

Silvia Parigi, ed.

George Berkeley: Religion and Science in the Age of Enlightenment.

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Silvia Parigi's anthology brings together thirteen heretofore-unpublished essays on some of the lesser-known aspects of Berkeley's thought. Most of the chapters began life as papers presented at the International Berkeley Society's 2007 meeting in Gaeta, Italy, organized in part by the editor. So what the volume amounts to is a beefed up conference proceedings with a few original pieces added on. Due to space constraints, I cannot discuss each of the essays in any detail, instead, I will focus my remarks on a few of the more intriguing essays and some of the book's high and low points.

The anthology has three putatively thematic parts: nominally, one on different interpretations of Berkeley's philosophy, one on more "neglected" areas of interest to Berkeley, and one devoted to essays that try to situate Berkeley in a wider historical context. In reality, the essays largely orbit around two rather minor areas of Berkeley's thought, which, despite the suggestive subtitle, are not "Science and Religion." Rather, the bulk of the essays are focused on one of two "S's": Berkeley's mystifying yet popular tome *Siris* and the connection between Berkeley's philosophy and that of the decidedly unpopular Spinoza. Four of the papers (Peterschmitt, Airaksinen, Parigi, and to a lesser extent, Hight) pay significant attention to the former and another two (Brykman and Menichelli) on the latter. Other essays discuss Berkeley's mathematics (Schwartz), his view of Biblical scholarship (Bertini), and his theory of the animal soul (Charles).

The piece I think most likely to receive lasting attention from Berkeley scholars is David Berman's, in which he argues that "Berkeley was a philosopher of little or no religious faith" (141). Berman does not mean by this that Berkeley would not have been fervently religious or a committed Christian, but that his religiosity was "philosophical, that is, based entirely on reason." Berman paints a picture of a deeply distrustful—not to say *skeptical*—young Berkeley. This young Berkeley was profoundly disturbed by the "gap" between the perceived and the allegedly real world posited by Cartesians and at the same time unwilling to accept the Cartesian solution: that we can trust the perceived as a guide to the real because God is not a deceiver. After surveying the other possible candidates, Berman concludes that it was Berkeley's young, distrustful self who the later Berkeley used as a model for Hylas, the materialist described as "plunged into the deepest and most deplorable scepticism that ever man was." Berkeley—not Descartes, Spinoza, Hobbes, Locke, or Bayle—was the unhappy occupant of the skeptical situation produced by materialism, lamented in the opening lines of the Introduction to the *Principles*. And it was Berkeley's discovery of the "obvious and amazing truth" of *esse* is *percipi* that rescued him from this forlorn position by collapsing the pernicious gap.

There is much to admire in Berman's paper, and much I agree with. Berman appreciates, more than many Berkeley scholars, the motivating force that skepticism had for Berkeley's immaterialism. Yet the central claim—that Berkeley was religious for philosophical reasons, not

out of pure faith—simply is not supported, even if Berman is right that the young Berkeley himself was the unhappy skeptic, because we don't get an account of how Berkeley got from *esse* is *percipi* to belief in God. How did such a distrustful mind find a philosophical basis for belief in God rather than, say, solipsism? Accepting that *esse* is *percipi* could easily lead in either direction, and it is hard to see how Berkeley could have had *reason* to favor the theistic answer, especially in light of Berman's concession that "[Berkeley] could even have been an atheist, if reason went that way" (142). So, why wasn't Berkeley an atheist, solipsist, and skeptic? The best remaining answer is that Berkeley simply *wanted* to believe, and there is no better word for that desire than faith. Berman's conclusion is just not as compelling as his portrait of the young, distrustful Berkeley who, many readers will learn for the first time, reportedly tried to hang himself in college. (For research purposes, of course!)

Some of the pieces deliver in unexpected ways. George Caffentzis's piece ("Locke, Berkeley and Hume as Philosophers of Money") is really less about Locke, Berkeley, or Hume than it is about what qualifies one as a philosopher of money. It is no less interesting for that. Not surprisingly, Caffentzis regards Locke, Berkeley, and Hume each as philosophers of money in their own ways. On monetary theory, it is refreshing to see that Berkeley has the better of Hume: Berkeley very early on supported a specie-less paper currency, whereas Hume could see no future for money that did not contain some metal with "intrinsic value."

In a similar departure from expectations, Caterina Menichelli's suggestively titled essay—"Was Berkeley a Spinozist? A Historiographical Answer"—is suggestive indeed; but in fact, she does not offer an answer to the titular question. What she does do is provide an illuminating catalogue of early, lesser-known responses to Berkeley's immaterialism, some of which did consider Berkeley dangerously Spinozistic. The reasons why are not difficult to see. By dispensing with material substance, Berkeley is forced to accept that God and mankind are of the same nature—spirit—even if one is infinite and the others finite. And with God as the ultimate causal force in the world producing ideas in finite minds according to the laws of nature, the dependency of finite minds on God looks, to a distrustful audience, not significantly different from Spinoza's view of God as the sole substance, unfolding itself deterministically. The historical scholarship is first rate, but one wishes Menichelli had offered something more by way of an answer to the question of whether Berkeley's early commentators were *right* in taking his philosophy to lead inexorably to Spinozism.

In truth, not all of the essays are likely to be of significant interest or use even to some students or scholars working on Berkeley. Such is the danger in exploring the lesser-known or less well-regarded aspects of a philosopher's corpus. Much of the current analytic and Anglophone philosophy concerned with Berkeley is focused on his metaphysics and epistemology, these largely drawn from his early *Principles*, *Three Dialogues*, or works on vision, and to a growing extent, *Alciphron*. Berkeley's philosophy of mathematics and philosophy of science are likewise small but buzzing topics of interest, driving research into *Analyst* and *De Motu*. Yet even among Berkeley specialists, *Siris* gathers comparatively little attention. It is, undoubtedly, an *odd* work. So where some will see *Siris* as the victim of "neglect," others will see the attention some do devote to it as supererogatory. Regardless of one's bent, the work herein on *Siris* is of a high quality and will help those who want to better

understand it to do so, even if those people are few in number (even among Berkeley enthusiasts).

Luc Peterschmitt's and Timo Airaksinen's roughly parallel articles (the former on chemistry in *Siris*, the latter on the treatment of gravity) do a nice job of showing that *Siris*'s chain of reflections is not entirely consumed by Berkeley's infatuation with tar water. Newton's thought features prominently in both, giving greater detail to Berkeley's complicated, conflicted reception of the new physical science. Parigi's own piece aims to shed light on the underlying theory of science she sees operating in *Siris*. And in taking a view opposite of Airaksinen on whether the theory of science in *Siris* allows for robust prediction making, she nicely points to an area in need of further investigation.

In sum, Parigi deserves credit for compiling a respectable anthology and in guiding the expansion of the essays from standard conference paper fare to the (mostly) well-written pieces they are. It is a solid addition to the growing library of work on Berkeley specifically and the early Modern period more generally.

For all that, the book has two great faults. Both, I think, can be laid at the feet of the publisher, Springer.

The copyediting is shoddy and careless. Some chapters are better than others, but not one is free of mistakes. The worst mistake is the misidentification of noted early Modern scholar Kenneth Winkler as "Henry Winkler" (113). Henry Winkler, of course, is better known to most people for his role as Fonzie on *Happy Days*. While The Fonz is eminently cool, he is most certainly not eminent in Berkeley studies; *Kenneth Winkler is*. As if to highlight the blunder, Winkler—Kenneth, that is—is correctly identified in a footnote on the very same page. Such a slip would almost be funny were it not indicative of the careless (non-existent?) proofreading. In a work whose intended audience is other scholars, both professional and aspiring, the slight is inexcusable.

The typographical errors are errors of omission, though egregious ones. But Springer deserves serious blame for the main error of commission: the price. At a preposterous \$139—more than \$10 per chapter—Springer has all but ensured that few among the already small target audience will buy a copy. In the end, it is a good book at a terrible price.

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