persons of the Trinity united as one. They must be so united, he says, for “how could power or authority avail or subsist without knowledge? Or either without life and action?” (S 361). That is, power makes no sense apart from its use, and any use of power must be determinate and have a specific direction. In short, God cannot subsist without knowing and acting.

Because non-Christian Neoplatonists (e.g., Plotinus, Proclus) fail to recognize this, they mistakenly assume that divine hypostases are distinguished as different gradations of being and that the One is beyond all knowledge. For Christian Neoplatonists (especially the Cappadocian Church Fathers), this would mean that God the Father is utterly inaccessible and unknowable and that the Son and the Holy Spirit derive from and depend on the Father. But as Gregory of Nyssa remarks, even though the Father, Son, and Spirit are distinct persons, they are identical in operation and thus are indistinguishable in their substance:

With the Father, unoriginate, ungenerate, always Father, the idea of the Son is inseparably joined as simultaneously coming from Him. Through the Son and yet with Him, before any vague, unsubstantial conception comes in between, the Holy Spirit is immediately in closest union; not subsequent in existence to the Son, as if the Son could be thought as ever having been without the Spirit; but Himself also owning the same cause of His being, i.e. the God over all, as the Only-begotten Light, and having shone forth in that very Light, being divisible neither by duration nor by an alien nature from the Father or from the Only-begotten. There are no intervals in that pre-temporal world and no difference in being.¹⁰

The three Persons of the Trinity are thus (1) the impulse toward being, (2) its meaning, and (3) its realization. They are not substances or distinct centers of consciousness behind or beneath their intercommunication. Rather, it is the communication itself that defines the three divine persons as the components

¹⁰ *Against Eunomius* I. 26, in *Select Writings and Letters of Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa* [1892], William Moore and Henry A. Wilson, trans. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1979), 70; see also Gregory of Nyssa, “On the Holy Trinity” and *The Great Catechism*, *ibid.*, 329, 477. Cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Presence and Thought: An Essay on the Religious Philosophy of Gregory of Nyssa* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 19–23; and Cornelius Plantinga, “Social Trinity and Tritheism,” in Ronald J. Feenstra and Cornelius Plantinga, ed., *Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement: Philosophical and Theological Essays* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 31–40.

of communicability.¹¹ Those components are necessary for all being, and in all being they are unchanging. To the extent that anything exists, therefore, it exists as the image of God, the embodiment of a triadic relation.

For Berkeley, this Trinitarian way of understanding being reappropriates insights that are glossed over in Cartesian and Lockean accounts of God. Instead of thinking of God as if he were a subject who happens to have faculties of understanding and will, Berkeley suggests that we think of God (and all other minds) as a spirit whose subsistence consists in knowing (perceiving, remembering, imagining) and acting, for “will and understanding constitute in the strictest sense a mind or spirit” (*D* 240; also *PC* 713, 848). The objects of God’s informed actions exist in virtue of God’s knowing them and acting on and through them. The point of highlighting the Trinitarian character of God is to indicate that for God to know and act is simply for God to be, just as for any created being to know and act is for God to be. In this sense, “God alone exists” (*S* 344).

To put this point in the more familiar terms of the *Principles* and the *Dialogues*: for God to be or subsist is for him to will/act/perceive, and for things in the world to exist means that they are perceived by some mind (ultimately, God’s). Just as the Father cannot be thought apart from the Son and the Spirit, so no object of perception can be thought apart from its being perceived and acted upon. As Berkeley early on says in his *Philosophical Commentaries*, “It seems there can be no perception, no idea without will. . . . It seems to me that will and understanding, volitions and ideas, cannot be severed, that either cannot be possibly without the other” (*PC* 833, 841). When God therefore perceives, he simultaneously wills, for he perceives nothing without perceiving how the object of his will is related to all other things.

This essential link between intellection and appetite applies to finite minds as well, for no finite mind can exist apart from having ideas. Just as the existence of ideas consists in their being perceived, so also my own existence as a mind consists in perceiving ideas. As Berkeley notes in his *Commentaries*, “Some ideas or other I must have so long as I exist or will” (*PC* 842). And in the *Principles* he concludes that “it is a plain consequence that the soul always thinks: and in truth whoever shall go about to divide in his thoughts, or abstract the *existence* of a spirit from its *cognition*, will, I believe, find it no easy task” (*P* 98). In his manuscript Berkeley adds:

Sure I am that should any one tell me there is a time wherein a spirit actually exists without perceiving, or an idea without being perceived, or that there is a third sort of

¹¹ Cf. Stephen H. Daniel, “Postmodern Concepts of God and Edwards’ Trinitarian Ontology,” in Sang Hyun Lee and Allen C. Guelzo, ed., *Edwards in Our Time: Jonathan Edwards and Contemporary Theological Issues* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 54–55.

being which exists though it neither wills nor perceives nor is perceived, his words would have no other effect on my mind than if he talked in an unknown language. Tis an easie matter for a man to say the mind exists without thinking, but to conceive a meaning that may correspond to those sounds, or to frame a notion of a spirit's existence abstracted from its thinking, this seems to me impossible.¹²

A mind exists (or more precisely, subsists) only to the extent that it has or perceives ideas. Those ideas are the content of the mind's activity. Without such content, there is no mental activity, there is no mind. Mind cannot subsist apart from thinking because mind is defined as volitionally conditioned perception. A mind is not some *thing* or substance that exists apart from having such perceptions. Rather, the affective perception of ideas inscribes a certain, determinate mind as that in terms of which ideas can be said to exist.

When Berkeley describes a mind as a spiritual substance that contains ideas, he does not therefore mean that mind can be an object of thought, for that would imply that minds are ideas. Instead, in referring to mind, mental activities, and the relations of ideas as "notions," Berkeley invokes the Stoic doctrine of *ἐννοία*, in which the meaning of an idea is understood in terms of its inherently intentional (i.e., mental) character.¹³ A perceived thing is intelligible or meaningful as an object of mind, and mind is intelligible as the activity by which objects are identified as objects. But there is no proper way to speak about minds apart from their perception of the divinely ordained sequences of ideas that distinguish them from one another.

In short, the mind is not its ideas but rather the active, willful, particular, and determinate apprehension of things that results from God's designation of a unique and affective ordering of perceptions (*D* 231). The active apprehension of ideas identifies and distinguishes individual souls and, as such, "the soul is the will properly speaking" (*PC* 478a). But Berkeley tells the American Samuel Johnson in 1730, "the soul of man is passive as well as active."¹⁴ In creating each finite mind, God communicates both a particular idea sequence and the sense of how those ideas are to be affectively appropriated. God thus inscribes each mind with the affective ideas that not only differentiate it from

¹² *P*, MS addition to § 98, in *Works*, 2: 84n. Cf. Charles J. McCracken, "Berkeley on the Relation of Ideas to the Mind," in Phillip D. Cummins and Guenter Zoeller, ed., *Minds, Ideas, and Objects: Essays on the Theory of Representation in Modern Philosophy* (Atascadero, CA.: Ridgeview Publishing, 1992), 197.

¹³ See Émile Bréhier, *Chrysippe et l'ancien stoïcisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1951), 65–67, 103–104; and Benson Mates, *Stoic Logic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), 11–13. Cf. Harry M. Bracken, *Berkeley* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974), 137, 139; and Wild, *Berkeley*, 70, 435, 438.

¹⁴ Berkeley to Johnson, 24 March 1730, in *Works*, 2: 293. Also see *PC* 286, 301. Cf. Stephen H. Daniel, "Berkeley's Pantheistic Discourse," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, forthcoming.

his and other minds but also link minds to one another in virtue of similar (and perhaps even the same) ideas.

However, as Johnson had pointed out earlier to Berkeley, this way of speaking creates a problem: If our ideas are fleeting and God's ideas are constant, then our ideas and God's ideas cannot be the same. And if our ideas are not the same as God's, then neither are the things that we and God supposedly together perceive, because, for Berkeley, things *are* ideas. To say that two minds perceive the same thing would mean that those minds have the same idea, which is consistent with what Berkeley calls the "vulgar acceptance." But, he continues, there is another sense (of which I will discuss more below) in which, as Hylas says, "the same idea which is in my mind, cannot be in yours, or in any other mind" (*D* 247). This is why Johnson suggests to Berkeley that our ideas be considered copies or resemblances (i.e., ectypes) of divine archetypes in virtue of which different minds perceive the *same* thing.¹⁵

In response to Johnson, Berkeley writes, "I have no objection to calling the ideas in the mind of God archetypes of ours," but he does not comment any further on how archetypes and ectypes are related to one another.¹⁶ He also does not tell Johnson how divine and human ideas are related, or why, after being asked in three separate letters, he finally and only half-heartedly acknowledges that divine ideas might be called archetypes.

This leads Jonathan Dancy and Geneviève Brykman to doubt whether Berkeley really believes that God's ideas are archetypes of our ideas or even whether archetypes play any role in Berkeley's immaterialism.¹⁷ Their doubts are based on the assumption that, in referring to archetypes as ideas in God's mind, Berkeley thinks that the only way one can speak about divine *ideas* is on the model of human ideas, and that would mean that there is something passive about God's ideas (which Berkeley explicitly rejects).

Instead of focusing on the passive character of ideas, however, it might be more helpful to consider how no idea exists apart from its being thought. By emphasizing the fact that no idea exists apart from mind, we focus on the *activity* in terms of which ideas are identified. This turns the discussion of ideas from a human perspective to a divine perspective by reminding us that no idea should be perceived without considering the action by which it is identified as that idea. It thus becomes possible to say that divine ideas are archetypes of

¹⁵ Samuel Johnson to Berkeley, 10 September 1729, in *Works*, 2: 274–75, 285–86. Also see Berkeley, *P* 90 and *D* 205–206. Cf. Charles J. McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 238–39, 324–25.

¹⁶ Berkeley to Johnson, 24 March 1730, in *Works*, 2: 292. See also Berkeley, *D* 248.

¹⁷ Cf. Jonathan Dancy, *Berkeley: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 51; and Geneviève Brykman, *Berkeley et le voile des mots* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1993), 307.

our ideas to the extent that divine ideas identify exactly what it is that we think when we have ideas.

If God's perception of things is therefore Berkeley's way to avoid the solipsistic implications of his doctrine that to be is to be perceived, then it would seem that his theory of divine ideas or archetypes would be at the heart of his idealistic immaterialism. But if there is no way to guarantee that God's ideas and our ideas are related, then neither is there any guarantee that ideas in different minds are related. Unless ideas are linked in some way by being perceived by God, there is no guarantee that we think the same thing as other finite minds when we claim to know. And that is what lies behind Johnson's question about archetypes.

This is why Berkeley is especially careful when he says in the *Dialogues* that an object existing outside our minds "is truly known and comprehended by (that is, *exists in*) the infinite mind of God" (*D* 235).¹⁸ For to say that something exists means that it has an identity as an intelligible object known at least to God. Since being known as a certain thing is part of what constitutes the thing's existence, each perception of a thing by different finite minds provides a perspective of the thing but does not identify the thing other than in terms of that perspective. Even though God comprehends all possible finite perspectives of a thing, it is his simultaneous (archetypal) identification of all finite actual perspectives that designates different perceptions as perceptions of that thing. This is how Berkeley can say that in "com-prehending" the thing, God's perception relates finite perceptions to one another as perceptions of the *same* thing. All this can be done without adopting (as Peter Wenz does) the very unBerkeleyan position that archetypes must be *abstract* ideas in God's mind, for that would define archetypes as abstractions from finite perspectives of a thing and thus make archetypes depend on finite perceptions for their intelligibility rather than vice versa.¹⁹

2. DIVINE IDEAS AND MALEBRANCHE

Twenty years before his exchange with Johnson, Berkeley had addressed similar issues in correspondence with Sir John Percival. In response to questions about how things could have existed prior to God's creation of finite minds to perceive them, Berkeley notes that the things created by God "existed from all

¹⁸ Cf. Robert McKim, "What *Is* God Doing in the Quad?" *Philosophy Research Archives* 13 (1987–88): 637–53, esp. 642.

¹⁹ See Peter S. Wenz, "Berkeley's Christian Neo-Platonism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 37 (1976): 537–46, esp. 542; Robert McKim, "Wenz on Abstract Ideas and Christian Neo-Platonism in Berkeley," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 43 (1982): 665–71, esp. 671; and Peter S. Wenz, "Berkeley's Two Concepts of Impossibility: A Reply to McKim," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 43 (1982): 673–80, esp. 678.

eternity in the divine intellect.” And three years later in the *Dialogues* he observes that “All things are eternally known by God, or which is the same thing, have an eternal existence in his mind.”²⁰ The actual existence of created things may be relative to finite (i.e., created) minds, but this is possible only in virtue of the fact that God knows those things from all eternity as objects of finite perception.

For Berkeley there is a difference, however, between *what* God knows from all eternity about created things and *how* God knows those things or what it *means* for God to know those things. This difference is most recognizable when we compare Berkeley’s references to God’s ideas in the *Principles* or *Dialogues* with his later remarks. In his earlier works Berkeley assumes that neither divine nor human ideas can exist apart from the mental activity in terms of which they are identified. So what God knows about created things is essentially bound up with what it means for him to create *those things*. But Lockean assumptions (e.g., that things can exist apart from their identification) so permeate the tone and vocabulary of the *Principles* and the *Dialogues* that, even when Berkeley rejects them, they continue to influence the discussion by suggesting that minds have an identity apart from their activity of perceiving (i.e., identifying) ideas.²¹ Apparently Berkeley had hoped that his explanation of the essential link between mind and ideas would have been enough to undermine those Lockean assumptions, and so in his *Principles* manuscript he crosses out his original claim that we have an idea “or rather a notion” of spirit or mind (*P* 140). When it becomes obvious that Johnson and others still assume that minds can be thought of as things distinct from the activity of identifying ideas, Berkeley reinstates his remark that we have a *notion* of mind in the 1734 edition of the *Principles* (*P* 27, 89, 140, 142) and *Dialogues* (*D* 233).²² We know minds, he concludes, only insofar as we know what it *means* for ideas to be perceived, willed, or related to one another.

The implication of such a move for the question of divine ideas is not made explicit until Berkeley writes *Siris*. There Berkeley describes divine ideas not as perfect instances or models of our specific ideas but as causes or principles that make our ideas intelligible (*S* 308, 335, 337). According to Kenneth Winkler, this means that divine ideas cannot be archetypes but are rather the *notions*

²⁰ See Berkeley to Percival, 6 September 1710, in *Works*, 8: 37; and *D* 252. Cf. McKim, “God in the Quad,” 640.

²¹ See Stephen H. Daniel, “Berkeley, Suárez, and the *Esse-Existere* Distinction,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 74 (2000): 621–36, esp. 631–36. Also see Stephen H. Daniel, “Edwards, Berkeley, and Ramist Logic,” *Idealist Studies* 31 (2001): 55–72; and Stephen H. Daniel, “The Ramist Context of Berkeley’s Philosophy,” *British Journal of the History of Philosophy*, forthcoming.

²² See T. E. Jessop, ed., *Works*, 2: 13, 53n, 105n. Cf. Berkeley, *Alc* (1752 addition), in *Works*, 3: 292.

(e.g., being, beauty, goodness, wisdom, order, law, and virtue) that characterize the “acts or operations” of mind.²³ Because all things are identified and related to one another by means of such ideas, all sensible or intelligible things are said to be “in the mind.” Berkeley claims that this is what Parmenides and Plato maintain, and from that it follows that “mind, knowledge, and notions, either in habit or in act, always go together,” in that to know or have an idea of something is to be a mind (*S* 309–10). To say that an idea exists means nothing more than that it is the object of mind, and to refer to the subsistence or being of a mind is to refer to the existence of its ideas. Therefore, to think that minds *exist* in the same way that ideas exist is to think that minds are *things* like ideas; and that is something Berkeley repeatedly cautions against.

Just as how we speak of mind cannot be based on our understanding of ideas, so also our description of the divine causes of ideas cannot be mediated by *our* understanding of ideas. Here again, though, we run into the difficulty Johnson raises. If archetypes are modeled on *our* ideas—even if they are understood as perfect exemplars of our ideas—then they too would be objects of mind (albeit God’s mind). That would portray archetypes as passive objects distinct from the activities by virtue of which they are identified. In such a case, archetypes would certainly not be divine ideas, because divine ideas do not exist *in* the divine mind as passive or inert objects but rather *constitute* the divine mind. Because divine ideas are the active principles by which things are identified and related, nothing about them is passive (*D* 213–14). Our notion of *having* ideas—that is, the notion of our own mind—furnishes us with “an active thinking image of the Deity” in terms of which we can understand how mind and ideas are essentially linked to one another (*D* 232).

According to Berkeley, this way of speaking about the relation between the divine mind and divine ideas has been misunderstood as a result of Aristotle’s “monstrous representation” of Platonic Ideas and Locke’s treatment of mind as an unknown substance or substratum in which ideas subsist as accidents or qualities (*S* 335, 337).²⁴ Instead of treating divine ideas such as wisdom, order, and law as the principles that create the matrix in which all things are identified and intelligibly related, Aristotelian-Lockean accounts portray those ideas as if they are simply objects of a mind that exists apart from them. The thought that mind might be something other than a substratum supporting ideas does not appear in such accounts, and that is how Neoplatonic insights about divine ideas are misinterpreted as discussions of abstract or complex ideas. As Berkeley writes in *Siris*:

²³ See Winkler, *Berkeley*, 232–233.

²⁴ Cf. John Locke, *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, Peter H. Nidditch, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), II.23.

It may seem, perhaps, to those who have been taught to discourse about substratums, more reasonable and pious to attribute to the Deity a more substantial being than the notional entities of wisdom, order, law, virtue, or goodness, which being only complex ideas, framed and put together by the understanding, are its own creatures, and have nothing substantial, real, or independent in them. But it must be considered that, in the Platonic system, order, virtue, law, goodness, and wisdom are not creatures of the soul of man, but innate and originally existent therein, not as an accident in a substance, but as light to enlighten, and as a guide to govern. In Plato's style, the term *idea* doth not merely signify an inert inactive object of the understanding, but is used as synonymous with αἴτιον and ἀρχή, cause and principle. According to that philosopher, goodness, beauty, virtue, and suchlike are not figments of the mind, nor mere mixed modes, nor yet abstract ideas in the modern sense, but the most real beings, intellectual and unchangeable, and therefore more real than the fleeting, transient objects of sense, which, wanting stability, cannot be the subjects of science, much less of intellectual knowledge. (S 335)

In contrast to *objects* of sense, divine ideas are the *subjects* of knowledge, in that they identify objects in relation to one another as ideas that can be sensed by particular subjects (i.e., finite minds). As finite minds we frame only fleeting ideas in our understanding and thus can seize only "imperfect glimpses of the divine Ideas" (S 337). But the very fact that we frame those sensible ideas indicates that we participate in the identification and differentiation of sensible things. Indeed, sensible things are intelligible to us precisely because their "relative, natural, or ectypal existence" depends on their being perceived by us or other created minds (D 252–54). In order for sensible things to exist, they must be identified and related to other existing things; and that is what created minds do.

However, if divine ideas are not archetypes of the things we perceive, then it seems that God does not know the *individual* things that we know, for there is nothing about divine ideas understood as acts or operations of the divine mind that individuates archetypes. Berkeley recognizes that this is a problem, and he acknowledges that one way to address it is to explain the individuation of archetypes, as Malebranche does, in terms of an underlying intelligible matter or extension that comprises the very essence of God.²⁵ This strategy, adapted from Neoplatonist thinkers, portrays archetypes in the mind of God as "so many marks or notes that direct him to produce sensations in our minds," much like a musician perceives the notes of a tune without actually hearing them. But Berkeley dismisses this notion of matter as "too extravagant to

²⁵ See Nicholas Malebranche, "Correspondence of Dortous de Mairan and Malebranche," Marjorie Grene, trans., in Richard A. Watson and Marjorie Grene, ed., *Malebranche's First and Last Critics: Simon Foucher and Dortous de Mairan* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995), 85; and Nicholas Malebranche, *Dialogues on Metaphysics*, Willis Doney, trans. (New York: Abaris Books, 1980), 181.

deserve a confutation" (*P* 71). For even if there were "certain permanent and distinct parcels of matter, corresponding to our ideas" which God perceives, there would have to be some principle by which they are differentiated. If the principle were material, then the same difficulty regarding individuation would arise all over again.

Berkeley concludes from this that the principle of individuation for archetypes in God's mind cannot be modeled on anything apart from the divine act of perception by which objects are identified as things (*entia realia*) revealed in creation (*PC* 535, *P* 87, *D* 253). As such, archetypes cannot be remote, absolute essences that exist eternally in the mind of God and serve as the bases for knowledge. Rather, they must be the specific, determinate ways in which God's power is expressed and through which God's providence is made accessible to us in and as concrete human activity.²⁶

However, because *we* perceive such archetypal acts of differentiation as bodies, Berkeley concedes that bodies can be said to be powers in God that cause us to have certain ideas. As long as bodies are not mistaken for modifications of an independently existing matter, they can be understood as archetypes of our ideas—that is, as powers in God that are not themselves ideas but which exist even when no finite mind perceives the ideas they cause. As Berkeley says:

Bodies etc. do exist even when not perceived, they being powers in the active Being. . . . Bodies etc. do exist whether we think of them or no, they being taken in a twofold sense: collections of thoughts and collections of powers to cause those thoughts. These latter exist, though perhaps *a parte rei* it may be one simple perfect power. . . . Bodies taken for powers do exist when not perceived, but this existence is not actual. (*PC* 52, 282, 293a)

As collections of our actual thoughts or perceptions, bodies are passive effects of God's creative activity.²⁷ But as the causes of certain ideas or collections of ideas, bodies are divine volitional actions that in God (*a parte rei*) are one but in our perceptions (in "actual existence") are distinct acts or effects of divine activity. We experience bodies as distinct powers that cause our ideas, but such a distinction exists in God's mind only insofar as he wills that we experience our ideas as having causes. If bodies were really the effects of God's agency, they would be ideas and thus might be misunderstood as powers that are independent of God. In order to avoid that suggestion, Berkeley decides to

²⁶ See Michel Adam, "Le Mot 'Archetype' chez Berkeley," *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger* 172 (1982): 523–28, esp. 526–528; and Richard T. Lambert, "Berkeley's Commitment to Relativism," in Colin M. Turbayne, ed., *Berkeley: Critical and Interpretive Essays* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 29.

²⁷ See McCracken, "What Does God See?" 284–285.

drop later references to bodies as powers in God for fear that bodies might be thought to exist apart from actually being perceived (*PC* 802).²⁸

When God produces ideas in our minds, he does not have a prior *idea* of what it is that he communicates, nor does he need to have such an idea—if by “idea” we mean a determinate object of perception. This is the point of Berkeley’s rejection of the maxim that nothing can give what it does not have: As he says, “Nihil dat quod non habet, or the effect is contained in the cause, is an axiom I do not understand or believe to be true” (*PC* 780). God can cause us to have an idea even if he does not have that idea himself, because in willing that we have a determinate idea, God does not perform a determinate act of will.²⁹ To think that he does would overlook the fact that it is by means of divine actions that things are identified as determinate in the first place. Only after a thing has been perceived *as that thing* would we be able to imagine its determining cause as a specific act of God’s will. But that would treat God’s creative activity as a series of determinate acts without acknowledging that the differentiation of those acts is modeled on the sensible ideas of created minds. To the extent that we merely assume the differentiation of divine acts without explaining how such differentiation occurs, we have to conclude (as Craig Lehman argues) that for Berkeley archetypes are by-products of God’s will.³⁰

To get around this difficulty Berkeley links the discussion of archetypes to a notion of divine ideas that emphasizes the power or will of God. No doubt such an effort is complicated by the fact that Berkeley’s doctrine of archetypes as the pragmatic, active, and creative causes of our ideas contrasts markedly with the widespread view (exemplified by Johnson) that archetypes are modeled on human ideas. It is no wonder, then, that he adopts the vocabulary of archetypes with reluctance and that some commentators conclude that his theory of archetypes is merely part of his Malebranchean heritage.³¹

In drawing attention to Malebranche’s doctrine of archetypes, though, Berkeley endorses the view that the *meanings* of ideas are communicable only if they exist apart from our particular sensations.³² Each of our particular sensi-

²⁸ See Michael Ayers, introduction to Berkeley, *Philosophical Works*, xi–xii; and A. A. Luce, *The Dialectic of Immaterialism* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1963), 134–42, 154.

²⁹ Cf. A. C. Grayling, *Berkeley: The Central Arguments* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1986), 99–100, 195.

³⁰ See Craig Lehman, “Will, Ideas, and Perception in Berkeley’s God,” *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 19 (1981): 197–203, esp. 198–99.

³¹ See Geneviève Brykman, “Berkeley on ‘Archetype,’” in Ernest Sosa, ed., *Essays on the Philosophy of George Berkeley* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1987), 103; and Michael R. Ayers, “Divine Ideas and Berkeley’s Proofs of God’s Existence,” *ibid.*, 125.

³² See Bracken, *Berkeley*, 132–134, 139–147; Harry M. Bracken, “Substance in Berkeley,” in Warren E. Steinkraus, ed., *New Studies in Berkeley’s Philosophy* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), 90, 95; Harry M. Bracken, “Berkeley and Malebranche on Ideas,” *The Modern*

ble ideas (or “sentiments,” as Malebranche calls them) is, in a sense, meaningful in virtue of its place in the sequence of ideas that identifies our individual minds. But because such sensations are meaningful only for the person who experiences them, they constitute a private language. To think that archetypes are simply divine versions of the things we individually perceive would thus not make our ideas any more intelligible. So when Malebranche says that we “see all things in God,” he does not mean that our *particular* sensible ideas are God’s ideas but rather that, insofar as our ideas are intelligible and communicable, they are known archetypally by God.

For Berkeley, the problem with Malebranche’s account is that it suggests that we know eternal archetypes in the mind of God whenever we perceive something. But as Berkeley insists, the only things we ever perceive are passive, changing ideas. In addition, our ideas are specific, whereas according to Berkeley Malebranchean divine ideas are abstract and general (*D* 214). For Berkeley that means that two people can be said to know the same mathematical proposition “in God” only to the extent that they are no longer considered as distinct from one another and God. If Malebranche intends to say that divine ideas are archetypes, then (Berkeley concludes) his doctrine hardly helps us resolve problems (e.g., regarding the continuity of unperceived objects or how different minds can have the “same” idea) that are most pressing in Berkeley’s immaterialism.

Of course, according to Malebranche, questions about the material world (including its existence) fall outside of knowledge. But Berkeley uses Malebranche’s discussion of seeing all things in God to highlight how the doctrine of archetypes contained in that discussion fails to explain, for example, how sensible objects continue to exist when no finite mind perceives them. Berkeley’s invocation of archetypes is thus not intended to resolve difficulties relating to the continuity of unperceived objects, nor does it require that archetypes be explained in terms of those objects. Instead, his appeal to Malebranchean archetypes indicates that the real issue to be resolved concerns the sense in which divine ideas guide God’s actions. For in order to say that God does not act blindly, Berkeley observes that God’s will is informed by his understanding in such a way that “the properties of all things are in God, i.e. there is in the Deity understanding as well as will” (*PC* 812). Those properties are the divine ideas by means of which sensible things are identified, differentiated, and placed in affective relations.

Indeed, Malebranche makes a similar point about God’s agency, but he

Schoolman 41 (1963): 1–15, esp. 13–14; Muehlmann, *Berkeley’s Ontology*, 297–306; Nicholas Jolley, “Berkeley, Malebranche, and Vision in God,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 34 (1996), 535–48, esp. 538; and McCracken, *Malebranche*, 207–209.

couches it specifically in terms of divine ideas: “God must have within himself the ideas of all the beings he has created (since otherwise he could not have created them).”³³ For Malebranche, as for Berkeley, this does not mean that God knows his creatures as individuals, that is, apart from their place in the orderly scheme of nature. That would require God to have ideas as we do (viz., passively), and Berkeley dismisses such a view as incompatible with God’s active nature: “I do not understand how our ideas, which are things altogether passive and inert, can be the essence, or any part (or like any part) of the essence or substance of God” (*D* 213). But instead of adopting Malebranche’s position that God knows what he creates because his essence contains their ideas as archetypes, Berkeley argues that God knows what he creates by identifying things *as* objects of mind (i.e., ideas). This is the sense in which God is said to “have” ideas or to perceive sensible things.

The question about what God perceives—and about whether God perceives at all—stems, of course, from concerns about God’s omniscience. If God knows and understands all things, he also would seemingly perceive those things. Accordingly, Berkeley says, “all sensible things must be perceived by [God]” as their cause (*D* 212; also 230–31, 236). But God comprehends pain not because he feels it. Rather, he knows what it means to feel pain because he fully comprehends what it is and how it affects creatures (*PC* 675). Furthermore, God knows what individual creatures sense by knowing how all creatures are related. Indeed, it is by a “decree of God” that creatures are related in the first place, both in what they perceive and in how they are perceived in the order and connection inscribed by the laws of nature (*D* 252–3).³⁴ God decrees that there be certain minds that perceive certain sensible objects in certain sequences. When an object is not perceived by any finite mind—for example, when no one is around in the quad to perceive the tree—it continues to exist in the sequence of relations that comprise the order of nature. Because the place it occupies in that sequence does not depend on its actually being perceived by any finite mind, it is knowable by all finite minds as that which God knows insofar as it is a specific expression of his power. That place “in the course of nature” (*S* 254) is what Berkeley means by an archetype of our ideas.

Describing archetypes in this way circumvents a number of questions that have been raised about Berkeley’s account. For example, according to Paul Olscamp, if God does not perceive ideas in the same way that we perceive ideas, then it seems wrong to say that the “same” thing continues to exist when

³³ Nicholas Malebranche, *The Search After Truth*, III.2.6, in *The Search After Truth and The Elucidations of The Search After Truth*, Thomas M. Lennon and Paul J. Olscamp, trans. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1980), 230. Cf. Muehlmann, *Ontology*, 301.

³⁴ Cf. McCracken, “What Does God See?” 288–290.

no finite mind perceives it.³⁵ Furthermore, Winkler argues that Berkeley cannot justifiably distinguish between God's perception of actually existing objects and his perception of those "same" objects before and after their actual existence.³⁶ Finally, since things (for Berkeley) are ideas, it seems impossible that the same thing can exist in two minds. As Berkeley puts the question to himself (*D* 247), how can two minds have the "same" idea? To say (with Robert McKim) that two minds can have two ideas of the same thing, or (with Michael Ayers) that ideas are intentional objects that can be shared by more than one person, only begs the question.³⁷ For the issue is not about *whether* the content of the ideas of different perceivers is identical, but rather *how*, given Berkeley's metaphysics, the content *could* be identical.

That is where archetypes come in. If God knows things in the course of nature—that is, as moments in history—he knows the history of perceivers in relation to whom objects in nature appear. In creating minds with certain sequences of ideas, God places individual ideas in relation to other ideas, thus identifying those things that we perceive as existing (at least relative to us individually). Insofar as those idea-sequences exhibit order and regularity, they identify "certain things perceived by the mind of God," namely, the archetypes of our ideas. In willing creation, God thus coordinates the histories of all created minds so that their individual perceptions are of the "same" thing.³⁸

In a sense, then, our ideas and their archetypes are "in" the mind of God or are the "same" insofar as God comprehends what it means for a particular mind to have a particular idea at a certain point in history (*D* 220). All sensible ideas thus are inscribed in a matrix of relations that constitute what Berkeley refers to as divine ideas. Strictly speaking, two finite minds do not have the same sensible ideas, just as "we do not see the same object that we feel" or see the same object through a microscope that we see with the naked eye (*D* 245–8). But for all practical purposes, we say that they are the same because they are always experienced as uniformly connected in what Berkeley calls archetypes.³⁹

However, in saying that archetypes unify our experience of different ideas, Berkeley does not suggest that for each sensible thing there is a corresponding unknown divine idea, for an idea that is unknown makes no sense at all (*P* 9, 45, 75–76, 90, 99; *D* 206, 240, 246, 248). Besides, if God alone perceives such ideas,

³⁵ See Olscamp, *Moral Philosophy*, 234.

³⁶ See Kenneth P. Winkler, "Unperceived Objects and Berkeley's Denial of Blind Agency," in David Berman, ed., *George Berkeley: Essays and Replies* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1985), 90–92.

³⁷ See Robert McKim, "Berkeley on Private Ideas and Public Objects," in Cummins, ed., *Minds, Ideas, and Objects*, 221, 226; and Ayers, "Divine Ideas," 125.

³⁸ See Lehman, "Will, Ideas," 202.

³⁹ Also see Berkeley, *An Essay towards a New Theory of Vision* § 49, in *Philosophical Works*. Cf. Lambert, "Berkeley's Relativism," 29–30; Dale Jacquette, "Reconciling Berkeley's Microscopes in God's Infinite Mind," *Religious Studies* 29 (1993): 453–63, esp. 463.

then the ideas in different minds could not be the same. Nor can God's knowledge of his creatures be mediated by abstract ideas (understood "in the modern [Lockean] sense"), because just as there is no such thing as an abstract or indeterminate action, there is also no such thing as an indeterminate or abstract idea (*S* 335).⁴⁰ Indeed, the existence of a determinate idea consists in its identification by a mind that is made determinate by that act of identification.

The key for understanding the relation of divine and human ideas thus lies in seeing how the human mind is modeled on the divine mind, and this is where Berkeley's discussion of the Trinity recalls the Cappadocian version of Christian Neoplatonism. If we were to think of minds as independent centers of consciousness, then (as Berkeley notes in *Alciphron* VII. 9) we would run into the kinds of difficulties that the Church Fathers faced in their disputes about the Persons of the Trinity. Berkeley's way around those difficulties is to adopt the Cappadocian view (developed especially by Gregory) that the Persons of the Trinity are not centers of consciousness but are rather the inherently communicative components of being (viz., power, meaning, and realization). Such a model does not presume that the Persons of the Trinity subsist apart from one another and precludes the possibility that the divine mind exists apart from its communication of ideas to created minds, for in its terms to be a mind at all means to be engaged in the activity of identifying determinate objects of thought.

For Berkeley this Trinitarian way of understanding being provides a means by which we no longer have to think (with Descartes or Locke) that persons or minds are substances that exist independently of the divine communication of ideas. That in itself provides a significant insight into how to interpret Berkeley's doctrine of mind. But more interesting, perhaps, is the fact that it also explains why there would be such a striking similarity between Berkeley's and Gregory's distinctive idealistic immaterialism.

For example, in a well-known passage in the *Principles*, Berkeley claims that in perceiving material substances we perceive only qualities:

To me a die seems to be nothing distinct from those things which are termed its modes or accidents [e.g., hardness, extension, figure]. And, to say a die is hard, extended, and square is not to attribute those qualities to a subject distinct from and supporting them, but only an explication of the meaning of the word die. (*P* 49)

And in the *Dialogues* he writes:

Take away the sensations of softness, moisture, redness, tartness, and you take away the cherry, since it is not a being distinct from sensations. A cherry, I say, is nothing but a

⁴⁰ See Wenz, "Berkeley's Christian Neo-Platonism," 537–41; and McKim, "Wenz on Abstract Ideas," 671.

congeries of sensible impressions, or ideas perceived by various senses: which ideas are united into one thing (or have one name given them) by the mind, because they are observed to attend each other. The particular arrangement of ideas communicated to us comprises what we think of as the substratum or substance of a thing. (*D* 249)

Arguing in a very similar way, Gregory points out that apart from perceived qualities, there is no material substratum or body:

For we shall find all matter to be composed of certain qualities, of which if it is divested, it can in itself be by no means grasped by idea. . . . If, then, color is a thing intelligible, and resistance also is intelligible, and so with quantity and the rest of the like properties, while if each of these should be withdrawn from the substratum, the whole idea of the body is dissolved. It would seem to follow that we may suppose the concurrence of those things, the absence of which we found to be a cause of the dissolution of the body, to produce the material nature: for as that is not a body which has no color, figure, resistance, extension, weight, and the other properties, and since each of these in its proper existence is found to be not the body but something else besides the body, so conversely, whenever the specified attributes concur they produce bodily existence.⁴¹

For both Berkeley and Gregory, bodily existence consists in being perceived. It is through the act of perceiving that an object is identified, made intelligible, and becomes substantial or real. In turn, the activity of perceiving ideas in particular arrangements identifies a mind as a determinate substance but not as a substratum that exists apart from or prior to the communication of ideas by which it is identified. In a sense, then, God is *the substance* of the communication of all existence.

In *Siris* Berkeley applies this semiotic analysis to the Trinity to show how the identity of God (and indirectly, the identity of all subjects) is constituted in communicative relations. Just as “there never was a time supposed when τὸ ἔν subsisted without intellect,” there is never a time when the mind of God (νοῦς, the Son) subsists apart from the specific, determinate action of God (the Spirit) (*S* 352). So also, the ideas of God have existed from all eternity as the relations in terms of which sensible things are actually perceived at some time in history. From the standpoint of finite perceivers, God’s ideas are the archetypes of his decrees, because it is through his decrees—that is, through “the power of his Word” or λόγος—that he acts and thus is.

However, because it is possible in non-Christian Neoplatonic thought to imagine God’s being or unity (the first hypostasis or “substance”) apart from his exercise of thought and will, or the self’s identity or unity apart from its intellect and life, we might be tempted to say that it is possible to imagine God’s acts of comprehension (i.e., divine ideas) apart from the things he comprehends (i.e., archetypes) (*S* 345–6, 352–4). But that would be like saying

⁴¹ Gregory of Nyssa, “On the Making of Man,” ch. 24, §§ 1–2, in *Select Writings*, 414.

that it is possible to imagine that God the Father could subsist apart from the Son or Spirit, or that God's mind could subsist apart from his actual perception of specific, determinate ideas. Berkeley accepts neither possibility because both are inconsistent with his doctrines about the nature of mind.

3. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Although commentators have recognized the similarity between Berkeley's and Gregory's immaterialism, no one heretofore has provided an explanation for why both would adopt such a unique view.⁴² I have suggested that the key to such an explanation lies in recognizing how both thinkers model the relations of minds and ideas on the relations of the Persons of the Trinity. That provides us a means to explain how the divine mind is related to created minds, and that in turn is what is needed to understand Berkeley's doctrine of divine ideas and archetypes.

That doctrine can be summarized in the following way. To the extent that our ideas seem significant or intelligible to ourselves alone, they are *ectypes*: their existence consists simply in being perceived by a particular mind. An *archetype* is the meaning of that idea and all others like it as determined by their place in the sequence of ideas that inscribes history. A *divine idea* is God's active comprehension of a thing in an eternal communicative relation to all other things: it is a principle of differentiation that identifies the places or *topoi* of intelligibility and, as such, identifies the mind of God as a matrix of discursive exchange. By learning the connections of ideas in history—that is, by “endeavouring to understand those signs instituted by the Author of Nature” (*P* 66)—we learn about ourselves and “the nature of things” (*D* 245). For all practical purposes, this amounts to nothing other than the contemplation of archetypes. Through such contemplation, we recognize ourselves not as substances distinct from God but as participants in the divine discourse.

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⁴² See Richard Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum: Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 292; A. H. Armstrong, “The Theory of the Non-Existence of Matter in Plotinus and the Cappadocians,” *Studia Patristica* 5 (1961–62): 427–29, 428; and McCraacken, *Malebranche*, 200.