

Can the Berkeleyan Idealist Resist Spinozist Panpsychism?

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We argue that prevailing definitions of Berkeley's idealism fail to rule out a nearby Spinozist rival view that we call 'mind-body identity panpsychism'. Since Berkeley certainly does not agree with Spinoza on this issue, we call for more care in defining Berkeley's view. After we propose our own definition of Berkeley's idealism, we survey two Berkeleyan strategies to block the mind-body identity panpsychist and establish his idealism. We argue that Berkeley should follow Leibniz and further develop his account of the mind's unity. Unity—not activity—is the best way for Berkeley to distinguish himself from his panpsychist competitors.

1. Introduction

In teaching, when we need a paradigmatic idealist, we point to Berkeley. Whether Leibniz and Kant are idealists is complicated—or so we tell our students—but Berkeley, *he* is an idealist. This confidence flows from a broad consensus that Berkeley is an idealist. Given the breadth of this consensus, one might naturally assume that there is a definition of his idealism that enjoys the status of a standard and also distinguishes his position from nearby competitors. In this paper, we argue that the prevailing definitions of Berkeley's idealism fail to rule out a nearby rival view endorsed by Spinoza that we call 'mind-body identity panpsychism'. Since Berkeley certainly does *not* agree with Spinoza about mind-body identity panpsychism, we call for more care in defining Berkeley's view. Next, we argue that this problem is a symptom of broader definitional issues surrounding idealism and panpsychism. We then propose a more discriminating definition of Berkeley's idealism. Finally, we survey two Berkeleyan lines of thought which might help Berkeley block the mind-body identity panpsychist and establish his idealism. We argue, with reference both to challenges presented by Spinoza and to problems with contemporary formulations of the view, that Berkeley should follow Leibniz and further develop his account of the unity of the mind. Berkeley must differentiate between minds and bodies to separate himself from his panpsychist competitors. The alternative differentiator, the mind's activity, is important to Berkeley but it is not up to the task.

2. Incomplete Definitions

Since the definitions of Berkeley's idealism one finds in the literature converge significantly, there seems to be something of a standard or, at least, several nearby standards. However, these definitions all fail to distinguish Berkeley's position from a nearby rival view. Consider the following definitions:

- A. Ordinary objects are only collections of ideas, which are mind-dependent.¹
- B. Reality consists exclusively of minds and their ideas.²
- C. Sensible objects and their sensible properties are nothing more than mind-dependent entities.³

¹ Flage, "George Berkeley," Sec. 4.

² Downing, "George Berkeley," Introduction.

D. The only kinds of things there are in the world are minds and ideas.⁴

E. All that exists is either mind or is dependent on mind.⁵

The first and third of these definitions reflect Berkeley's own strategy of expressing his view negatively as the rejection of all positions, from physicalism to dualism, that affirm the existence of bodies (or their constituent qualities) independent of minds. Yet, both definitions remain compatible with mind-body identity panpsychism. This is the rival view that every body is identical to some mind and every mind is identical to some body. As versions of Berkeley's famous slogan—*esse est percipi (aut percipere)*, to be is to be perceived (or to perceive)—the other three definitions do no better.

We read the kind of dependence referenced by all of these definitions as dependence with respect to existence: for all x and all y , x depends on y if, and only if, necessarily, if x exists, then y exists. For all x and some mind y , x is mind-dependent if, and only if, necessarily, if x exists, then y exists. This minimal notion of dependence does not presuppose asymmetry, a feature that must be kept in mind in what follows despite its perhaps counterintuitive ring in English. For instance, for all minds x , if x exists, then x is mind-dependent, on this definition, just because necessarily, for all minds x , if x exists, then some mind (that very x) exists. If Berkeley's view is to be distinguished from mind-body identity panpsychism, asymmetry must be stated and argued for, not assumed.

Mind-body identity panpsychism entails that every body depends on some mind and every mind depends on some body. If ordinary objects are only collections of ideas, which are mind-dependent (A), then mind-body identity panpsychism could be true as well, given that ordinary objects would be dependent on minds if they were identical to minds, which are just collections of ideas of varying complexity for Spinoza (EIIp15). If sensible objects and their sensible properties are nothing more than mind-dependent entities (C), then mind-body identity panpsychism could be true as well, given that sensible objects (and their properties) would be dependent on minds if they were identical to minds (and if their properties were identical to properties of minds). If all that exists is either mind or is dependent on mind (E), then mind-body identity panpsychism could be true as well, given that all that exists could be a mind or dependent on one if all bodies were identical to minds. And so it goes for the rest of the definitions. None of the definitions is inconsistent with mind-body identity panpsychism.

Mind-body panpsychism is a rival of Berkeley's idealism, as is clear from consideration of Spinoza's version of this more general view. Spinoza holds that "a mode of extension and the idea of that mode are one in the same thing, but expressed in two ways" (EIIp7s).⁶ As mentioned above, for Spinoza divine and human minds just are more or less complex ideas (EIIp15). Every

³ Rickless, *Berkeley's Argument for Idealism*, 1.

⁴ Rickless, *Berkeley's Argument for Idealism*, 9.

⁵ Hausman & Hausman, "A New Approach to Berkeley's Ideal Reality," 64.

⁶ Spinoza's views on the causal and conceptual isolation of the attributes (EIp10), and the corresponding need to reject views that express richer forms of dependence of the modes of one attribute on another, as well as his denial of finite substances, require his rejection of some Berkeleyan definitions as written. Still, Spinoza's monism is a plausible historical precursor of the view we call 'mind-body identity panpsychism,' and we make clear which view we have in mind throughout, tracking the relations between Berkeley's view and both Spinoza's, as well as the more generic panpsychist view we define here.

composite body is identical to a complex idea and constitutes the Extended object of that complex mind in Thought. To hold mind-body identity panpsychism is to deny Berkeley's idealism since, among other reasons, Berkeley's ontology contains a wholly immaterial God and finite, wholly immaterial spirits. Spinoza denies both. Likewise, Berkeley's view that minds are not ideas cannot be simply assumed, given Spinoza's position. Consequently, Berkeley's arguments for the non-identity of mind and body that rely on this view—and the claim that bodies are collections of ideas—ought to be treated as contested. Of course, as noted, Berkeley's idealism has other rivals since some physicalists think that all minds are identical to bodies, but that some bodies are not minds or dependent on them, and some dualists hold that (mind-independent) bodies and minds both exist. Both these alternative rival views *are excluded* by the preceding definitions.

Although Spinoza's position is a rival to Berkeley's, Berkeley shares more with Spinoza than with some of his other rivals. Notably, Spinoza argues that his mind-body identity panpsychism is a direct consequence of his views on God, which he establishes with the help of ontological and cosmological arguments in ways quite similar to those employed by the Christian tradition of which Berkeley is a part. So, while the historical context Berkeley found himself in demanded engagement with physicalists and dualists, he potentially faces a graver threat from Spinoza.

3. Incomplete Arguments

Before offering our own definition of Berkeley's idealism that excludes mind-body identity panpsychism, we must address a natural objection. Given that mind-body identity panpsychism is neither one of Berkeley's targets nor a prevalent view, one could argue that those who give definitions of Berkeley's idealism—whether they are his commentators or Berkeley himself—are not obligated to formulate it in such a way that it explicitly precludes mind-body identity panpsychism. One might think that how philosophers express views is largely stipulative and depends on the dialectical contexts they find themselves in. So, while the definitions of Berkeley's idealism found in the literature fail to explicitly preclude mind-body identity panpsychism, this is not a problem. After all, one might argue, Berkeley's arguments for his idealism rule out mind-body panpsychism. This objection amounts to the claim that the premises of some of Berkeley's arguments for his idealism entail the negation of mind-body identity panpsychism, so if their conclusions are formulated to express all of their entailments, mind-body panpsychism is ruled out. In this section, we will argue that this claim is false.

Choosing which argument to examine is no easy matter. There is little dispute that Berkeley is, in fact, an idealist, but it is not settled how his arguments for idealism should be understood. It is often argued that his main strategy is to grant or argue for the mind-dependence of certain "sensible qualities" and then attempt to undermine various distinctions between these qualities and others in order to establish his idealism. In discussing this strategy, some commentators focus on Berkeley's perceptual relativity arguments, while others focus on his inseparability argument.⁷ Recently, it has been proposed that this latter argument is unique in bringing together

⁷ Those who defend the traditional "inherence account" are focused on the former. For classic statements of the inherence account, see Allaire, "Berkeley's Idealism," and Watson, "Berkeley in a Cartesian Context." Others who have a similar, but distinct, focus include Hausman & Hausman, "A New Approach to Berkeley's Ideal Reality."

several seemingly independent lines of reasoning that Berkeley develops elsewhere to support his idealism.⁸

Given our goals, it is not feasible for us to present and discuss all of the arguments in Berkeley's texts that have been proposed as arguments for his idealism. Since the inseparability argument is, as of late, taken to be either Berkeley's strongest argument for idealism or one of them, it is as good of a choice as any. What makes the inseparability argument unique is that Berkeley uses it, fittingly, to argue for the inseparability of the primary and secondary qualities. There are different ways of understanding how the argument proceeds. The argument is found in both the *Principles* (PHK 10) and the *Dialogues* (3D 194), but what follows is our formulation of it as Berkeley expresses it in the *Principles*. Here is Berkeley:

They who assert that figure, motion, and the rest of the primary or original qualities do exist without the mind, in unthinking substances, do at the same time acknowledge that colours, sounds, heat, cold, and such like secondary qualities, do not, which they tell us are sensations existing in the mind alone, that depend on and are occasioned by the different size, texture and motion of the minute particles of matter. This they take for an undoubted truth, which they can demonstrate beyond all exception. Now if it be certain, that those original qualities are inseparably united with the other sensible qualities, and not, even in thought, capable of being abstracted from them, it plainly follows that they exist only in the mind. But I desire any one to reflect and try, whether he can by any abstraction of thought, conceive the extension and motion of a body, without all other sensible qualities. For my own part, I see evidently that it is not in my power to frame an idea of a body extended and moved, but I must withal give it some colour or other sensible quality which is acknowledged to exist only in the mind. In short, extension, figure, and motion, abstracted from all other qualities, are inconceivable. Where therefore the other sensible qualities are, there must these be also, to wit, in the mind and no where else. (PHK 10)

Berkeley's argument for the first premise (P1), which we have not included, relies on the received view about the mind-dependence of phenomenal secondary qualities that is held by Descartes, Locke, and many other non-idealists. Here, following Locke but using contemporary terminology, we contrast phenomenal secondary qualities (e.g. a particular shade of red that you see when viewing a tomato) with dispositional secondary qualities (e.g. the disposition of a tomato to cause you to see a particular shade of red when viewing it). The crucial point is that Locke holds that the former are represented by us as belonging to mind-independent bodies but they are in fact mind-dependent.

⁸ Samuel Rickless has recently argued forcefully for a version of this interpretation. For a summary of Rickless' interpretation and the role the inseparability argument plays for Berkeley, see Rickless, *Berkeley's Argument for Idealism*, 185-7. In "Sensible Qualities and Secondary Qualities in the First Dialogue", Lisa Downing argues that the inseparability argument blocks a path that Berkeley's non-idealist interlocutors could have used to escape his attacks, if Berkeley only had the perceptual relativity arguments and his arguments from the immediacy of perceived things at his disposal.

- P1. It is not possible that there is a mind-independent being that has phenomenal secondary qualities. [granted by many opponents, perceptual relativity arguments, identification argument]
- P2. For all p , if it is inconceivable that p because it is a contradiction that p , then it is not possible that p . [Berkeley's inconceivability principle, according to Thomas Holden]
- P3. If it is inconceivable that there is a body that exists without having phenomenal secondary qualities in fully determinate and non-contradictory ways because it is a contradiction that there is a body that exists without having phenomenal secondary qualities in fully determinate and non-contradictory ways, then it is not possible that there is a body that exists without having phenomenal secondary qualities in fully determinate and non-contradictory ways. [P2]
- P4. If it is not possible that there is a body that exists without having phenomenal secondary qualities in fully determinate and non-contradictory ways, then it is not possible that there is a mind-independent body. [P1]
- P5. For all x , x is a body if, and only if, x has all of the primary qualities in fully determinate and non-contradictory ways. [Locke's definition of 'body', Berkeley's nominalism]
- P6. For all x , if x is a quality and a fully determinate and non-contradictory way of being extended, figured, or mobile, then x is a primary quality. [Locke's definition of 'primary quality', Berkeley's nominalism]
- P7. For all x , x is a body if, and only if, x has extension, figure, and mobility in fully determinate and non-contradictory ways. [P5, P6]
- P8. For all x , if x has extension, figure, and mobility in fully determinate and non-contradictory ways, then x has phenomenal secondary qualities in fully determinate and non-contradictory ways. [Berkeley's inseparability principle, Berkeley's nominalism]
- P9. It is a contradiction that there is a body that exists without having phenomenal secondary qualities in fully determinate and non-contradictory ways. [P7, P8]
- P10. It is inconceivable that there is a body that exists without having phenomenal secondary qualities in fully determinate and non-contradictory ways because it is a contradiction that there is a body that exists without having phenomenal secondary qualities in fully determinate and non-contradictory ways. [P7, P8, P9]
- C. So, it is not possible that there is a mind-independent body. [P3, P4, P10]

The traditional view is that the inseparability argument relies centrally on a principle that moves from inconceivability to impossibility: for all p , if it is inconceivable that p , then it is not possible that p . This principle would take the place of P2 above; call it P2*. A virtue of the traditional view is that it does not require the attribution of a strong metaphysical inseparability premise like P8 to Berkeley. P8 is needed to generate the requisite contradiction. Instead, the traditional view can simply attribute a premise that asserts that the primary and phenomenal secondary qualities cannot be conceived apart. A cost of the traditional view is that P2* does not seem to be endorsed by Berkeley. Thomas Holden convincingly argues that Berkeley holds that there are cases where we cannot conceive something but nonetheless it is possible.⁹ However, for any cases where we cannot conceive something *because it is contradictory*, then it is in fact impossible. After all, everything that is contradictory is impossible, on Berkeley's view (and that of many of his contemporaries). Or so Holden's argument goes. Thus P2 and P8.

⁹ Holden, "Berkeley on Inconceivability and Impossibility."

There is much to be said about the argument itself, but we will limit ourselves to three points. First, none of the premises entail the negation of mind-body identity panpsychism; the mind-body identity panpsychist could endorse all of the premises of the inseparability argument. Second, none of the premises provide anything like non-question-begging reasons for the negation of mind-body identity panpsychism. Berkeley might simply add the negation of mind-body identity panpsychism as an assumption, but this would beg the question. None of the premises to which he is entitled, and for which he has provided some compelling independent motivation in making his inseparability argument, entail the negation of mind-body identity panpsychism. Third, in analyzing this argument, we can see why commentators end up with definitions like those listed in the prior section (especially A and C). Berkeley's own argumentation is not sensitive to the challenge presented by the mind-body identity panpsychist.

4. A Definitional Digression

In noting that both common definitions of Berkeley's idealism and his prominent arguments fail to distinguish his ontological position from mind-body identity panpsychism, we do not mean to criticize Berkeley. We grant that the dialectical context Berkeley found himself in as he presented his views about the mind did not demand direct engagement with mind-body identity panpsychism. Our goal is simply to show that more care must be taken to get clear on the precise nature of Berkeley's idealism, given the early modern option space as well as burgeoning recent interest in nearby panpsychist views. Since we seek to offer an improved—even if still incomplete—definition of Berkeley's idealism, contemporary attempts to define idealism and panpsychism are natural starting points, although these discussions are themselves fraught with disagreement. Nevertheless, we turn there first, before considering whether Berkeley can justify his preference for idealism over a mind-body identity panpsychist alternative.

In introducing *Idealism: New Essays in Metaphysics*, Tyron Goldschmidt and Kenneth Pearce register the difficulties associated with defining idealism, before glossing both idealism in general and Berkeley's idealism in particular. They write:

Roughly speaking, we may say that idealists endorse *the priority of the mental* [. . .]. George Berkeley's view that minds and their ideas are all the beings there are is the most famous version of idealism. According to Berkeley, minds enjoy ontological priority: minds alone are fundamental and everything else depends on them.¹⁰

Other contributors to the same volume gather related theses under the banner of idealism, including Robert Adams' claim that "all intrinsic non-formal qualities must be qualities of consciousness or strongly analogous to qualities of consciousness,"¹¹ Robert Smithson's assertion that "truths about ordinary objects and their manifest properties supervene on truths about actual and possible counterfactual experiences,"¹² and Segal and Goldschmidt's characterization of idealism as "the view that all concrete things are purely mental."¹³

¹⁰ Goldschmidt & Pearce, "Introduction," ix.

¹¹ Adams, "Idealism Vindicated," 46; Buras and Dougherty, "Parrying Parity," 2.

¹² Smithson, "A New Epistemic Argument for Idealism," 18.

¹³ Segal & Goldschmidt, "The Necessity of Idealism," 35.

These definitions all have their problems. Smithson's supervenience formulation of idealism, like pure supervenience formulations of physicalism, fails to capture the notion of asymmetric dependence that Jaegwon Kim and others have argued is central to any non-trivial supervenience definition.¹⁴ Segal and Goldschmidt admit that their definition is consistent with "the world being *thoroughly* physical, *wholly* physical, physical *through and through* [. . .]. That would be the case if every mental aspect of the universe were itself physical, and vice versa."¹⁵ Adams' view faces the same problem, since intrinsic non-formal qualities of consciousness might be, as with Segal and Goldschmidt, wholly physical qualities in addition. These latter views thus appear to countenance something like Spinoza's monistic view that "the thinking substance and the extended substance are one and the same substance, which is now comprehended under this attribute, now under that" (EIIp7s). But, as Samuel Newlands and Yitzhak Melamed have argued at length, Spinoza cannot be an idealist, for idealism introduces incoherence into his philosophical system, in violating *Ethics* Ip10.¹⁶

Definitions of panpsychism do not fare much better. David Chalmers, for instance, defines panpsychism as "the thesis that some microphysical entities are conscious."¹⁷ As stated, this view is consistent with Segal and Goldschmidt's definition of idealism, since if all concrete things are purely mental (per their definition of idealism) and all microphysical things are concrete, then all microphysical things are purely mental. If all purely mental things are conscious, then trivially some are conscious, but this is Chalmers' definition of panpsychism. Yet, the views are clearly *intended to be* distinct. As Godehard Brüntrup and Ludwig Jaskolla discuss in their introduction to *Panpsychism: Contemporary Perspectives*, "Panpsychists in contrast claim that mental being is a fundamental and ubiquitous feature of the universe but is not the only fundamental and ubiquitous feature of the universe [. . .]. It is thus distinguished from absolute idealism, according to which the world consists solely of minds and their activities."¹⁸

Other panpsychists, however, appear to disagree. Galen Strawson, for instance, describes his view as "a form of pure panpsychism, which I here take to be the view that experientiality is all there is to the intrinsic nature of concrete reality."¹⁹ This, of course, sounds like Segal and Goldschmidt's idealistic claim that all concrete things are purely mental, but Strawson *apparently* denies that there are other non-mental fundamental features of the universe (so the purely mental is *not* also purely physical).²⁰ If this latter part of Strawson's view is indeed a commitment, then

¹⁴ Jessica Wilson ("Supervenience Based Formulations of Physicalism") catalogues the problems with supervenience-based formulations, while Kim (*Physicalism or Something Near Enough*, 34) argues that supervenience needs ontological dependence too.

¹⁵ Segal & Goldschmidt, "The Necessity of Idealism," 34.

¹⁶ Newlands, "Thinking, Conceiving, and Idealism in Spinoza," and *Reconceiving Spinoza*, (esp. chapter 9); Melamed, "Spinoza's Metaphysics of Thought." *Ethics* Ip10 is central not only to Spinoza's views on the mind-body problem, but also to all his central arguments concerning God in *Ethics* Part I.

¹⁷ Chalmers, "Panpsychism and Panprotopsychism," 24.

¹⁸ Brüntrup & Jaskolla, "Introduction," 1.

¹⁹ Strawson, "Mind and Being," 81.

²⁰ See Strawson, *Consciousness and Its Place in Nature*, 238-242. There Strawson considers the possibility that the purely mental is also purely physical. Since he gives some reasons to be skeptical, we interpret him as tentatively denying this identification.

his panpsychism runs afoul of the definition from Brüntrup and Jaskolla. Finally, there is what Chalmers labels 'constitutive Russellian panpsychism', according to which

[. . .] microphenomenal properties serve as quiddities, playing the roles associated with microphysical properties, and also serve as the grounds for macrophenomenal properties [. . .]. One could think of the world as fundamentally consisting in fundamental entities bearing fundamental microphenomenal properties, where the microphenomenal properties are connected to each other (and perhaps to other quiddities) by fundamental laws with the structure that the laws of physics describe.²¹

On this view, microexperience is fundamental, grounding macroexperience while serving as the quiddity occupying all microphysical roles. So, *pace* Brüntrup and Jaskolla, Chalmers holds that the questions of fundamentality and ubiquity come apart: mentality alone is fundamental but being mental and being physical are both ubiquitous features of the world.

To exit this definitional morass, reconnect with prevailing definitions of Berkeley's idealism, and emphasize the crucial differences between Berkeley's project and contemporary ones, we propose the following theses for consideration:

Strong Asymmetry: (1) Necessarily, for all x , if x is a mind, then x does not depend on a body, and (2) necessarily, for all x , if x is a body, then x depends on a mind.

Mental Substances: Necessarily, for all x , if x is a mind, then x is a substance.

Existence: There are minds, there are bodies, there are mind-dependent beings that are not bodies, and there is nothing else.

Berkeley's Idealism: Strong Asymmetry, Mental Substances, and Existence.

Our definition has the following virtues. First, it is consistent with all of the definitions given at the outset of this paper. Like others in the literature, many of these definitions highlight Berkeley's view that all bodies depend on minds, as well as his view that minds and bodies exist (he is not an eliminativist about bodies). The second conjunct of Strong Asymmetry and Existence capture these features of Berkeley's idealism. Second, the first conjunct of Strong Asymmetry expresses Berkeley's denial that it is possible that a mind depends on bodies.²² It is this component which rules out mind-body identity panpsychism and thus makes explicit what has been presupposed by Berkeley's commentators. The distinct advantage of our definition, relatedly, is that it clarifies where Berkeley would require further argument against a mind-body identity panpsychist rival. Third, note that it is not enough for Berkeley, as it is for many contemporary panpsychists, that *mentality* or *phenomenal properties* exist ubiquitously and fundamentally. Strawson hints at this divide in his own definition of pure panpsychism, arguing "[that] the existence of subjects of experience *can't be supposed* to be anything ontologically

²¹ Chalmers, "Panpsychism and Panprotopsychism," 254-255.

²² God depends on nothing (other than Himself), and thus not on any body. Finite minds are more complicated, yet we think Berkeley holds that while there could be no finite minds independent of all ideas whatsoever, minds do not depend on the ideas that constitute bodies. Thus no minds depend on bodies.

over and above the existence of experiencing."²³ Rather, independent mental *substances* are a key part of Berkeley's ontology.²⁴

Some forms of panpsychism, including Strawson's pure panpsychism and perhaps Chalmers' constitutive Russellian panpsychism, might count as forms of idealism in the sense defined, depending on the stance taken on whether microexperience requires micro-minds. But we agree with Segal and Goldschmidt in counting this consequence among our view's advantages: the fundamentally idealist implications of *some* forms of contemporary panpsychism bear noting and should be accounted for by an adequate definition.²⁵

At best, arguments like the inseparability argument support the second conjunct of Strong Asymmetry, while other arguments are needed for the other components of Berkeley's idealism. In the rest of the paper, we conclude with some thoughts about Berkeley's prospects for success with these tasks.

5. The Virtues of Unity

Here, we conclude by surveying two Berkeleyan strategies, one more prominent in Berkeley's published writings than the other, for establishing the following claim:

Non-Identity: Necessarily, for all x , if x is a body, then x is not a mind.

Establishing this claim is a necessary first step if Berkeley is to secure the first conjunct of Strong Asymmetry. Non-Identity will be established if Berkeley establishes that, necessarily, for all x , if x is a mind, then x is F , where F is some quality, and, necessarily, for all x , if x is a body, then x is not F .²⁶ All dialectically defensible methods for Berkeley to establish Non-Identity in the face of opposition from the mind-body identity panpsychist reduce to this schema. The mere stipulation or presumption of Non-Identity would be question-begging, and both direct and *reductio* arguments for Non-Identity would be instances of this schema.

²³ Strawson, "Mind and Being," 81.

²⁴ We do not deny that Berkeley scholars debate his commitment to mental substance. For instance, Robert Muehlmann argues that "Berkeley's nominalism (and, consequently, his anti-abstractionism) is fatal to substances, whether material *or* mental" (Muehlmann, "The Substance of Berkeley's Philosophy," 90; see also Muehlmann, *Berkeley's Ontology*). Others, like Marc Hight and Walter Ott ("The New Berkeley"), argue that Berkeley's conception of mental substance is relatively traditional and that for Berkeley mental substances are objects of inner awareness, or agents (on this latter point, see Bettcher, "Berkeley on Self-Consciousness"). Still others argue for a Stoic conception of substance not amenable to being spoken of or theorized abstractly, like Stephen Daniel ("Berkeley's Pantheistic Discourse" and "Berkeley's Stoic Notion of Spiritual Substance"). Despite this disagreement, we think on balance the texts strongly suggest Berkeley includes mental substances in his ontology.

²⁵ Segal & Goldschmidt, "The Necessity of Idealism," 47.

²⁶ Spinoza's views on identity and non-identity are highly idiosyncratic, but Spinoza can accept our method of establishing non-identity (though of course he rejects our conclusion, since he thinks minds just are bodies), as long as the relevant F in our schema is what some commentators have called an attribute-neutral property. And activity and unity, insofar as they are discussed explicitly at all by Spinoza, are clearly attribute-neutral. See Della Rocca, *Representation and the Mind-Body Problem in Spinoza*, Newlands, *Reconceiving Spinoza*, and Melamed, "Spinoza's Metaphysics of Thought," for more on Spinoza's use of attribute-neutrality.

The first option to consider is that 'active' is *F*. After considering this possibility, we will suggest reasons for Berkeley to shift his emphasis to his less common proposal—namely, that minds are fundamentally *unified* in a way no bodies are or could be. We will conclude by briefly discussing Berkeley's prospects for establishing the rest of the claims he needs in order to secure the first conjunct of Strong Asymmetry and Mental Substances.²⁷

Berkeley's focus on the activity of minds and the passivity of bodies is ubiquitous. When Philonous is first challenged by Hylas to explain how his "passive and inert" idea of a "purely active" being like God or himself could represent such a being, he has this to say:

PHILONOUS: [. . .] I do nevertheless know that I, who am a spirit or thinking substance, exist as certainly as I know my ideas exist. Farther, I know what I mean by the terms 'I' and 'myself'; and I know this immediately, or intuitively, though I do not perceive it as I perceive a triangle, a color, or a sound. [. . .] (3D 231)

PHILONOUS: How often must I repeat, that I know or am conscious of my own being; and that I myself am not my ideas, but somewhat else, a thinking active principle that perceives, knows, wills, and operates about ideas. [. . .] (3D 233)

Assuming that Philonous' position can be identified with Berkeley's own, Berkeley's argument in this passage is an appeal to his intuitive or reflective awareness of himself—he knows that he exists as an active mental being "by a certain internal consciousness" (DM 21).²⁸ Yet, it seems that Berkeley's awareness of himself could at most show that he is a mind and is active *at the time that he introspects*, but not that it is necessary that he is. How could experience teach Berkeley that it is not possible that he is passive? Cartesian memories loom large here. One solution is to interpret Berkeley as holding that 'active' refers to a capacity, such that if Berkeley is aware of himself as active, then he is aware of himself as capable of acting at all possible times that he exists.²⁹ This syncs better with Philonous' claim that minds are passive when they perceive via the senses and also with Berkeley's remark to Samuel Johnson that "the soul of man is passive as well as active, I make no doubt" (*Works* 2:293). If there could be some duration when minds perceive only via the senses, then it seems Berkeley must deny that, necessarily, minds are acting, but he need not deny that necessarily, minds are capable of acting.³⁰

To be clear, though, Berkeley does not maintain that minds are nothing over and above their activity (or capacity for activity). Berkeley locates the activity of the mind in the will, which is one of its two constituent faculties. Here is one of Berkeley's arguments which relies on this bipartite concept of the mind:

²⁷ We thus set aside the question of establishing Existence.

²⁸ For Berkeley, this "internal consciousness" is not mediated by ideas, which he makes clear in saying: "Our souls are not to be known in the same manner as senseless inactive objects, or by way of idea" (PHK 142)

²⁹ For cases where Berkeley uses 'active' in this sense, see PHK 53 and PHK 61.

³⁰ Note, however, that some interpreters argue that Berkeleyan sense perception is not passive, and that Berkeley conceives of sense perception in an adverbial manner as a series of mental acts. For a classic defense of this interpretation, see Pitcher, "Minds and Ideas in Berkeley." For a recent defense of a similar view, see Frankel, "Acts, Ideas, and Objects in Berkeley's Metaphysics." For an extended criticism of views of this kind, see Marušić, "Berkeley on the Objects of Perception."

PHILONOUS. [. . .] From the effects I see produced, I conclude there are actions; and because actions, volitions; and because there are volitions, there must be a will. Again, the things I perceive must have an existence, they or their archetypes, out of my mind: but being ideas, neither they nor their archetypes can exist otherwise than in an understanding: there is therefore an understanding. But will and understanding constitute in the strictest sense a mind or spirit. The powerful cause therefore of my ideas, is in strict propriety of speech a *spirit*. (3D 240)

In a similar fashion, occasionally Berkeley argues for the passivity of bodies via conceptual analysis. For instance, in *De Motu* 22, Berkeley argues that the qualities distinctive of bodies exclude power when he proposes that

[. . .] impenetrability, extension, or shape include or connote no power to produce motion. On the contrary, when we review one by one not only those qualities but whatever other qualities that bodies possess, we see that they are all genuinely passive, and that there is nothing active in them [. . .].

Berkeley's more common strategy is to identify bodies with ideas in order to argue for bodies' passivity via the passivity of ideas. If ideas are "visibly inactive", as Berkeley argues at *Principles* 25, then Berkeley can rightfully conclude that they are *in fact* inactive, given his view that "there is nothing in them but what is perceived." There is some disagreement about the next step. Some commentators argue that Berkeley identifies bodies one-to-one with the ideas of one sensory modality, others argue that Berkeley identifies bodies with collections of ideas perceived via multiple sensory modalities across time (including, perhaps, some that *will be* or *would be* observed), and still others fall somewhere in between these extremes. It is granted on all hands, though, that Berkeley identifies bodies with ideas or collections of ideas. Berkeley argues for this identification at various points in his corpus by arguing for the identification of bodies with whatever it is we "*immediately perceive by our Senses*" (3D 180) since ideas are what we immediately perceive. If Berkeley is correct that bodies are necessarily inactive, perhaps because they are ideas and ideas are "visibly" so, or because the concept of body excludes power, then he is well on his way to Non-Identity.

In four interconnected ways, Spinoza challenges Berkeley's reliance on 'active' as the quality *F* that differentiates minds from bodies. First, whereas Berkeley thinks that there is nothing in ideas but what is perceived, Spinoza argues that our ideas of bodies—and what they are capable of—are fundamentally inadequate: "For indeed no one has yet determined what the body can do, that is, experience has not yet taught anyone what the bodies can do from the laws of Nature alone" (EIIIp2s). Second, granting for the moment that Berkeley is right that there is nothing in ideas but what is perceived, and that bodies are ideas, Berkeley would still need to establish that our mind is not an idea or collection of ideas to establish Non-Identity. Given the preceding point, Berkeley must do so without simply presupposing that ideas, or bodies, are perceived as "visibly inactive" and that such ideas are adequate. Spinoza is not alone in failing to share that perception and, as noted before, he has arguments to establish that our minds are ideas. Third, Spinoza argues that minds are only active when their associated bodies are: "Does not experience also teach that, if the body is inactive, the mind is at the same time incapable of thinking?"

(EIIIp2s).³¹ Berkeley denies that a mind is, at any time, completely *incapable* of thinking, both for the reasons already discussed and because he maintains that the passage of time is relativized to a thinker's thoughts.³² But bodies, for Berkeley, are always wholly passive. Fourth, Spinoza argues that the essence of a finite thing, whether thinking or extended, is its degree of power, and thus bodies, like minds, are inherently powerful and active.³³

For all that we have said so far, one might think that Berkeley and Spinoza simply come to opposing conclusions on the basis of similarly compelling arguments. The mere existence of Spinoza's alternatives and their accompanying arguments, one might think, is not enough to put pressure on Berkeley. Yet, two further features of Spinoza's defense of his mind-body identity panpsychism do. First, Spinoza argues for his substance monism on fairly traditional grounds, using versions of the ontological and cosmological arguments for God's existence. Berkeley faces significant theological pressure to accept these arguments. Michael Della Rocca, for example, interprets Spinoza's argument as containing four key steps:

Spinoza argues first that no two substances can share an attribute (1p5). Second Spinoza argues that "it pertains to the nature of a substance to exist" (1p7). On the basis of 1p7, Spinoza argues that God—defined as the substance with all the attributes—exists. Finally, since God exists and has all the attributes and since there can, by 1p5, be no sharing of attributes, no other substance besides God can exist. Any such substance would have to share attributes with God and such sharing is ruled out.³⁴

Other interpreters, like Don Garrett, disagree with Della Rocca about how exactly to formulate the strongest version of Spinoza's reasoning, but they agree that it shares some features with the traditional ontological argument while ultimately relying on a very strong Principle of Sufficient Reason more at home in standard versions of the cosmological argument.³⁵ There is a consensus that Spinoza's mind-body identity panpsychism follows *quite directly* from his theology. Spinoza's arguments for his so-called "parallelism doctrine" (EIIp7) that "the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things," and for his mind-body

³¹ Note that Spinoza also rejects the view that either the mind or body could ever be completely inactive. Spinoza's point here must thus be read as suggesting that the activity levels of the body and the mind are, in our experience, precisely correlated, contrary to Berkeley's suggestion that the mind is often quite active while its ideas, bodies, are wholly passive. Berkeley cannot challenge Spinoza's claim here by appealing, for example, to cases where people who are paralyzed still think. This is not a true mismatch in the activity levels of mind and body, of course, since 'bodies', for Spinoza, include any physical extended thing of whatever size. What would be needed for a Berkeleyan counterexample like this to succeed would be mental activity in the complete absence of neural (that is, bodily) activity, and such cases do not exist in our experience.

³² For instance, in his letters to Samuel Johnson, Berkeley states that "[a] succession of ideas I take to constitute Time, and not to be only the sensible measure thereof, as Mr. Locke and others think" (*Works* 2:293). There, Berkeley also rules out one mind's succession of ideas being a measure of the time of another, and he argues that "all things, past and to come, are actually present to the mind of God, and that there is in Him no change, variation, or succession" (*Works* 2: 293).

³³ See, for example, EIp36, EIIIp7, EIVdef8, and elsewhere. Della Rocca, in "The Power of an Idea," 225, discusses these and related passages.

³⁴ Della Rocca, *Spinoza*, 46.

³⁵ Garrett, "Spinoza's Ontological Argument," marks the beginning of this fruitful debate, which Della Rocca continues in "Spinoza's Substance Monism" and *Spinoza* and Garrett returns to in "Postscript: Arguments for God's Existence Revisited."

identity panpsychism (EIIp7s), that "a mode of extension and an idea of that mode are one and the same thing," cite only EIA4, which states that "knowledge of effects depends on, and involves, knowledge of causes." Immediately prior to introducing his mind-body identity claim, Spinoza says, "[b]efore we proceed further, we must *recall here what we showed in the First Part*." Yitzak Melamed relies on this language to argue that Spinoza's mind-body identity panpsychism follows from the nature of God alone, *as already proved* in EIp16: "From the necessity of the divine nature there must follow infinitely many things in infinitely many modes."³⁶ Della Rocca draws a linear connection between Spinoza's substance monism, the constraints of the Principle of Sufficient Reason, and mind-body identity panpsychism. In broad strokes at least, Garrett seems to agree, noting that

[Spinoza] will reply that the perfection of the necessarily existing divine substance, as established by the ontological argument and the principle of sufficient reason, actually requires that one substance have all *possible principal* attributes, necessarily mirroring one another...this means that the one substance and each of the singular things that are its finite modes must exist in multiple fundamentally different yet complementary dimensions of being—including as thinking and as extended. This is nothing less than panpsychism.³⁷

Moreover, the mind-body identity panpsychism that follows rather directly from Spinoza's conception of the divine nature leaves little room for the appeals to the will that form one prong of Berkeley's conception of spirits as active. In fact, Spinoza would challenge every step of Philonous's aforementioned argument in *Dialogues* 240 that "From the effects I see produced, I conclude there are actions; and because actions, volitions; and because there are volitions, there must be a will." Spinoza agrees that every effect implies some activity, but he would argue that the inferences from activity to actions and from actions to volitions are not warranted. And Spinoza argues in EIIp48-49 that since each mind is a determinate mode of God (EIIp11), and since all God's determinate modes are necessarily caused by preceding ones (EIp28), there are no free acts of will, but only effects produced by necessity, such that "in the mind there is no other volition, or affirmation or negation, except that which the idea involves insofar as it is an idea" (EIIp49).³⁸ In this way, Spinoza argues from God's nature to a mind-body identity panpsychism in which volitions just are ideas, the complex joining of which is all there is to being a mind.

Space does not permit us to fully evaluate each step of Spinoza's reasoning. We can grant that it is unclear whether Berkeley would accept the Principle of Sufficient Reason. And it is almost certain that Berkeley would continue to deny that Extension is a possible attribute of substance. Nonetheless, the more or less traditional theological arguments whose conclusions Spinoza interprets in heterodox ways to ground his mind-body panpsychism pressure Berkeley to justify his rejection of that position (and its entailment that minds and bodies are active to precisely the

³⁶ Melamed, "Spinoza's Metaphysics of Thought: Parallelisms and the Multi-faceted Structure of Ideas," 648-49.

³⁷ Della Rocca, Spinoza, 89-136 and Garrett, "Descartes, Spinoza, and Locke on Extended Thinking Beings," 237-238.

³⁸ See Garrett, "Spinoza's Necessitarianism," Curley and Walski, "Spinoza's Necessitarianism Reconsidered," and Newlands, Reconciling Spinoza, Ch. 4, for more discussion of Spinoza's commitment to necessitarianism. Della Rocca, "The Power of an Idea" gives much more of the argument for Spinoza's rejection of the distinction between will and intellect, or willing and the having of an idea.

same extent). The burden is on Berkeley to explain how his arguments for the passivity of bodies remain compatible with these traditional theological arguments.

Berkeley could go this route and address Spinoza's arguments directly, showing in detail how Spinoza goes wrong in the above-noted ways. But it is our position that a simpler solution would be for Berkeley to switch his emphasis from the mind's *activity* to the mind's *unity*, following Leibniz's example. Like Berkeley, Leibniz focuses at times on the activity of substances, which for him include only minds, and at other times on their unity. For instance, in the *Monadology*, Leibniz is clearly focused on the unity of mental substances. This is evident both from his opening definition—"the monad, which we shall discuss here, is nothing but a simple substance that enters into composites"—and from his famous "mill argument" in *Monadology* 17, which seeks to show that "*perception*, and what depends on it, is *inexplicable in terms of mechanical reasons*," such that "we should seek perception in the simple substance and not in the composite or in the machine." Why would this shift in emphasis help Berkeley? For one, accounting for certain aspects of the unity of minds is widely regarded as one of panpsychism's most important challenges. One popular formulation of the combination problem for panpsychism holds that subjects, or subjective perspectives, cannot unite. If we as subjects and our thoughts as constituting a particular perspective have the unity that Berkeley argues they do and that we commonly take them to have, they cannot be constituted as the mind-body identity panpsychist says they are.³⁹ Likewise, Spinoza accepts the mutual dependence of minds and bodies, in our weak sense, in virtue of their identity. But he explicitly denies the finite mind's unity, in part because he holds that the finite mind is identical to a finite body that is composite.⁴⁰ If either our concepts, the data of experience, or reasoning along the lines of Leibniz's mill argument or Kant's argument for the transcendental unity of apperception favor Berkeley here, then Berkeley will have an advantage over Spinoza.

This is not to claim that there are no complications facing Berkeley were he to change his approach. One issue is that Berkeley never gives us a full account of the relevant sort of unity—it may be that this part of his system was lost when the rest of the *Principles* were lost.⁴¹ Another is that Berkeley seems to maintain that the unity of the mind follows from its activity. Berkeley often mentions activity and unity simultaneously as features of minds (though he almost invariably focuses on activity at the expense of unity).⁴² Some commentators interpret Berkeley (or, at least, the "mature Berkeley") as understanding perception as requiring an active mind to gather together the objects of perception into a single unified perspective *à la* Kant.⁴³ Others

³⁹ See, among others, Chalmers, "The Combination Problem for Panpsychism," 182-3, as well as Montero, "What Combination Problem?," and others in the same volume, for discussion of this aspect of the combination problem.

⁴⁰ "The idea that constitutes the formal being of the human mind is not simple, but is composed of a great many ideas" (EIIp15). Here as always, we mean only minimal dependence with respect to existence in describing Spinoza's view.

⁴¹ As A.A. Luce and T.E. Jessop surmise in their Editor's Introduction to Berkeley's letters to Samuel Johnson. See *Works* 2:269.

⁴² See, for example, *Principles* 141 or *Dialogues* 234 and 249. For a discussion of unity's importance to Berkeley's view of substances (and its origins in his philosophical antecedents), see Wilson, "On the Hausmans' 'A New Approach,'" 81-88.

⁴³ This activity does not, however, require precedent volitions, so it is not the same sort of agency as is involved with the will (and so it can be, and is, blind). See Hill, "The Active Self and Perception in Berkeley's Three Dialogues." If, for Berkeley, activity and unity are in fact linked in this way, such that the relevant sort of unity is

suggest that the distinctive activity of minds is to imitate God, such that "to fully and properly achieve participation in the divine nature, it is not enough to grasp clearly and distinctly what I ought to do—I must *act* on that knowledge [. . .] to be engaged in the activity of virtue [is our] proper, natural state."⁴⁴ If either view is right, then even though one of the mind's specific activities explains and is thus more fundamental than its unity, Berkeley could simply argue that bodies lack this type of activity—the ability to unify perceptions in a single perspective, on the former reading, or to act as a unified virtuous agent, on the latter. Thus Berkeley need not necessarily commit himself to showing that bodies are wholly passive, just that they are passive with respect to a certain type of activity, even if the latter is something he in fact continues to believe. A third complication is that Berkeley also mentions unity as a feature of collections or "congeries" of ideas but also as a feature of individual ideas like sensations. Below is an example of the latter:

HYLAS. Hold, Philonous, I fear I was out in yielding intense heat to be a pain. It should seem rather, that pain is something distinct from heat, and the consequence or effect of it.
 PHILONOUS. Upon putting your hand near the fire, do you perceive one simple uniform sensation, or two distinct sensations?
 HYLAS. But one simple sensation.
 PHILONOUS. Is not the heat immediately perceived?
 HYLAS. It is.
 PHILONOUS. And the pain?
 HYLAS. True.
 PHILONOUS. Seeing therefore they are both immediately perceived at the same time, and the fire affects you only with one simple, or uncompounded idea, it follows that this same simple idea is both the intense heat immediately perceived, and the pain; and consequently, that the intense heat immediately perceived, is nothing distinct from a particular sort of pain. (3D 176)

If Berkeley is to establish per our proposed definition that, necessarily, for all x , if x is unified, then x is a substance, then he must distinguish between different kinds of unity. As for collections or congeries of ideas, Berkeley holds that "in each instance it is plain, the unit relates to some particular combination of ideas arbitrarily put together by the mind" (P 12).⁴⁵ Since the unity of minds explains the unity of collections and congeries in this way, its unity must be distinct from and more fundamental than theirs. Even if the sort of unity possessed by a mind

entailed by activity, then activity would be an appropriate F , as it would be sufficient to establish Non-Identity. However, *displaying* this fact would require an argument for the link between activity and unity, as well as an expanded version of the argument we have given for the efficacy of unity against the mind-body identity panpsychist.

⁴⁴ Russell Roberts, "A Puzzle in the Three Dialogues and Its Platonic Resolution," 150. Later in Russell Roberts' discussion of Cudworth's Neo-Platonism and its connection to Berkeley's view, he draws, implicitly and without much commentary, as Berkeley often does, the same connection between activity and unity or simplicity, saying (152): "His is a view of agents as *simple*, active, immaterial substances where activity is conceived of exactly the way it should be if we are made in the image of God and God's nature is conceived of axiarchically. In other words, where activity is conceived of as volition. It is through volition that our moral natures are self-determined" (italics ours).

⁴⁵ See also 3D 245-246 and 3D 249.

which enables it to unify collections and congeries is its unity of perspective, more needs to be said about what this amounts to.⁴⁶

Yet, supposing Berkeley were to have a well-developed account of what this unity of perspective amounts to, then he would be in a much improved position relative to panpsychists more generally and mind-body identity panpsychists like Spinoza in particular. Although Berkeley's texts provide little immediate assistance in further explicating his account of the mind's unity, Berkeley could rely on plausible arguments defended by others to improve his position. The benefits are significant not only because they provide additional grist for Berkeley's idealist mill, but also because the claim that the mind is unified—while the body is not—has substantially greater intuitive plausibility than the claim that since bodies are ideas and ideas are passive, bodies are wholly passive. This advantage in intuitive plausibility remains so even if Berkeley's *ultimate explanation* for the mind's unity is its having a specific sort of activity, as unifier of perceptions into a single perspective or as unified virtuous agent, that bodies lack.

6. Conclusion

The foregoing suggests that, even if Berkeley fails to identify mind-body identity panpsychism as an important rival to his idealism, he may in the end have the resources to argue for Non-Identity. We are optimistic about Berkeley's chances, although pessimism looms. If neither 'unified' nor 'active' are viable replacements of *F* in our schema, and so neither enable Berkeley to defend his idealism, then what follows is that his idealism is simply ill-suited to respond to the challenge posed by mind-body identity panpsychism, given the significant limitations of Berkeley's arguments for his position we have identified here.

Supposing, though, that Berkeley can establish Non-Identity, he then must turn to the other components of his idealism. Mental Substances can be secured if Berkeley can establish that, necessarily, for all *x*, if *x* is unified, then *x* is a substance. It follows from this claim and the claim that, necessarily, for all *x*, if *x* is a mind, then *x* is unified that, necessarily, for all *x*, if *x* is a mind, then *x* is a substance. Since, again, it is not clear what sort of unity all minds possess on Berkeley's view, we cannot address whether Berkeley could plausibly argue that only substances have this sort of unity. There is reason, however, to be hopeful about this possibility, given that whatever sort of unity it is, it is not possessed by ideas, which are, on Berkeley's picture, the only non-substances. With Non-Identity and Mental Substances in hand, Berkeley can establish the first conjunct of Strong Asymmetry with the addition of only one further claim: necessarily, *x* is a substance if, and only if, *x* is independent. This is an eminently plausible claim since substances are generally defined as independent beings, both in the early modern context and otherwise. Supposing Berkeley is successful at these tasks, he would have his idealism, or something near enough.

⁴⁶ Especially since Berkeley claims that the unity of minds entails that they are "incorruptible", "indissoluble by the Force of Nature", and "immortal" (P 141). A simple pain is, by contrast, corruptible, dissoluble, and mortal, and undeniably so. Berkeley does not give a clear explanation of what explains the difference.

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Abbreviations

Berkeley's Texts:

PHK *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge: Part 1*

3D *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*

DM *De Motu, or The Principle and Nature of Motion and the Cause of the Communication of Motions*

Citations of these works are by section numbers, except for citations of the *Dialogues*, which are by page numbers, and citations of Berkeley's letters with Johnson, which are by volume number and page number.

Spinoza's Texts:

E *Ethics*

Citations of this work are by book, definition, axiom, proposition, scholium, and corollary.

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