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IN HIM WE LIVE AND MOVE AND HAVE OUR BEING:
PHILOSOPHICAL THEOLOGY IN NICOLAS MALEBRANCHE
AND GEORGE BERKELEY

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INTRODUCTION

“In Him We Live and Move and Have Our Being” Acts 17:28

“... let us believe with Saint Paul, that He is not far from any of us, and that in Him we live and move and have our being.” Nicolas Malebranche¹

“I entirely agree with what the Holy Scripture saith, that in God we live, and move, and have our being.” George Berkeley²

Nicolas Malebranche and George Berkeley cite this passage from the New Testament multiple times.³ As philosophers who held Christian doctrines, these philosophers were likely drawn to this text because it is one of the few places in the Bible that mentions the philosophical systems of the day. This passage is from a sermon preached by St. Paul on Mars Hill to the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers in Athens. I have taken this passage as the title of this project because it summarizes the philosophical theology of both philosophers: we are dependent upon God for all things.

The philosophical theology of Nicolas Malebranche and George Berkeley has been largely neglected. This neglect is not due to a lack of textual evidence that these philosophers held doctrines of philosophical theology. We shall see that such textual evidence is plentiful. It is also not due to the lack of importance these doctrines play in the thought of these philosophers. We will see that these doctrines are important in their

¹ *Search* (LO 230). See “Appendix: Abbreviations”, page 230. Unless otherwise noted, I will use this translation for all citations from *The Search after Truth*.

² *Dialogues* (DHP 214).

³ Malebranche quotes this passage at least twice in the *Search* (LO 235 & 629) and once in the *Dialogues* (DM 131). Berkeley quotes from Acts 17 at least four times in his published works; three times in the *Principles* (PHK 66, 149, & 150) once in the *Dialogues* (DHP 214) and once in *Alciphron* (4.14). Daniel says that Berkeley cites this passage “On at least nine occasions”. Stephen H. Daniel, “Berkeley's Pantheistic Discourse,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 49 (2001): 179-80. Bracken suggests that Berkeley's citing of this passages shows that he was following Malebranche as “a reservoir of suggestiveness”. Harry M. Bracken, “Berkeley and Malebranche on Ideas,” *The Modern Schoolman* 41 (1963).

overall philosophical and theological systems. Nonetheless commentators have not paid much attention to the doctrines of philosophical theology held by both philosophers.

The philosophical theology of Malebranche and Berkeley can be seen by their shared acceptance of the doctrines of divine revelation and the Trinity. Recovering this aspect of their thought allows interpreters to appreciate the richness of their overall philosophical systems. Likewise, ignoring their philosophical theology robs interpreters of a deeper understanding of some of their more important philosophical doctrines.

My chief argument is that Malebranche and Berkeley hold similar theories of philosophical theology and that in each case understanding their philosophical theology helps us to understand their philosophical system. Both accept the traditional doctrines of divine revelation and the Trinity from Christian theology. Not only do they accept these doctrines, but the doctrines are philosophically relevant to the philosophical systems of both philosophers. In other words, some of the philosophical similarities between the two philosophers can be explained in light of their similar theories of philosophical theology.

Since the modern period, interpreters have noticed that these philosophers hold similar philosophical positions. Commentators have argued that these two philosophers hold similar views across many different branches of philosophy: philosophical method, theories of knowledge and perception, theories of causation, and philosophical motivation.⁴ The similarities most often pointed out fall into the categories of epistemology and metaphysics. This literature has established that there are epistemological and metaphysical similarities in the philosophical systems of Malebranche and Berkeley.

⁴ All of these suggested similarities are pointed out in section 1.4.

However, the fact that they hold similar theories of philosophical theology has not been mentioned in the secondary literature. Commentators have missed obvious similarities concerning doctrines from Christian theology that both philosophers embrace. They accept the doctrines of divine revelation and the Trinity. They merge these doctrines into their overall philosophical systems and generate their own theories from these doctrines. As I will show, these theories are remarkably similar. Malebranche's theory of divine revelation is similar to Berkeley's. The same is true of their theories of the Trinity. Malebranche and Berkeley's philosophical theology consists in their embracing these doctrines from Christian theology and applying them to their philosophical projects in similar ways.

Not only do they hold similar theories of divine revelation and the Trinity, these theories are philosophically relevant for understanding their similar positions of metaphysics and epistemology.⁵ That is to say that Malebranche and Berkeley construct their positions in metaphysics and epistemology to be held consistently alongside their commitments to philosophical theology. Since this is the case, we can look at one set of doctrines for help understanding the other. Some of their similarities can be explained by a proper appreciation of their similar theories of philosophical theology.

Neglecting the philosophical theology of Malebranche and Berkeley has consequences. A proper understanding of their commitments in philosophical theology sheds light into various puzzles and disputes concerning their metaphysics and epistemology. In many cases, interpretive puzzles discussed in the secondary literature concerning the philosophical relationship between the two philosophers can be resolved when considered in light of their similar views of philosophical theology. For example,

⁵I explain what I mean by 'philosophically relevant' in section 1.1.

many commentators have pointed out that they hold similar theories of causation. In this work, I show that understanding these philosophers' positions on the Trinity helps us understand why their theories of causation are similar.

I present this argument in three chapters and apply the findings of this study in the fourth chapter. The first three chapters work together to form my chief argument. The fourth chapter is different. Here I apply one feature from the earlier chapters, the doctrine of the Trinity in Malebranche, and look at it more closely showing how a proper understanding of this doctrine provides insight into some of the current discussions and disputes in the literature.

In chapter one, "Malebranche, Berkeley, and Philosophical Theology", I begin by introducing some necessary methodology and background. In section 1.1, I introduce some important methodological considerations. I define the discipline of philosophical theology and introduce a distinction between influence and similarity. I explain why I argue that the theological doctrines of divine revelation and the Trinity are only philosophically relevant for these philosophers rather than argue that the theological doctrines influenced their philosophical positions. My position is that these philosophers consistently hold the doctrines of divine revelation and the Trinity alongside their epistemological and metaphysical doctrines.

In section 1.2, I give background information as well as a philosophical overview of each of the philosophers in question. I also point out features of their religious positions and theological education since these are important in understanding their philosophical theology. I start with Malebranche, explaining his philosophical doctrines

of occasionalism and vision in God since these are important for my project. I follow suit with Berkeley, introducing his idealism, language of vision, and his theory of causation.

In 1.3, I introduce background information concerning the philosophical relationship of Malebranche and Berkeley. Even early in Berkeley's career, commentators suggested that he followed Malebranche on many points. Berkeley rejected this claim in both his published works as well as personal correspondences. I point out that a charitable interpretation will take Berkeley at his word and seek out other explanations for the similarities between his thought and Malebranche's.

In 1.4 I introduce several different movements, debates, and disagreements in the secondary literature to which this study contributes. Of these, the most important is the literature that points out philosophical similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley since many of these similarities can be explained by their shared acceptance of divine revelation and the Trinity.

After introducing these introductory matters, I continue my chief argument in chapters 2 and 3: Malebranche and Berkeley hold similar theories of philosophical theology which are philosophically relevant in their metaphysics and epistemology. In chapter two, "Divine Revelation in the Epistemology of Malebranche and Berkeley", I argue that Malebranche and Berkeley accept traditional accounts of divine revelation from Christian theology and that their shared acceptance of this doctrine helps explain their epistemological similarities. In Christian theology, the doctrine of divine revelation explains how God reveals to humans.

I begin in 2.1 with an account of divine revelation: divine revelation occurs when the veiled is unveiled and ignorance is dispelled with God acting as the revealer. Then, I

explain the distinction between general and special revelation from traditional Christian theology since this is a distinction found in Malebranche and Berkeley. I introduce a contemporary account of divine revelation from George Mavrodes—the causation theory of divine revelation—since Malebranche and Berkeley’s accounts are very similar. I end this first section by examining quickly the relationship between divine revelation and knowledge.

Then in section 2.2, I present Malebranche’s theory of divine revelation. I show that it is an example of Mavrodes’ causation theory of divine revelation. Next I show that Malebranche accepts and applies the traditional distinction between general and special revelation from Christian theology. I show Malebranche’s acceptance of the doctrine of divine revelation is philosophically relevant in his vision in God. Malebranche’s vision in God is his theory of general revelation. I end by arguing that for Malebranche, all knowledge is derived from divine revelation.

In section 2.3, I present Berkeley’s theory of divine revelation. I argue that Berkeley’s theory is also an example of Mavrodes’ causation model. Then I show that Berkeley utilizes the traditional distinction between general and special revelation, even though he does not use this terminology. Like Malebranche’s, Berkeley’s theory of divine revelation is philosophically relevant in his epistemology. Berkeley’s language of vision is his account of general revelation. This section closes when I argue that Berkeley holds that the vast majority of human knowledge is derived from divine revelation.

I conclude this chapter in 2.4 by summarizing Malebranche and Berkeley’s similar theories of divine revelation. I also summarize some of their epistemological

similarities. Then I present the payoff of studying Malebranche and Berkeley's philosophical theology. I argue that Malebranche and Berkeley's similar theories of divine revelation explain their epistemology similarities, something that has not been properly explained in the secondary literature.

I turn to metaphysics in chapter 3, "The Trinity in the Metaphysics of Malebranche and Berkeley". I argue here that Malebranche and Berkeley hold similar doctrines of the Trinity and that understanding these similar theories sheds light on their similar metaphysical positions. The Trinity is the doctrine from Christian theology that God is one substance and three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

In 3.1 I give the historical development of the doctrine of the Trinity from Christian theology. I introduce the Nicene Creed—which pronounced that God is one substance in three persons—since Malebranche and Berkeley accept a Nicene formulation of the Trinity. I highlight Augustine's developments of the doctrine of the Trinity. These include the differentiation between the persons of the Trinity and Augustine's analogy of being, mind, and will. I also introduce what I call the "amplified analogy" from a contemporary of Malebranche and Berkeley, Jonathan Edwards.⁶ The amplified analogy takes Augustine's analogy of being, mind, and will and connects each of the parts of the analogy with one of the persons of the Trinity: God the Father is being, God the Son is mind, and God the Holy Spirit is will.

I argue that Malebranche accepts a traditional formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity in 3.2. Malebranche accepts the Nicene formulation of the Trinity as well as the

⁶ While Edwards wrote somewhat later than both Malebranche and Berkeley, I am referring to him as a "contemporary" because he lived and wrote in the same basic intellectual era. I explain this in more detail in section 3.1.

Augustinian distinctions. He also shows that he holds the amplified analogy when he says that God the Father is being, the Son (or the Word) is mind or Reason, and the Holy Spirit is the will. The Trinity is philosophically relevant for Malebranche. A proper understanding of Malebranche's theory of the Trinity helps explain passages what would be puzzling otherwise. Plus this doctrine serves as the motivation for his occasionalism or theory of causation.

We see that Berkeley also accepts the doctrine of the Trinity in 3.3. The Nicene formulation, Augustinian differentiation between the persons of the Trinity, as well as the amplified analogy are all found in Berkeley. The doctrine of the Trinity is philosophically relevant in Berkeley's metaphysics. It helps us understand Berkeley's argument in the *Siris*; a work that is considered puzzling. Berkeley's theory of the Trinity is also philosophically relevant to his theory of causation. This theory is structured so that it can be held consistently with the Trinity.

Finally, I end this chapter in 3.4 by summarizing the similarities of Malebranche and Berkeley concerning their Trinitarian metaphysics. I show how appreciating Malebranche and Berkeley's similar theories of the Trinity sheds light on some of the issues and disputes from the secondary literature introduced in section 1.4. With their theories of the Trinity in mind, we can give a better explanation of why Berkeley's theory of causation is similar to that of Malebranche than has been given to this point.

These first three chapters constitute my chief argument. Chapter 4 is a supplemental chapter where I apply some of the findings from the earlier three chapters. It does not add anything to the argument concerning the philosophical similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley. Instead, I point out in this chapter that Malebranche

and Berkeley's theories of philosophical theology are not only helpful for understanding the philosophical similarities between the two philosophers, they are also helpful in interpreting the philosophers on their own. In this chapter, I give one example of how to apply the results of this study into some puzzles in the literature on Malebranche.

I classify four different ways that we could apply the findings of the earlier chapters to the literature on either Malebranche or Berkeley:

[1] An application of Malebranche's theory of the Trinity

[2] An application of Malebranche's theory of divine revelation

[3] An application of Berkeley's theory of the Trinity

[4] An application of Berkeley's theory of divine revelation

Rather than attempt all four, I focus on [1]. My hope and expectation is that my work here will provide an example for how to apply the other three. I show how Malebranche's theory of the Trinity provides solutions to two different puzzles from the secondary literature. I apply this doctrine to the ontological status of Malebranche's ideas in 4.1 and then to his theory of efficacious ideas in 4.2. In both cases, I present the puzzle, highlight various solutions from the secondary literature, and then show how a proper understanding of Malebranche's theory of the Trinity provides a solution to the puzzle.

Finally, in the conclusion I restate my findings concerning the philosophical similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley's philosophical theology. I show that they hold similar positions of divine revelation and the Trinity that are relevant for understanding their similarities in epistemology and metaphysics.

CHAPTER 1 Malebranche, Berkeley, and Philosophical Theology

Malebranche and Berkeley hold similar positions of philosophical theology. Both accept divine revelation and the Trinity from Christian theology and structure their respective philosophical systems to be held consistently alongside these doctrines. Neglecting the philosophical theology of Malebranche and Berkeley robs the interpreter of appreciating the fullness of their epistemological and metaphysical systems.

In this first chapter I prepare the ground for arguing that Malebranche and Berkeley hold theological positions that are philosophically relevant to their metaphysics and epistemology. Before I build that argument, I need to set the stage with some necessary background information. I start in 1.1 by introducing two related methodological considerations. I give an account of what I mean by “philosophical theology” and I explain why I claim that certain theological doctrines are “philosophically relevant”. Next in 1.2, I present some relevant background information concerning Malebranche and Berkeley. This is necessary since some knowledge of these philosophers is required to properly understand the relationship between their philosophical theology and philosophy. In section 1.3 I examine the philosophical connections between Malebranche and Berkeley. This examination places my claim that the two philosophers hold similar views of philosophical theology into proper context. In the final section, 1.4, I introduce how my research contributes to different movements, disputes, and puzzles found in the secondary literature. I highlight the literature that compares the philosophy of Malebranche and Berkeley.

1.1

In recent literature, philosophical theology is often defined as the application of philosophical techniques and analysis into theological matters such as doctrines of the Christian faith. In a book published in 2005, Brian Hebblethwaite defines philosophical theology in this way.

But at the same time a third major development has been the huge increase in the application of the techniques of philosophical analysis to the central doctrines of the Christian faith. This may be called, in a stricter sense that was customary earlier, philosophical theology.¹

Another recent book by Stephen T. Davis advances the same notion. According to Davis philosophical theology is “the kind of approach that a believing philosopher would make to Christian theological topics”².

These definitions from Hebblethwaite and Davis can be combined to form what I will call the Hebblethwaite/Davis account of philosophical theology. This account holds three features. The first concerns the activity of this field of study. Philosophical theology applies philosophical analysis to theological subjects. The second concerns the object of that analysis. On this account the object of the philosophical analysis is the Christian faith. The third feature concerns the agent: the philosophical theologian. According to the Hebblethwaite/Davis account the agent will be someone within the Christian faith. It is the approach that a “believing philosopher” would take. Accounts such as the Hebblethwaite/Davis account are not unusual in Christian theological circles.

¹ Brian Hebblethwaite, *Philosophical Theology and Christian Doctrine* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 2.

² “‘Philosophical theology’ is sometimes used as a synonym for ‘philosophy of religion’, but, as noted, I will use it simply to mean the kind of approach that a believing philosopher would make to Christian theological topics.” Stephen T. Davis, *Christian Philosophical Theology* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Accounts of philosophical theology that share all three of these features can also be found in systematic theologies of the Christian faith.³

A literal reading of the Hebblethwaite/Davis account of philosophical theology suggests two things. Philosophical theology must have the Christian faith as its object and the philosophical theologian must be a Christian. This reading excludes other possibilities, such as a Jewish philosophical theologian applying philosophical analysis to Jewish theology. Charity suggests that the Hebblethwaite/Davis account does not restrict the field of philosophical theology to Christians working within Christian theology. I suggest that this account could also be practiced by a person of another theological tradition and still fit into the account presented by Hebblethwaite and Davis.

While adherents to other theological traditions can also do philosophical theology, the salient feature of this account is that it is done from within the theological tradition in question. The Christian philosophical theologian applies philosophical tools to Christian theology and the Jewish philosophical theologian does the same concerning Jewish theology. Philosophical theology, according to this account, occurs when a thinker from a certain theological tradition applies philosophical tools to that tradition. In other words, there are certain beliefs or presuppositions one must have in order to do philosophical theology according to this account. That person must be a member of a theological tradition and they must be interested in considering, and often times defending, doctrines from that theological tradition. This is an account of philosophical theology from within a certain tradition. In light of this, philosophical theology is treated as a subset of theology according to the Hebblethwaite/Davis account. The theological tradition serving as the object of the inquiry determines how and who can take part in that inquiry.

³ One example is Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing, 1983).

This account also restricts the activity of the philosophical theologian to only theological matters. When the writer delves into more philosophical matters such as epistemology and metaphysics, she is no longer doing philosophical theology according to this account. In other words there is a priority relationship in the Hebblethwaite/Davis account; philosophy serves or supports theology.

A different account of philosophical theology is given in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, an important work on philosophical theology from the middle of the twentieth century by Antony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre.⁴ Most agree that philosophical theology has been done for centuries by thinkers such as Augustine and Aquinas, but this work edited by Flew and MacIntyre is the first example of a contemporary work of philosophical theology.⁵ The account of philosophical theology presented in this work is an older account than the Hebblethwaite/Davis account.

In the preface to this work, Flew and MacIntyre give some background concerning why they chose to title the work *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*. They explain that they adopted the expression “philosophical theology” rather than “philosophy of religion” because they feared that the latter has become connected to attempts to prove the truth of theism: “But this expression has become, and seems likely for some time to remain, associated with Idealist attempts to present philosophical

⁴ Antony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre, eds., *New Essays in Philosophical Theology* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1955).

⁵ It is hard to find any titles mentioning philosophical theology before this work. I also say this because the explanation they give of their choosing the terminology ‘philosophical theology’ over ‘philosophy of religion’ from the preface (which I cite in full below).

prolegomena to theistic theology.”⁶ In other words, in the 1950’s Flew and MacIntyre feared that philosophy of religion was a discipline reserved for those who were theists working on issues related to preserving theism. What they feared concerning the term ‘philosophy of religion’ fifty years ago is true today of their preferred term, “philosophical theology”, at least according to the Hebblethwaite/Davis account.

Flew and MacIntyre’s account of philosophical theology shares one important feature in common with the Hebblethwaite/Davis account. It agrees that philosophical theology is an application of philosophical analysis to theological subjects. But the Flew/MacIntyre account disagrees with the other two features from the Hebblethwaite/Davis account. It does not limit the agents to those who are within in a theological tradition. In fact, Flew and MacIntyre deliberately chose the terminology “philosophical theology” because they wanted their collection of essays to represent a discipline where both theist and atheist philosophers could explore issues related to theology even if they come with different starting points and arrive at different conclusions.⁷ In contrast with the Hebblethwaite/Davis account, the Flew/MacIntyre

⁶ “... it is only in the last few years that attempts have been made to apply these latest philosophical techniques and insights to theological issues, while this is probably the first time that a whole book has been devoted to this enormous job. We should like to have used the expression ‘Philosophy of Religion’ for its analogy with ‘Philosophy of History’, ‘Philosophy of Science’, and so on: since the questions discussed here are philosophical and bear the same sort of relation to religious thought and practice as the questions of the philosophy of history and science bear to the thought and practice of working scientists and historians; the relation, that is, of arising out of or being posed by these empirical disciplines, while being themselves philosophical and not factual questions (see Chapter III). But this expression has become, and seems likely for some time to remain, associated with Idealist attempts to present philosophical prolegomena to theistic theology. So we have adapted as an alternative the expression ‘Philosophical Theology’; which has a welcome analogy to ‘Philosophical Ethics’ and ‘Philosophical Aesthetics’, occasionally used to cover the parallel philosophical inquiries which arise out of the moral and critical thought and practice.” Flew and MacIntyre, eds., *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, viii.

⁷ “We realize that many will be startled to find the word ‘theology’ so used that: the expression ‘theistic theologian’ is not tautological; and the expression ‘atheist theologian’ is not self-contradictory. But unless this unusual usage of ours is adopted we have to accept the paradox that those who reach opposite conclusions about certain questions must be regarded as having thereby shown themselves to have been engaged in different disciplines: the paradox that whereas St. Thomas’s presentation of the *quinque via* is a

account does not require any beliefs or presuppositions of the philosophical theologian. While the first approach places philosophical theology as a subset of theology, the Flew/MacIntyre approach places it as a subset of philosophy.

According to the Flew/MacIntyre account, philosophical theology is the discipline where philosophical insights and techniques are applied to issues in theology, regardless of the theological tradition in question or the beliefs of the philosophical theologian. Philosophical theology is indeed interested in theological issues, but defined broad enough to include Hume's *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*. The Flew/MacIntyre account of philosophical theology also does not restrict the activity of the philosophical theologian in the same way that the Hebblethwaite/Davis account does. The Flew/MacIntyre account does not hold a priority relationship between theology and philosophy.

For my purposes, I prefer the Flew/MacIntyre account of philosophical theology over the Hebblethwaite/Davis account. The earlier, more theologically motivated account has a hard time categorizing historical thinkers. According to the Hebblethwaite/Davis account, Augustine's *On the Trinity* is philosophical theology, but those works where Augustine is interested in more general philosophical questions—such as substance or knowledge— are not philosophical theology. Epistemology is not a theological doctrine, yet Augustine's theory of divine illumination— where all knowledge is illuminated by God— should be considered a matter of philosophical

piece of (Natural or Philosophical) Theology, Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* must also belong to some other and nameless discipline." Ibid., viii.

theology according to all accounts.⁸ Or, to use a contemporary of both Malebranche and Berkeley as an example, Jonathan Edwards was interested in doing philosophy as well as theology, but even his more philosophical works are greatly informed by his theology.⁹ The Hebblethwaite/Davis account has a hard time classifying historical writers whose work is often times both theological and philosophical such as Malebranche and Berkeley. The Flew/MacIntyre account, on the other hand, does not have any problem identifying these historical thinkers as doing philosophical theology.

It is according to the Flew/MacIntyre account that Malebranche and Berkeley are doing philosophical theology. They apply philosophical analysis to theological subjects, but they do so in a more philosophical way than theological. That is, they do not embrace the priority relationship that philosophy serves theology. Malebranche and Berkeley are interested in doing philosophy. They present arguments concerning what they take to be truth in all matters of philosophy. Their chief concern is not limited to the theological. Neither are they concerned with doing systematic Christian theology. In the process of seeking the philosophical truth, they are also interested in theological matters. Malebranche and Berkeley are noted for placing God at the centers of their philosophical theories. Nicholas Jolley writes: “In general terms, Berkeley and Malebranche both offer

⁸ The same is true for some of the contemporary accounts of epistemology such as Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim That God Speaks* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995), Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Reason within the Bounds of Religion* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976). And Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁹ In fact Lee, in his book on the philosophical theology of Jonathan Edwards, assumes a definition similar to the Flew/MacIntyre account in his book. He considers many of Edwards more metaphysical and epistemological doctrines to all fall under the category of philosophical theology. Sang Hyun Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

examples of theocentric metaphysics of fundamentally Cartesian inspiration.”¹⁰ Since they were not a part of the modern academy, they were not concerned to separate their theology from their philosophy into two distinct realms. They are doing philosophy alongside their theology, allowing one to inform the other. As I show in chapters 2 and 3, Malebranche and Berkeley hold Christian doctrines such as the Trinity and divine revelation and these doctrines are philosophically relevant. So, while they are interested in theological matters, they are not doing theology. In those instances where they are concerned with theological matters, Malebranche and Berkeley are doing philosophical theology according to the account given by Flew and MacIntyre.¹¹

An argument could be made that Berkeley and Malebranche are doing philosophical theology according to the Hebblethwaite/Davis account since they are both members of the Christian theological tradition. Malebranche was a Catholic Priest and Berkeley was an Anglican Bishop. They also restrict their theological concerns to their tradition. Neither wrote concerning the positions of other theological traditions. There is no doubt that Malebranche and Berkeley were happy to use their philosophical systems to defend their theological positions, and this is permissible on the Flew/MacIntyre account. But Malebranche and Berkeley did not use their philosophy to serve their theology. The priority relationship that categorizes the Hebblethwaite/Davis account cannot be found in

¹⁰Nicholas Jolley, “Berkeley, Malebranche, and Vision in God,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 34 (1996): 536. See also A. A. Luce, *Berkeley and Malebranche: A Study in the Origins of Berkeley's Thought* (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 1934). Copleston makes similar remarks at Frederick Charles Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* (Westminster, Md.,: Newman Bookshop, 1946), Vol 4, Pgs 202-03.

¹¹ It is not my position that everything from Malebranche and Berkeley fits into the category of philosophical theology. Since they both speak of God often, it might be interesting to distinguish where philosophy stops and philosophical theology begins. But that is not my goal here, I am only concerned with their views on divine revelation and the Trinity, which both fall into the category of philosophical theology.

Malebranche or Berkeley and this is why they are doing philosophical theology according to the Flew/MacIntyre account.

Malebranche supports my claim that he is doing philosophical theology according to the Flew/MacIntyre account. He says that he should never be considered as only a philosopher or as only a theologian, but always as both. “One must not say that I act sometimes as a philosopher and sometimes as a theologian: for I always speak, or claim to speak, as a rational theologian.”¹² I interpret Malebranche here to be saying that he is doing philosophical theology in the spirit of the Flew and MacIntyre account. He does not use philosophy to support his theological positions. He does both philosophy and theology together in an intertwined manner. I suggest that Berkeley would agree that he does philosophical theology according to the Flew/MacIntyre account. In fact, in light of Berkeley’s more theologically motivated works, which are introduced in section 1.2, it looks as if the claim that Berkeley is doing philosophical theology is even stronger than Malebranche. Berkeley writes some works where he highlights his philosophy¹³ and others where he highlights his theology¹⁴.

Since Malebranche and Berkeley are doing philosophical theology, I suggest that there is a payoff to recognizing this fact. Understanding their philosophical theology is helpful in interpreting them both. For an example of how a proper understanding of

¹² This is from OCM VIII, 632. I am citing Pyle’s translation of this passage from Andrew Pyle, *Malebranche* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2002). In a similar vein, Copleston remarks that “... Malebranche’s outlook was definitely that of a Christian philosopher who made no rigid separation between theology and philosophy and who was intent on interpreting the world and human experience in the light of his Christian faith... he was definitely a Christian thinker rather than a philosopher who happened to be a Christian.” Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol 4, pg 181.

¹³ These works would be *An Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision*, *Introduction to the Principles of Human Knowledge*, *Three Dialogs Between Hylas and Philonous*, and *The Theory of Vision Vindicated and Explained*.

¹⁴ These works would be *Siris* and *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher*.

philosophical theology can aid a philosophical interpretation consider Malebranche's epistemology. As I will show in chapter 2, it has been common for interpreters to point out that Malebranche's epistemology is related to his view of God. But a more comprehensive view of philosophical theology can advance this position. The general strategy in these sources is to point out that Malebranche accepts some form of divine revelation in his epistemology. This has its merits, but it fails to explain the depth of the dependence Malebranche's epistemology has on divine revelation.

This general strategy concerning Malebranche's epistemology starts with some issue directly related to epistemology and evokes Malebranche's view of revelation as a way at understanding that particular issue. While considering the epistemological problem at hand, Malebranche's view of the role of God in the process is consulted. A conclusion is then made and applied back into the original problem. This general strategy recognizes Malebranche's theory of illumination, but it places it in a position of secondary interest. It recognizes what Malebranche says about revelation only in relation to his broader epistemological concerns.

A good example of this general strategy is the literature concerning efficacious ideas in Malebranche. Since I will talk in detail about Malebranche's efficacious ideas in chapter 4, I only introduce some of the principal players in this literature and how they illustrate this strategy here. Many commentators interpret Malebranche's theory of efficacious ideas as some form of divine illumination or revelation including Nicholas Jolley and Tad Schmaltz.¹⁵ The general strategy considers Malebranche's view of

¹⁵ Jolley argues that Malebranche abandons a Cartesian doctrine of pure intellect for a more Augustinian doctrine of divine illumination. Nicholas Jolley, "Intellect and Illumination in Malebranche," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 32 (1994). See also Tad M. Schmaltz, *Malebranche's Theory of the Soul: A Cartesian Interpretation* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996).

revelation only as it is related to other epistemological issues. Jolley and Schmalz start with a Cartesian epistemological doctrine and then try to make sense of Malebranche's adaptation or rejection of that doctrine. Jolley is concerned with Malebranche's rejection of the theory of pure intellect and Schmalz is concerned with Malebranche's understanding of the role of the soul in understanding sentiments. Both of these authors then present Malebranche's commitment to illumination or revelation as the means of explaining his departure from Descartes. In these two instances an epistemological question has been raised and Malebranche's theory of revelation is given as the explanation.

Another way of stating this general strategy is that Malebranche's view of revelation is only considered as it complements or supports his epistemological project. The same could be said generally about any of the theological nuances of Malebranche's positions or doctrines. While Malebranche has caught the attention of many English speaking philosophers in the past decades he is still basically unknown to English speaking theologians.¹⁶ This means that the importance of Malebranche's philosophical theology has not been investigated by either philosophers or theologians. The result is that Malebranche's philosophy has largely been studied in terms of what is interesting or important to philosophers who are uninterested in his theology. This has led to important misunderstandings concerning Malebranche's philosophical theology that results in a lack of awareness of how Malebranche's philosophical theology is relevant to his wider

¹⁶ Stephen Nadler in his Introduction to the *Cambridge Companion to Malebranche*, published in 2000, says that Malebranche "is only now finding his place in the pantheon of early modern figures – along with Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, and the others—deemed worthy of study by contemporary philosophers of the Anglo-American tradition." Steven Nadler, *The Cambridge Companion to Malebranche* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1. My claim that Malebranche seems relatively unknown to English speaking theologians is derived from the general lack of any Malebranche scholarship among English speaking theologians as well as from conversations about Malebranche at various theological conferences.

philosophical system. Malebranche's philosophical positions have been harvested and separated away from his theological or religious commitments in a way that would be foreign to Malebranche.¹⁷

Approaching the subject of revelation in Malebranche in this fashion where the theological and religious doctrines are looked at primarily as support for his epistemological program no doubt has some merits. It gives epistemologists the ability to mine from Malebranche what is of interest to them while at the same time recognizing that he holds certain commitments that inform his theory.¹⁸

Recognizing these merits, this general strategy should not be the only way that Malebranche is studied. It leaves open the possibility that we are missing an important part of Malebranche's project since we are constructing a hierarchy that does not exist in Malebranche. The hierarchy in question is one that suggests that epistemological concerns are more fundamental to Malebranche than those of philosophical theology. This weakness can be overcome with a proper understanding of the role of philosophical theology in Malebranche. Putting Malebranche's use of revelation in this secondary position does not allow us to see the full picture of what Malebranche says concerning how he thinks that God reveals truths to humans. There is no reason to think that Malebranche's philosophical theology should take a back seat to his epistemology.

¹⁷ Nadler seems to recognize this. "While Malebranche's thought is deeply rooted in his theological agenda and, more broadly, in the particular intellectual and religious environment of early modern France, much of it is of perennial philosophical value, and plenty of his ideas and arguments continue to be of interest to philosophers today." *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁸ It also highlights where his Augustinianism leads him to depart from Descartes. In the next section, 1.2, I introduce Malebranche's philosophy as an attempt to synthesize Descartes and Augustine.

Following this strategy thereby misses some important aspects of Malebranche's thought and is in opposition his Malebranche's goal of creating a "Christian Philosophy".¹⁹

I have made the complaint that commentators miss an important aspect of Malebranche's philosophical theology by looking at revelation only through the lens of epistemology. Jasper Reid makes a similar observation concerning the literature on Malebranche's view of intelligible extension. He suggests that one of the reasons that the ontological status of intelligible extension for Malebranche is not clearly understood is that it has been examined primarily from an epistemological point of view.²⁰ Reid's own approach is to look at this doctrine from a different point of view, one that starts with ontology. He argues that by looking at Malebranche's view of intelligible extension from the viewpoint of ontology, important insights are gained. Reid is focusing on different subjects in Malebranche that I am here, but I take Reid to be making a similar claim. We are both encouraging interpreters to look at Malebranche from a different viewpoint. Reid is encouraging a viewpoint from ontology and I am encouraging a viewpoint from philosophical theology. We both suggest that important insights can be gained from these shifts in viewpoints.

I have gone into some detail explaining Malebranche literature to make my point that understanding his philosophical theology aids our understanding of his philosophy. The same is true for the Berkeley literature, and I could have chosen an example from that literature to make the same point.

¹⁹ Pyle, *Malebranche*, 2.

²⁰ "Most of the secondary literature on intelligible extension has approached it primarily from an epistemological point of view which is why many of the still-outstanding difficulties pertain more to its ontology". Jasper Reid, "Malebranche on Intelligible Extension," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 11 (2003): 581-82.

Finally, while I hold that both Berkeley and Malebranche are doing philosophical theology, I am not. Malebranche and Berkeley's attempt at arriving at the truth of some matter concerning epistemology or metaphysics causes them to enter into philosophical theology. Unlike Malebranche and Berkeley, I am not interested here to discern the truth concerning any of the doctrines that I introduce. My intent here is merely to give an interpretation of Malebranche and Berkeley. In the process, I do not attempt to argue that their theories concerning divine revelation or the Trinity are correct. Rather than philosophical theology, this project falls into the classification of the history of philosophy.

Another area of methodology that I need to discuss is what I mean by 'philosophically relevant'. I claim that the theories of divine revelation and the Trinity are philosophically relevant for Malebranche and Berkeley. Without explanation, this is unclear.

The claim that these doctrines are philosophically relevant could be understood in at least two ways. First, I could be making a strong claim concerning the influence these two theological doctrines held over the philosophical positions of Malebranche and Berkeley. It is possible that Berkeley and Malebranche's theological commitments could have influenced their philosophical conclusions in a causal relationship.²¹ In this case I would be arguing that these philosophers actually derived some aspects of their philosophy from their theology in some direct and deliberate manner. But I am not attempting to claim any such influence here.

²¹ Of course, I could also be arguing that Malebranche and Berkeley's philosophical positions influenced their theological doctrines.

The primary reason that I am not arguing that Malebranche and Berkeley's philosophical theology influenced their philosophy is that there is a lack of historical support for such a position. I think that it is possible, even likely, that Malebranche or Berkeley's philosophical conclusions may have been influenced by their theological doctrines, but there is not adequate historical support for such a claim. There are no private journals indicating such an influence. There is no reason to think that the progression of their chronological works support the notion that their theology influenced the philosophy of Malebranche or Berkeley. In fact, the progression in the works of both philosophers might indicate the opposite; that their philosophical views influenced the theological. Both wrote their more philosophical works early in their career. They did not write their more theologically motivated works till later. In section 1.2, I introduce these works by both philosophers in more detail.

By saying that the doctrines of divine revelation and the Trinity are philosophically relevant I am not saying that there was a causal influence of the theological doctrines over the philosophical. Instead, I am making a weaker claim. Malebranche and Berkeley consciously hold these theological doctrines alongside their philosophical positions. It is my position that Malebranche and Berkeley deliberately and consciously accepted the doctrines of divine revelation and the Trinity from Christian theology. They also deliberately and consciously accepted certain philosophical doctrines derived from their innovative epistemological and metaphysical systems. My claim is that they attempted to hold both sets of doctrines together in a consistent whole. Malebranche and Berkeley were good philosophers who would not consciously hold inconsistencies. I think that the philosophers tested both sets of doctrines against each

other seeking consistency and unity. From their works, there is no reason to think that they placed priority upon either set of doctrines over the other. This is particularly true when we realize that there was not the clear cut distinction between theology and philosophy as exists today.

Also, when I say that Malebranche and Berkeley's philosophical theology is relevant in their philosophy, I am pointing out that this relationship between the theological and philosophical doctrines is reciprocal. That is to say, an understanding of one set of doctrines will provide a better understanding of the other. We can gain information about the philosophical doctrines by looking about the theological doctrines and vice versa. Philosophers are well aware of Malebranche and Berkeley's philosophical doctrines, but they are not familiar with their theological doctrines. Since this is the case, an understanding of certain doctrines of philosophical theology will shed light on the better known philosophical positions of Malebranche and Berkeley. In short, my claim is that the doctrines of divine revelation and the Trinity are philosophically relevant for Malebranche and Berkeley because both philosophers are consciously striving to hold both sets of doctrines and taking this into account sheds light on their philosophical positions.

A second methodological issue concerns the tone of the project as a whole. Some philosophers might criticize it as too theological. They might say that philosophers should not care about theology or the theological commitments held by past thinkers. After all, they might say, philosophers are not looking at Berkeley and Malebranche for their insights into theology but for the role their unique philosophical systems played in the advancement of certain themes and for the influence they had on later philosophers.

Such a criticism of this project, or any other similar project, is wrongheaded. First of all, to truly understand a philosopher from the past we need to have some understanding of their cultural setting. Throughout history, most philosophers lived and worked in cultures that were much more saturated with religious and theological sentiments than ours. This is particularly true of the early modern period when the majority of philosophers were trained in theology and held positions of leadership in their respective religious communities. We should not divorce the philosophical truths from the religious setting where this philosophy was formed. John Cottingham warns that we should be careful to not secularize these thinkers from the early modern period. He says, in the context of studies on Descartes, that there is a tendency to look only for those insights that current analytic specialists find interesting thereby filtering out any theistic claims. This kind of filtering can lead to a view of Descartes that distorts his achievement, misunderstands his stated goals, and “destroys much of the point of studying his ideas.” We should, Cottingham suggests, realize that his system was a cohesive whole.²² Cottingham’s point can be extended to Malebranche and Berkeley as well.

Secondly, it would be foolish to ignore the theological or religious aspects of philosophers since it is possible that these things lead to a better understanding of the philosophical positions. Some philosophical puzzles are resolved by understanding the theological commitments of the thinker in question. This relationship is all the more likely to be found in the works of thinkers such as Father Malebranche and Bishop

²² John Cottingham, *Cartesian Reflections: Essays on Descartes's Philosophy* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 5-6, 44.

Berkeley who are interested in matters of theology as well as philosophy.²³ The above objection that philosophers should not care about theology is wrong; we must understand the theological commitments of some thinkers to properly understand their philosophy.

So, theological or religious issues should not be out of bounds for philosophical inquiry concerning a historical figure. But there is also the fear of making the opposite mistake. While I want to avoid the tendency to secularize Malebranche and Berkeley, I want to be careful not to theologize them either. To look at the theological doctrines of these thinkers as an end in itself would classify this work as doing historical theology. While some of the conclusions from this project may be of interest to historical theologians, my aim is to look at the doctrines of divine revelation and the Trinity in Malebranche and Berkeley as a means to properly understanding their wider philosophical projects. I am also looking at them to gain a better understanding of the philosophical similarities between the two thinkers. I am not interested in their doctrines of divine revelation and the Trinity in isolation, but only in so far as these two theological doctrines are related to their philosophical positions.

1.2

Since this work focuses on Malebranche and Berkeley, I begin with a summary of each of these philosophers. These summaries prepare the soil for what will follow later in sections 1.3 and 1.4 where I will introduce the philosophical relationship between Malebranche and Berkeley as well as some of the relevant secondary literature. Most of

²³ Malebranche does not see a division between theology and philosophy. “One must not say that I act sometimes as a philosopher and sometimes as a theologian: for I always speak, or claim to speak, as a rational theologian.” Pyle cites and translates this passage from (OCM VIII 632). Pyle, *Malebranche*, 10. For the role that Malebranche saw his religion playing in his philosophy see Henri Gouthier, *La Philosophie De Malebranche Et Son Expèrience Religieuse* (Paris, FR: Vrin, 1948). I think that Berkeley would also think of himself as both a theologian and a philosopher since he wrote on both subjects.

that literature assumes an understanding of the general picture of the philosophical systems of both. I begin each summary with a brief overview of each philosopher's life and general philosophy. I, in the process, point out salient features of their religious or theological commitments. The biographical information is important for understanding the theological and religious influences on both philosophers. Both Malebranche and Berkeley shared extensive theological training. While these brief biographies are important, the primary reason for these summaries is to focus on those philosophical positions that become relevant later. When I advance my main argument in chapters 2 and 3, I will pick back up on these summaries. Malebranche and Berkeley's doctrines of perception and causation are the most relevant to their philosophical theology. Since this is the case, I focus on these doctrines and exclude some of the other philosophical positions held by Malebranche or Berkeley.

Nicolas Malebranche was a French Catholic priest from Paris during the early modern period. He began his studies at the age of sixteen at the *College de la Marche* where he was tutored in Aristotelianism. Then he attended the Sorbonne in Paris where he studied scholastic philosophy and theology. He found neither Aristotelianism nor scholasticism to his liking.²⁴ After three years he left the Sorbonne to join the Oratory where he studied for four years. The Oratory was founded with a deep veneration for St. Augustine. Brandon Watson points out that Malebranche's background formed by his time at the Oratory is crucial for a proper understanding of Malebranche's mature philosophical system. Watson also shows that this background is often neglected in the

²⁴ Thomas M. Lennon states this in the introduction to Malebranche's *Search after Truth*. Nicolas Malebranche, *The Search after Truth*, ed. Thomas M. Lennon and Paul J. Olscamp, trans. Thomas M. Lennon and Paul J. Olscamp, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), Viii. See also Nadler, *The Cambridge Companion to Malebranche*, 2.

secondary literature.²⁵ The Oratory was founded in 1611 by Pierre de Berulle and it consisted entirely of priests who did not share any particular vows, doctrines or religious orders. Berulle, and the Oratory itself, became particularly associated with an approach of spirituality known as the French School of Spirituality.²⁶ The French school was characterized by an intense emphasis on venerating Jesus as the Word of God and a corollary emphasis on the emptying or nothingness of creatures.²⁷ As I point out in chapters 2 and 3, these themes show up in one form or another in the philosophy of Malebranche.

While at the Oratory, Malebranche was immersed in the writings of Augustine.²⁸ As Malebranche matured as a philosopher, Augustine would continue to exert a strong influence on him. But commentators suggest that the most important year in Malebranche's development was 1664 when he graduated from the Oratory, became ordained, and converted to a Cartesian philosophical perspective. It was during this year that a bookseller sold him Descartes' *Treatise on Man*.²⁹ Malebranche became deeply influenced by the works of Descartes and his followers. He merged his newfound

²⁵ Watson was generous to send me a copy of this unpublished manuscript where he highlights this background. Brandon Watson, "Malebranche, Nicolas: Religion," (Unpublished Manuscript, 2008). He explores the influence of the Oratory on Malebranche in more detail in his PhD dissertation, Brandon Watson, "The External World and the Fall from Reason: Malebranche's Account of Our Knowledge of the Existence and Nature of Bodies" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2005).

²⁶ Watson, "Malebranche, Nicolas: Religion," section 1.

²⁷ This emphasis on the Jesus as the Word of God is by no means in and of itself a noteworthy aspect of this school, many schools or religious sects would have done this. But the particular way that the French school venerated the Word is. "The idea is that our attitude toward the Word should be one of such abject and humble reverence that we may be said to have become as nothing, so that the Word may become all... Likewise, the reasoning goes, our attitude toward God should be one of continual and adoring self-sacrifice and abnegation, and recognition of our nothingness apart from God." Ibid., section 1.

²⁸ Nadler, *The Cambridge Companion to Malebranche*, 3.

²⁹ Pyle, *Malebranche*, 1., Malebranche, *The Search after Truth*, viii., Nadler, *The Cambridge Companion to Malebranche*, 3.

Cartesian philosophy with his Augustinianism into his own unique philosophical position. Andrew Pyle described this combination as a "... distinctive philosophical position where a Cartesian, i.e. mechanistic, natural philosophy is incorporated into a spiritualistic metaphysics derived largely from Augustine."³⁰

One way to introduce Malebranche's general philosophical framework is as an attempt to synthesize the two influences of Augustine and Descartes.³¹ This synthesis led to Malebranche's most original contributions to philosophy: occasionalism and his theory of ideas.

Malebranche is perhaps best known for his commitment to occasionalism. This is a doctrine that is often misunderstood. There has been a tendency to misrepresent this doctrine as if it were nothing but an *ad hoc* solution by rationalists to the Cartesian mind-body problem.³² But, this doctrine, at least as used by Malebranche, is largely the result of his commitment to create a philosophical system that is entirely centered on God. Steven Nadler, one of the foremost Malebranche scholars summarizes this doctrine in Malebranche's philosophy: "Occasionalism is the doctrine that all creatures, finite

³⁰ Pyle, *Malebranche*, 2.

³¹ For very good treatments of Malebranche's attempt to synthesize Augustine and Descartes, see Steven Nadler, *Malebranche and Ideas* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992). Pyle, *Malebranche*. Tad M. Schmaltz, "Malebranche on Ideas and the Vision in God," in *The Cambridge Companion to Malebranche*, ed. Steven Nadler (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

³² Both Nadler and Pyle suggest this is a misrepresentation since it does not do justice to the importance of the doctrine itself and the role it plays in the philosophy of Malebranche. Both Nadler and Pyle comment that this doctrine is not simply an *ad hoc* solution to the mind-body problem. Steven Nadler, "Malebranche on Causation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Malebranche*, ed. Steven Nadler (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000), , 116. Pyle adds that it may have historical roots on the basis of a superficial reading of a remark in Leibniz's *New System*. Pyle, *Malebranche*, 96-98.

entities that they are, are absolutely devoid of any causal efficacy, and that God is the only true causal agent.”³³

In the *Search*, Malebranche states the force of his occasionalism:

But whatever effort of mind I make, I can find force, efficacy, or power, only in the will of the infinitely perfect Being. (LO 658)

Malebranche speaks of two kinds of causes: true causes and occasional causes. A true cause, for Malebranche, is necessarily connected to its effect. Malebranche holds that God is the only true cause because all causality is connected to God’s will.³⁴ Any other causes – what we might call natural causes – are merely what Malebranche calls occasional causes.

But natural causes are not true causes; they are only occasional causes that act only through the force and efficacy of the will of God, as I have just explained. (LO 449)

An occasional cause is not a true cause, but only the occasion for God to act causally.

Malebranche explains this by means of an example of one ball striking and moving another ball.³⁵ On Malebranche’s account, the first ball is the “natural cause” of the motion of the second ball. The latter is merely an occasional cause, not a true cause.

... and when a ball that is moved collides with and moves another, it communicates to it nothing of its own, for it does not itself have the force it communicates to it.

³³ Nadler, “Malebranche on Causation,” 115. In this same section, Nadler quotes Malebranche from his *Meditations Chretiennes*, “God alone is the true cause of all that occurs in the world. He acts regularly according to all that occurs in the world. He acts regularly according to certain laws, in consequence of which it can be said that secondary causes have the power to do that which God does by means of them.”

³⁴ “There is therefore only one single true God and one single cause that is truly a cause, and one should not imagine that what precedes an effect is its true cause.” (LO 451) In section 3.2, I talk in more detail about the claim that all causation is rooted in the will of God for Malebranche.

³⁵ It is possible, if not likely, that Malebranche could be the source material for Hume’s billiard ball example of causation that he made famous. “There can be no question that Hume, when composing the account of causality in the *Treatise*, had Malebranche’s treatment of that topic in his thoughts. Almost at the outset of the chapter on necessary connection Hume refers his readers to the *Search* VI02.3 and the Fifteenth Elucidation where Malebranche had presented his analysis of causality; in addition, Hume devoted an early part of this chapter to refuting Occasionalism.” Charles J. McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1983), 257.

Nevertheless, a ball is the natural cause of the motion it communicates. A natural cause is therefore not a real and true but only an occasional cause, which determines the Author of nature to act in such and such a manner in such and such a situation. (LO 448)

In short, occasionalism is the theory that God is the only true cause. All other apparent causes are only occasional causes for God to act.³⁶ For Malebranche there can be no other true cause apart from God. God is the only true cause.³⁷ Malebranche's theories of divine revelation and the Trinity are both philosophically relevant to his theory of

³⁶ As a historical example of occasionalism, there is a rumor that George Berkeley visited the elder Malebranche in Paris. The story suggests that the two men had a philosophical dispute which got Malebranche so excited that his condition got worse and he died not long after. The punch line of the story is that Berkeley was the occasional cause of Malebranche's death. Luce, *Berkeley and Malebranche: A Study in the Origins of Berkeley's Thought*, appendix 2. The Problem of Berkeley's Visits to Malebranche. Here are some other passages from the Search where Malebranche endorses occasionalism.

"Surely, only God, only His always efficacious substance, can affect, enlighten and nourish our minds, as St. Augustine says." (LO 626)

"We do not consider that bodies can act on the mind only as occasional causes, that the mind cannot immediately or by itself possess anything corporeal and cannot unite itself to an object except through its knowledge and love, that only God is above it and can reward or punish it through sensations of pleasure or pain, can enlighten or move it—in a word, only He can act on it." (LO 365)

"But it seems to me that the principle that only God enlightens us, and that He enlightens us only through the manifestation of an immutable and necessary wisdom or reason so conforms to religion, and furthermore, that this principle is so absolutely necessary if a sound and unshakable foundation is to be given any truth whatsoever, ..." (LO 613)

"True, our soul is what it is by its nature and necessarily perceives what affects it, but God alone can act on it, He alone can illuminate it, affect it, or modify it through the efficacy of His ideas." (LO 622)

³⁷ Continuous creation is a doctrine related to occasionalism where God conserves the world by creating it over and over again in succession. According to continuous creation, all things and events are dependent on God for their metaphysical reality. Malebranche summarizes this position in Dialogue 7 of his *Dialogues on Metaphysics and on Religion*.

"God wills that a certain kind of world exist. His will is omnipotent, and this world is thus created. Let God no longer will there to be a world, and it is thereby annihilated. For the world assuredly depends on the will of the creator. If the world subsists, it is because God continues to will its existence. Thus, the conservation of creatures is, on the part of God, nothing but their continued creation... But in essence the act of creation does not cease, because in God creation and conservation are but a single volition which, consequently, is necessarily followed by the same effects." (DM 112)

For a good, concise overview of Malebranche's doctrines of occasionalism and continuous creation see the introduction to Nicolas Malebranche, *Dialogues on Metaphysics and on Religion*, ed. Nicholas Jolley, trans. David Scott, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), xxi-xxvi.

There is some disagreement concerning the best way to understand Malebranche's doctrine of continuous creation. For two different views concerning how to best understand Malebranche's doctrine of continuous creation, see Pyle, *Malebranche*. and Andrew Pessin, "Does Continuous Creation Entail Occasionalism? Malebranche (and Descartes)," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 30 (2000). For a good study that separates these two doctrines philosophically, see Timothy D. Miller, "Continuous Creation, Persistence, and Secondary Causation: An Essay on the Metaphysics of Theism," (PhD diss., University of Oklahoma, 2007).

occasionalism. In chapters 2 and 3, I show how recognizing Malebranche's commitment to these two theological doctrines sheds light on his theory of occasionalism.

Like many philosophers from the early modern period, Malebranche's theory of ideas is very important for understanding his entire philosophical system. Here is how Malebranche defines "idea" as he uses it in the *Search*.

Thus, by the word *idea*, I mean nothing other than the immediate object, or the object closest to the mind, when it perceives something, i.e., that which affects and modifies the mind with the perception it has of an object. (LO 217)

The mind directly perceives ideas.³⁸ The most controversial aspect of Malebranche's theory of ideas in his own day had to do with his locating ideas in God. Malebranche broke with his fellow rationalists, including Descartes, by arguing that ideas are not contained in the mind of humans but rather in God.³⁹ God must contain the ideas of everything that he has created, or He would not have been able to create them.

To understand this fifth way, we must remember what was just said in the preceding chapter—that God must have within Himself the ideas of all the beings He has created (since otherwise He could not have created them), and thus He sees all these beings by considering the perfections He contains to which they are related. (LO 230)

Since all ideas are in God, humans perceive everything through a connection with God, or as Malebranche puts it, we see all things in God.⁴⁰ This theory is known as the vision in God. In section 2.2, I introduce Malebranche's vision in God in more detail. I argue

³⁸ I believe that Malebranche holds a representational or indirect realist theory of ideas. There is some debate concerning the nature of ideas for Malebranche. For example, Nadler argues that Malebranche is a direct realist. See the following on the debate concerning Malebranche and his ideas: Monte Cook, "Malebranche Versus Arnauld," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 29, no. 2 (1991), Nicholas Jolley, *The Light of the Soul: Theories of Ideas in Leibniz, Malebranche, and Descartes* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1990), Nadler, *Malebranche and Ideas*, Richard A. Watson, "Malebranche and Arnauld on Ideas," *The Modern Schoolman* 71 (1994).

³⁹ This break from the Cartesians, where Malebranche located ideas in the mind of God, is one of the sparks for the disagreement and lifetime debate between Malebranche and Arnauld.

⁴⁰ "These are some of the reasons that might lead one to believe that minds perceive everything through the intimate presence of Him who comprehends all in the simplicity of His being." (LO 235)

that this epistemological doctrine of perception is an indispensable part of Malebranche's theory of divine revelation.

George Berkeley was an Irish Bishop in the Anglican Church. Berkeley was nearly 50 years younger than Malebranche and there was a brief time when both were philosophically active.⁴¹ Berkeley began his studies at Kilkenny College and then moved to Dublin where he studied at Trinity College until he was awarded a Fellowship. He remained at Trinity for a total of 24 years.⁴² There is general agreement that the two greatest influences on Berkeley were John Locke and Malebranche.⁴³

After his earliest years, Berkeley's life and thought can be separated into three periods.⁴⁴ The first period spans Berkeley's time spent as a Fellow at Trinity College. It was during this time that he wrote what many consider his most important philosophical works supporting the theory of idealism or immaterialism: *A New Theory of Vision*, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* and *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*. The second period was not marked by any new philosophical work. Instead Berkeley traveled Europe, meeting with many of the intellectuals and social luminaries of his time. During this time he also took up a new cause. He desired to found a college in the New World, on the island of Bermuda. As he made plans for the college, he moved to Rhode Island where he lived in Newport for nearly three years in a

⁴¹ Berkeley's early works were published around 1710. Even though Malebranche was 72 at the time, he was editing his sixth and last edition of the *Search* which was published in 1712.

⁴² David Berman, *George Berkeley: Idealism and the Man* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1994), 1-2.

⁴³ Malebranche's influence has not always been recognized. Below, in section 1.3, I will trace this relationship between Berkeley and Malebranche in more detail.

⁴⁴ These 3 periods are from Berman, *George Berkeley: Idealism and the Man*, 71. He calls them, in order, the period of philosophical idealism, the period of social idealism, and finally the period of medical idealism.

house that still stands called Whitehall.⁴⁵ In the third period, Berkeley returned to Britain and once again began writing on matters such as economics, mathematics, and politics. It was during this time that he wrote his two most theological works. The first was *Alciphron or the Minute Philosopher* where he presents arguments against atheists and deists. The second was called *Siris: a Chain of Philosophical Reflections and Inquiries concerning the Virtues of Tar-Water* where he gives information concerning health remedies alongside theological and philosophical arguments.⁴⁶ While largely unread today, *Siris* was by far his most widely read book during his lifetime. While Berkeley's earliest works are studied more often by philosophers today, for the purposes of this paper I will be looking at these two later works as well to examine the connections between his philosophy and his theology.

Berkeley's principle philosophical innovation came during his early period of philosophical activity. This is the claim that the only existing entities are minds (also called spirits) and ideas. Matter or corporeal substance does not exist. The entire world is mental or spiritual in nature. A proper understanding of the philosophical climate of Berkeley's day places this view into the correct context. In Berkeley's estimation, the dominant theory of knowledge during the early Modern period was indirect or representative realism. According to this theory, the only things that humans directly perceive are ideas which resemble objects that exist in the real world. Thus, we know

⁴⁵ Ibid., 100-04.

⁴⁶ *Siris* is a curious work recommending the benefits of drinking water that had been filtered with tar. It is thought that Berkeley learned this remedy while living in the American colonies. The book starts with tar water and ends with a defense of the Christian Trinity, with many unrelated steps along the way, such as the claim that gold can be made from combining mercury and sunlight. But the general structure is that there is a chain of reasoning which starts with tar water and ends with God. See Timo Airaksinen, "The Path of Fire: The Meaning and Interpretation of Berkeley's *Siris*," in *New Interpretations of Berkeley's Thought*, ed. Stephen H. Daniel (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2008).

ideas directly, not objects. We know of objects only as they are represented through ideas, or we know them indirectly. Berkeley rejected this epistemological picture; one of the reasons being that it leads to skepticism.⁴⁷

Upon the whole, I am inclined to think that the far greater part, if not all, of those difficulties which have hitherto amused philosophers, and blocked up the way to knowledge, are entirely owing to ourselves. That we have first raise a dust, and then complain, we cannot see. (PHK intro, 3)

So, Berkeley's response is to remove the philosophers' dust. He does this by rejecting the existence of matter, leaving only minds and ideas. But, ideas cannot exist alone; they only exist within a mind or when being perceived. This leads to Berkeley's famous doctrine: for sensible things to exist is for them to be perceived.

It is indeed an opinion strangely prevailing amongst men, that houses, mountains, rivers, and in a word all sensible objects have an existence natural or real, distinct from their being perceived by the understanding... For what are the forementioned objects but the things we perceive by sense, and what do we perceive besides our own ideas or sensations; (PHK 4)

Nothing exists outside of a mind. For example, when I perceive Berkeley's house, Whitehall, the thing that I perceive is the idea of the house, not a mind-independent physical object. The house *is* the thing that I perceive in my mind, namely the idea; not some bit of physical matter sitting in Newport. This captures the essence of Berkeley's immaterialist or idealist theory.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Berkeley thought that indirect realism led to skepticism because according to that theory there is no way to ensure that our ideas actually do represent the objects. Humans can never know what really exists apart from ideas. Berkeley thought that philosophers like Locke and Descartes were guilty of a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy. In an attempt to respond to skeptics, they posed new theories of knowledge. But these theories actually lead to skepticism (in Berkeley's view), and then the philosophers complain about the skeptics.

⁴⁸ On this account, Berkeley argues that matter simply does not exist. But, at times it seems that Berkeley gives a separate argument against matter in the *Principles*. The second argument suggests that even if matter did exist, it would be impossible to know it, presupposing a representalist theory of ideas.

"In short, if there were external bodies, it is impossible we should ever come to know it; and if there were not, we might have the very same reasons to think there were that we have now." (PHK 20)

While his Idealism captures his general theory of ideas, Berkeley also has much more to say about ideas. I do not need to introduce everything he says, but I do need to introduce one related epistemological theory in more detail since there is a connection between it and Berkeley's theory of divine revelation. This is his theory of perception, or what he calls the language of vision. Berkeley's doctrine of the language of vision is found in his first published work, the *Essay towards a New Theory of Vision*, and it is also presented in a particularly strong way in the later work *Alciphron*.⁴⁹ According to Berkeley, the language of vision is how God presents ideas of sense to our minds.

Upon the whole, I think we may fairly conclude that the proper objects of vision constitute an universal language of the Author of nature, whereby we are instructed how to regulate our actions in order to attain those things that are necessary to the preservation and well-being of our bodies, as also to avoid whatever may be hurtful and destructive of them. (NTV 147)

This language is explained more fully in *Alciphron* where Euphranor, Berkeley's spokesman in the dialogue, says that God constantly speaks to humans in the 'language of vision'.

Alciphron: But, to cut short this chicane, I propound it fairly to your own conscience, whether you really think, that God Himself speaks every day and in every place to the eyes of all man.

Euphranor: That is really and in truth my opinion; and it should be yours too, if you are consistent with yourself, and abide by your own definition of language. Since you cannot deny that the Author of Nature constantly explaineth Himself to the eyes of men by the sensible intervention of arbitrary signs... In consequence, I say, of your own sentiments and concessions, you have as much reason to think the Universal Agent or God speaks to your eyes, as you can have for thinking any particular person speaks to your ears. (Alc. 4.12)

But on either account, Berkeley rejects matter and in its place we are left with only ideas and minds which perceive those ideas.

⁴⁹ The fact that this doctrine is presented in both his earliest works as well as one of his latest works shows that Berkeley held the language of vision doctrine throughout his life.

Berkeley's language of vision is a language whereby God, the Author of Nature, communicates to all men by constantly impressing ideas into their minds. I point out in chapter 2 that Berkeley's language of vision is an aspect of his theory of divine revelation.

Berkeley's theory of causation is the other philosophical position that is relevant to his philosophical theology. As we will see in chapter 3, Berkeley's doctrine of the Trinity is philosophically relevant to his theory of causation. According to his idealism, the only existing entities are minds and ideas. But ideas are inert and unable to cause or produce anything.

All our ideas, sensations, or the things which we perceive, by whatsoever names they may be distinguished, are visibly inactive, there is nothing of power or agency included in them. So that one idea or object of thought cannot produce, or make any alteration in another. (PHK 25)

Berkeley holds that ideas are completely passive and inert.

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, who is an impassive, indivisible, purely active being. (DHP 213-214)

Hence there can be no idea formed of a soul or spirit: for all ideas whatever, being passive and inert, vide Sect. 25, they cannot represent unto us, by way of image or likeness, that which acts. (PHK 27)

Therefore, all causation is mental. Everything that is caused is caused by a mind. Next, according to his language of vision, God is the cause of all the ideas we have by sense perception. But there are other ideas which we have that are not caused by God, ideas of memory and imagination.

I find I can excite ideas in my mind at pleasure, and vary and shift the scene as oft as I think fit. It is no more than willing, and straightway this or that idea arises in my fancy: and by the same power it is obliterated, and makes way for another. (PHK 28)

So, the mind of God is the cause of all ideas of sensation while the mind of man is the cause of all our ideas of memory and imagination.⁵⁰ Of these two mental causes, God is the one doing most of the work; God produces more ideas than human minds.

But though there be some things which convince us, human agents are concerned in producing them; yet it is evident to everyone, that those things which are called the works of nature, that is, the far greater part of the ideas or sensations perceived by us, are not produced by, or determined on the wills of men. (PHK 146)

This last aspect becomes important in chapter 2 where I argue that most of the ideas we have come from divine revelation.

Berkeley's theory of causality can be summarized as follows. Mind-independent physical objects have no causal powers since they do not exist. Ideas have no causal powers since they are inert and powerless. Physical objects do exist as Berkeley understands them; as collections of ideas, but they do not have any causal powers since they are made of ideas. Only minds are causally active, both God's mind as well as human minds. To apply Berkeley's theory into the billiard ball example from earlier, the first ball does not cause the motion of the second ball, a collection of ideas that constitute a physical object cannot produce motion. When we perceive that one ball has moved another ball, what is actually occurring is that God is producing those particular sensations to our minds through the language of vision. In a similar way, we can produce

⁵⁰ There is a puzzle concerning Berkeley's theory of causation concerning the movement of our own limbs. In his *Philosophical Commentaries* Berkeley states that we move our own limbs.

"We move our Legs our selves. 'tis we that will their movement. Herein I differ from Malbranch." (PC 548)

The puzzle here concerns how the legs are moved. Berkeley holds that all our ideas from perception are generated by God. This would mean that God causes the idea that we have when we sense our legs moving. But, in this passage from the *Philosophical Commentaries*, Berkeley rejects that God causes our legs to move. We move them ourselves. Berman suggests there is another puzzle in this passage. If Berkeley means by "legs" physical things, then how can we move them since they do not exist? Berman, *George Berkeley: Idealism and the Man*, 42.

ideas of a similar situation whenever we remember or imagine one ball hitting another ball. I classify this causal activity by God as divine revelation in chapter 2.

I have summarized some philosophical positions from Malebranche and Berkeley. I will later show how these positions are relevant to the philosophical theology of both philosophers. Up to now, I have been examining each philosopher in isolation. I have not yet attempted to point out any similarities between the two philosophers. That is the task of the next two sections.

1.3

Commentators have compared Berkeley's philosophy with that of Malebranche since the modern period and contemporary commentators continue to make the same comparison. Some claim that Malebranche held great influence over Berkeley⁵¹ while others suggest that Berkeley's philosophy is vastly different from the positions of Malebranche.⁵² Historical evidence does in fact suggest that Berkeley studied Malebranche while he was at Trinity College. A letter written by a contemporary of Berkeley's stated that the students at Trinity studied Aristotle, Descartes, Colbert, Epicurus, Pierre Gassendi, Malebranche, and Locke.⁵³ It is even possible that the two philosophers met.⁵⁴ The philosophical connections between Malebranche and Berkeley

⁵¹ The best example of such a position is Luce, *Berkeley and Malebranche: A Study in the Origins of Berkeley's Thought*.

⁵² A good example of such a position is T. E. Jessop, "Malebranche and Berkeley," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 1 (1938).

⁵³ Berman cites this letter. Malebranche's early influence was great enough that it is likely that universities in Britain and Ireland would have been reading him at the time that Berkeley was a student. Berman, *George Berkeley: Idealism and the Man*, 7.

⁵⁴ See note 36.

are important to examine to prepare for my discussion of their similarities in philosophical theology.

The comparison of Berkeley to Malebranche started early. Soon after Berkeley published his earliest works, his philosophy was compared to that of Malebranche, as well as Locke. Many of Berkeley's contemporaries made this connection soon after Berkeley published his *Principles of Human Knowledge* in 1710.⁵⁵ Henry Bolingbroke commented in a letter written in 1725 that Berkeley could "espouse in good earnest the system of Father Malebranche."⁵⁶ John Percival communicated to Berkeley that Samuel Clarke and William Whiston considered his views similar to those of Malebranche and Norris, the leading English appreciator of Malebranche.⁵⁷ In short, soon after the publication of the *Principles* and *Three Dialogues* it was common to connect Berkeley with Malebranche.⁵⁸

Berkeley was not pleased with this comparison. He distanced himself from Malebranche in his published works as well as unpublished manuscripts. In his early journals, later published as his *Philosophical Commentaries*, Berkeley pointed out differences between his philosophy and that of Malebranche.

⁵⁵ For a more comprehensive list of quotes from thinkers during the early modern period concerning Berkeley's similarities to Malebranche see Luce, *Ibid.*, 9-10.

⁵⁶ This letter is cited in both *Ibid.*, 9. and McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*, 205.

⁵⁷ "They look upon you as an extraordinary genius... ranking you with Father Malebranche, Norris and another..." McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*. This letter is also cited by Fritz. Anita D. Fritz, "Malebranche and the Immaterialism of Berkeley," *Review of Metaphysics* 3 (1949): 59.

⁵⁸ Berkeley's philosophy was considered by one contemporary to be "wrapped up in Malebranche's" This quote from Hamilton is cited in Luce. Luce, *Berkeley and Malebranche: A Study in the Origins of Berkeley's Thought*, 9. C. R. Teape said that Berkeley's master was Malebranche. Luce cites this comment, 10. This connection between Malebranche and Berkeley continued for a time. A generation or so later Thomas Reid wrote "Berkeley's arguments are founded upon the principles which were formerly laid down by Descartes, Malebranche, and Locke." *Inquiry into the Human Mind*. c.i, section 5.

We move our Legs our selves. 'tis we that will their movement. Herein I differ from Malbranch. (PC 548)

Malbranch in his Illustration differs widely from me He doubts the existence of Bodies I doubt not the least of this. (PC 800)

He also explicitly mentions Malebranche in the *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, summarizing the points on which he feels his philosophy differs from Malebranche's.

“I shall not therefore be surprised, if some men imagine that I run into the enthusiasm of Malebranche, though in truth I am very remote from it. He builds on the most abstract general ideas, which I entirely disclaim. He asserts an absolute external world, which I deny. He maintains that we are deceived by our senses, and know not the real natures or the true forms and figures of extended beings; all of which I hold the direct contrary. So that upon the whole there are no principles more fundamentally opposite than his and mine.” (DHP 214)

While he did not refer to Malebranche by name, Berkeley implicitly distanced himself from Malebranche in the *Principles*.

But alas we need only open our eyes to see the sovereign Lord of all things with a more full and clear view, than we do any one of our fellow-creatures. Not that I imagine we see God (as some will have it) by a direct and immediate view, or see corporeal things, not by themselves, but by seeing that which represents them in the essence of God, which doctrine is I must confess to me incomprehensible. (PHK 148)

Berkeley was still distancing himself from Malebranche late in his career. In the *Alciphron* published in 1752, 40 years after the *Principles*, Berkeley once again went out of his way to say this his theory of optic language was not similar to Malebranche's vision in God.

Alciphron: ... I was aware, indeed, of a certain metaphysical hypothesis of our seeing all things in God by the union of the human soul with the intelligible substance of the Deity, which neither I, nor any one else could make sense of...
Crito: As for that metaphysical hypothesis, I can make no more of it than you.”
(*Alc.*, 4:14)

In private letters, Berkeley repudiated his philosophical connection to Malebranche even more strongly.

As to what is said of ranking me with Father Malebranche and Mr. Norris... I have this to answer: that I think the notions I embrace are not in the least coincident with, or agree with, theirs, but indeed plainly inconsistent with them in the main points, insomuch that I know few writers whom I take myself at bottom to differ more from than them.⁵⁹

From these statements it is clear that Berkeley did not want his philosophy to be connected with Malebranche.

Given these statements from Berkeley, how should we understand the claim made by many interpreters that his philosophy is similar to that of Malebranche? To put this question into context, how can I argue that Berkeley and Malebranche share similar theories of philosophical theology in light Berkeley's rejection of any philosophical similarity? Before I can advance my position, I must respond to the objection raised by Berkeley himself that his philosophy is opposed to the views of Malebranche.

One attempt to justify the claim that there is philosophical connection in spite of Berkeley's objection is to claim that Berkeley was indeed indebted to Malebranche, but chose to hide it for prudential reasons. This seems to be Luce's position.

Malebranche's influence on Berkeley extended beyond the technique of the subject, and was therefore profound. It is curious that while obscure writers are named in the *Theory of Vision*, Malebranche receives neither acknowledgement nor mention. Possibly Berkeley was so conscious of the points of difference that he did not realize his debt. More probably his silence was prudence. In some quarters 'Malebranche' spelled enthusiasm, and enthusiasm was literally a sin... It seems certain that Berkeley deliberately avoided mentioning Malebranche.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Benjamin Rand, *Berkeley and Percival* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1914), 89.

⁶⁰ Luce, *Berkeley and Malebranche: A Study in the Origins of Berkeley's Thought*, 40, 81.

While this is one possible explanation, it is not a charitable interpretation. It presents Berkeley as someone who knowingly borrows material and then hides it for personal gain. Such an interpretation should be resisted unless every other option has been exhausted. Making a similar point concerning the relationship between Berkeley and Malebranche's vision in God theory, Jolley writes:

“Of course it is possible to argue that Berkeley simply protests too much because the accusation that his philosophy is derivative touches a raw nerve. But we should resist this suggestion if we can; it is best to begin by assuming that Berkeley was justified in disclaiming any real similarity between his idealism and the doctrine of the vision in God.”⁶¹

Another option is to suggest that Berkeley is correct to point out those differences between his philosophy and that of Malebranche because there really are significant differences between the two.⁶² Berkeley rejects abstract ideas, an external world consisting of matter, and the deception of the senses. These are all theories that Malebranche held. So, Berkeley is correct to point out these differences. However, he was not so quick to recognize the connections from his own philosophy to that of Malebranche. Still, this is to be expected. The areas of disagreement are exactly those where Berkeley's originality is its strongest.⁶³ In Berkeley's mind, his philosophy was vastly different from Malebranche since these differences were so central to his overall theory. These differences could have been so strong that Berkeley was unable to recognize any similarities that may have existed. In this explanation, it is possible that

⁶¹ Jolley, *The Light of the Soul: Theories of Ideas in Leibniz, Malebranche, and Descartes*, 196.

⁶² McCracken suggests a solution that is somewhat close to this. McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*, 208-10. McCracken also suggests that the reason that the two philosophers were considered similar was due to their shared motivation to make all things dependent upon God. McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*, 215.

⁶³ Both McCracken and Luce make this same general point. Luce, *Berkeley and Malebranche: A Study in the Origins of Berkeley's Thought*, 81. McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*, 209.

there are similarities of which Berkeley either was either not aware or considered of such little importance that there was no need to mention.⁶⁴

In presenting my response to Berkeley's claim that his philosophy is opposed to Malebranche, it will prove helpful to point out an important distinction between influence and similarity. This is a methodological distinction that is often not clear in the literature. There are two different, although related, possibilities concerning the philosophical relationship between Malebranche and Berkeley (indeed between any two philosophers). The first is to argue that Malebranche, the earlier figure of the two, in fact influenced Berkeley.⁶⁵ This is the claim that one of the philosophers served as a direct, positive influence. In this case, this would mean that Malebranche influenced Berkeley to accept a similar doctrine or position.⁶⁶ This claim of influence, according to the account I am presenting here, requires that Berkeley was aware of Malebranche's position and responded to it as a result of that awareness. For a commentator to argue that Malebranche influenced Berkeley, she must support that claim with both textual and

⁶⁴ Copleston suggests that the fact that Berkeley felt the need to distance himself from Malebranche justifies in some way the comparison. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol 5, pgs 249-50.

⁶⁵ It is possible for someone to argue that Berkeley influenced Malebranche since he was still alive when Berkeley published his earliest works. However it is unlikely that that Berkeley could have been much of an influence on Malebranche. Berkeley published his *Theory of Vision* in 1709 and the *Principles* in 1710 when Malebranche was 72 and 73 years old. Malebranche published his 6th and final edition of the *Search* in 1712 so it is possible that Malebranche could have been influenced by Berkeley and modified his position in that final edition, but this is much less likely than Malebranche influencing Berkeley. Malebranche died in 1715 at the age of 77. But, every case that I am aware of claims that the influence goes the other way: Malebranche in some way or another influenced Berkeley. Since this is the case, I will treat influence only as Malebranche's influence over Berkeley.

⁶⁶ According to my use here, influence could be either positive or negative. By positive I mean that Berkeley could have been influenced to accept one of Malebranche's positions. The result of a positive influence would be that both Malebranche and Berkeley end up holding a similar position. A negative influence would be a situation where Berkeley is influenced by Malebranche and thereby rejects some position. The result of what I am calling a negative influence is that Berkeley and Malebranche end up holding different positions. This is because Berkeley intentionally found some reason to not follow Malebranche's position. But, by in large, the literature focuses on the positive influence of Malebranche on Berkeley, so when I use the term "influence", I mean positive influence unless I state otherwise.

historical evidence. She must show that Berkeley was familiar with Malebranche's position and show how we can know that he opted to follow Malebranche.

The second possibility concerning this relationship is to argue that Malebranche and Berkeley merely hold similar philosophical positions, whether or not one influenced the other. This is the claim of similarity. To show this we need only point out a common philosophical position shared by both. We need not explain how both Malebranche and Berkeley came to this common position. The similar position could have been original to both thinkers or could be attributed to a common influence on both. To argue that these two philosophers hold similar positions is a less robust claim than to argue that Malebranche influenced Berkeley.

I point out this distinction between influence and similarity for two reasons. First, many interpreters who write on the philosophical relationship between Malebranche and Berkeley argue that Malebranche influenced Berkeley, but only support their claim by pointing out similarities.⁶⁷ Of course, if Berkeley was influenced by Malebranche, than his philosophy is likely to be similar at those points. But, similarity between Berkeley and Malebranche is not enough to support the claim that Malebranche influenced Berkeley.

The second reason that I point out this distinction is because it is helpful for explaining my purpose in this project. My aim here is to argue for similarity. I show that there are philosophical similarities between the way that Berkeley and Malebranche make use of certain theological doctrines. I do not argue that Malebranche influenced Berkeley. Philosophical similarities are both more interesting and more instructive than

⁶⁷ Of course, I am not here pointing out a weakness of their position since they may be working with different accounts of both influence and similarity than I have explained here.

textual or historical arguments concerning the influence of Malebranche on Berkeley. I agree with T. E. Jessop when he says “similarities and differences of spirit, method, and doctrine are more important than external, merely historical relations”.⁶⁸

The third and final reason that I point out this distinction between similarity and influence is because it helps me respond to Berkeley’s objection that his philosophy should not be compared to Malebranche. I interpret Berkeley to be saying that he has not been influenced by Malebranche and I take this claim at face value. If Berkeley says that he has not been influenced by Malebranche, the charitable interpretation is that he was not influenced by Malebranche, at least in any way that he was conscious.⁶⁹ I am not arguing that Malebranche influenced Berkeley, but I am arguing that there are philosophical similarities between the two philosophers. These similarities concern doctrines in their philosophical theology as well as certain philosophical doctrines. Berkeley and Malebranche hold similar theories of divine revelation and the Trinity, and they also hold similar theories of epistemology and causation. I point out these similarities in detail in chapters 2 and 3.

While this distinction between influence and similarity helps me give a response to Berkeley, it does not get me off hook entirely. Concerning Malebranche, Berkeley is rejecting influence as well as similarity. It is on this account that I accept the second response from above. Berkeley is justified in pointing out the dissimilarities between his philosophy and Malebranche. There are many and some of them are substantial. These differences were so great in Berkeley’s mind that he failed to notice the similarities.

⁶⁸ Jessop, “Malebranche and Berkeley,” 124.

⁶⁹ It may be possible that Berkeley could have been influenced in an unconscious way.

After all, Berkeley claimed that his system is inconsistent with Malebranche “in the main points” and they were different “at bottom”.⁷⁰ This language from Berkeley can be interpreted to support the position I am advancing.

While some of these similarities have been mentioned in the secondary literature, I am introducing a connection between Malebranche and Berkeley that has been largely ignored. Both philosophers hold similar doctrines in their philosophical theology. On a superficial level, my contribution along these lines is not unique. It has been common to point that both Malebranche and Berkeley construct overall philosophical systems that emphasize the role of God.⁷¹ But there has been very little work done to flesh out what this means in terms of a philosophical similarity between the two philosophers, and there has been no work done on the similarities in philosophical theology between Malebranche and Berkeley. I show that the similarities in doctrines of divine revelation and the Trinity have not been mentioned. The contribution of this project is greater than simply pointing out these two doctrines which are similar to both Malebranche and Berkeley, this project also is able to give more satisfactory solutions to some of the philosophical similarities found in this literature.

⁷⁰ Here is the passage again where Berkeley makes these claims:

“As to what is said of ranking me with Father Malebranche and Mr. Norris... I have this to answer: that I think the notions I embrace are not in the least coincident with, or agree with, theirs, but indeed plainly inconsistent with them in the main points, insomuch that I know few writers whom I take myself at bottom to differ more from than them.”

Rand, *Berkeley and Percival*, 89.

⁷¹ Jolley, “Berkeley, Malebranche, and Vision in God,” 536. Copleston makes similar remarks at Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol 4, pgs 202-03. See also Luce, *Berkeley and Malebranche: A Study in the Origins of Berkeley's Thought*, 82.

This study of Malebranche and Berkeley's philosophical theology contributes to several different movements, debates, and disagreements in the secondary literature. These contributions are direct at times and indirect at others. By "direct contribution", I mean that this research picks up an existing debate, movement, or unresolved puzzle from the secondary literature and adds to that literature by advancing the debate, supporting the movement, or proposing a solution to a puzzle. By "indirect contribution", I mean that this study of Berkeley and Malebranche loosely fits into a larger movement or debate in the secondary literature. An indirect contribution to the secondary literature means that this research applies to the movement or debate more loosely than a direct contribution.

During the past few decades, scholars have discussed the value of the traditional distinction between Rationalism and Empiricism. On the one hand, scholars like Louis Loeb have argued that this distinction fails and should be abandoned. In *From Descartes' to Hume* Loeb argues that the standard distinction between Continental Rationalism and British Empiricism fails because it does not do justice to the philosophical nuances found in many of the Philosophers, including Malebranche and Berkeley.⁷² On the other hand, scholars like Michael Ayers argue that this distinction should not be rejected. Their claim is that the distinction between Rationalism and

⁷² Louis E. Loeb, *From Descartes to Hume* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981). While this distinction has been challenged in many forms, one of the other attacks is Hide Ishiguro, "Pre-Established Harmony Verses Constant Conjunction: A Reconsideration of the Distinction between Rationalism and Empiricism," in *Rationalism, Empiricism, and Idealism: British Academy Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, ed. Anthony Kenny (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1986).

Empiricism is helpful and is grounded in true differences.⁷³ Falling within this literature are works that consider the placement of individual philosophers from the early modern period within this distinction. For example, some scholars challenge the traditional classification of Berkeley as an Empiricist and considered whether he should be classified as a Rationalist instead.⁷⁴ I contribute to this debate by pointing out similarities between Malebranche, who is traditionally classified a Rationalist, and Berkeley, who is traditionally classified an Empiricist. My argument that these philosophers hold similar positions could be held up as support for the rejection of the traditional distinction between the Rationalists and Empiricists. It could also support the claim that Berkeley should not be classified as an Empiricist since his philosophy holds so many similarities to Malebranche the Rationalist.

In recent literature there is also a current movement to understand the theological principles and positions of the philosophers of the early modern period. Contemporary philosophers are seeking to understand the theology held by the thinkers of this period. There have been a number of books and articles written with this goal in mind. One of the better examples is a recent book published in 2008 by John Cottingham called *Cartesian Reflections*.⁷⁵ Cottingham recommends in the overview that scholars should

⁷³ See the introduction to Michael Ayers, "Was Berkeley an Empiricist or a Rationalist?," in *The Cambridge Companion to Berkeley*, ed. Kenneth P. Winkler (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁷⁴ While Malebranche has been typically classified as a Rationalist, there has been some debate concerning the classification of Berkeley. Ayers argues that while Berkeley is not the standard empiricist, he should be included into that group nonetheless. *Ibid.* See also Ayers' introduction to Michael Ayers, ed., *Rationalism, Platonism, and the Good, Proceedings of the British Academy* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁷⁵ Many of these works contain statements whereby the authors state that their goals are to explore the role of theology on the philosophy of historical thinkers. Here are a few examples of this kind of research. Derk Pereboom, "Early Modern Philosophical Theology," in *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Philip L. Quinn and Charles Taliaferro, *Blackwell Companions to Philosophy* (Malden, MA: Blackwell

take Descartes' views on God and theology more seriously than they have done in the past.⁷⁶ This interest in the theology of the early modern period can also be seen in the establishment of the Center for the History of Philosophical Theology at King's College in London in 2005, as well as in recent conferences such as the Workshop on Theology and Early Modern Philosophy held in Helsinki in February of 2008.⁷⁷ By arguing that Malebranche and Berkeley hold similar positions of philosophical theology, I am advancing the same agenda as the authors involved in this movement. While a few of the theological commitments of Malebranche and Berkeley have been discussed in isolation, I am the first to concentrate on the views of divine revelation and the Trinity as they are found together in each of these philosophers.⁷⁸

Publishers Ltd, 1997). Chris L. Firestone and Stephen R. Palmquist, eds., *Kant and the New Philosophy of Religion* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006).

⁷⁶ Cottingham, *Cartesian Reflections: Essays on Descartes's Philosophy*.

⁷⁷ These two are related. On the website for the Center for the History of Philosophical Theology, the following note can be found concerning their European research project:

"The impact of early modern philosophy on early modern theology; The CHPT is developing a major research project on 'The impact of early modern philosophy on early modern theology' in collaboration with scholars based in Helsinki, Leuven, and Copenhagen. An application to the European Science Foundation for an exploratory workshop is currently under consideration."
<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/schools/humanities/hrc/chpt/intres.html>

⁷⁸ Here are some sources that have attempted to consider the theology of Malebranche: Watson, "The External World and the Fall from Reason: Malebranche's Account of Our Knowledge of the Existence and Nature of Bodies". Reid, "Malebranche on Intelligible Extension." Jasper Reid, "The Trinitarian Metaphysics of Jonathan Edwards and Nicolas Malebranche," *The Heythrop Journal* 43, no. 2 (2002). And likewise, here are some sources that have attempted to consider Berkeley's theology: Stephen H. Daniel, "Berkeley's Christian Neoplatonism, Archetypes, and Divine Ideas," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 39 (2001). Douglas Jesseph, "Faith and Fluxions: Berkeley on Theology and Mathematics," in *New Interpretations of Berkeley's Thought*, ed. Stephen H. Daniel (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2008). Robert R. Hurlbutt, "Berkeley's Theology," in *George Berkeley: Lectures Delivered before the Philosophical Union of the University of California*, ed. S. C. Pepper, Karl Aschenbrenner, and Benson Mates, *University of California Publications in Philosophy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1957). But, to my surprise, these works tended to focus on issues that fall into the category of Philosophy of Religion. For example, many of these works do nothing but examine the arguments for the existence of God from the works of either Malebranche or Berkeley. None of these works attempt to construct anything like a comprehensive a theology or philosophical theology from the texts.

In section 1.3, I showed that Berkeley's philosophy was compared to that of Malebranche early after his first publications and I also introduced some preliminary considerations to these kinds of comparisons. Since that time a debate concerning the relationship between Malebranche and Berkeley can be traced through the secondary literature. Now I can introduce some of the relevant secondary literature. The similarities that are mentioned in these works will become important later in chapter 2 and 3 since I find some of these same similarities. The one important difference is that these authors fail to mention, and thereby it is likely that they failed to notice, the importance of Malebranche and Berkeley's similar philosophical theology. I will point out these omissions as I introduce the literature.

In time the initial tendency to find similarities between the philosophical systems of Berkeley and Malebranche was abandoned. Berkeley became more associated with Locke by English speaking philosophers and less compared to Malebranche.⁷⁹ By the nineteenth-century Malebranche was no longer considered an important influence on Berkeley at all. Likewise, similarities between Berkeley and Malebranche were no longer mentioned in the literature. G. A. Johnston published a study into the development and origins of Berkeley's philosophy in 1923 where he summarizes the general attitude of the day: "from Locke only did he really *derive* anything of first importance."⁸⁰ Johnston suggests that Malebranche contributed only as a formative

⁷⁹ McCracken states that some nineteenth-century French scholars such as Francisque Bouillier, Georges Lyon, and Francois Pillon continued to recognize Malebranche as an influence over Berkeley, but English philosophers did not. McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*, 208.

⁸⁰ Italics in the original. G. A. Johnston, *The Development of Berkeley's Philosophy* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1923), 32.

influence.⁸¹ Many interpreters agreed with Johnston's view that Berkeley was not influenced by Malebranche and that their philosophies were not similar.⁸²

This deemphasizing of the similarity or influence between Malebranche and Berkeley could be explained in a few ways. First, perhaps as people read Berkeley more, they took him at this word. When he stated that he is not to be compared with Malebranche, his readers believed him. Another possibility is that Berkeley's star began to shine more brightly than Malebranche's. Over time, Berkeley's work began to stand on its own. Soon he was read more in the English world than was Malebranche. This meant that fewer and fewer readers were reading Berkeley with Malebranche already in mind. Malebranche was not as well known to English readers as was Locke.

Berkeley, in his lifetime, was regarded as a disciple of Malebranche. Subsequently he came to be regarded as a Lockian. The new opinion was a natural growth. In the course of time British acquaintance with Malebranche sank and the fame of Berkeley rose. National sentiment adopted him as the English philosopher in succession to Locke.⁸³

As later readers encountered Berkeley's works, they caught the influence from Locke but missed the influence from Malebranche. Regardless of the explanation, the opinion expressed by Johnston continued for years, Malebranche and Berkeley were not thought to be connected philosophically by English speaking interpreters.

But the general attitude changed when Luce published *Berkeley and Malebranche: A study in the Origins of Berkeley's Thought* in 1934.⁸⁴ Luce's work has become the seminal study concerning the influence of Malebranche on Berkeley. His

⁸¹ Ibid., 32.

⁸² Luce gives many similar quotes from the literature from this time period. Luce, *Berkeley and Malebranche: A Study in the Origins of Berkeley's Thought*, 3-10.

⁸³ Ibid., 10

⁸⁴ Ibid.

general thesis is that Berkeley read and studied Malebranche's *Search After Truth* and that Malebranche's influence can be found in Berkeley. Luce says about Berkeley that Malebranche was "one of his two primary sources, comparable in importance to Locke, and in some ways, of higher importance"⁸⁵. He argues that Malebranche's influence can be found throughout Berkeley's two notebooks, what have become known as the *Philosophical Commentaries*.⁸⁶ He shows how Malebranche's ideas can be traced through Berkeley's thought on matters such as methodology and epistemology including his theories of ideas and vision.

First, Luce argues that Berkeley's philosophical method was influenced by Malebranche.

From his earliest days of authorship Berkeley was conscious of method and critical of method ... in his method of setting and solving problems, in his actual writing, and in the spirit of his approach to philosophical questions he was directly influenced by what Malebranche had said on Methodology.⁸⁷

Luce recognizes that Berkeley following Malebranche's philosophical method is no evidence that he also followed his philosophical conclusions, so he argues further that Berkeley did follow Malebranche's conclusions as well.⁸⁸ Of these, Luce claims that Berkeley's theory of vision holds important similarities to Malebranche's theory of sense perception.

The comparison of the sense-*datum* to language, the arbitrary connexion between sign and thing signified, and the contrast between man-made connexions and the universal

⁸⁵Ibid., 5.

⁸⁶ Luce calls these notebooks the *Commonplace Book*. Ibid., 1-12.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 13.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 24.

connexions established by the Will of God, these Berkeleian principles may all be found in the *Search*.⁸⁹

Luce points out two separate similarities in this passage that are discussed later. In chapter 2, I show that Malebranche and Berkeley's similar theories of perception are best explained in light of their similar doctrines of general revelation. I also show in chapter 3 that both philosophers accept the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and that helps us understand why Malebranche and Berkeley stress the causal activity of the will of God.

Luce also argues that Berkeley's theory of ideas follows Malebranche's in some important ways. Concerning Berkeley on ideas, Luce concludes boldly that Berkeley "seems to have gone as near to the doctrine of seeing all things in God as one who was not an occasionalist could go."⁹⁰ By this he means that Berkeley followed Malebranche's theocentric emphasis on ideas rather than what Luce calls Locke's human path.⁹¹

Ultimately, both Malebranche and Berkeley agree that the ideas we conceive are not our ideas, but are God's ideas which are excited in our minds.⁹² Luce admits that there is one important difference between Malebranche and Berkeley concerning the cause of ideas. Malebranche, the occasionalist, held that God causes all ideas while Berkeley forged a middle ground between that position and Locke's by saying that God causes the majority of our ideas. Humans also cause ideas.⁹³ Luce also suggests that Berkeley follows

⁸⁹ Ibid., 43.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 82.

⁹¹ Ibid., 83.

⁹² "Real things, then, for Berkeley, are in God and are ideas. I have real ideas; therefore some of my ideas are also God's ideas... Ideas of sense are 'our ideas' (*Prin.* § 25 &c), because we perceive them; yet clearly they are not creatures of my will (*Prin.* § 29). They are produced by the will of God and excited into my mind. So that they are God's ideas, just as our world is also God's world. Ibid., 84.

⁹³ Ibid., 90.

Malebranche concerning what Luce calls the “knowing of knowing”.⁹⁴ By this he suggests that Berkeley follows Malebranche concerning the nature of knowledge of all things; those that require ideas as well as those that do not such as God, the soul, and other people or finite spirits.

Luce is correct to point out these epistemological similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley concerning perception and ideas, but he fails to mention any similarity between their theological or religious positions. He does not notice that Berkeley and Malebranche hold similar doctrines of divine revelation and these doctrines are philosophically relevant for their epistemological views. Malebranche and Berkeley agree that the things we perceive and many, or all in Malebranche’s case, of our ideas are generated by God as well. In chapter 2, I argue that both of these claims are related to the doctrine of divine revelation that Malebranche and Berkeley accept.

Luce argues that Berkeley follows Malebranche for significant contributions to his philosophical system: philosophical method, vision, ideas, and epistemology in general. However, Luce is careful to not overstate his case. He does not want to be interpreted as if he is arguing that Berkeley owes all of his philosophical debt to Malebranche. He recognizes the importance of Locke in the formulation of Berkeley’s theories. He simply wants to remind readers that Malebranche was also an important influence on Berkeley. Luce sums up his primary motivation. “My aim is to show that the way to the heart of Berkeleianism is through Malebranche.”⁹⁵ Luce is a very good example of arguing that Malebranche influenced Berkeley’s philosophy. He gives

⁹⁴ Ibid., 92.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 43.

careful textual arguments from the *Philosophical Commentaries* where he compares certain language and strategies of the two philosophers.

A sweeping thesis like Luce's is likely to be met with resistance and indeed this was the case. In a paper published in 1938, T. E. Jessop argues that Berkeley is right to distance himself from Malebranche. He concludes that Berkeley differs significantly from Malebranche concerning the senses, materialism, and ideas.⁹⁶

To summarize. When system is compared with system, both contents and principles are deeply different. Berkeley was certainly right in repudiating any genuine similarity between his doctrine and Malebranche's.⁹⁷

He does mention one similarity concerning their relation of knowledge to God.

Regarded in this very broad way, in the light of his general motive, Berkeley comes together with Malebranche at a level where the differences between them are evidently technical ones. Both desire to show that whatever knowledge we have of the corporeal world is the unmediated gift of God and therefore an ever-present witness to His presence and to our dependence on Him.⁹⁸

Jessop calls this connection a "reservoir of suggestiveness" since this religious similarity merely suggested a line of thought that Berkeley followed on his own⁹⁹ Along these same lines, Jessop also points out that both Berkeley and Malebranche recite often the words of St. Paul, "In Him we live and move and have our being."¹⁰⁰ Jessop recognizes

⁹⁶ It is worth pointing out that these are some of the same issues that Luce pointed out as similar.

⁹⁷ Jessop, "Malebranche and Berkeley," 138-39.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 137

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 139

¹⁰⁰ Acts 17:28. These are the words of Paul while in Athens, as recorded by Luke, the author of the book of Acts, as I mention in the Introduction.

the historical connections between Malebranche and Berkeley, but this does not translate into a philosophical connection, “the latter has no positive debt to the earlier”.¹⁰¹

In addition, Jessop gives two objections to the kind of reasoning that Luce advances concerning Malebranche’s influence on Berkeley. First, Luce seems to attribute everything in Berkeley that is not found in Locke to Malebranche. This denies the genius of Berkeley’s originality. Secondly, and more importantly in Jessop’s view, if Berkeley was so indebted to Malebranche he would have acknowledged the debt. He points out that the only times that Berkeley mentions Malebranche in print is to distance himself from the French priest.¹⁰²

Like Luce, Jessop also misses the force of the theological similarity between Malebranche and Berkeley. He recognizes that there are some similarities in this respect, but does not find them worth mentioning in any detail. Jessop’s failure to notice these similarities between the two thinkers’ philosophical theology does not allow him to see any of the corresponding similarities in philosophical doctrine. Perhaps if Jessop had noticed the similarities in philosophical theology between Malebranche and Berkeley, he would not have been so quick to reject Luce’s claim that there are similarities in their philosophical systems.

The next author in the discussion takes Luce’s side over Jessop. In two articles from the early 1950’s, Anita Dunlevy Fritz argues that Berkeley’s immaterialism and his view of the self were both natural outgrowths from Malebranche.¹⁰³ First, concerning

¹⁰¹ Jessop, “Malebranche and Berkeley,” 139.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 140.

¹⁰³ Fritz, “Malebranche and the Immaterialism of Berkeley.” And Anita D. Fritz, “Berkeley’s Self-- Its Origin in Malebranche,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 15 (1954).

immaterialism, Fritz argues that matter is not necessary for Malebranche as a cause or occasion of perception since God reveals ideas directly to the human mind. Malebranche did not need matter on his system. He held that matter exists but it is superfluous to his theory.¹⁰⁴ Fritz points out that Malebranche and Berkeley hold that ideas could be generated without any external bodies.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, Berkeley simply advanced Malebranche's theory to its logical conclusion. Recognizing that it is unnecessary, Berkeley removed matter from his system entirely. Fritz also argues that while there are apparent dissimilarities between Malebranche and Berkeley concerning the self, Berkeley's view is actually closer to Malebranche's than he thinks. She makes two conclusions concerning the views of the self held by Malebranche and Berkeley. The first is that they both hold that the self is passive concerning sensation.¹⁰⁶ The second is that God directly or immediately causes all sensations upon the self.¹⁰⁷ Fritz argues from these similarities to the claim that Malebranche's theory of the self must have influenced Berkeley. While Luce's primary goal was to argue that Malebranche shaped and influenced Berkeley's epistemology, Fritz advances her general argument by arguing that this is also the case concerning Berkeley's metaphysics.

Fritz is correct to point out that Berkeley and Malebranche share metaphysical similarities as well as epistemological. But Fritz fails to mention that there are theological similarities as well as metaphysical. Fritz also does not mention that some of

¹⁰⁴ Fritz, "Malebranche and the Immaterialism of Berkeley," 64-66.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁰⁶ "Central to both theories is the passivity of the self in relation to the cause of sensation." Fritz, "Berkeley's Self-- Its Origin in Malebranche," 571.

¹⁰⁷ Speaking of the cause of sensation: "For both this cause is immediately and directly God, and God is held to be the origin not only of the existence and character of sensation, but of the order of sensations as well." *Ibid.*, 571.

these theological doctrines held metaphysical ramifications. Both Malebranche and Berkeley accept the doctrine of the Trinity. This doctrine holds that God is one substance with three persons. Fritz does not seem to notice that the metaphysical doctrines that are similar in Malebranche and Berkeley are related to a shared acceptance of this doctrine of the Trinity. In chapter 3, I show that Malebranche and Berkeley both accept a traditional formulation of the Trinity and that this doctrine is philosophically relevant in the metaphysical systems of both philosophers. Fritz's project is enhanced by my claim that Berkeley and Malebranche hold similar accounts of philosophical theology.

In 1959 Frederick Copleston comments on the relationship between Malebranche and Berkeley in his *History of Philosophy*.¹⁰⁸ While he did not contribute to this literature in any significant way, Copleston did point out a similarity between the role of God in the philosophical systems of Berkeley and Malebranche. Copleston claimed that the two philosophers had little in common aside from both propounding to what he calls theocentric philosophical systems.

Both men developed theocentric metaphysical systems, and these systems bear marked resemblances in some points, though there are also notable differences, due at least in part to the association of the one system with Cartesianism and the other with British empiricism.¹⁰⁹

He says that Berkeley took the reigning Empiricism of the day from Locke and used it in the service of his theocentric system. In the same way, Malebranche took Descartes' Rationalism and did the same thing. Aside from both placing God at the center of their philosophy, Copleston does not see any other philosophical similarities between these two thinkers. At first glance it appears that Copleston is in better shape than the

¹⁰⁸ He makes comments concerning the two philosophers and their relationship in Volume 4, in the Malebranche entry, as well as in Volume 5, in the Berkeley entry. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol 4, pg 203.

commentators mentioned thus far since he at least notices some theological similarity between Malebranche and Berkeley. But he also fails to give this theological similarity its due. He mentions it as if it is philosophically uninteresting. He does not recognize either the depth of these theological similarities or their relevance and importance to the philosophical systems of both philosophers.

In 1963 Harry Bracken added to this literature. Bracken's paper concerning the theories of ideas shared by both Malebranche and Berkeley makes a different claim concerning how these philosophers are similar.¹¹⁰ He argues that both philosophers accept two claims concerning ideas. These are the claims of immediacy and independence. According to Bracken, immediacy is the position that we must be immediately aware of the things that we know and independence is the position that the things we know must be ontologically independent of our knowing them.¹¹¹ Bracken adds that these shared commitments concerning ideas lead Malebranche and Berkeley to other similar positions, including some "important parallels between Berkeley's Divine Language account and Malebranche's Intelligible Extension."¹¹² Berkeley joined Malebranche's notions of Ideas and Sensations to create his ideas of sense.¹¹³ Bracken follows Luce in claiming that Malebranche and Berkeley share similar accounts of epistemology.

¹¹⁰ Harry M. Bracken, "Berkeley and Malebranche on Ideas," *The Modern Schoolman* 41 (1963).

¹¹¹ It seems that Malebranche is a better example of holding these positions than Berkeley, but Bracken explains how Berkeley accepts them as well.

¹¹² Bracken, "Berkeley and Malebranche on Ideas," 13.

¹¹³ "As I have hinted, Berkeley's ideas of sense are the product of combining Malebranchian Ideas and Sentiments to the obvious detriment of the thesis of immediacy and independence." Brackin also hints at the position that both Malebranche and Berkeley are direct or common sense realists. *Ibid.*, 9, 11.

Bracken points out some of the same similarities that I do when I discuss Malebranche and Berkeley's epistemological theories. In section 2.4 I show that Berkeley's divine language argument is similar to Malebranche's vision in God. But Bracken fails to notice that Malebranche and Berkeley share a similar theory of divine revelation. Understanding their shared doctrine of divine revelation sheds light on the similarities between Malebranche's vision in God and Berkeley's Divine Language argument. My work in chapter 2 supports many of Bracken's points and strengthens his overall project.

Another article concerning the relationship between Malebranche and Berkeley is by John Immerwahr in 1974.¹¹⁴ Immerwahr argues that Berkeley alters Malebranche's position on causation to create his own causal thesis. Malebranche's causal thesis is captured by his occasionalism: God is the only true cause. Berkeley agrees with Malebranche that only minds are causes, but Berkeley abandons Malebranche's full occasionalism. While Malebranche rejects that human wills have causal power, Berkeley thinks that humans cause ideas of sense and imagination. Immerwahr carefully dissects both these theories of causation and shows why Malebranche and Berkeley hold similar positions. He argues that Berkeley's causal thesis is derived from Malebranche, with certain modifications. In short, Malebranche held that there must be a necessary connection between a true cause and its effect.¹¹⁵ Immerwahr then points out that Berkeley held that true causality holds when the cause is a necessary condition for its

¹¹⁴ John Immerwahr, "Berkeley's Causal Thesis," *New Scholasticism* 68 (1974).

¹¹⁵ He shows this for Malebranche at *Ibid.*, 159.

effect.¹¹⁶ While Fritz pointed out that there were metaphysical similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley, Immerwahr is the first to point out that there is a metaphysical similarity between their theories of causation.

I agree with Immerwahr that Berkeley and Malebranche hold similar accounts of causation. But I go beyond his claim when I suggest that the doctrine of the Trinity that both philosophers accept is philosophically relevant for their theories of causation. As I show in chapter 3, Malebranche and Berkeley were committed to the amplified analogy of the Trinity, and their shared acceptance of this theological doctrine is relevant for their metaphysical theories of causation. Immerwahr does not mention the Trinity in Malebranche and Berkeley, or its relevance to their theories of causation.

In 1982 Louis Loeb published a book where he argued against what he called the “standard theory” of modern philosophy, which includes the traditional distinction between Rationalism and Empiricism.¹¹⁷ Along the way he also adds to the literature concerning the philosophical relationship between Malebranche and Berkeley. Loeb follows Fritz and Immerwahr in suggesting that Berkeley followed Malebranche’s metaphysics. He summarizes Berkeley’s use of Malebranche in a few short lines.

The introduction of three modifications into Malebranche’s metaphysics yields the basic structure of the metaphysics of Berkeley. First, eliminate material substances (in the sense of objects which exist independently of any perceiver). Second, allow that some volitions of created minds are casually efficacious (in particular, volitions of created minds can cause the movement of their own limbs, that is, can cause changes in those ideas which constitute their limbs). Third, deny that created minds are directly acquainted with anything except their own ideas and mental operations

¹¹⁶ He states Berkeley’s causal thesis this way to account for the role that humans play. “Berkeley’s point here is just that although volitions are not *sufficient* conditions for true causality, they are *necessary* conditions.” Ibid., 164.

¹¹⁷ He considers the standard theory to hold that certain philosophers before Kant are more important than others (in alphabetical order: Berkeley, Descartes, Hume, Leibniz, Locke, and Spinoza). The second feature of the standard theory is the distinction between Rationalism and Empiricism. Loeb, *From Descartes to Hume*.

(thus, they are not directly acquainted with ideas in God). The system that results is Berkeley's metaphysics—a "trivial variant" of Malebranche's in the sense that the required modifications are so simple.¹¹⁸

Loeb claims that in creating his own system of metaphysics, Berkeley accepts Malebranche's system along with two "trivial" variations. The first variation or modification is to eliminate matter, as Fritz has pointed out. The second is to allow human minds some causal powers, which was pointed out by Immerwahr. Loeb concludes that Berkeley's metaphysics are derived from Malebranche in a "simple and straightforward way".¹¹⁹ Neither of these suggestions are unique to Loeb, but Loeb adds that Malebranche and Berkeley shared a common motivation that can describe these similarities. In short, both philosophers shared the same two goals. The first is a shared desire to undermine the belief that created entities are casually efficacious. Both Malebranche and Berkeley referred to such a view as "paganism" or "idolatry".¹²⁰ The second is to establish that there is an immediate union between human minds and God.¹²¹

Loeb also mentions that Berkeley's language of vision argument is similar to Malebranche's vision in God. He calls Berkeley's divine language argument a "transmuted version of Malebranche's vision in God".¹²² Loeb argues for the closest relationship between the metaphysics of Berkeley and Malebranche yet. He has also

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 229.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 241.

¹²⁰ Loeb cites many passages where these philosophers state that such views of causation are pagan or the result of idolatry. For Malebranche, see Ibid., 223-225 for Berkeley see 241-243.

¹²¹ "I have suggested that Malebranche accepted occasionalism in order to achieve two principal objectives: to undermine a presupposition of pagan religion or idolatry, the belief that created entities are casually efficacious; and, more important, to establish that there is an immediate union between minds and God (sect. 25). Berkeley was interested in both these objectives." Ibid., 241.

¹²² Loeb mentions this connection quickly, but only as a solution to a problem for his argument. The problem is that Berkeley does not mention his divine language, or what Loeb calls his "visual-language"

pointed out an important similarity between Malebranche's vision in God and Berkeley's divine language argument.

Loeb recognizes the importance of the metaphysical similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley, but he misses the similarity concerning their philosophical theology. He does not mention that both Berkeley and Malebranche accept an account of the Trinity which is philosophically relevant for their metaphysics. He also is the first to point out the epistemological similarities between Malebranche's vision in God and Berkeley's divine language argument. He does not show that these doctrines are similar because Malebranche and Berkeley share a similar view of natural revelation. The pattern continues; commentators notice various similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley but continue to miss the relevant similarities in their systems of philosophical theology.

Second to Luce, the most comprehensive work on Malebranche and Berkeley is by Charles McCracken.¹²³ In *Malebranche and British Philosophy* published 1983,

argument in the *Dialogues*. This is a problem for Loeb since he is arguing that this argument plays an important role in Berkeley and its absence from the dialogues weakness that argument. He solves this problem by suggesting that Berkeley's divine vision argument is a transmuted version of Malebranche's vision in God argument and that Berkeley wanted to downplay his connection to Malebranche's enthusiasm. Here is the full passage:

"It is curious that the visual-language argument does not appear in the *Dialogues*. There well may be a prudential explanation here, if one is willing to think of Berkeley's Divine visual language as a transmuted version of Malebranche's vision in God. For Malebranche, sensory awareness requires vision of ideas or archetypes in God; for Berkeley, in sensory experience we are acquainted with a visual language of God. Of course, these doctrines are not identical in content. On the other hand, the terminological similarities are not just coincidental, and both doctrines would invite the charge of enthusiasm. The prudential considerations by Luce (26) might well have led Berkeley to downplay the visual-language argument in his early works; and since by the time of the *Dialogues* he was already defending himself against the suggestion that his views "run into the enthusiasm of Malebranche," the argument could not sagely appear in that work at all." *Ibid.*, 254.

Of course Loeb's solution to his problem brings in a different problem concerning Berkeley: Berkeley would not only downplay his indebtedness to Malebranche but forcefully reject it while at the same time embracing doctrines from Malebranche.

¹²³ McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*.

McCracken traces the influence of Malebranche over many British philosophers including John Norris, Thomas Taylor, and Berkeley.¹²⁴ The first similarity that McCracken points out concerns Malebranche and Berkeley's views of nature and the divine. They both desired to destroy what they considered a pagan view of nature and replace it with an absolute dependence of all things on God. This point is similar to the one made by Loeb, but McCracken expands upon Loeb's formulation. Both Malebranche and Berkeley agree that nature is the general law of God.

For Berkeley, as for Malebranche, nature, in the truest *sense*, is nothing but a series of effects that occur 'according to certain fixed and general laws'. And those laws of nature are themselves nothing more in reality than the will of God.¹²⁵

According to McCracken, Berkeley is so often linked to Malebranche because they both place all things in a state of immediate dependence on God. Berkeley learned the spirit of this move from Malebranche, but he advanced it to a new level when he dismissed matter entirely.¹²⁶ McCracken then points out that there is a "particularly noteworthy similarity" in the theories of vision between both Malebranche and Berkeley.¹²⁷

For both Malebranche and Berkeley, visual *sensa* are signs by which God directly communicates to us something we need to know. As such, vision is for them a 'divine language' or, as Malebranche liked to call it, a 'natural revelation' by which God speaks to man.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ "Berkeley's thoughts thus seem to have returned repeatedly to Malebranche throughout the most productive period (1707-13) of his authorship." Ibid., 210.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 211.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 215.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 224.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 224.

In this passage, McCracken points out two things that I point out in greater detail in chapter 2. He mentions that Malebranche and Berkeley hold similar theories of vision. And he also states that both philosophers accept a form of natural revelation.

McCracken is the first and only commentator to hint at what I make explicit in chapter 2 concerning natural revelation. Both Malebranche and Berkeley hold theories of natural revelation that get worked out into their epistemologies. But even McCracken misses the importance of the doctrine of natural revelation for Malebranche and Berkeley. He mentions it in an aside; as if this similarity concerning natural theology is nothing more than an interesting footnote to their theories. He fails to see the relevance of the doctrine of natural revelation to the epistemological systems of Malebranche and Berkeley.

McCracken also restates some of what we have already seen from other commentators. He points out that Berkeley follows Malebranche's theory of causation, but stops short of full occasionalism. McCracken then asks why Berkeley chose to not follow Malebranche's full occasionalism. He suggests that full occasionalism is incompatible with human freewill and that it supposes matter—an unthinking, unperceived substance – to occasion our ideas.¹²⁹ Berkeley rejected full occasionalism because he was committed to human freewill. McCracken also points out that Berkeley rejected occasionalism because it presumes the existence of matter, which he denied. But these objections aside, McCracken says that Berkeley is a partial occasionalist.

Despite these many similarities McCracken concludes:

But Berkeley was not a Malebranchist. As he insisted, his philosophy was opposed to Malebranche's over crucial topics—matter, universals, the reliability of the senses, and so on. Yet, many are the places where their notions touch—about the direct

¹²⁹ Ibid., 245-247.

dependence of nature on God, the indemonstrability of a material world, the externality of ideas, the identification of causal power with voluntary action, the certainty with which we know of spirits though we have no idea of them, and so forth; and when we remember that Berkeley read the *Search* in an early period, when he was first exploring these ideas, we can only suppose, it seems to me, that it was one of his principal guidebooks, though his own ingenuity and daring led him to follow new pathways that went well beyond the terrain charted in the *Search After Truth*.¹³⁰

McCracken does an excellent job of taking seriously Berkeley's disavowal of following Malebranche's philosophy while at the same time appreciating those areas where the two philosophers are similar.

In the nineties, Nicholas Jolley published two papers and a portion of a book contributing to this literature. For the purposes of this project, Jolley's work is very important because he introduces two separate connections between Malebranche and Berkeley which are related to the similarities that I point out later in the work.

In a paper written in 1990, Jolley considers the similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley's theories of causality.¹³¹ He points out that Berkeley was attracted to occasionalism early in his writing. But in his later published works he rejects full occasionalism for a theory that humans are also causal agents. He first introduces Malebranche's theory of occasionalism and causation and then Berkeley's rejection of Malebranche's position. Jolley points out that Berkeley's rejection of full occasionalism is a puzzle, since it seems that occasionalism fits well with his immaterialism.¹³² Up until this point, Jolley's paper is not too different from what has come before. But, for an

¹³⁰ Ibid., 253.

¹³¹ Nicholas Jolley, "Berkeley and Malebranche on Causality and Volition," in *Central Themes in Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. J. A. Cover and Mark Kulstad (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1990).

¹³² This is the same puzzle that McCracken points out. Jolley calls this departure from full occasionalism a "change for the worse". Ibid., 227.

explanation of why Berkeley changed positions concerning causation, Jolley suggests a theological rather than a philosophical explanation.¹³³ Berkeley deviates from Malebranche's occasionalism due to yet another theological commitment: what Jolley calls the Genesis doctrine. This is the commitment to the Christian doctrine that humans are made in the image of God. Berkeley rejects occasionalism because of his commitment to this other theological doctrine that humans are made in the image of God.¹³⁴ God is causally active. Since humans are made in the image of God, human minds are also causally active in the same way. In essence, Jolley argues that Berkeley criticizes Malebranche for not paying enough attention to the Genesis doctrine. Jolley is unique among the commentators we have looked at so far in that he seems to recognize the importance of theology to Berkeley.

This work by Jolley is important for my project not only because of a similar subject matter, but also because of a similar methodology. Jolley introduces a puzzle, and then explains it in light of one of Berkeley's theological commitments. This is similar to what I will claim in the body of this work, that Berkeley and Malebranche hold theological commitments that are relevant for their philosophical doctrines. This is important to notice since understanding these commitments sheds light on their philosophical systems as a whole, as well as particular aspects of those systems. But, even though Jolley comes closest to what I say here concerning theology, he nowhere

¹³³ "In the second part of the paper I shall try to explain why Berkeley felt it necessary to depart from Malebranche's teaching concerning causality by insisting that finite spirits are true causes. This will require us to look beyond purely philosophical arguments to the theological concerns which underpin his metaphysics." *Ibid.*, 228.

¹³⁴ "From Berkeley's perspective, then, Malebranche had mounted a powerful attack on idolatrous attitudes towards physical nature, but he had paid too high a price for his success: he had undermined idolatry at the cost of compromising the Genesis doctrine that the mind is made in the image of God." *Ibid.*, 238.

mentions the shared doctrine of the Trinity in Malebranche and Berkeley nor its relevance to their theories of causation.

Jolley also considers the theories of ideas of these two philosophers. He does this in two separate works. First, in *The Light of the Soul*, published in 1990, Jolley briefly mentions the relationship between Malebranche and Berkeley.¹³⁵ Other than Berkeley following Malebranche's notion that ideas are the immediate objects of perception, "their theories of ideas are really very different."¹³⁶

But Jolley again compares Malebranche's vision in God to Berkeley in a paper published six years later in 1996.¹³⁷ In this later paper, his position has changed. Rather than saying that Berkeley is justified in distancing himself from Malebranche's vision in God, Jolley argues that Malebranche, in his later works, moved toward a version of the vision in God doctrine which anticipates Berkeley's theory of vision.¹³⁸ This new development is Malebranche's theory of efficacious ideas. This is Malebranche's causal

¹³⁵ Jolley, *The Light of the Soul: Theories of Ideas in Leibniz, Malebranche, and Descartes*.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 197.

¹³⁷ Jolley, "Berkeley, Malebranche, and Vision in God."

¹³⁸ "It is tempting, then, to conclude with Genevieve Brykman that, at least on the issue of perception, the similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley are altogether superficial. Or, in other words, it seems that Berkeley is entirely right to insist on his distance from the doctrine of vision in God. In this paper I shall argue that this view is mistaken. I shall show (in section 1) that, in his later philosophy, Malebranche was moving towards a version of the vision in God doctrine which in some degree anticipates Berkeley's account of perception... I assume that if this kind of dialectical relationship between the two philosophers could be established, it would be sufficient to refute Philonous's claim that there are no principles more fundamentally opposite than Berkeley's and Malebranche's; for presumably not even Philonous would wish to make this claim about the relationship between Berkeley and Locke." *Ibid.*, 536-37.

Jolley is a very good example of arguing for a philosophical similarity between Malebranche and Berkeley; not influence. He does not attempt to give a historical explanation for the similarities between Berkeley and Malebranche. Instead, he points out that the developments in Malebranche's later philosophy most likely were not available to Berkeley, probably because Berkeley was reading an English translation of the *Search* by Taylor in 1700. "There is no direct evidence that Berkeley was familiar with Malebranche's later version of the vision in God, according to which ideas in God have the power to cause perceptions in human minds;" Jolley, "Berkeley, Malebranche, and Vision in God," 541.

theory of perception, which makes it similar to Berkeley's own causal theory of perception.¹³⁹

Following some of the French interpreters of Malebranche, Jolley suggests that Malebranche moves away from his earlier position on the vision in God. This change is so great that the early theory is rightly called a vision in God, *vision en Dieu*, and the later theory would be better called vision by God, *vision par Dieu*.¹⁴⁰ Jolley makes this distinction to point out how the later doctrine stresses God's causal action whereby ideas affect the human mind directly.¹⁴¹ Jolley concludes that when we look at Malebranche's later version of the vision in God, we see that he and Berkeley adopt "a theological version of the causal theory of perception".¹⁴² Aside from his main argument, Jolley briefly mentions other areas in which Malebranche and Berkeley are similar.

In general terms, Berkeley and Malebranche both offer examples of theocentric metaphysics of fundamentally Cartesian inspiration. Moreover, on a more specific level, it is clear that even in his published works, Berkeley is to some extent an occasionalist; he argues for the quasi-occasionalist thesis that there are no genuine causal relationships between physical phenomena from the Malebranchian premise that there is an absolutely necessary connection between a cause and its effect.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Jolley, "Berkeley, Malebranche, and Vision in God," 540.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 537. See also André Robinet, *Système Et Existence Dans L'oeuvre De Malebranche* (Paris, FR: J. Vrin, 1965), 262-63.

¹⁴¹ This later development has to do with Malebranche's theory of efficacious ideas, the doctrine that God uses ideas to affect the human mind, which I talk about in section 4.3. Unlike Jolley, I am not interested in the historical development of Malebranche's theory, I am only interested in what Malebranche thought in his most mature work. Because of this, I take the latest version of the *Search*, which had been edited many times by Malebranche, as his most mature work. It is interesting to note that, if Jolley is correct, many of the disagreements concerning the active or passive nature of the mind could be simply disagreements concerning early Malebranche verses later Malebranche. One example of an argument for the active nature of the mind in Malebranche is Susan Peppers-Bates, "Does Malebranche Need Efficacious Ideas? The Cognitive Faculties, the Ontological Status of Ideas, and Human Attention," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 43 (2005).

¹⁴² Jolley, "Berkeley, Malebranche, and Vision in God," 539.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 536.

Jolley notices the similarities between Malebranche's vision in God and Berkeley's theory of vision. But I expand upon his work in chapter two when I show that Malebranche and Berkeley both accept similar theories of divine revelation which are philosophically relevant for these epistemological doctrines.

In 2005, Lisa Downing compares the metaphysics and philosophy of science of Malebranche and Berkeley.¹⁴⁴ She begins her paper by examining the similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley on causation. While Malebranche holds to full occasionalism, Downing suggests that Berkeley is not as far from Malebranche's occasionalism as he might have intended. She calls Berkeley's position, "semioccasionalism".¹⁴⁵ While Berkeley's occasionalism differs from Malebranche's in that finite minds or spirits are also causes, it is essentially the same as Malebranche when it comes to the physical realm.¹⁴⁶ Both agree that God works according to his general laws.¹⁴⁷ She concludes that while Malebranche and Berkeley have similar metaphysical doctrines of occasionalism and causation, their philosophy of science differs in that Malebranche accepts strict mechanism while Berkeley denies it.¹⁴⁸ We find in Downing

¹⁴⁴ Lisa Downing, "Occasionalism and Strict Mechanism: Malebranche, Berkeley, Fontenelle," in *Early Modern Philosophy: Mind, Matter, and Metaphysics*, ed. Christia Mercer (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005).

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 209.

¹⁴⁶ "Berkeley allows that human minds are active, causing their own ideas of imagination and even, it seems, the movements of bodies. Nevertheless, if we restrict our attention to the physical realm, and discount the modest causal input of finite spirits, Berkeley emerges as a *Malbranchiste de bonne foi*, as one of his early critics put it. Berkeley argues, as had Malebranche, that the causes of physical change cannot be found in the realm of bodies. Berkeley's view, then, amounts to occasionalism for the physical realm, but not the spiritual; I will label this position 'semioccasionalism'." *Ibid.*, 208.

¹⁴⁷ Downing does not give much detail concerning the theories of causality between Malebranche and Berkeley. *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Downing's article is primarily interested in this issue of strict mechanism, which is the view that bodies interact only through impact. Strict mechanism is contrasted with what she calls "attractionism", which are

another example of a commentator who considers the similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley on causation but fails to notice their doctrine of the Trinity.

McCrackin and Tipton published a book whose aim is to explain Berkeley's philosophical background and source materials titled *Berkeley's Principles and Dialogues: Background Source Materials*.¹⁴⁹ McCrackin and Tipton suggest that it is open for debate whether the young Berkeley was directly influenced by Malebranche, but "it is widely accepted both that Berkeley came on it at an early stage and that it had a profound effect on him."¹⁵⁰ They suggest that Malebranche's *Search* gave focus or direction to Berkeley's thinking on matters such as the existence of bodies, causation, and errors from the senses. Nowhere do they make any connections between these similarities and the philosophical theology of Malebranche or Berkeley.

A recent article, published in a collection of essays in 2008, by Godfrey Vesey is titled "Malebranche, Arnauld, and Berkeley on the Imperceptibility of Outer Objects."¹⁵¹ Vesey considers the question concerning the source of Berkeley's notion of idea. He concludes that Berkeley got this notion from Malebranche rather than Lock. He says that there are many similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley. He concludes that "Berkeley's immaterialism is Malebranche's philosophy minus the external world and

theories which suggest that bodies may have non-impact causal powers. Newton's theory of gravity is such a theory. *Ibid.*, 206.

¹⁴⁹ Charles J. McCracken and I. C. Tipton, eds., *Berkeley's Principles and Dialogues: Background and Source Materials* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁵¹ Godfrey Vesey, "Malebranche, Arnauld and Berkeley on the Imperceptibility of Outer Objects," in *New Interpretations of Berkeley's Thought*, ed. Stephen H. Daniel (New York, NY: Humanity Books, 2008).

minus our ‘seeing all things in God’.¹⁵² Vesey does not mention the religious or theological similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley.

Finally, Marc Hight notices yet another similarity between Malebranche and Berkeley in his book, *Idea and Ontology*, published in 2008.¹⁵³ Hight’s thesis is that the philosophers of the Early Modern period did not abandon the traditional ontological distinction between substance and mode. Hight does not directly consider the similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley since that is not a part of his agenda, but his conclusion of each philosopher shows that he takes both to hold a similar theory of ideas in regard to the substance/mode distinction. He concludes that Malebranche and Berkeley both accept, but stretch, the traditional ontological distinction concerning their ideas. Malebranche’s ideas are “unambiguously rather like substances”, they are “second-rate” substances but not substances *per se*.¹⁵⁴ Hight says similar things concerning Berkeley’s ideas. Berkeley’s ideas are “quasi substances”: “they behave like substances except for the fact that they are ontologically dependent upon minds.”¹⁵⁵ Hight points out a similarity between the notion of substance for both Malebranche and Berkeley, but he does not mention their shared acceptance of the Trinity. As I show in chapter 3, the doctrine of the Trinity accepted by Malebranche and Berkeley is philosophically relevant for their theories of substance. Because of their acceptance of

¹⁵² Ibid., 115.

¹⁵³ Marc A. Hight, *Idea and Ontology: An Essay in Early Modern Metaphysics of Ideas* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University, 2008).

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 59.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 141. Hight does not explain the difference between a second-rate substance and a quasi-substance.

that theory, they are motivated to produce an account of substance that makes sense of the Trinitarian claim that God is one substance and three persons.

This project makes a direct contribution to this secondary literature that compares the philosophical systems of Malebranche and Berkeley. My work here supports many of the similarities already mentioned by these commentators. In most cases, their conclusions could be made stronger with a realization of the additional similarities between the philosophical theology of Malebranche and Berkeley. But more than just supporting this literature, I point out that there are important similarities in the doctrines of divine revelation and the Trinity held by both philosophers that have not been mentioned. Throughout the discussion of the literature I showed that the religious or theological similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley have been hinted at, but they have not been fully recognized or developed. I expand on these themes which are merely mentioned in this literature and contribute original material that has not been mentioned in the literature. This is the first work to argue that these two philosophers hold similar doctrines of philosophical theology.

CHAPTER 2

Divine Revelation in the Epistemology of Malebranche and Berkeley

This chapter is the first of two in which I give my primary argument that Malebranche and Berkeley hold similar theories of philosophical theology and those theories are philosophically relevant to their philosophical systems. This chapter focuses on Malebranche and Berkeley's similar theories of divine revelation. Both hold the position that God directly causes certain psychological states in humans. Both also accept the traditional distinction from Christian theology between special and general revelation.¹ Once we see these two similarities in philosophical theology, we can see relevant epistemological similarities in their philosophy. Malebranche and Berkeley construct theories of epistemology that emphasize God's general revelation. Both also agree that God's revelation accounts for the majority of human knowledge.

To show that Berkeley and Malebranche accept similar theories of divine revelation, I must first introduce this doctrine from Christian theology and some of the facets of it that are found in both philosophers. I do this in 2.1. Then, in section 2.2, I focus on Malebranche and his theory of divine revelation. Malebranche's vision in God is his doctrine of general revelation. In 2.3, I show that Berkeley accepts a theory of divine revelation and that his language of vision, an important feature of his epistemology, is his account of general revelation. Finally in 2.4, I summarize in detail the similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley's theories of divine revelation. I show how these doctrines of divine revelation from their philosophical theology shed light on some of the interpretive issues and disputes in the secondary literature concerning the philosophical relationship between Malebranche and Berkeley.

¹ I will explain each of these features of divine revelation below.

2.1

I begin by giving an account of what I mean by ‘revelation’ and in particular ‘divine revelation’. I need to do this because these terms are used differently in different contexts. Moreover, it is possible for someone to hold a theory of divine revelation but never call it such. Indeed, this is the case with Berkeley. As I point out in sections 2.2 and 2.3, Malebranche and Berkeley differ concerning how they talk about divine revelation. Malebranche uses the terms ‘divine revelation’ at times while Berkeley does not. But, despite the terms they adopt, both embrace divine revelation. This section is necessary so that we can locate the doctrine of divine revelation even if the author does not choose to use this theologically motivated language. So, to be able to recognize a theory of revelation in these philosophers, we must first introduce what we are seeking.

It is necessary to define ‘revelation’ first, and then define what it means for a revelation to be divine. We use “reveal” as a predicate with many different entities filling the role of subject. There are at least four different categories of things that are said to reveal. God reveals. This is known as divine revelation.² But humans can also reveal.³ Perhaps more surprisingly, even animals and inanimate objects are sometimes said to reveal.⁴ When all these purported claims of revelation are grouped together, I call that category ‘generic revelation’. This sort of revelation is generic in the sense that is not restricted by attaching any of the qualifiers. Divine, human, and the other kinds of

² For example: “God revealed to Moses that he would lead the children of Israel.”

³ We could call this *Human revelation*. For example: “Billy Roe revealed his psychological state when he decorated the headstones of his diseased family members with gold spray paint.”

⁴ We could call the first *Non-human creature revelation*. For example: “My dog in High School, Sanders, revealed his love for peanut butter by eating it enthusiastically.” We could call the second *Inanimate revelation*. For example: “The ice on my Toyota Matrix revealed that there was a freeze during the night.”

revelation mentioned all fit into the category of generic revelation. It is revelation in the broadest sense possible. Within generic revelation, a distinction can be made between agent and non-agent revelation. Agent revelation is revelation between agents. Both the revealer and the one being revealed to, the revealee, are agents.⁵ Both human and divine revelation are categories of agent revelation since agents are involved in both cases.⁶

Revelation is typically defined as ‘to unveil’ or ‘to disclose something that was formerly hidden’.⁷ Nicholas Wolterstorff gives a nice treatment of what I am calling generic revelation in *Divine Discourse*.⁸ Put simply, revelation is making the unknown known.⁹ Revelation occurs when ignorance is dispelled, or at least when ignorance should be dispelled if proper attention and interpretation skills are present.¹⁰ However, revelation is not dispelling just any sort of ignorance. Wolterstorff says that there is an additional requirement which he calls “unveiling the veiled” or “disclosing the hidden”¹¹.

⁵ Applying this distinction to the categories in note 1, it follows that of the four categories, only divine and human revelation are examples of agent revelation. Agent and non-agent revelation is a common distinction. See Bruce Reichenbach, “Divine Revelation,” in *For Faith and Clarity: Philosophical Contributions to Christian Theology*, ed. James K. Beilby (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing 2006). And Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim That God Speaks* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

⁶ In both human and divine revelation there are two agents. In human revelation humans fill both slots of revealer and revealee. In divine revelation, God fills one slot and a human or group of humans fill the other slot.

⁷ This is the typical definition given for revelation in the secondary literature such as: Reichenbach, “Divine Revelation,” 86. See also John Baillie, *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1956). The Compact Oxford English Dictionary has these three entries. 1. the revealing of something previously unknown. 2. a surprising or remarkable thing. 3. the disclosure of knowledge to humans by divine or supernatural means.

⁸ Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim That God Speaks*. Another good treatment of generic revelation is Reichenbach, “Divine Revelation.”

⁹ Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim That God Speaks*, 19.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹¹ “Dispelling ignorance becomes revelation when it has, to some degree and in some way, the character of unveiling the veiled, of uncovering the covered, of exposing the character of the unveiling view. The

This requirement points out that something must be formerly hidden before it can be revealed. So, generic revelation occurs when the veiled is unveiled and ignorance is dispelled.

Divine revelation is a subset of generic agent revelation. In divine revelation, God is serving as one of the agents with a human, or a group of humans, serving as the other. This is most typically understood as God serving as the revealer and humans as the revealee. But, according to the definition so far, it would also include accounts of humans revealing things to God, as through prayers or other such petitions.¹² However, for the remainder of this chapter, I will use divine revelation as agent revelation where God acts as the revealer. Applied to the definition given above, divine revelation occurs when the veiled is unveiled and ignorance is dispelled with God acting as the revealer.

Many different varieties or forms of divine revelation fit the definition I have given. Divine revelation can refer to God directly speaking in an audible voice. It can also refer to some form of mystical experience from meditation. It is perhaps most common to limit divine revelation to some set of religious scriptures such as the Bible or the Koran. Any of these forms of divine revelation could be a means by which God makes the unknown known or dispels ignorance.

I need not examine every form of divine revelation here. I need only explain those forms of divine revelation that Malebranche and Berkeley accept. As I showed in chapter 1, Malebranche and Berkeley were trained in Christian theology. This means that

counterpart of the revealed is the hidden. The difference between just telling somebody something and revealing it, is that telling becomes revealing when, to some degree and in some way, it discloses the hidden." *Ibid.*, 23-24.

¹² If God is omniscient, then humans cannot reveal anything to him since it is impossible to dispel God's ignorance.

both would have been familiar with the traditional account of divine revelation. Those trained in Roman Catholic and Protestant theological schools would learn essentially the same doctrine of divine revelation. Divine revelation is not a contested doctrine among these two theological traditions.¹³ So, Malebranche the Catholic priest and Berkeley the Anglican bishop would have studied the same basic theological doctrine concerning divine revelation.¹⁴ We will see in sections 2.2 and 2.3 that both Malebranche and Berkeley accept the doctrine of divine revelation.

Christian theologians have traditionally spoken about two species or forms of divine revelation: special and general revelation. This same distinction is sometimes classified as a distinction between supernatural and natural revelation.¹⁵ I introduce and explain those aspects of this distinction that are relevant for both Malebranche and Berkeley. This distinction between special and general revelation can be found throughout the history of Christian theology, from the Early Church Fathers to the most

¹³ As I say in chapter 3, the Trinity is another doctrine where both Roman Catholics and Protestants would not hold any significant disagreements. This is not true concerning many doctrines such as the church, justification by faith, or the sacraments.

¹⁴ One of the differences between Roman Catholic and Protestant theology concerning divine revelation is that Protestants might say that Catholics accept more things into the category of special revelation than do Protestants. Since the Reformation, Protestants hold a doctrine of *sola Scriptura* or Scripture alone is God's special revelation while Catholics typically accept church councils and Papal decrees as special revelation. But these differences do not come into play here.

¹⁵ Special, or supernatural, revelation is also often called particular revelation. I do not intend to give a complete historical overview of the distinction between these two species of divine revelation nor give a full account of this distinction, but only point out what is necessary for this project. For a good historical treatment of revelation from within the Christian tradition see Bruce A. Demarest, *General Revelation: Historical Views and Contemporary Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982). Other works along the same lines are Paul Helm, *The Divine Revelation: The Basic Issues* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1982). G. C. Berkouwer, "General and Special Divine Revelation," in *Revelation and the Bible: Contemporary Evangelical Thought*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing 1958). And Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 6 vols. (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1976).

recent works on the subject.¹⁶ The basic idea is that general revelation occurs when God reveals something to humans through some natural means. Special revelation occurs when God reveals something to humans through some supernatural means. It is common for theologians to explain this distinction as a two book theory. God has two books through which he reveals: the first book is the book of Scripture, or special revelation, and the second book is the book of nature, or general revelation.¹⁷ Traditional Christian theology often places the emphasis on the book of Scripture, saying that that special revelation is required to properly interpret the book of nature.¹⁸

Special revelation is described as having many attributes. It occurs when God reveals through supernatural means. It is miraculous. God is overriding the natural course of things to reveal. It is God's direct, unmediated revelation. God is also

¹⁶ Here is an example of this distinction in revelation from a respected theologian that lived about 100 years after Malebranche and Berkeley, B.B. Warfield. I chose Warfield because his work is dedicated to the doctrine of revelation, and also because Warfield thought of himself as summarizing the traditional account of divine revelation rather than introducing new elements in the doctrine. So, the doctrine as it is summarized here by Warfield is similar to the doctrine of revelation that would have been familiar to both Malebranche and Berkeley:

“These two species or stages of revelation have been commonly distinguished from one another by the distinctive names of natural and supernatural revelation, or general and special revelation, or natural and soteriological revelation. Each of these modes of discriminating them has its particular fitness and describes a real difference between the two in nature, reach or purpose. The one is communicated through the media of natural phenomena, occurring in the course of Nature or of history; the other implies an intervention in the natural course of things and is not merely in source but in mode supernatural. The one is addressed generally to all intelligent creatures, and is therefore accessible to all men; the other is addressed to a special class of sinners, to whom God would make known His salvation. The one has in view to meet and supply the natural need of creatures for knowledge of their God; the other to rescue broken and deformed sinners from their sin and its consequences.” B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (London, UK: Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1951), 74.

¹⁷ McCracken refers to this two book explanation. Charles J. McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1983), 225.

¹⁸ Jonathan Edwards, a contemporary philosopher and theologian of Malebranche and Berkeley states this priority of special revelation clearly:

“The book of Scripture is the interpreter of the book of nature in two ways, viz., by declaring to us those spiritual mysteries that are indeed signified and typified in the constitution of the natural world; and secondly, in actually making application of the signs and types in the book of nature as representations of those spiritual mysteries in many instances. . . .” Jonathan Edwards, *Works*, ed. Various Editors (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1957-), unpublished note 156.

exclusive concerning this revelation, meaning that there is only a certain person, or group of people, who receive special revelation. The content of special revelation concerns themes related to human salvation or other spiritual truths. While some theologians in Malebranche and Berkeley's time would have allowed that God still reveals supernaturally through direct communication or mystical experience, the majority of theologians in the modern period held that such forms of special revelation had ceased. Instead, God's special revelation is limited to religious works such as the Christian scriptures.¹⁹ So, the Bible is the best representative of special revelation in the modern period of philosophy.

General revelation, on the other hand, occurs when God reveals through natural means rather than supernatural. It is an indirect form of revelation, mediated through some natural phenomenon. The idea is that God writes the book of nature through creation. Whereas special revelation was exclusive, natural revelation is inclusive. God reveals to all humans through the book of nature; it is not reserved for a special, privileged group. While the content of special revelation was human salvation, the content of general revelation is much less specific. One can learn many things by studying the book of nature: theological principles about God, ethical truths, and even truths concerning science or mathematics. The book of general revelation is akin to natural law.²⁰

¹⁹ This is where the one difference between Malebranche's Catholicism and Berkeley's Protestantism concerning special revelation could be at play. Protestants since the Reformation denied any ongoing supernatural revelation from God because of their doctrine of *sola scriptura*. Catholics on the other hand were open to ongoing special revelation, but this would typically be found through church council or Papal decree. But this potential difference between Malebranche and Berkeley is not relevant in this project since the main emphasis is on their views of general revelation.

²⁰ It is typical to equate natural revelation with the natural law. Both come without the need of God's special revelation.

Not every early modern philosopher accepted the traditional account of divine revelation. Some of those that did accept this doctrine made significant alterations to fit their philosophical systems. For example, John Locke shows that he accepts divine revelation when he defines faith in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.

Faith, on the other side, is the Assent to any Proposition, not thus made out by the Deductions of Reason; but upon the Credit of the Proposer, as coming from GOD, in some extraordinary way of Communication. This way of discovering Truths to Men we call *Revelation*.²¹

What Locke is calling “revelation” is really only special revelation. Locke wanted to define all revelation in terms of supernatural revelation. From this quote, it seems that Locke has no theory of natural revelation.²² In section 2.3 I will show that Berkeley seems to hold the same position as Locke, he defines revelation in terms of supernatural revelation only. But Berkeley does in fact have a theory of natural revelation, even though he does not use the term “natural revelation”.

Now that the theological context of both Malebranche and Berkeley concerning revelation has been set, I will mention one contemporary account of divine revelation that is similar to the accounts held by Malebranche and Berkeley. Many contemporary philosophers in the analytical tradition have branched out from the traditional distinction between special and general revelation and added their own nuances.²³ Of these

²¹ Italics and capitalization in the original. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1979), 141. Book 4, Chapter 18, section 2.

²² It is possible that Locke does in fact have a theory of general revelation and does not call it general revelation.

²³ Here are some of the more important contemporary works on divine revelation that present different nuances: Cardinal Avery Dulles lists five different models of divine revelation: revelation as doctrine, history, inner experience, dialectal presence, and new awareness Avery Robert Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983). Robert Trembath gives two broad categories: divergence and convergence theories of divine revelation. Kern Robert Trembath, *Divine Revelation: Our Moral Relation with God* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1991).

contemporary distinctions, George Mavrodes has introduced one that is remarkably similar to the theories of divine revelation held by both Malebranche and Berkeley.

Mavrodes in *Revelation in Religious Belief* presents a model of revelation that he calls the causation model of divine revelation.²⁴ The main idea in this model is God's causal activity. God causes or produces psychological effects in his human creations in a direct manner.²⁵ Mavrodes gives an example of his causation model of divine revelation:

Suppose, for example, that someone who has no discernable theistic belief throughout his life goes to bed one night, and wakes up in the morning with the firm conviction that there is a God who is the creator of the world.²⁶

The causation model suggests that God directly causes a new belief in this sleepy agnostic by inserting the idea of theism into his mind overnight. Through this causal

²⁴ He actually presents three models, but the first two are not relevant for this project since they are not similar to the positions of Malebranche or Berkeley. Mavrodes calls these first two models the communication and the manifestation models of revelation. The communication model picks out those instances where the revealer makes the unknown known through communication. For example, I reveal that I am going bald by telling you that my hair is falling out. God would be using the communication model when he speaks to humans. The manifestation model is when the revealer makes the unknown known by showing something to be true. For example, if I show that I am going bald by taking off my baseball cap, I have manifested my baldness. Examples of God using the manifestation model include arguments from design or supernatural, mystical encounter. In the former, it is purported that God reveals things about himself in the order and design of the universe that he created while in the later God reveals something about himself through a personal, subjective encounter. George I. Mavrodes, *Revelation in Religious Belief* (Philadelphia: PA: Temple University Press, 1988). He also presents a similar account of divine revelation in George I. Mavrodes, "Revelation and the Bible," *Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers* 6 (1989).

²⁵ Mavrodes says concerning the causation model of divine revelation:
"The third model that I want to consider—and it is the one that I have already said may not fit the general idea of revelation as well as might be wished—is that of causation. Suppose that we think of God as being powerful, perhaps even omnipotent. And suppose that we think of God as being the creator of the world. It would seem plausible to suppose that an agent of this sort would probably be able to produce psychological effects in human beings. In fact, it might well seem plausible to think that God could produce some such effects directly." Mavrodes, *Revelation in Religious Belief*, 37.

²⁶Ibid., 37-38.

activity, God revealed in a very direct way a certain psychological effect, namely a belief that there is a God who created the world.²⁷

Mavrodes' theory is unique on a few accounts. First of all, neither of the traditional distinctions concerning divine revelation have anything to say about God directly causing ideas or psychological states in humans. It is also unique because of the directness in which God alters the psychological states of humans. In this model God uses no mediator such as experience of nature or the reading of a religious text to change psychological states. God works directly on the human mind.²⁸

Mavrodes suggests that many philosophers and theologians have held similar views to his causation model of revelation. Among them he names Descartes, John Calvin, and some of the contemporary reformed epistemologists. For example, Mavrodes suggests that Descartes' argument for the existence of God from the third meditation is an example of the theory of causation.²⁹ Descartes holds the concept of God as infinite,

²⁷ He introduces this model through the image of a black box vending machine. This machine is a black box because we have no way of knowing what is going on inside, all we see are the inputs and the corresponding outputs. In Mavrodes' black box, when you put a coin in you receive a candy bar from the dispenser. He conjectures that there are a few ways that such a vending machine might work. One is that the machine might hold an internal stock of candy bars. When the coin is inserted, the mechanism releases the candy bar. Another option is that the machine holds all the ingredients for a candy bar. In this case the candy bar is actually manufactured inside the machine when a coin is placed. Yet another option is that the machine holds neither candy bars nor ingredients. Instead, the coin prompts a signal to be sent to the warehouse which in turn sends the candy bar (or packet of ingredients) to the dispenser. The final option Mavrodes considers is that the machine merely takes a coin and turns it into a candy bar. In this fourth option, none of the other mechanisms are at play from the other options. This final case for turning the coin into a candy bar is useful for Mavrodes in explaining his causation theory of divine revelation since the input and the output are very closely related, he suggests more closely related than in the earlier cases. The candy bar is actually made, somehow, from the material of the coin. Mavrodes applied this black box to his theory by suggesting that God could have created humans with a psychological state like a vending machine. When certain stimuli are placed into us, the result is the production of certain beliefs. The input from God is causally related to the output in the mind. *Ibid.*, 36-40.

²⁸ Some philosophers of religion may object to this theory of Mavrodes by saying that God would never directly act on the human mind in this way because it, in some way, nullifies the free will or dignity of man.

²⁹ Mavrodes, *Revelation in Religious Belief*, 55-63.

eternal, immutable, independent, all-knowing, all-powerful, and the being by which all things were created. Descartes then concludes that this concept of God could not have been created by his own mind. Descartes concludes that this concept came from God, or, in Mavrodes' interpretation, it was produced in him by God. That is to say that God directly caused him to have this concept.

But Mavrodes' claim that Descartes' argument is an example of the causation model of divine revelation does not work as well as he suggests. This is because the idea of God was not directly produced in the mind of Descartes by God. In Descartes' view, this concept of God is innate. Mavrodes is not ignorant that Descartes held a theory of innate ideas. He claims that there are two Cartesian theses in this argument which are logically independent. The first is the claim that Descartes held such a concept of God. The second is that the concept of God is innate. Mavrodes suggests that Descartes' argument rests on the former and not the latter. He states that Descartes is only pointing out God has caused this concept, but it does not matter how God has caused it. "The argument requires that God be the cause of Descartes' having the concept, but it is completely neutral about how God causes that effect."³⁰

I take it that Mavrodes is pointing out that in his model God could be acting directly, but it is not necessary that the action be direct. When introducing his model, he says this concerning the directness of God's action:

It would seem plausible to suppose that an agent of this sort would probably be able to produce psychological effects in human beings. In fact, it might well seem plausible to think that God could produce some such effects directly.³¹

³⁰ Ibid., 62.

³¹ Ibid., 37.

So, while the most natural way to consider God's action in the case of the sleepy agnostic is a direct, divine action, Mavrodes wants to leave open the possibility of some other, indirect action whereby God causes the idea of theism.

Even so, Mavrodes' use of Descartes' argument as an example of his causation model is still not a good choice. Contrary to Mavrodes' claim, Descartes' belief in innate ideas diminishes the use of this argument as an example of the causation model of divine revelation. In Mavrodes' own example God caused an agnostic to wake up with the belief of theism. If this were explained as an innate idea that somehow the agnostic realized, the example is not a clear example of God's causal activity. Mavrodes' argument would benefit from a historical example that does a better job of explaining what is going on in the sleepy agnostic. This would be a theory that explains God's action in a more direct way than innate ideas.³² As I explain in the next two sections, either Malebranche or Berkeley would have served as a better example for this theory than Descartes. Both Malebranche and Berkeley hold causal theories of divine revelation according to ideas.

The doctrine of divine revelation is relevant for epistemology and knowledge. Since divine revelation occurs when God dispels ignorance in humans by unveiling the veiled, it is obvious that a theory of divine revelation will have epistemological consequences. Any philosopher who accepts a theory of divine revelation must also accept that some knowledge comes from that revelation since God is active in producing at least some human knowledge.³³ I argue in the next two sections that Malebranche and

³² But this action need not be direct to do a better job of explaining this than Descartes.

³³ Of course, this is only true if you accept my account of divine revelation. Some may argue that revelation does not involve dispelling ignorance. I am also assuming, naturally I think, that ignorance is

Berkeley hold a similar position; most human knowledge is the product of divine revelation.

Once it has been determined how much knowledge comes from divine revelation in the account of any given philosopher, a further distinction comes into play. This is the distinction between general and special revelation. What kind of revelation is responsible for producing knowledge? The knowledge that is produced by God could be produced by special revelation, general revelation, or a mixture of both. Malebranche and Berkeley agree that the emphasis is on general revelation in producing human knowledge.

I have now defined ‘revelation’ and ‘divine revelation’. I have introduced the historical distinction between general and special revelation. I have summarized Mavrodes’ causal theory of revelation. And I have introduced my claim that Malebranche and Berkeley agree that most human knowledge comes from general revelation. Now, the remainder of this chapter is dedicated to applying what has been said here concerning divine revelation to the theories of epistemology found in Malebranche and Berkeley.

2.2

In section 1.2, I introduced Malebranche’s primary theory of knowledge; the vision in God. This is a unique, theologically motivated epistemological doctrine where humans see ideas in God.³⁴ My principle claim in this section is that Malebranche’s vision in God is his theory of revelation. More specifically, it is his theory of general

dispelled by knowledge. But, someone may suggest otherwise and also reject the implication that I point out here.

³⁴ Nadler refers to this doctrine as a “theocentric theory of knowledge”. Steven Nadler, *The Cambridge Companion to Malebranche* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 2.

revelation. For the purposes of my argument, I do not need to give a comprehensive account of Malebranche's theory of divine revelation. I need only point out those features of Malebranche's theory that are similar to Berkeley.

While many commentators overlook the relationship between divine revelation and the vision in God, this is not always the case. A handful of interpreters have classified Malebranche's epistemological project as involving divine revelation. Andrew Pyle, for example, writes that for Malebranche, "all our knowledge is some form or other of revelation."³⁵ Other commentators also notice how his theory of epistemology is related to divine revelation in some form or another.³⁶ Still, even those who notice Malebranche's theory of revelation merely mention it without any attempt to explain how his theory of epistemology can best be understood as a divine revelation. Malebranche holds a theory of divine revelation and his epistemology is structured so that it can be held consistently alongside it.

Malebranche accepts the doctrine of divine revelation. While presenting the vision in God in *The Search after Truth*, Malebranche explicitly says that God reveals to human minds.

³⁵ Andrew Pyle, *Malebranche* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2002). Pyle also states "For Malebranche, as for Augustine, all knowledge is revelation." on page 9. Also, "In the final analysis, all knowledge is revelation, and attention to a problem (e.g. in mathematics) is just a form of prayer. Illumination always comes from without." On page 56.

³⁶ These commentators recognize that Malebranche calls this divine action "revelation", but they do not attempt to explain what that means. Steven Nadler, *Malebranche and Ideas* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992). McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*. Nicholas Jolley, "Intellect and Illumination in Malebranche," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 32 (1994). Nicholas Jolley, *The Light of the Soul: Theories of Ideas in Leibniz, Malebranche, and Descartes* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1990). Susan Peppers-Bates, "Does Malebranche Need Efficacious Ideas? The Cognitive Faculties, the Ontological Status of Ideas, and Human Attention," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 43 (2005). André Robinet, *Système Et Existence Dans L'oeuvre De Malebranche* (Paris, FR: J. Vrin, 1965). Tad M. Schmaltz, *Malebranche's Theory of the Soul: A Cartesian Interpretation* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996). Tad M. Schmaltz, "Malebranche on Ideas and the Vision in God," in *The Cambridge Companion to Malebranche*, ed. Steven Nadler (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000). And Ferdinand Alquie, *Le Cartésianisme De Malebranche* (Paris, FR: J. Vrin, 1974).

Thus, the mind can see God's works in Him, provided that God wills to reveal to it what in Him represents them. (LO 230)

Malebranche uses the term 'revelation' or 'reveal' widely in both the *Search* and the *Dialogues*.³⁷ A revelation for Malebranche occurs when God acts and causes a psychological change in human minds. Revelation is a causal relationship between God and my mind. When God reveals, he causes me to experience psychologically what he has caused.

Thus, since God can reveal everything to minds simply by willing that they see what is in their midst, i.e., what in Him is related to and represents these things, there is no likelihood that He does otherwise, or that He does so by producing as many infinities of infinite numbers of ideas as there are created minds. (LO 231)

God reveals directly to the human mind through a psychological causal relationship.

Divine revelation on Malebranche's account is God making the unknown known through this causal action.

Malebranche also uses other terms to pick out the same causal activity by God.

Malebranche uses terms like 'enlighten' and 'illumination' to express the same idea that God causally affects human psychological states.

We do not consider that bodies can act on the mind only as occasional causes, that the mind cannot immediately or by itself possess anything corporeal and cannot unite itself to an object except through its knowledge and love, that only God is above it and can reward or punish it through sensations of pleasure or pain, can enlighten or move it—in a word, only He can act on it.³⁸ (LO 365)

Nor should the understanding be taken to obey the will by producing in itself the ideas of things the soul desires—for the understanding does not act. All it does is receive illumination or the ideas of things through the necessary union it has with

³⁷ He does use these two terms more frequently on the *Dialogues* than in the *Search*, which mostly likely can be explained by the fact that in the *Dialogues* Malebranche is deliberately applying his philosophy to issues in metaphysics and religion. Hence, the full name is *Dialogues on Metaphysics and Religion*. Even though he uses the terms more in the *Dialogues*, I think that his theory of revelation is pervasive in both works.

³⁸ Also, "Surely, only God, only His always efficacious substance, can affect, enlighten and nourish our minds, as St. Augustine says." (LO 626)

Him who contains all beings in intelligible fashion, as has been explained in the third book. (LO 559)

These passages show that when Malebranche speaks of revelation he is talking about the causal action of God whereby God causes mental or psychological states in the minds of humans. He refers to this divine action in at least three ways: reveal, enlighten, and illuminate.³⁹ This is not to say that Malebranche means precisely the same thing by using all three terms, but only that the same causal work of God is in view. The three terms are basically saying the same thing concerning God's action.⁴⁰ In each of these cases Malebranche is getting at the same idea: God causally affects mental states in humans. Therefore, I treat these three terms as basically synonymous in Malebranche's theory of revelation: reveal, enlighten, and illuminate.

In section 2.1, I introduced Mavrodes' causation theory of divine revelation. This is the theory whereby God directly causes psychological states in human minds. I criticized Mavrodes' use of Descartes' argument for the existence of God as a paradigm example of this theory. Mavrodes could have used Malebranche as the representative example of his theory instead of Descartes. Mavrodes does not mention Malebranche as holding a version of the causation theory of divine revelation, but Malebranche's theory of revelation fits the theory presented by Mavrodes seamlessly. Malebranche held that

³⁹ In a passage concerning divine ideas, Malebranche also equates God's causal action with enlightenment: "We would see that the soul is essentially a substance that thinks or perceives everything that affects it, that it is an intelligence that nonetheless is actually made intelligent only through the efficacy of divine ideas, which alone can act on it, affect it, modify it, enlighten it, as I have explained elsewhere." (LO 560)

⁴⁰ I say it is the same basic action because it is possible that Malebranche is using each of these three terms to point out different aspects of God's action. For example, it is possible that when he uses the term "enlighten" Malebranche is focusing on the result of God's action in the human mind. While when he uses "reveal" he is focusing on the action of God itself. But my main point here is that all three of them are referring to the same general thing: the action of God in causing or producing mental states. Any other nuances between the three terms would not take away from my general claim.

God reveals things to humans by causing psychological effects in them. Malebranche's theory of revelation can account for Mavrodes's sleepy agnostic example. The agnostic at one point has no discernable belief in God, but God reveals or illuminates him and produces an idea of God in his mind. Malebranche is a much better example of Mavrodes' causation model of divine revelation than Descartes. Malebranche's theory of divine revelation is a historical example of the causation model.

It is worthwhile to stop and consider an objection at this point. If Malebranche's theory of divine revelation is God directly causing psychological states, nothing substantively differentiates it from Malebranche's occasionalism. Or, another way to state this same objection is that when Malebranche uses the term "reveal", he is merely dressing up his occasionalism in religious verbiage.

It is true that Malebranche's theory of divine revelation is closely connected with his theory of occasionalism, but this is to be expected. Malebranche's epistemological doctrine of the vision in God, which I argue later is an important feature of Malebranche's theory of divine revelation, is closely related to his occasionalism. Jolley points out that the Malebranche's vision in God and occasionalism share the same theme of extreme dependence on God.

Vision in God is of course a thesis about the mind's union with God; occasionalism, at least in its specific form, is a thesis about the mind's relationship with the body. More strikingly perhaps, it is characteristic of both doctrines that they place man in a condition of extreme dependence on God; indeed, they might be seen as respectively ontological and epistemological versions of this theme.⁴¹

⁴¹ Jolley, *The Light of the Soul: Theories of Ideas in Leibniz, Malebranche, and Descartes*, 99. McCracken also sees this connection. "Again, every created thing depends wholly and directly upon its Creator. The doctrine of the vision of all things in God is only an acknowledgement of this dependence in one particular domain—that of human knowledge." McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*, 66. Pyle also points out the same epistemological implications of Malebranche's occasionalism. "Just as occasionalism emphasizes the causal dependence of all creatures on the divine will, the Vision in God emphasizes our absolute cogitative dependence on the divine intellect. Just as I have no real causal powers of my own, but

Since I argue that Malebranche's vision in God is an integral part of his theory of divine revelation, it is not surprising that it also has much in common with his occasionalism. I agree that we should not be surprised to find that Malebranche's occasionalism leads him to think that God is able to cause psychological effects. This connection has not been clearly explained in terms of divine revelation.

But Malebranche's theory of divine revelation is more than his theory of occasionalism dressed up in religious verbiage. The most obvious difference is that divine revelation concerns knowledge. Divine revelation occurs when God acts upon the human mind and makes the unknown known. This seems to create a problem for Malebranche concerning false beliefs. According to Malebranche's occasionalism, only God can act upon the mind.⁴² This implies that God acts upon the mind in the same way regardless of whether he is causing knowledge or a false belief. Given only Malebranche's occasionalism, God produces my knowledge as well as my false beliefs.

For example, suppose that I currently hold the true belief that it is hot outside and I also currently hold the false belief that my car's air conditioner will sufficiently cool me down when I get to my car. However, I am not aware that one of my sworn enemies has broken into my car and destroyed my air conditioner. Both of these beliefs are held for

can only invoke His aid to move my own body, so I have no real cognitive powers of my own, but must invoke His aid in order to understand anything at all." Pyle, *Malebranche*, 56.

For treatments of Malebranche's occasionalism that fail to mention that it is also related to Malebranche's epistemology see. Lisa Downing, "Occasionalism and Strict Mechanism: Malebranche, Berkeley, Fontenelle," in *Early Modern Philosophy: Mind, Matter, and Metaphysics*, ed. Christia Mercer (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005). Nicholas Jolley, "Berkeley and Malebranche on Causality and Volition," in *Central Themes in Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. J. A. Cover and Mark Kulstad (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1990). McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*. Steven Nadler, "Malebranche on Causation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Malebranche*, ed. Steven Nadler (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Andrew Pessin, "Does Continuous Creation Entail Occasionalism? Malebranche (and Descartes)," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 30 (2000).

⁴² "Surely, only God, only His always efficacious substance, can affect, enlighten and nourish our minds, as St. Augustine says." (LO 626)

various reasons, but, according to Malebranche's occasionalism, God is the cause of both. So, in this example, God has caused me to hold one true belief and one false one. Suppose further that the true belief meets the requirements for knowledge, whatever those may be. If this is the case, God is the cause of our knowledge as well as our errors. This is a problem for Malebranche because he holds that God is not a deceiver and cannot be the cause of errors.⁴³

Malebranche's theory of divine revelation helps resolve this puzzle. As I show below, Malebranche says that God reveals in two ways: through special revelation and through general revelation. To equate Malebranche's theory of divine revelation with his occasionalism is to ignore this distinction. It makes all revelation special revelation. Malebranche thinks that his theory of revelation or enlightenment resolves this puzzle.

Thus, there is a God and a true God who never deceives us, although He does not always enlighten us; and we are often mistaken when we do not have His enlightenment. (LO 482)

We will see below how Malebranche thinks we can be mistaken.⁴⁴

As I have already mentioned, not only does Malebranche accept divine revelation, he also accepts the traditional distinction from Christian theology between general and

⁴³ "Thus, there is a God and a true God who never deceives us" (LO 482)

⁴⁴ There are still difficulties and lingering questions concerning Malebranche's theory of revelation. Other than further investigations concerning how exactly Malebranche's occasionalism is related to his divine revelation, there is also a question concerning the role of natural judgments on Malebranche's theory of divine revelation. For good treatments of natural judgments, but no mention of their relationship to divine revelation, see: Pyle, *Malebranche* 239-42. and McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy* 31-34. There is also a question concerning the role of God in producing knowledge and the role of humans in Malebranche's account of divine revelation.

"Illumination enlightens our mind and makes us aware of the good without actually or efficaciously leading us to love it. ... Illumination does not lead by itself; it merely permits us to lead ourselves, freely and by ourselves, to the good it presents to us when we already love it; illumination leaves us entirely to ourselves. (LO 563)

special revelation.⁴⁵

“And as the existence of created things does not depend on our wills but upon that of the Creator, it is again clear that we cannot be assured of their existence except by some kind of revelation, either natural or supernatural.” (LO 319)

“Hence, natural revelation, which is consequent upon the general laws of the union of the soul and body, is now subject to error. I shall tell you the reasons for this. However, particular revelation can never lead directly to error, because God cannot will to deceive us.” (DM 10)

In these passages Malebranche makes a distinction between natural and supernatural or particular revelation. As I pointed out in 2.1, these are other ways of referring to the traditional distinction between special and general revelation. Supernatural and particular revelation are akin to special revelation and natural revelation is akin to general revelation. In Dialogue 6 of the *Dialogues on Metaphysics and Religion*, Malebranche explains this distinction between general and special revelation in his own terms.

In general there are two kinds of revelations. Some are natural, others supernatural. I mean that some occur as a consequence of certain general laws which are known to us, according to which the author of nature acts in our mind on the occasion of what happens to our body. Others occur through general laws which are unknown to us, or through particular volitions added to the general laws to remedy the disagreeable effects they have because of the sin which has disordered everything.⁴⁶ (DM 96)

From these passages we find that Malebranche holds the following concerning special or supernatural revelation: special revelation is God’s revelation through unknown general

⁴⁵ It is seldom mentioned in the secondary literature that Malebranche accepts the distinction between special and general revelation. The one exception to this is McCrackin who points out in passing that Malebranche uses a theory of general or natural revelation, but this claim occurs on one page, with out any further discussion. Also, McCracken does not mention Malebranche’s acceptance of special revelation.

“For both Malebranche and Berkeley, visual *sensa* are signs by which God directly communicates to us something we need to know. As such, vision is for them a ‘divine language’ or, as Malebranche liked to call it, a ‘natural revelation’ by which God speaks to man.” McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*, 224.

⁴⁶ Malebranche holds this same distinction in other passages as well.

laws. It is infallible since God never leads directly to error.⁴⁷ And it concerns matters of faith such as the divinity of the Scriptures and the Gospel.⁴⁸

In a passage from the sixth elucidation, Malebranche says that we know bodies through special revelation.⁴⁹ He says that we cannot know the material world in any other way since it is “neither perceptible nor intelligible by itself.”⁵⁰

“Nonetheless, I believe the blessed are certain that there is a world; but this is because God assures them of it by revealing His will to them in a way that is unknown to us. We here below are certain of the existence of the world because faith teaches us that God has created it... Now in the appearance of Sacred Scripture and from the appearance of miracles we learn that God has created a heaven and an earth, that the Word was made flesh, and other such truths that assume the existence of a created world. Hence it is certain through faith that there are bodies, and that through it all these appearances become realities.”⁵¹ (LO 575)

The kind of revelation Malebranche is talking about here is special revelation since he is talking about the Christian Scriptures and miracles. So, we know two things from this passage. The first is that Malebranche considers the Christian Scriptures as a divine authority. Second, we can know of the existence of bodies through the Scriptures and miracles, two forms of special revelation.⁵² He advocates the view that the Scriptures are true, which shows that he accepted special revelation. We also know that special

⁴⁷ “However, particular revelation can never lead directly to error, because God cannot will to deceive us.” (DM 10)

⁴⁸ “Still, I grant that all those who read Scripture know by a particular revelation that the Gospel is a divine book which has not been corrupted through the malice and negligence of copyists;” (DM 256)

⁴⁹ For a paper that connects this passage to divine revelation see: Fred Ablondi, “Malebranche, Solipsism, and Divine Revelation,” *Sophia* 33, no. 1 (1994).

⁵⁰ “Now it must be noted that since only God knows His volitions (which produce all beings) by Himself, we can know only from Him whether there really is a material world external to us like the one we perceive, because the material world is neither perceptible nor intelligible by itself.” (LO 573)

⁵¹ There is a very similar passage in the *Dialogues* on pages 99-100.

⁵² For an article that explains why Malebranche rejected Descartes’ argument for the existence of bodies, and thereby making it necessary that Malebranche turn to revelation, see Monte Cook, “Malebranche's Criticism of Descartes's Proof That There Are Bodies,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 15 (2007).

revelation produces or is responsible for some knowledge—knowledge concerning the existence of the material world.

Malebranche also shows that he accepts the Christian Scriptures as special revelation through his habit of quoting Biblical passages as an authority.⁵³ For example, Malebranche quotes many Biblical passages supporting the vision in God when he introduces this doctrine in the *Search*.⁵⁴ We can see that Malebranche accepts special revelation by both his claim that we gain knowledge of the existence of bodies from the Scripture as well as his habit of citing the Bible to support of his conclusions.

Malebranche's acceptance of special revelation is not unusual. Many philosophers of the early modern period held that God could reveal matters of faith to humans through supernatural means. As I pointed out in section 2.1, Locke accepted special revelation and made use of it in his account of faith.⁵⁵ Malebranche's application of special revelation—we know the existence of the physical world through special revelation—is unusual.

⁵³ The second sentence of the *Search* assumes the truthfulness of what is found in the Bible.

“Sacred Scripture teaches us that men are miserable only because they are sinners and criminals, and that they would be neither if they had not enslaved themselves to sin by consenting to error.” (LO 1)

⁵⁴ It is common for Malebranche to cite Biblical passages. For example, he cites these passages when he is introducing the vision in God theory in the *Search*. He cites them from the Latin Vulgate, which I have given the King James translation since it is closest to the Vulgate:

“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.” 2 Corinthians 3:5

“That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” John 1:9

⁵⁵ Here is the passage quoted above where Locke accepts special revelation:

“Faith, on the other side, is the Assent to any Proposition, not thus made out by the Deductions of Reason; but upon the Credit of the Proposer, as coming from GOD, in some extraordinary way of Communication. This way of discovering Truths to Men we call *Revelation*.”

Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book 4, Chapter 18, Section 2.

But according to Malebranche, we need more than special revelation. God must use natural revelation as well since he teaches us different things through different kinds of revelations.

Be advised, then, once and for all, that only Reason should stand in judgment on all human opinions not related to faith (in which God alone instructs us in an entirely different way from that in which he reveals natural things to us). (LO xlii)

God reveals matters of faith to us through special revelation and he reveals natural things to us through natural revelation. While his use of special revelation is somewhat common among philosophers during his day, his use of general revelation is much more uncommon.

Malebranche uses the doctrine of natural revelation to get out of the problem of God causing false ideas. According to Malebranche, general revelation is also from natural laws, but, unlike special revelation, these laws are known to us.⁵⁶ While special revelation is infallible, general revelation is often confused and misleading.⁵⁷ This confusion is not due to any inadequacy concerning God's revelation, but it is instead due to the effects of sin on our ability to make proper judgments concerning this revelation.

But the cause of our error does not come precisely from the falsity of our natural revelations, but from the imprudence and temerity of our judgments, from our ignorance of the path God must take, from the disorder which, in short, sin has caused in our faculties, and from the confusion it has introduced into our ideas, not by changing the laws of the union of the soul and body, but by elevating our body and through its rebellion depriving us of the power to put these laws to the use for which they were established. (DM 99)

⁵⁶ "I mean that some occur as a consequence of certain general laws which are known to us, according to which the author of nature acts in our mind on the occasion of what happens to our body." (DM 96)

⁵⁷ "As God exactly follows and must exactly follow the laws He has established of the union of the two substances of which we are composed, and because we have lost the power to prevent the traces which the rebellious animal spirits effect in the brain, we take phantoms for realities." (DM 99)

Our cogitative faculties have been damaged by sin and therefore we make confused judgments concerning these natural revelations. As I point out below, one of the results of sin on our cognitive faculties is that we do not realize that our sensations are revealed by God.

Malebranche clearly states that he accepts general revelation, but he does not explicitly say what that theory is. It is my position that Malebranche's vision in God is his doctrine of general revelation applied. We see through the vision in God that the doctrine of divine revelation is philosophically relevant for Malebranche. Malebranche's doctrine of the vision in God is consistent with his claim that God reveals to humans.

Malebranche introduces the vision in God in the *Search* as the way that the "soul might see external objects".⁵⁸ In short, the vision in God is the claim that humans see all ideas in God.⁵⁹ Malebranche argues for the vision in God through an eliminative argument.⁶⁰ He rejects that ideas are produced by bodies themselves as well as the

⁵⁸ LO 230.

⁵⁹ Malebranche's vision in God can be understood to pick out two separate roles that ideas play in the epistemology of Malebranche. Nadler and Jolley both explain the vision in God in this way. "The vision in God serves in two related capacities in Malebranche's system, basically corresponding to the two roles ideas are required to play. On the one hand, it constitutes a theory of knowledge; on the other hand, it is the foundation of his account of our perceptual acquaintance with the world." Nadler, *Malebranche and Ideas*, 152. Jolley introduces this distinction in the forms of two separate chapters, chapters 4 and 5. He says, "Malebranche's theory of knowledge calls to mind not merely a distinctive theory of ideas, but the famous doctrine that we see all things in God. Since Malebranche locates all ideas in God, there is a sense in which all mental activity involving ideas might be described as 'vision in God'. But the term 'vision in God' may also be taken in a narrower sense to denote Malebranche's theory of visual perception; thus for Malebranche, it is in God that we perceive the primary quality features of physical objects such as tables and chairs." Jolley, *The Light of the Soul: Theories of Ideas in Leibniz, Malebranche, and Descartes*, 55-56. See also Jolley, "Berkeley and Malebranche on Causality and Volition."

⁶⁰ Malebranche rejects these possibilities concerning the ways that external objects are seen. "... either (a) the ideas we have of bodies and of all other objects we do not perceive by themselves come from these bodies or objects; or (b) our soul has the power of producing these ideas; or (c) God has produced them in us while creating the soul or produces them every time we think about a given object; or (d) the soul has in itself all the perfections it sees in bodies" (LO 219)
The final option, Malebranche thinks (although he does not give any arguments concerning why this list is exhaustive), is that ideas are in God.

possibility that God causes ideas in our minds, including innate ideas. But Malebranche also gives positive arguments in support of this theory as well.⁶¹ According to the vision in God, ideas are not in the minds of humans. Ideas only exist in God. When we perceive an object, we know it only through its idea in God.

This brings up the important distinction in Malebranche between sensations and ideas. While ideas are in God, sensations are not. Sensations are in us,⁶² they are modifications of our souls.⁶³ This distinction plays an important role for Malebranche's theory of perception which involves pure perception of ideas and sense perception of objects.

There are some things we know only by ideas, for example the truths of geometry. There are other things that we know only by sensation. A bodily pain is an example of something known through sensation. But we know a great many things through a combination of ideas and sensations. In every case where we perceive an object both ideas and sensations are playing a role.

When we perceive something sensible, two things are found in our perception: *sensation* and pure *idea*. (LO 234)

“... or else (e) the soul is joined to a completely perfect being that contains all intelligible perfections, or all ideas of created beings.” (LO 219)
Malebranche rejects the first four options in LO 220-228 and he argues for the fifth at LO 229-235.

⁶¹ Nadler calls these Malebranche's positive arguments for vision in God. They are: simplicity, creaturely dependence, efficacy, perception, and truth. Nadler, *Malebranche and Ideas*, 140-45.

⁶² “Thus sensations, *qua* sensations, do not involve vision in God: they are governed exclusively by the laws of the union of mind and body.” Jolley, *The Light of the Soul: Theories of Ideas in Leibniz, Malebranche, and Descartes*, 109.

⁶³ “The sensation is a modification of our soul” (LO, 234)

While many things can be said concerning Malebranche's sensations and ideas,⁶⁴ my object is to show that both are matters of divine revelation.

First, Malebranche is clear that ideas are in God and that we perceive or know these ideas through divine revelation. God reveals through ideas.

As for the idea found in conjunction with the sensation, it is in God, and we see it because it pleases God to reveal it to us. (LO 234)

You know that all intellects, which are united to that sovereign Reason, discover some of these ideas in it, inasmuch as God wishes to reveal these ideas to them. (DM 32)

The things that we know by ideas, we know through divine revelation. When introducing the vision in God, Malebranche says that ideas are in God and that humans can see these things in God if they are revealed.

Given these two things, the mind surely can see what in God represents created beings, since what in God represents created beings is very spiritual, intelligible, and present to the mind. Thus, the mind can see God's works in Him, provided that God wills to reveal to it what in Him represents them. (LO 230)

The ideas of every created thing are in God and the only way that humans can have access to those ideas is through divine revelation.

Those familiar with Malebranche are likely to expect that he says that ideas are revealed to us, but it is surprising that he also says that sensations are known by divine revelation. A sensation is a psychological state or what Malebranche calls a modification of the soul. Sensations are caused by God.

The sensation is a modification of our soul, and it is God who causes it in us (LO 234)

⁶⁴ Jolley has an excellent discussion of Malebranche's ideas and sensations. He points out that the ideas that we see in God include only the primary qualities since these are the only qualities that bodies actually possess. The secondary qualities are not in God and are therefore found in our souls. Jolley, *The Light of the Soul: Theories of Ideas in Leibniz, Malebranche, and Descartes*, 81-98. He also argues in a different work that the distinction between sensation and idea became less important for Malebranche in time as his theory of the efficacious ideas became to take over what Jolley calls his older theory. Nicholas Jolley, "Berkeley, Malebranche, and Vision in God," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 34 (1996).

This might be enough to claim that Malebranche holds that God reveals sensations since we know that Malebranche holds a causation theory of divine revelation. But, Malebranche makes it clear that sensations are known by divine revelation in the 4th *Dialogue*. The relevant passage starts when Theodore claims that we know of bodies by the revelation we have of them.

Theodore: There are only three kinds of beings about which we have any knowledge and to which we can have any connection: God, of the infinite perfect being who is the principle or cause of all things; minds, which we know only through the inner feeling we have of our nature; and bodies, of the existence of which we are assured by the revelation we have of them. (DM 93)

Aristes asks for clarification of this claim. It appears that we have knowledge of bodies through experience — that is seeing or touching bodies — rather than through divine revelation.

Aristes: But what do you mean, that we are assured of the existence of bodies “by the revelation we have of them”? What! Do we not see them, do we not sense them? We do not need “revelation” to teach us that we have a body when we are pricked; we sense it quite clearly. (DM 94)

Malebranche responds with the following explanation.

Theodore: Yes, undoubtedly, we do sense it. But this sensation of pain we have is a kind of ‘revelation’. This expression strikes you. But it is just for this reason that I use it. For you always forget that it is God Himself who produces in our soul all those various sensations by which it is affected on the occasion of the changes that happen to our body... It is therefore God Himself, who through the sensations with which He affects us reveals to us what is happening outside us – I mean in our body and in those bodies surrounding us.⁶⁵ (DM 94)

⁶⁵ Here is the rest of the passage:

“For you always forget that it is God Himself who produces in our soul all those various sensations by which it is affected on the occasion of the changes that happen to our body, as a result of the general laws of the union of the two substances composing humans; laws which are simply the efficacious and continual volitions of the creator, as I shall explain to you in the following. The point which pricks our hand does not cause pain despite itself. Assuredly it is a superior power. It is therefore God Himself, who through the sensations with which He affects us reveals to us what is happening outside us – I mean in our body and in those bodies surrounding us. (DM 94)

Malebranche is clear; God reveals through sensations. While it seems strange to say that a sensation of pain is a revelation from God, this is Malebranche's position. When I sense a pain in my back from a loose screw in my office chair, I do not normally attribute that pain to divine revelation. But Malebranche says that I am wrong not to do this. Malebranche calls this sensation of pain in my back a "revelation" since God is the one producing the sensation. Through this sensation, God is revealing to me that there is something hurting my back. His reasoning here supports my interpretation that his theory is a causation theory of divine revelation. God caused the sensation to my back. Through that sensation he revealed to me the knowledge of what was happening to my body.

So, Malebranche holds that God causes all our ideas as well as all our sensations. Through this causal activity, Malebranche holds that God reveals through ideas as well as through sensations.

"But although I say that we see material and sensible things in God, it must be carefully noted that I am not saying we have sensations of them in God, but only that it is God who acts in us:... When we perceive something sensible, two things are found in our perception: *sensation* and pure *idea*. The sensation is a modification of our soul, and it is God who causes it in us... As for the idea found in conjunction with the sensation, it is in God, and we see it because it pleases God to reveal it to us."
(LO 234)

Revelation through ideas and revelation through sensations show that perception is divine revelation for Malebranche. Pure perception is revelation since the ideas involved in geometry are in God and must be revealed for us to know them. Sense perception is also revelation. When we see an object, both the idea and the corresponding sensation is caused, and thereby, revealed by God. This is why Malebranche can speak of this theory as a whole and call it divine revelation.

Thus, the mind can see God's works in Him, provided that God wills to reveal to it what in Him represents them. (LO 230)

Malebranche's vision in God is a theory of divine revelation.

But I have not yet shown what kind of revelation Malebranche's vision in God is. We know that this theory must be general revelation, rather than special revelation, by an eliminative argument. The revelation that Malebranche is talking about here cannot be special revelation. According to Malebranche, special revelation is infallible, which my knowledge of objects is not. Malebranche's vision in God as a theory of perception is not fallible; we are often mistaken about what we sense. Also, special revelation concerns matters of faith such as the Scriptures. God does not reveal spiritual things through the vision in God, but natural things such as the objects in the world.⁶⁶ So, the first reason to think that the vision in God is Malebranche's theory of general revelation is that it cannot be special revelation.

There are also positive arguments for the claim that Malebranche's vision in God is general revelation. Recall that when introducing his account of general revelation, Malebranche made two claims about natural revelation. The first is that it is fallible, confused, and misleading due to the effects of sin on the human cognitive faculties and the second is that general revelation is according to known natural laws. He makes both of these claims explicit when talking about the vision in God.

Malebranche says that original humans who were not yet affected by the fall had full cognitive power and were not confused by their sensations. A human in a pre-fallen

⁶⁶ Knowledge of natural things must come about by a different way:

“Be advised, then, once and for all, that only Reason should stand in judgment on all human opinions not related to faith (in which God alone instructs us in an entirely different way from that in which he reveals natural things to us).” (LO xliv)

state knew many things.⁶⁷ He knew that sensations were revealed by God. When he had a sensation of a particular object, he recognized that the sensation was a revelation.

He concluded, therefore, that the various sensation by which God affected him were simply revelations by which God taught him that he had a body and was surrounded by many other bodies. (DM 97)

But this is no longer the case. Humans now make errors concerning the sensations we have when we perceive an object. One of these is the error of not realizing that the sensation is from God. Our natural capacities are not working properly because of the negative effects sin has had on our cognitive powers.⁶⁸ General revelation is confused and fallible because we no longer recognize that our sensation is a matter of divine revelation. The vision in God is Malebranche's account of general revelation.

Malebranche also connects the vision in God to the natural law. This shows that it is natural revelation since he says that natural revelation is according to known natural laws. For Malebranche, the natural law is nothing but God's general will. In an

⁶⁷ Malebranche says humans knew the following before the fall:

1. Only God can act, modify, or affect humans
2. God always affected humans in the same way in the same circumstances
3. The action of God was and had to be uniform
4. Beings were the occasional causes of the general laws by which God acted
5. Humans were able to prevent themselves from sensing the action of sensible objects
6. The volitions of humans are inferior and subordinate to the human
7. On occasion of being affected by a sensation of an object, Humans saw clearly that they were only bodies
8. Humans concluded that the sensations that affected them were simply revelations by which God taught them that they have bodies and are surrounded by other bodies
9. Humans discovered that they must not judge the nature of the bodies by the sensations they had of them

Malebranche concludes 9:

“But, knowing by Reason that God's action had to be uniform, and knowing by experience that the laws of the union of the soul and body were always the same; seeing indeed that these laws were established simply to inform him of what he had to do to preserve his life, he easily discovered that he must not judge the nature of bodies by sensations he had of them, nor let himself be persuaded of their existence by these same sensations, except when his brains was agitated by an external cause and not by a movement of animal spirits excited by an internal cause.” (DM 97-98)

⁶⁸ In this sense, Malebranche can be interpreted as foreshadowing Alvin Plantinga's epistemological theory as presented in Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000).

important passage in which he concludes his argument for the vision in God in the *Search*, Malebranche stresses that we know what we know and we sense what we sense by the general will of God.

Thus, our souls depend on God in all ways. For just as it is He who makes them feel pain, pleasure, and all the other sensations, which is but His decree and general will, so it is He who makes them know all that they know through the natural union He has also established between the will of man and the representation of ideas contained in the immensity of the Divine being, which union is also but His general will. As a result of this, only He can enlighten us, by representing everything to us—just as only He can make us happy by making us enjoy all sorts of pleasures. (LO 235)⁶⁹

In this passage, Malebranche shows again that ideas and sensations are revealed by God. He sums up his vision in God doctrine by saying that both sensations and ideas are found in God's general will. This equation of the general will of God, or the natural law, and the doctrine of the vision in God is important for realizing that the vision in God is Malebranche's theory of natural revelation. It is common for theologians to connect natural revelation with the natural law and Malebranche is making the same connection here.

Finally, another reason to think that Malebranche's vision in God is his theory of natural revelation is his use of the passage from Acts 17 in support of this position. He cites this passage as he is summarizing the vision in God in the *Search*.⁷⁰

Let us hold this view, then, that God is the intelligible world or the place of minds, as the material world is the place of bodies; that from His power minds receive their modifications; that in His wisdom they find all their ideas; that through His love they

⁶⁹ He also says the same basic thing in the *Dialogues*:

“I mean that some occur as a consequence of certain general laws which are known to us, according to which the author of nature acts in our mind on the occasion of what happens to our body.” (DM 96)

⁷⁰ Malebranche cites this passage again in the *Search*:

“He who made all things,” he says, “is closer to us than the very things He made, for it is Him that we live and move and have our being.” (LO 629)

It also occurs in the *Dialogues*.

“It is in Him that we exist. It is in Him that we have movement and life, as the apostle says: “In him we live, and move, and are.” (DM 131)

receive their orderly impulses, and because of His power and love are but Himself, let us believe with Saint Paul, that He is not far from any of us, and that in Him we live and move and have our being.” (LO 235)

This passage concerns natural revelation. It suggests that God reveals to humans in all contexts by being present in all life experiences. Malebranche’s uses of this passage to conclude his argument for the vision in God is further evidence this the vision in God is Malebranche’s theory of natural revelation.

So, I have now shown that Malebranche accepts both special and general revelation. I have also shown that his theory of divine revelation is philosophically relevant for his epistemology. His entire theory of perception, the vision in God, can be explained as fulfilling the role of general revelation for Malebranche.

The last thing I want to consider from Malebranche concerns what knowledge we receive from revelation. Malebranche holds that all human knowledge comes from divine revelation. Indeed, there are passages where he explicitly says as much:⁷¹

But not only are bodies incapable of being the true causes of whatever exists: the most noble minds are in a similar state of impotence. They can know nothing unless God enlightens them. (LO 449)

Thus, our souls depend on God in all ways. For just as it is He who makes them feel pain, pleasure, and all the other sensations... so it is He who makes them know all that they know through the natural union He has also established between the will of man and the representation of ideas contained in the immensity of the Divine being, which union is also but his general will.⁷² (LO 235)

⁷¹ While I tend to think that Malebranche is speaking loosely in these passages, Pyle takes these passages as representing Malebranche’s final position. He comments that according to Malebranche “all our knowledge is some form or another of revelation”. Pyle, *Malebranche*, 5.

⁷² There are other passages where Malebranche says that everything we know we know from divine revelation.

“Human beings are not their own light unto themselves. Their substance, far from enlightening them, is in itself unintelligible to them. They know nothing except by the light of the universal Reason which enlightens all minds, by the intelligible ideas it reveals to them in its wholly luminous substance.” (DM 32)

Finally, only though the union we have with Him are we capable in this life of knowing what we know, ... (LO 237)

But perhaps Malebranche is speaking loosely in these passages. A better indicator of how much knowledge we derive from divine revelation comes in book three of the *Search*. Malebranche states that there are four ways of knowing things:

- [1] “The first is to know things by themselves
- [2] The second is to know them through their ideas, i.e., as I mean it here, through something different from themselves.
- [3] The third is to know them through consciousness, or inner sensation
- [4] The fourth is to know them through conjecture.” (LO 236)

I take Malebranche to show that all four are known through divine revelation. In this passage Malebranche clearly shows that [1] is known through divine revelation. The only thing that we know by itself, that is without the need for ideas, is God. He states clearly that we know God by his self-revelation.

“Only God do we know through Himself, for though there are other spiritual beings besides Him, which seem intelligible by their nature, only He can act on our mind and reveal Himself to it.” (LO 236)

The things that we know through their ideas, [2], are also revealed to us, this is the doctrine of the vision of God.⁷³ I have just argued that Malebranche holds that when we know things by their ideas, we know them through divine revelation.⁷⁴

Things are a bit less clear concerning [3] and [4]. Concerning [3], Malebranche shows that sensations are produced in our souls by God. Even those sensations which are not accompanying ideas are produced by God. Not only are sensations caused by God, but Malebranche says that they are revelation. For example, in the passage cited above

⁷³ “Undoubtedly, we know bodies with their properties through their ideas, because given that they are not intelligible by themselves, we can perceive them only in that being which contains them in an intelligible way. Thus, it is in God and through their ideas that we perceive bodies and their properties...” (LO 237)

⁷⁴ [2] is the category that Malebranche typically and consistently refers to as “revelation”.

Malebranche says that the pain we sense from a knife is a “kind of revelation” from God.⁷⁵

This leaves the fourth way of knowing or perceiving things, conjecture, [4].

Conjecture is the weakest form of knowledge, yet it is knowledge nonetheless.

Finally, through conjecture we know those things that are different both from ourselves and from what we know either in itself or through ideas, such as when we believe that certain things are like certain others we know. (LO 236)

I interpret Malebranche as holding that whatever we know by conjecture we know through divine revelation. According to Malebranche, it is by conjecture that we know other humans’ souls.⁷⁶ We do not know them through their ideas or our own consciousness.⁷⁷ But, we only can know of other souls through divine revelation.

But I know this with evidence and certainty because it is God who teaches me—for who else but God could reveal to me His designs and volitions? (LO 239)

So, we know the souls of other men, albeit in a confused manner, by divine revelation.

⁷⁵ Here are two passages that were cited above concerning Malebranche’s use of the term “revelation” in cases of sensation:

“Yes, undoubtedly, we do sense it. But this sensation of pain we have is a kind of ‘revelation’. This expression strikes you. But it is just for this reason that I use it. For you always forget that it is God Himself who produces in our soul all those various sensations by which it is affected on the occasion of the changes that happen to our body... It is therefore God Himself, who through the sensations with which He affects us reveals to us what is happening outside us – I mean in our body and in those bodies surrounding us.” (DM 94)

“He concluded, therefore, that the various sensation by which God affected him were simply revelations by which God taught him that he had a body and was surrounded by many other bodies.” (DM 97)

While he is consistent in claiming that sensations are caused by God, Malebranche does not always refer them as “revelations”. One possible explanation of this is that God reveals something through the sensations that are caused like knowledge of what is being sensed. This explanation fits with my account of divine revelation for Malebranche—God making known the unknown by a causal action on the human psychological state.

⁷⁶ LO 238-240.

⁷⁷ “At present we do not know them either in themselves or through their ideas, and as they are different from ourselves, we cannot know them through consciousness.” (LO 239)

Malebranche does not suggest if this knowledge is by special or natural revelation.⁷⁸ Of the four ways that Malebranche says that we can know things, all four are from divine revelation. This means that everything we know, we know by divine revelation.⁷⁹

Before I move to Berkeley, let me review. Malebranche accepts divine revelation and there are four features of this doctrine and its relationship to his epistemology. First, his theory is a historical example of Mavrodes' causation theory of divine revelation. Second, Malebranche makes use of the traditional distinction between special and general revelation. Third, this doctrine of revelation is philosophically relevant for Malebranche since his vision in God is a theory of general revelation. And lastly, Malebranche holds that all human knowledge is the result of divine revelation.

2.3

Berkeley also accepts the doctrine of divine revelation. While Berkeley does not explicitly use the distinction between special and general revelation, in practice he accepts this distinction and applies it to his epistemology. Berkeley's doctrine of divine revelation is philosophically relevant to his epistemology. He builds an epistemological

⁷⁸ McCracken interprets this to mean that we know other souls through special revelation:

“At the time that he wrote the *Search*, Malebranche seems to have thought that the certainty we have of the existence of other minds, like that we have of the existence of bodies, comes only from God's revelation in Scripture that there are many conscious beings in the world. Natural knowledge can only render it probable that there are other souls in the world; for, through the conjecture that there are other souls in the world best explains the behaviour of other bodies that are much like my own, there is no *necessity* that God create such beings if he does not will do. Hence, without a revelation of his will, I cannot be certain that any created person, other than myself, exists.” McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*, 81.

⁷⁹ Pyle and McCracken agrees with me. “In the final analysis, all knowledge is revelation, and attention to a problem (e.g. in mathematics) is just a form of prayer. Illumination always comes from without.” Pyle, *Malebranche*, 56. Also “In effect, the vision of all things in God is merely the extension of Occasionalism to the domain of human knowledge; no more are there secondary causes of knowledge than of anything else in the world: God is the immediate cause of all our knowledge: McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*, 66.

doctrine called the language of vision which is his account of general revelation.

Berkeley holds that the majority of human knowledge is derived from divine revelation.

The goal of this section is to introduce Berkeley's theory of divine revelation. As was the case with Malebranche, I am not aiming at a comprehensive account of Berkeley's theory of divine revelation. I focus only on those features of Berkeley's theory that are similar to Malebranche. I do not attempt to answer every question or settle every issue that arises from Berkeley's theory of divine revelation.

While Malebranche often says that God reveals things to humans, Berkeley seldom says this.⁸⁰ Berkeley thinks that God causally acts on the human mind, but God is not the only being that is casually active. Humans cause our ideas of memory and imagination.

“I find I can excite ideas in my mind at pleasure, and vary and shift the scene as oft as I think fit. It is no more than willing, and straightway this or that idea arises in my fancy: and by the same power it is obliterated, and makes way for another.”
(PHK 28)

Berkeley holds that God causes ideas. Our ideas of sense must have a different cause.

We could not have caused these ideas ourselves.

But whatever power I may have over my own thoughts, I find the ideas actually perceived by sense have not a like dependence on my will. When in broad day-light I open my eyes, it is not in my power to choose whether I shall see or no, or to determine what particular objects shall present themselves to my view; and so likewise as to the hearing and other senses, the ideas imprinted on them are not creatures of my will. There is therefore some other will or spirit that produces them.
(PHK 29)

Early in the *Principles*, Berkeley merely suggests that humans must not be the cause of these ideas of sense. He does not explicitly say that God is the one doing this action. But

⁸⁰ Berkeley does not use the words “revelation” or “reveal” often in either the *Principles* or the *Dialogues*. He does use the term “revelation” one time in the *Dialogues* when speaking about supernatural revelation.

later in the work Berkeley leaves no room for misunderstanding. The spirit that produces these ideas is God.⁸¹

It is therefore plain, that nothing can be more evident to any one that is capable of the least reflection, than the existence of God, or a spirit who is intimately present to our minds, producing in them all that variety of ideas or sensations, which continually affect us, on whom we have an absolute and entire dependence. (PHK 149)

God is immediately present to our minds and produces all our ideas of sensation. God acts on human minds in a causal manner and produces these ideas.

Berkeley describes this divine activity in different ways. He also says that God imprints and excites ideas.

The ideas imprinted on the senses by the Author of Nature are called *real things*: (PHK 33)

If we follow the light of reason, we shall, from the constant uniform method of our sensations, collect the goodness and wisdom of the *spirit* who excites them in our minds. (PHK 72)

When Berkeley talks about God imprinting or exciting ideas, he is saying that God produces these ideas in human minds. Berkeley thinks that God acts on the human mind in a causal manner, affecting psychological states. So, even though Berkeley does not use the term ‘revelation’ or ‘reveal’ to explain God’s action of producing ideas into the human mind, this causal action by God is an aspect of his theory of divine revelation. All knowledge derived from ideas of sense comes from God’s causal action of producing those ideas. So, for Berkeley, part of divine revelation is God making the unknown known by his causal activity.

⁸¹ He also makes the same point in the *Dialogues*:

“Philonous: ... From all which I conclude, *there is a Mind which affects me every moment with all the sensible impressions I perceive*. ... This I do not understand; but I say, the things by me perceived are known by the understanding, and produced by the will, of an infinite Spirit...

Hylas: I think I understand you very clearly; and own the proof you give of a Deity seems no less evident, than it is surprising... God is the supreme and universal cause of all things...” (DHP 215)

Berkeley is also a good historical example of the theory presented by George Mavrodes in *Revelation in Religious Belief*, the causation model of divine revelation.⁸² According to Berkeley, God is the immediate or direct cause of all our ideas of sense.⁸³ God causally acts on the human mind, impressing ideas upon it. While Mavrodes does not mention Berkeley any more than he does Malebranche, Berkeley too fits this model better than Descartes.

Berkeley does not use the terms “special” and “general” revelation. He seems to hold something like the view of Locke presented in 2.1. Locke used the term “revelation” only to refer to special or supernatural revelation. Berkeley, perhaps due to influence by Locke, does the same thing. Berkeley does not use the term often, but when he does use this term he is referring to special revelation.

Hylas: After all, can it be supposed God would deceive all mankind? Do you imagine, he would have induced the whole world to believe the being of matters, if there was no such thing?

Philonous: That every epidemical opinion arising from prejudice, or passion, or thoughtlessness, may be imputed to God, as the Author of it, I believe you will not affirm. Whatsoever opinion we father on him, it must be either because he has discovered it to us by supernatural revelation, or because it is so evident to our natural faculties, which were framed and given us by God, that it is impossible we should withhold our assent from it. (DHP 243)

Berkeley also uses the term ‘revelation’ in *Alciphron* to refer to special revelation when he refers to the Christian Scriptures as the “Christian revelation”.⁸⁴

⁸² Mavrodes, *Revelation in Religious Belief*.

⁸³ Here are other passages where God is said to be the immediate cause of these ideas:
“But it is more unaccountable, that it should be received among Christians professing belief in the Holy Scriptures, which constantly ascribe those effects to the immediate hand of God, that heathen philosophers are wont to impute to *Nature*.” (PHK 150)
“It is equivalent to a constant creation, betokening an immediate act of power and providence.” (Alc. 4.14)

⁸⁴ After this, Berkeley goes into a full fledged defense of the Christian Scriptures using arguments from Church history and textual criticism.

Crito: As this objection supposes there is no proof or reason for believing the Christian revelation... (*Alc.* 6.2)

In the *Alciphron* Berkeley is speaking of the Christian Scriptures. This is clear from the context, since he continues to defend the Christian scriptures.⁸⁵

Berkeley's acceptance of the Christian scriptures as supernatural revelation is supported by his practice of citing from the Bible as an authority.

But it is more unaccountable, that it should be received among Christians professing belief in the Holy Scriptures, which constantly ascribe those effects to the immediate hand of God, that heathen philosophers are wont to impute to *Nature*. *The Lord, he causeth the vapours to ascend; he maketh lightings with rain; he bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures*, Jerem Chap. 10. ver 13. *He turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night*, Amos Chap. 5. ver 8. *He visiteth the earth, and maketh it soft with showers: he blesseth the springing thereof, and crowneth the year with his goodness; so that the pastures are clothed with flocks, and the valleys are covered over with corn. See Psalm 65.* But notwithstanding that this is the constant language of Scripture; yet we have I know not what aversion from believing, that God concerns him so nearly in our affairs. Fain would we suppose him at a great distance off, and substitute some blind unthinking deputy in his stead, though (if we may believe Saint Paul) *he be not far from every one of us.* (PHK 150)

This passage is interesting because in it we see Berkeley cite biblical passages to support this immaterialist theory. Berkeley's practice of citing biblical passages shows that he accepts special revelation even though he does not use the terminology "special revelation".

It is clear that Berkeley accepted special revelation. As was the case with Malebranche, Berkeley's acceptance and use of special revelation is not unusual in his time. Many philosophers from this period also accepted this form of divine revelation. But, Berkeley's acceptance and use of general revelation is unusual.

⁸⁵ This is the sixth dialogue of *Alciphron*. This is one of the works where we see Berkeley doing theology proper. In this dialogue, he defends the authority of the Bible, as well as its reliability showing a deep understanding of theological tools such as textual criticism and textual transmission theories.

Berkeley nowhere says that he holds a theory of general revelation. He does not use this terminology. But even though Berkeley never says that he accepts such a theory, we shall see that he does. Not only does he accept general revelation, but general revelation is philosophically relevant for Berkeley's epistemology. Before I can explain Berkeley's theory of general revelation, I need to explain the role of God in his philosophy. A proper understanding of the role of God in Berkeley's philosophy is necessary for understanding the role God plays in human knowledge, which is fundamental to Berkeley's theory of divine revelation.

That Berkeley holds a role for God in his philosophy is well known and widely commented upon.⁸⁶ Berkeley employs three different arguments concerning the role of God in his philosophy. Each of these different arguments points out a different role of God in the philosophy of Berkeley. While Berkeley employs each of them as an argument for God's existence, my chief interest in these arguments concerns what they say about God's divine action. So, I will examine these arguments seeking to properly understand the role of God in the philosophy of Berkeley.

The best known view of God in Berkeley is expressed by a pair of limericks:

⁸⁶ The amount of secondary literature on the issue of the role of God in Berkeley is immense: Jonathan Bennett, "Berkeley and God," *Philosophy* 40 (1965). Jonathan Bennett, *Locke, Berkeley, Hume: Central Themes* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1971). J. D. Mabbott, "The Place of God in Berkeley's Philosophy," *Journal of Philosophical Studies* 6 (1931). Charles J. McCracken, "What Does Berkeley's God See in the Quad," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 61 (1995). Robert McKim, "What Is God Doing in the Quad," *Philosophy Research Archives* 13 (1987-88). Nicholas Everitt, "Quasi-Berkeleyan Idealism as Perspicuous Theism," *Faith and Philosophy* 14 (1997). E. J. Furlong, "Berkeley and the Tree in the Quad," *Philosophy* 41 (1966). Douglas Jesseph, "Berkeley, God, and Explanation," in *Early Modern Philosophy: Mind, Matter, and Metaphysics*, ed. Christia Mercer (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005). Craig Lehman, "Will, Ideas, and Perception in Berkeley's God," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 19 (1981). George Thomas, "Berkeley's God Does Not Perceive," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 14 (1976). Michael Levine, "Berkeley's Theocentric Mentalism: Pantheism?," *Sophia* 26 (1987).

There was a young man who said, 'God
 Must think it exceedingly odd
 If he finds that this tree
 Continues to be
 When there's no one about in the Quad'
Reply
 "Dear Sir: your astonishment's odd:
 I am always about in the Quad.
 And that's why the tree
 Will continue to be
 Since observed by *Yours Faithfully, God.*⁸⁷

According to this argument, Berkeley is saying that God's role is to keep things in existence by constantly observing them. According to the common interpretation, Berkeley's immaterialism requires that minds observe ideas for them to exist. This creates the problem that when a mind is no longer observing an idea, the idea (which is the physical object) no longer exists. Berkeley presents this problem and its solution in the *Three Dialogues*.

Hylas: Supposing you were annihilated, cannot you conceive it possible that things perceivable by sense may still exist.
 Philonous: I can; but then it must be in another mind... There is therefore some other Mind wherein they exist, during the intervals between the times of my perceiving them: as likewise they did before my birth, and would do after my supposed annihilation. And, as the same is true, with regard to all other finite created spirits; it necessarily follows that there is an *omnipresent eternal Mind*, which knows and comprehends all things...⁸⁸ (DHP 230-231)

⁸⁷ Bertrand Russell, in his *History of Philosophy*, attributes the limericks to Monsignor Ronald Knox. Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, Inc, 1945). See also David Berman, *George Berkeley: Idealism and the Man* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1994), 46, note 2. My thanks to Dr. Ken Merrill for chasing this limerick down late one night when we were both working on the 6th floor of Dale Hall Tower (even though I did not ask him to), at the University of Oklahoma.

⁸⁸ A similar claim is also made in the *Principles*.
 "The table I write on, I say, exists, that is, I see and feel it; and if I were out of my study I should say it existed, meaning thereby that if I was in my study I might perceive it, or that some other spirit actually does perceive it." (PHK 3)

The argument Berkeley advances here has been called the continuity argument by interpreters in the secondary literature.⁸⁹ It can be summarized like this:

- [1] Things (ideas and collections of ideas) exist only when perceived by a mind
- [2] Things continue to exist when not perceived by any human mind
- [3] Therefore, there is an omnipresent mind (God) which perceives things⁹⁰

The interpretation of the continuity argument has been under fire in the secondary literature for the last 50 years. Berkeley scholars are split concerning whether Berkeley held to the continuity argument or not.⁹¹ Bennett argues that this argument is an aberration in Berkeley's philosophical system and that he did not put much stock in it.⁹² But whatever the view concerning Berkeley's acceptance of this argument there is wide agreement in the secondary literature that the continuity argument is not Berkeley's primary argument for the role of God in his philosophy.

There is a second argument that plays the primary role for Berkeley. This is what has become known in the literature as the passivity argument.⁹³ Berkeley, through the passivity argument, says that God causes certain ideas. Since all ideas rely on minds for

⁸⁹ Berkeley never used the term 'continuity argument'. For a few works that mention the continuity argument see: Bennett, *Locke, Berkeley, Hume: Central Themes*. Louis E. Loeb, *From Descartes to Hume* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981). and McCracken, "What *Does* Berkeley's God See in the Quad."

⁹⁰ I have adapted this version of the argument from both Bennett and Berman. Bennett, "Berkeley and God," 207. Berman, *George Berkeley: Idealism and the Man*, 47.

⁹¹ There is a lot of debate in the secondary literature concerning the continuity argument. See Bennett, "Berkeley and God." Bennett, *Locke, Berkeley, Hume: Central Themes*. Berman, *George Berkeley: Idealism and the Man*. Furlong, "Berkeley and the Tree in the Quad." Lehman, "Will, Ideas, and Perception in Berkeley's God." Mabbott, "The Place of God in Berkeley's Philosophy." McCracken, "What *Does* Berkeley's God See in the Quad." McKim, "What *Is* God Doing in the Quad." Thomas, "Berkeley's God Does Not Perceive." Kenneth P. Winkler, *Berkeley: An Interpretation* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁹² Bennett, "Berkeley and God." and Bennett, *Locke, Berkeley, Hume: Central Themes*.

⁹³ Berkeley never used the term 'passivity argument'. For a few works that mention the passivity argument see: Bennett, *Locke, Berkeley, Hume: Central Themes*, Loeb, *From Descartes to Hume*. and Berman, *George Berkeley: Idealism and the Man*.

their existence, every idea must be caused or produced by some mind. While Berkeley suggests that human minds produce certain ideas, those of reflection and memory, the ideas we have of sensation must have a different cause.

From all which I conclude, there is a mind which affects me every moment with all the sensible impressions I perceive. And from the variety, order, and manner of these, I conclude the Author of them to be wise, powerful, and good, beyond comprehension. (DHP 215)⁹⁴

While the force of the continuity argument was on God's perceiving ideas to keep them from popping out of existence, the force of this argument is on God's causal power over ideas. For Berkeley, all causes are mental. God is the cause of all ideas of sensation while humans are the causes of our own ideas that come from memory and imagination. So, the role of God according to the passivity argument is to cause ideas of sense. The passivity argument can be laid out like this:

- [1] We have ideas of sense, the cause of which must be a mind
- [2] My mind cannot cause the ideas of sense
- [3] Therefore, there must be some other mind (God) which causes them⁹⁵

Berkeley also uses a third argument to explain the role of God in his system. This is the divine language argument. This argument has been overshadowed in the secondary literature by the continuity and passivity arguments.⁹⁶ While it can be found throughout

⁹⁴ Here is another passage that supports the passivity argument:

It is therefore plain, that nothing can be more evident to anyone that is capable of the least reflection, than the existence of God, or a spirit who is intimately present to our minds, producing in them all that variety of ideas or sensations, which continually affect us... (PHK 149)

⁹⁵ Again, I have adapted this argument from both Bennett and Berman. Bennett, "Berkeley and God," 208. Berman, *George Berkeley: Idealism and the Man*, 45-46.

⁹⁶ Loeb calls it the "visual-language argument" and says that it is "Berkeley's least known argument for the existence of God". Loeb, *From Descartes to Hume*, 249. Jonathan Dancy says that Berkeley's views concerning the language of God and its relationship to scientific knowledge have been "inexplicably neglected". Jonathan Dancy, *Berkeley: An Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 112.

Berkeley's works, the divine language argument is presented in its strongest form in the later, and more theologically motivated, work *Alciphron*.⁹⁷

Berkeley wrote *Alciphron* to refute religious skeptics, atheists, and deists, who were gaining popularity during his lifetime.⁹⁸ *Alciphron* is written as a series of conversations, in the same vein as the Platonic dialogues. At one point, Alciphron advances the deistic claim that God created the world but is no longer present in it. Euphranor, Berkeley's spokesperson in the dialogue, says that God constantly speaks to humans in the 'language of vision'. God's language of vision can be seen in his causal action of presenting ideas of sense to our minds.

Alciphron: But, to cut short this chicane, I propound it fairly to your own conscience, whether you really think, that God Himself speaks every day and in every place to the eyes of all man.

Euphranor: That is really and in truth my opinion; and it should be yours too, if you are consistent with yourself, and abide by your own definition of language. Since you cannot deny that the Author of Nature constantly explaineth Himself to the eyes of men by the sensible intervention of arbitrary signs... In consequence, I say, of your

⁹⁷ Loeb traces in some detail the development of Berkeley's divine language argument throughout all his works showing that it is a position that Berkeley held throughout his philosophical career. His earliest work, *A New Theory of Vision*, embraces an early version of the divine vision language, with the exception that he does not connect this language with God. In the *Principles* and the *Dialogues*, his focus is on God's causing ideas more than on the language that these ideas produce. Although see PHK 30, 31, 60-65, and 105. For Berkeley on the laws of nature, which are formed from these ideas of sense. Then, later in his life, in the *Alciphron* and the *The Theory of Vision or Visual Language shewing the immediate Presence and Providence of a Deity Vindicated and Explained* Berkeley picks the theme back up from the early work on vision, that the ideas of sensation that God causes make a divine language. Berkeley actually also at this time went back and edited his original work on vision, making the divine language explicit. Where the earliest version said "the proper objects of vision constitute the universal language of nature", he changed in the newer edition to read "the proper objects of vision constitute an universal language of the Author of nature." (NTV 147) This change is mentioned by Loeb at page 251. Berkeley is still committed to defending this thesis at *Siris* 252-254. Berkeley has the same primary role of God in mind throughout all of these works. Berkeley is pointing out both that God both causes our ideas of sensation and that these ideas constitute a divine language. Interestingly, Loeb points out that Berkeley does not use the divine language argument in the *Dialogues* and suggests that the reason why is that it could be a "transmuted version of Malebranche's vision in God." Loeb says "The visual-language argument, whatever we may think of it, was a favorite of Berkeley's". Loeb, *From Descartes to Hume*, 249-54.

⁹⁸ While *Alicphron* has received much less attention in the secondary literature as Berkeley's earlier works, there has been some works dedicated entirely to this work. David Berman, *George Berkeley Alciphron in Focus, Philosophers in Focus* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1993). Roomet Jakapi, "Faith, Truth, Revelation and Meaning in Berkeley's Defense of the Christian Religion (in *Alciphron*)," *The Modern Schoolman* 80 (2002).

own sentiments and concessions, you have as much reason to think the Universal Agent or God speaks to your eyes, as you can have for thinking any particular person speaks to your ears. (*Alc.* 4.12)

Berkeley's language of vision is a language whereby God, the Author of Nature, communicates to all people. God talks to humans in this language by constantly impressing ideas into their minds. In *Alciphron*, Berkeley uses the language of vision to refute the deist by showing that God is casually active in the world on a daily basis.

On the one hand, the passivity argument and the divine language argument seem to highlight the same role of God in the philosophy of Berkeley. In both, God's role is to create ideas of sense and present them to human minds. Loeb points out that there are two similarities between these two arguments. Both lead to the conclusion that God is continuously active and both require the premise that ideas are casually inefficacious.⁹⁹ But on the other hand, these arguments differ. The divine language argument makes the additional step of suggesting that these ideas produced by God actually constitute a language, which the passivity argument does not.

According to Berkeley's language of vision, God impresses ideas upon the human mind. Then, when these ideas of sense are grouped together into general rules, we see that there is a uniformity of the appearances we receive from these ideas. This uniformity constitutes the grammar of this divine language.

There is a certain analogy, constancy, and uniformity in the phenomena or appearances of nature, which are a foundation for general rules: and these are a grammar for the understanding of nature, or that series of effects in the visible world whereby we are enabled to foresee what will come to pass in the natural course of things. (*Siris* 252)

Berkeley uses analogy to suggest how these ideas of sense constitute a language.

According to Berkeley, a language is a series of signs which signify their referents. The

⁹⁹ Loeb, *From Descartes to Hume*, 249-50.

connection between the sign and the referent is arbitrary—it is only made through convention. The divine language argument shows that ideas of sense act as signs in the same way. The connection between these ideas and the things they signify is arbitrary.

Speaking of these ideas, Berkeley says:

And the manner wherein they signify and mark unto us the objects which are at a distance is the same with that of languages and signs of human appointment, which do not suggest the things signified by any likeness or identity of nature, but only by an habitual connexion that experience has made us to observe between them. (NTV 147)¹⁰⁰

The main point of Berkeley's divine language is that God, the author of nature, creates all our ideas of sense. He then impresses these ideas on our minds. These ideas constitute a language from God. The divine language argument can be set up like this:

- [1] Ideas of sense suggest or signify other ideas.
- [2] Ideas of sense are related to their signification arbitrarily.
- [3] A language is a system of arbitrary signs.
- [4] Therefore, visible ideas constitute a universal language of the author of nature.¹⁰¹

At this point, it looks as if Berkeley's position may have a similar problem that Malebranche's faced concerning false beliefs. If God is producing all my ideas of sense, it seems that God is also causing me to have ideas that lead me to false beliefs. It looks as if the idea that I have of the bent stick in the water is caused by God in the same way as my idea of the stick before it was put into the water.

¹⁰⁰ Berkeley makes the same general claim in the *Principles*:

“To all which my answer is, first, that the connexion of ideas does not imply the relation of *cause* and *effect*, but only of a mark or *sign* with the thing *signified*. The fire which I see is not the cause of the pain I suffer upon my approaching it, but the mark that forewarns me of it. In like manner, the noise that I hear is not the effect of this or that motion or collision of the ambient bodies, but the sign thereof. Secondly, the reason why ideas are formed into machines, that is, artificial and regular combinations, is the same with that for combining letters into words.” (PHK 65)

¹⁰¹ I have adapted this argument from Loeb. Loeb, *From Descartes to Hume*, 249.

Berkeley is aware of this problem and the potential damage it could do to his entire system. In a well known passage, he confronts the problem of ideas of the imagination, or what he calls *chimeras*, in the *Principles*.

The ideas of sense are more strong, lively, and distinct than those of the imagination; they have likewise a steadiness, order, and coherence, and are not excited at random, as those which are the effects of human wills often are, but in a regular train or series, the admirable connexion whereof sufficiently testifies the wisdom and benevolence of its Author. Now the set rules or established methods, wherein the mind we depend on excites in us the ideas of sense, are called the *Laws of Nature*: and these we learn by experience, which teaches us that such and such ideas are attended with such and such other ideas, in the ordinary course of things. (PHK 30)

In the end, the solution to this problem is that we must learn by experience which ideas are from the senses and which ideas are from the imagination. Those from our senses are from God and those from the imagination are not. In short Berkeley gets out of the problem of false ideas through a mandate to learn God's language of vision. Once we learn this divine language, we are able to distinguish between the true and false ideas of sense.

Jonathan Dancy and John Russell Roberts argue that learning the language of vision amounts to Berkeley's account of science.¹⁰² Berkeley's scientific theory holds that an event is explained not by showing its cause, but by showing that the event is part of the regular order of things as well as how it fits into the general rules derived from the divine language.¹⁰³ In short, the explanation of any event is merely its reduction to

¹⁰² Dancy, *Berkeley: An Introduction*, 104-12. John Russell Roberts makes the same point. "The point of doing science is to help us learn to understand better the language that *constitutes* the natural world. The natural world is nothing more than a vast collection of signs." John Russell Roberts, *A Metaphysics for the Mob: The Philosophy of George Berkeley* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), 65.

¹⁰³ Dancy, *Berkeley: An Introduction*, 105-06.

general rules. Dancy suggests that Berkeley's account of science as learning the divine language is found in the *Principles*.¹⁰⁴

There are certain general laws that run through the whole chain of natural effects: these are learned by the observation and study of Nature and are by men applied ... to the explaining the various phenomena: which explication consists only in shewing the conformity any particular phenomena hath to the general Laws of Nature, or, which is the same thing, in discovering the *uniformity* there is in the production of natural effects. (PHK 62)

The natural philosopher, or the scientist, is not the person who studies the cause of nature. It is the person who best understands these general rules. The scientist is the one who studies and masters God's language of vision.¹⁰⁵

If therefore we consider the difference there is betwixt natural philosophers and other men, we shall find it consists, not in an exacter knowledge of the efficient cause that produces them, for that can be no other than the *will of a spirit*, but only in a greater largeness of comprehension, whereby analogies, harmonies, and agreements are discovered in the works of Nature, and the particular effects explained, that is, reduced to general rules. (PHK 105)

Berkeley's theory of divine revelation sidesteps the problem of false ideas through science—learning how to interpret God's language of vision. According to

¹⁰⁴ "The *Principles* contain the rudiments of an account of natural science as the attempt to learn the language in which God is speaking to us. Individual events are conceived on this account as utterances of God's, our understanding of which is to be taken on the model of our understanding of ordinary utterances, that to understand an event will be to know what it means." Ibid., 109.

¹⁰⁵ Dancy concludes:

"Once this point is sorted out it becomes possible to see that Berkeley's account of science as the attempt to learn the language of God is enormously suggestive, and offers a rich and promising philosophy of science which generates far better answers to questions about the relation between scientific and non-scientific knowledge and to many other difficult problems about science. Berkeley's views here have been inexplicably neglected, partly perhaps because the *Principles* as we have them contain only a few hints which need to be teased out. But I want to suggest that they are a rich and untapped source of good philosophy of science, and also that they constitute an important move in the progress of eighteenth-century thought." Ibid., 112.

Roberts concludes:

"Science, at its best, is nothing more (and nothing less!) than a well-managed body of activities that helps us to learn to vaticinate more and more effectively. And in doing so, it does not reveal to us a body of knowledge the contemplation of which is valuable in-itself. The end of science is not the cobbling together of a mind independent description of "the natural world."... Its end is not to represent or to convey to us some idea, image, or bit of "cognitive content," but rather to teach us how to regulate our own behavior. The content of the divine language is expressive of his divine love for us." Roberts, *A Metaphysics for the Mob: The Philosophy of George Berkeley*, 66.

Berkeley, God's impressing these ideas to our mind is one part of his theory of divine revelation, but our senses are not enough to properly understand this language. The next step is that we must learn how to interpret this language.

We know a thing when we understand it; and we understand it when we can interpret or tell what it signifies. Strictly speaking, the sense knows nothing. We perceive indeed sounds by hearing, and characters by sight; but we are not therefore said to understand them. After the same manner, the phenomena of nature are alike and visible to all; but all have not alike learned the connexion of natural things, or understand what they signify, or know how to vaticinate by them. (*Siris* 253)

It is crucial in Berkeley's theory of divine revelation that we learn how to interpret the language of vision. We can become more competent interpreters of this language with study which helps us properly differentiate true ideas from false.

Therefore, the phenomena of nature, which strike on the senses and are understood by the mind, form not only a magnificent spectacle, but also a most coherent, entertaining, and instructive Discourse; and to effect this, they are conducted, adjusted, and ranged by the greatest wisdom. This Language or Discourse is studied with different attention, and interpreted with different degrees of skill. But so far as men have studied and remarked its rules, and can interpret right, so far they may be said to know in nature. A beast is like a man who hears a strange tongue but understands nothing. (*Siris* 254)

Berkeley holds that those who study God's language of vision will be able to properly interpret this language.

Finally, Berkeley states that the purpose of the divine language is self-preservation. God communicates to us through this language so that we will know how to regulate our actions.

This gives us a sort of foresight, which enables us to regulate our actions for the benefit of life. And without this we should be eternally at a loss: we could not know how to act any thing that might procure us the least pleasure, or remove the least pain of sense. That food nourishes, sleep refreshes, and fire warms us; that to sow in the seed-time is the way to reap in the harvest, and, in general, that to obtain such or such ends, such or such means are conducive, all this we know, not by discovering any necessary connexion between our ideas, but only by the observation of the settled laws of Nature, without which we should be all in uncertainty and confusion, and a

grown man no more know how to manage himself in the affairs of life, than an infant just born. (PHK 31)¹⁰⁶

For example, when we perceive the ideas of sense that signify the presence of a bear, we are receiving a divine language from God that is intended for a very practical end—our self-preservation.¹⁰⁷

In the *New Theory of Vision*, his first work where he introduces the divine language argument Berkeley summarizes this argument including the practical motivation for God to communicate to us in this way.

Upon the whole, I think we may fairly conclude that the proper objects of vision constitute an universal language of the Author of nature, whereby we are instructed how to regulate our actions in order to attain those things that are necessary to the preservation and well-being of our bodies, as also to avoid whatever may be hurtful and destructive of them. It is by their information that we are principally guided in all the transactions and concerns of life. (NTV 147)

Berkeley's divine language argument is his doctrine of general revelation. This doctrine comes in two steps. First, God creates these ideas of sense and presents them to human minds in a causal manner. So the vision of language argument is in this sense a causation theory of divine revelation. But, as Berkeley points out, the senses alone know

¹⁰⁶ Berkeley makes this same point in *Alciphron*.

“Since you cannot deny that the great Mover and Author of Nature constantly explaineth Himself to the eyes of man by the sensible intervention of arbitrary signs, which have no similitude or connexion with the things signified ... thereby informing and directing men how to act with respect to things distant and future, as well as near and present.” (*Alc.* 4.12)

¹⁰⁷ I take this bear example from Roberts:

“We do our best to make use of the order present in nature (i.e., the ideas of sense we receive) by means of introducing words that help us to organize, inculcate, and communicate appropriate expectations. If I say “Lo, a bear!” to my friend, he may expect, upon turning his head in the appropriate direction, to receive certain ideas of sense typical of bear sightings. This may be of great help to him in getting through the next few minutes of his life. If he knows the meaning of the word ‘bear’, he will know what sorts of ideas of sense may be coming his way next. These new ideas of sense, in turn, are only meaningful insofar as he is able to regard them as *signs*. If he is wise in the ways of bears, he will take his ideas of sight, e.g. vivid visual ideas of brown fur and olfactory ideas, like that of a strong musky odor, to be indications of impending extremely painful ideas of sense, ones typical of a mauling. If he is a good vaticinator, he will take these as signs that he ought to either get out of there or make himself appear unappetizing. Thus, the organizing of the ideas of sense into objects by means of the introduction of words is ultimately a practical matter.” Roberts, *A Metaphysics for the Mob: The Philosophy of George Berkeley*, 66.

nothing. So, there is a necessary second step. We must become scientists and learn to interpret this language correctly.

Berkeley's theory of general revelation is philosophically relevant to his epistemology. We know ideas of sense through God's action of revealing them to our minds in a causal manner along with our interpretation of these ideas. The language of vision argument is found in Berkeley's works throughout his philosophical career. I have shown that he embraces this theory as early as the *New Theory of Vision* and as late as *Siris*. If the language of vision is his theory of general revelation, which I show below, this doctrine from Berkeley's philosophical theology is present throughout his works and informs his entire epistemological picture.

There is good evidence that Berkeley's language of vision is his theory of general revelation. First, he connects the language of vision to the natural law. God presents all the ideas of sense to our minds. We in turn, organize them into general rules which constitute the grammar of the language. It is common for Berkeley to say that the language of vision makes up the natural law or laws of nature. According to Berkeley, we discover the general law through these general rules.

The ideas of sense are more strong, lively, and distinct than those of the imagination; they have likewise a steadiness, order, and coherence, and are not excited at random, as those which are the effects of human wills are, but in a regular train or series, the admirable connection whereof sufficiently testifies the wisdom and benevolence of its Author. Now the set rules or established methods, wherein the mind we depend on excites in us the ideas of sense, are called the *Laws of Nature*; and these we learn by experience, which teaches us that such and such ideas are attended with such and such other ideas, in the ordinary course of things. (PHK 30)

...it necessarily follows that there is an *omnipresent eternal Mind*, which knows and comprehends all things, and exhibits them to our view in such a manner, and

according to such rules, as he himself hath ordained, and are by us termed the *Laws of Nature*. (DHP 231)¹⁰⁸

As I pointed out in 2.1, theologians typically equate the natural law and general revelation. Berkeley uses the divine language as his theory of natural revelation, even though he does not use that terminology.

Further evidence that the language of vision is Berkeley's account of general revelation can be found in *Principles* 62 and 63. After establishing that this language constitutes the laws of nature, Berkeley suggests that God can interrupt the ordinary course of events and cause a miracle.

Thus, for instance, it cannot be denied that God, or the intelligence which sustains and rules the ordinary course of things might, if he were minded to produce a miracle, choose all the motions on the dial-plate of a watch, though no body had ever made the movements, and put them in it. (PHK 62)

It may indeed on some occasions be necessary, that the Author of Nature display his overruling power in producing some appearance out of the ordinary series of things. Such exceptions from the general rules of Nature are proper to surprise and awe men into an acknowledgement of the Divine Being: but then they are used but seldom, otherwise there is a plain reason why they should fail of that effect. (PHK 63)

While Berkeley does not use the terms special and general revelation, he is defending that distinction from traditional Christian theology in these passages. There is a normal series of events called the natural law. God causes the ideas which make up these events. But, on rare occasion, God can interrupt this normal series of events and create an appearance

¹⁰⁸ The same idea is found from a passage cited in the text earlier:

“There are certain general laws that run through the whole chain of natural effects: these are learned by the observation and study of Nature and are by men applied ... to the explaining the various phenomena: which explication consists only in shewing the conformity any particular phenomena hath to the general Laws of Nature, or, which is the same thing, in discovering the *uniformity* there is in the production of natural effects.” (PHK 62)

Berkeley also calls these the ‘works of nature’:

“But though there be some things which convince us, human agents are concerned in producing them; yet it is evident to everyone, that those things which are called the works of nature, that is, the far greater part of the ideas or sensations perceived by us, are not produced by, or determined on the wills of men.” (PHK 146)

out of the ordinary. According to Berkeley, this interruption is a “miracle”. Since the normal series that makes up the natural law is God’s language whereby he communicates to humans, it can rightly be called general revelation. And, the disturbance that God causes in that series—the miracle—can be rightly called special or supernatural revelation.¹⁰⁹

Another reason to think that Berkeley’s language of vision is his account of general revelation is that it is consistent with the two books view of divine revelation. I introduced this view from traditional Christian theology in section 2.1. God writes two books and uses both to reveal to humans. On the two book theory, general revelation is God’s book of nature and special revelation is God’s book of Scriptures. Berkeley talks about his language of vision as if it is God’s book of nature. God communicates to humans through creating, or writing, his language of vision. Since it is always present to our minds, the language of vision is God’s constant revelation to humans. As John Russell Roberts puts it, “On Berkeley’s view, from the womb to the grave, God is communicating with us, training us to be interacting persons.”¹¹⁰

Berkeley’s insistence that we learn how to interpret this language of vision is consistent with the two book theory. If God has written a book or text in nature, it is our

¹⁰⁹ It is not clear that Berkeley has a method for distinguishing such miracles from *chimeras*. We know that we are to distinguish ideas of sense from ideas of imagination by recognizing that ideas of sense have “a steadiness, order, and coherence, and are not excited at random.. a regular train or series”. (PHK 30) It seems according to this passage that those ideas which we have that are not a part of that regular train should be dismissed as *chimeras*. It seems that anytime God interrupts the normal series with a miracle, I should dismiss such ideas rather than embrace them as miracles. If I see a bush burning on the mountainside and hear a voice coming from the bush, I should dismiss this event as the product of my imagination since I know that the normal series does not allow for burning bushes to talk. It seems that Berkeley here wants to carve out room for miracles, but his philosophical system will not allow humans to differentiate between miracles and *chimeras*. Berkeley could suggest that such miracles are similar to ideas of sense because they are “more strong, lively, and distinct than those of the imagination” (PHK 30), but it is not clear how I could determine that upon encountering the burning bush that talks.

¹¹⁰ Roberts, *A Metaphysics for the Mob: The Philosophy of George Berkeley*, 85-86.

responsibility to learn how to interpret that text. Dancy and Kenneth Winker point out that the world is a text for Berkeley,¹¹¹ but neither connects this up with the language of vision being Berkeley's account of general revelation. Berkeley's view is that the language of vision constitutes the text of the world whereby God communicates to humans for their own well-being.

Berkeley's use of the passage from Acts 17 – “In Him we live and move and have our being” – is another reason to think that Berkeley's language of vision is his account of general revelation. He quotes this passage twice in the *Principles*, and both times it is quoted as supporting the language of vision.

And it is the searching after, and endeavouring to understand those signs instituted by the Author of Nature, that ought to be the employment of the natural philosopher, and not the pretending to explain things by corporeal causes; which doctrine seems to have much estranged the minds of men from that active principle, that supreme and wise spirit, *in whom we live, move and have our being*. (PHK 66)

It is therefore plain, that nothing can be more evident to anyone that is capable of the least reflection, than the existence of God, or a spirit who is intimately present to our minds, producing in them all that variety of ideas or sensations, which continually affect us, on whom we have an absolute and entire dependence, *in short, in whom we live, and move, and have our being*. (PHK 149)

This is a passage that points out God's general revelation and it has been historically interpreted as such. God is constantly present in the world and in humans, revealing Himself in every aspect of life. Berkeley's citing this passage in connection with his language of vision shows that he considers this theory to be his doctrine of general revelation.

It is important to remember that Berkeley was trained in theology as well as philosophy. We can expect that someone who was conversant in theology would be

¹¹¹ Winker states that it is “important to bear in mind Berkeley's belief that experience is a text, authored by God in the language of ideas for the sake of our well-being.” Winkler, *Berkeley: An Interpretation*, 231. See also Dancy, *Berkeley: An Introduction*, 120-24.

familiar with the doctrine of general revelation as well as the two book theory of God's revelation. The difference between his language of vision and these theological doctrines is not accidental. Berkeley's language of vision is his account of general revelation.

However, at this point an objection can be brought against my conclusion. My argument rests on the similarities between Berkeley's language of vision and general revelation. But Berkeley says things about this language of vision that we would not expect him to say about general revelation. Berkeley takes this language of vision beyond any traditional doctrine of general revelation by suggesting that it is necessary for knowledge, wisdom, and goodness and stating that this language is clear, full, and direct.¹¹² In the traditional theories from Christian theology, general revelation is not considered direct, full, and clear. These adjectives are usually reserved for Special revelation. According to the traditional understanding, general revelation is indirect, incomplete, and unclear. The objector could suggest that Berkeley here is suggesting that the language of vision is special revelation, not general revelation.

My response to this objection is that the evidence supporting the claim that the language of vision is Berkeley's theory of natural revelation is overwhelming. It would be indeed surprising and unexpected if Berkeley connected special revelation to the natural law as he does the language of vision. Berkeley's theory of general revelation is more robust than the traditional theory. He takes general revelation to be clearer, fuller,

¹¹² Berkeley says these things about the language of vision in *Alciphron*:
"Euphranor: You, who, in the beginning of this morning's conference, thought it strange that God should leave Himself without a witness, do now think it strange the witness be so full and clear.
Alciphron: I must own I do. I was aware, indeed, of a certain metaphysical hypothesis of our seeing all things in God... But I never imagined it could be pretended that we saw God with our fleshly eyes as plain as we see any human person whatsoever, and that He daily speaks to our sense in a manifest and clear dialect. (*Alc.* 4.14)

and more direct than the traditional theologian and this should not be surprising given Berkeley's philosophical system.

Berkeley's language of vision is his account of general revelation. This theory of divine revelation is philosophically relevant to Berkeley's epistemology because we derive knowledge from divine revelation according to this theory. Any knowledge we receive from ideas of sense is the result of divine revelation. Divine revelation plays a crucial role in knowledge acquisition in Berkeley's epistemology.¹¹³ On Berkeley's theory, we obtain knowledge from ideas. Ideas are generated by minds, either human minds or God's mind. Humans generate ideas of memory and imagination. The knowledge we have from our memories and imaginations does not depend on anything outside of ourselves. God generates our ideas of sense.

It is important to point out that Berkeley thinks that the majority of our ideas are from God, not ourselves.

But though there be some things which convince us, human agents are concerned in producing them; yet it is evident to everyone, that those things which are called the works of nature, that is, the far greater part of the ideas or sensations perceived by us, are not produced by, or determined on the wills of men. There is therefore some other spirit that causes them, since it is repugnant that they should subsist by themselves. (PHK 146)

God generates these ideas and then excites or produces them in human minds according to the language of vision. We gain knowledge from these ideas once we interpret this language properly. God writes the text of the world and reveals it to humans. Therefore, the knowledge we have from these ideas is knowledge that is dependent upon divine

¹¹³ For one work on Berkeley's epistemology that looks at some related issues see Robert Merrihew Adams, "Berkeley and Epistemology," in *Essays on the Philosophy of George Berkeley*, ed. Ernest Sosa (Boston, MA: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1987). But Adams does not consider the relationship between Berkeley's epistemology and divine revelation.

revelation. In Berkeley's own terms, this knowledge constitutes "the far greater part" of the knowledge we have from ideas. Berkeley's empiricist philosophical system claims that the majority of our knowledge comes from sensations, which in turn come from divine revelation. While Berkeley may also hold that humans receive knowledge from special revelation, there can be no question that the majority of our knowledge is derived from general revelation in the form of the ideas of sense that we know from interpreting the language of vision.¹¹⁴ So, Berkeley's theory of divine revelation is philosophically relevant for his epistemology in that he holds that the majority of human knowledge is derived from general revelation.

To summarize, Berkeley holds a theory of divine revelation even though he does not use this specific terminology. There are four features of his acceptance of this doctrine. First, Berkeley embraces a causation theory of divine revelation where God produces ideas in the minds of humans. Second, he accepts and makes use of the traditional distinction between natural and special revelation from Christian theology. Third, his view of divine revelation is philosophically relevant to his epistemology. The language of vision is Berkeley's attempt to do epistemology that is consistent with his view that God reveals ideas and that humans acquire knowledge from these ideas. And finally, we see that Berkeley accepts that the majority of human knowledge of ideas comes from divine revelation, of which general revelation plays the primary role.

¹¹⁴ This argument only works for knowledge of or from ideas, which is another reason that I am concluding that Berkeley holds that the majority of our knowledge is from divine language. If Berkeley holds that we have knowledge without ideas (and there are good reasons to think that he does) and if that knowledge is not the result of divine revelation, it is still likely that the knowledge we have from ideas is greater than the knowledge we have that is not. The conclusion still holds. The majority of our knowledge requires divine revelation.

2.4

Malebranche and Berkeley's accounts of divine revelation are similar. Both hold a causation theory where God directly produces ideas in the human mind. Malebranche and Berkeley serve as historical examples of Mavrodes' theory presented in *Revelation and Religious Belief*. In fact, Malebranche and Berkeley actually hold a stronger position concerning God's causal activity than Mavrodes. Mavrodes talks about God casually inserting one idea into the human mind. In his example, God produces the idea of theism in the mind of a sleeping agnostic.¹¹⁵ But according to Malebranche and Berkeley, God causes many ideas. On Malebranche's account, God causes all our ideas. Every idea is in God and we perceive those ideas when God chooses to reveal them to us. For example, when I perceive the idea of Eagle Nest Lake in the valley, the idea of the lake is in God and I perceive it because God is revealing that idea to me. On Berkeley's account, God causes the vast majority of the ideas that I perceive. The only ideas that God is not revealing to me, according to Berkeley, are those ideas of memory or imagination. While gazing upon the lake, the ideas that signify the lake are generated by God and excited in my mind. He reveals the visual ideas of the mountains, the aspen trees, and the sky as well as every other idea I sense such as the sound of the birds and the cool feel of the breeze. Malebranche and Berkeley hold very robust causation theories of divine revelation concerning ideas.

Secondly, Malebranche and Berkeley embrace and utilize the distinction from Christian theology between special revelation and general revelation. While they both accept this doctrine, Malebranche and Berkeley do not talk about special and general

¹¹⁵ Mavrodes, *Revelation in Religious Belief*, 37-38.

revelation in the same way. Malebranche explicitly accepts this distinction, and gives his own philosophical explanation of it. When Berkeley uses the term ‘revelation’, he seems to follow Locke by referring to special or supernatural revelation. But, even though he does not use the terminology, we have seen that Berkeley also makes use of general revelation. Both hold that special revelation is infallible and pertains to matters of faith. The Christian scriptures are regarded as special revelation by both philosophers. They also agree that general revelation is fallible and allows room for confusion and false ideas.

Malebranche and Berkeley regard the natural law as natural revelation.

Malebranche connects his account of general revelation, the vision in God, to the natural law. Berkeley connects the language of vision to the natural law in a more straightforward way than does Malebranche since Berkeley actually uses the terminology ‘natural law’ while Malebranche does not.

Also, Malebranche and Berkeley agree that the doctrine of divine revelation is philosophically relevant to their epistemological theories. Malebranche constructs a theory of knowledge that can be held consistently alongside his view that God reveals ideas to humans: the vision in God. Berkeley does the same thing through his divine language argument. These theories are not only consistent with the doctrine of divine revelation, the vision in God and the divine language are natural revelation for Malebranche and Berkeley. The vision in God and the divine language argument play a crucial role in the epistemological systems of Malebranche and Berkeley respectively. Since these epistemological doctrines are the philosopher’s accounts of natural revelation, understanding their theories of divine revelation sheds light on their other

epistemological projects. For example, in section 4.2 I show how Malebranche's theory of divine revelation helps resolve a puzzle concerning efficacious ideas.

Finally, Malebranche and Berkeley hold a very high place for the role of divine revelation in human knowledge. Malebranche holds that all human knowledge is derived from divine revelation. Berkeley holds that the majority of our knowledge is derived from such revelation. Both philosophers also emphasize general revelation over special revelation in producing human knowledge. Malebranche and Berkeley hold accounts of divine revelation that places the priority on general revelation.

While there are many similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley's theories of divine revelation, there are also some differences in these two accounts of revelation. While Malebranche and Berkeley accept special revelation and the Bible as a part of that special revelation, Berkeley rejects Malebranche's conclusion about what we can know from special revelation. Malebranche thought that we could be sure of the existence of bodies by this revelation, Berkeley rejects this conclusion.

Some there are who think, that though the arguments for the real existence of bodies, which are drawn from reason, be allowed not to amount to demonstration, yet the Holy Scriptures are so clear in the point, as will sufficiently convince every good Christian, that bodies do really exist, and are something more than mere ideas; there being in Holy Writ innumerable facts related, which evidently suppose the reality of timber, and stone, mountains, and rivers, and cities, and human bodies. .. (after suggesting that his theory does not dispute those statements).. And I do not think, that either what philosophers call *matter*, or the existence of objects without the mind, is any where mentioned in Scripture. (PHK 82)

Berkeley is clearly referring to Malebranche's position in this passage and distances himself from Malebranche's theory of divine revelation by rejecting the conclusion that we can know the existence of bodies only through special revelation. Instead, Berkeley

states that the scriptures do not teach the existence of matter or the external world, if these are more than ideas.¹¹⁶

There are also differences in the broader epistemological theories of Malebranche and Berkeley.¹¹⁷ Berkeley highlights these differences in a passage that was cited in section 1.3.¹¹⁸ He says that his philosophy is different from that of Malebranche. While Malebranche accepts abstract general ideas and the existence of a mind-independent external world, Berkeley rejects both. There are also differences concerning each of these philosophers' views of ideas.¹¹⁹

I recognize these differences between Malebranche and Berkeley's theories of revelation and epistemology; they do not damage my argument. By arguing that Malebranche and Berkeley hold similar theories of divine revelation as well as similar epistemological positions, I am not arguing that all of their positions of philosophical

¹¹⁶ Some similar questions have been brought up in articles that have focused on Berkeley's theory and his view of creation and resurrection. Lynn D. Cates, "Berkeley on the Work of the Six Days," *Faith and Philosophy* 14 (1997). Marc A. Hight, "Berkeley and Bodily Resurrection," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 45 (2007).

¹¹⁷ While there is secondary literature concerning the philosophical similarities of Malebranche and Berkeley, there is also some literature that rejects any similarity. Some of this literature I summarized in section 1.3. Margaret Atherton, *Berkeley's Revolution in Vision* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990). Geneviève Brykman, "Berkeley: Sa Lecture De Malebranche À Travers Le Dictionnaire De Bayle," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 114 (1975). T. E. Jessop, "Malebranche and Berkeley," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 1 (1938). J. Pucelle, "Berkeley a-T-Il Ètè Influencè Par Malebranche?," *Les Études Philosophiques* 38 (1979).

¹¹⁸ I cite that passage again for reference:

"I shall not therefore be surprised, if some men imagine that I run into the enthusiasm of Malebranche, though in truth I am very remote from it. He builds on the most abstract general ideas, which I entirely disclaim. He asserts an absolute external world, which I deny. He maintains that we are deceived by our senses, and know not the real natures or the true forms and figures of extended beings; all of which I hold the direct contrary. So that upon the whole there are no principles more fundamentally opposite than his and mine." (*DHP*, 214)

¹¹⁹ Malebranche thinks that ideas are not mental, but logical, abstract, and eternal. He also thinks that ideas are not in the minds of humans but in God. Berkeley, on the other hand, thinks that ideas are not eternal (they are produced by spirits) and are located in the minds of humans.

theology and epistemology are similar.¹²⁰ I am arguing that Malebranche and Berkeley hold similar theories of divine revelation and thereby also share similarities in epistemological doctrines that are related to these theories of revelation. While there are some notable differences, the similarities in philosophical theology concerning revelation and the similarities in the corollary epistemological doctrines between Malebranche and Berkeley outweigh these differences.

While I have been making contributions throughout this chapter concerning Malebranche and Berkeley's theories of divine revelation, I can at this point stop and systematically categorize some of the more significant contributions. This is the first work to argue in detail that Malebranche and Berkeley hold theories of divine revelation. Apart from a few works that mention it in passing, there has not been a serious study showing that each of these philosophers accepts the doctrine of divine revelation.¹²¹ Not only do Malebranche and Berkeley each hold a theory of divine revelation, I have also shown that their theories are similar in many respects. While commentators have pointed out many different philosophical similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley, they have not mentioned that these two philosophers hold similar theories of philosophical theology. This aspect has slipped through the cracks.

Neglecting Berkeley and Malebranche's similar theories of divine revelation has implications. Understanding this feature of Malebranche and Berkeley's thought sheds light on certain puzzles and disputes pointed out in the secondary literature that compares

¹²⁰ Jolley makes the same point, just because someone highlights philosophical similarities between two philosophers, it does not follow that that interpreter does not recognize salient differences. Jolley, *The Light of the Soul: Theories of Ideas in Leibniz, Malebranche, and Descartes*.

¹²¹ One exception that has pointed out that Malebranche's theory of knowledge is divine revelation is Pyle, *Malebranche*. And another exception points out that both Malebranche and Berkeley hold accounts of natural revelation: McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*, 224. But neither of these argues this point in detail.

the two philosophers. In other words, there is a payoff that comes from recognizing that these philosophers accept the doctrine of divine revelation.

In section 1.4, I introduced the secondary literature that compares the philosophical systems of Malebranche and Berkeley. Many of the commentators introduced point out that Malebranche and Berkeley shared certain epistemological similarities. Now that we are familiar with the theories of divine revelation held by each philosopher, we can look back at that literature and see the philosophical relevance of these theories more clearly. I have made the claim that Malebranche and Berkeley's theories of divine revelation are philosophically relevant to their epistemologies (and I have pointed out instances of this along the way). Now we can see how understanding Malebranche and Berkeley's position concerning divine revelation sheds light on positions and disputes in the literature. Appreciating the theories of divine revelation in Malebranche and Berkeley also provides a payoff in the individual literature that considers each philosopher in isolation. Chapter 4 is dedicated to highlighting some of those instances.

The most promising result of this study is that it advances some of the work already done in the literature. While others have pointed out epistemological similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley, now, through an appreciation of their theories of divine revelation, we can see *why* they hold some of these similarities.

One important similarity in epistemology that is pointed out in the secondary literature concerns Malebranche and Berkeley's similar theories of perception. This similarity has been pointed out in two related, but different approaches. The first approach points out that Malebranche and Berkeley agree that the human is passive in

regards to sensations. That is to say that Malebranche and Berkeley hold epistemological theories where the human is passive and God is active. The second approach focuses on the actual arguments each philosopher gives in support for their theories of perception. This approach points out that Malebranche and Berkeley share similar accounts of perception. This similarity is usually described by suggesting that Berkeley was influenced by Malebranche: the vision in God is, in some way or another, a precursor of Berkeley's theory of sense perception. Malebranche and Berkeley's shared acceptance of the doctrine of divine revelation sheds light on both of these approaches to this issue.

The best representatives of the first approach are Fritz and Jolley. They point out that Malebranche and Berkeley hold theories of sensation where the human is passive. On both theories, God is doing all the work. God produces the sensations and impresses or excites them in the minds of humans. Fritz summarizes this position: "Central to both theories is the passivity of the self in relation to the cause of sensation."¹²² Jolley agrees, suggesting that Malebranche's later vision in God would be more aptly called "vision by God" since humans are passive in the process.¹²³

While Fritz and Jolley point out that Malebranche and Berkeley agree that the human is passive, neither attempts to explain *why* these philosophers agree on this point. Taking into account their theories of divine revelation, we know that they agree concerning the passive nature of the human in this regard because they both hold causation theories of divine revelation. God, the revealer is active in producing psychological states in humans. This epistemological relationship between the one

¹²² Anita D. Fritz, "Berkeley's Self-- Its Origin in Malebranche," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 15 (1954): 571.

¹²³ Jolley, "Berkeley, Malebranche, and Vision in God," 540.

revealing and the revealee explain why Malebranche and Berkeley agree on these two general points. They both hold epistemological positions that place a priority on divine revelation. Jolley gets very close to saying this when he concludes that Malebranche and Berkeley hold “a theological version of the causal theory of perception”.¹²⁴

The second approach points out that Malebranche and Berkeley hold similar theories of perception; Berkeley’s language of vision is similar to Malebranche’s vision in God. This approach is more common than the first and has been taken by many interpreters including Bracken, Loeb, and McCrackin.¹²⁵ The claim is that Malebranche’s vision in God is similar to Berkeley’s theory of perception, the language of vision. This similarity is usually explained by Malebranche’s direct influence over Berkeley. Berkeley read the *Search*, and patterned his theory of sense perception after Malebranche. Loeb is a good example of this. He suggests that Berkeley’s divine language argument is a “transmuted version of Malebranche’s vision in God.”¹²⁶ As I pointed out in section 1.3, there is a problem with this kind of explanation. Berkeley denies that his philosophy follows Malebranche. We should seek an explanation of these

¹²⁴ Ibid., 539. Before moving on, it is important to note that these interpretations by Fritz and Jolley are disputed. For example, Susan Peppers-Bates presents an argument that Jolley’s interpretation is wrong concerning the passivity of Malebranche. I side with Jolley’s interpretation of Malebranche while I might not agree so quickly concerning Berkeley. I agree that Berkeley holds a passive position concerning our reception of ideas of sense, but he also states that we must learn how to interpret those ideas before we can know what they signify. It does not matter if Fritz and Jolley are right concerning this interpretation. Either way, an understanding of Malebranche and Berkeley’s theories of divine revelation would provide them with an answer to the question of why these theories are similar. My point can be made in the hypothetical: If Malebranche and Berkeley hold a similar account that the human is passive concerning sensation, then that similarity can be explained by their similar theories of a causation theory of divine revelation. See Peppers-Bates, “Does Malebranche Need Efficacious Ideas? The Cognitive Faculties, the Ontological Status of Ideas, and Human Attention.”

¹²⁵ Harry M. Bracken, “Berkeley and Malebranche on Ideas,” *The Modern Schoolman* 41 (1963): 13. Loeb, *From Descartes to Hume* 254. McCrackin, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*, 224.

¹²⁶ Loeb, *From Descartes to Hume*, 254. Brackin says that there are “important parallels between Berkeley’s Divine Language account and Malebranche’s Intelligible Extension.” Bracken, “Berkeley and Malebranche on Ideas,” 13.

epistemological similarities that takes Berkeley's statement concerning his use of Malebranche at face value. A proper understanding of both philosophers' acceptance of the doctrine of divine revelation gives such an explanation.

The commentators who point out that the similarities between the vision in God and the language of vision fail to mention that Malebranche and Berkeley's theories of divine revelation are relevant to these accounts of perception. The vision in God and the language of vision are the philosophers' accounts of natural revelation. The vision in God and the language of vision are the means by which God reveals ideas, and thereby knowledge to humans.

Once these theories of natural revelation are seen and appreciated we can see why these philosophers held similar epistemological theories concerning sense perception. Malebranche's vision in God is similar to Berkeley's language of vision because these theories are both able to be held alongside the doctrine of divine revelation. I have provided a better explanation to why Malebranche's vision in God is similar to Berkeley's language of vision. They both accept the doctrine of divine revelation and they both construct these theories of perception in a way that can be held consistently alongside their belief that God reveals knowledge to humans.

CHAPTER 3 The Trinity in the Metaphysics of Malebranche and Berkeley

This chapter continues my main argument that Malebranche and Berkeley hold similar theories of philosophical theology and those theories are philosophically relevant to their epistemologies and metaphysics. The second similarity between Malebranche and Berkeley's philosophical theologies concerns the doctrine of the Trinity. As was the case with divine revelation, Malebranche and Berkeley accept the doctrine of the Trinity. The Trinity is also philosophically relevant for Malebranche and Berkeley. While divine revelation is epistemologically relevant, the Trinity is metaphysically relevant. Malebranche and Berkeley construct metaphysical theories that are consistent with their acceptance of the Trinity.

As was the case with the doctrine of divine revelation, it is necessary to do some theological groundwork before we can look at Malebranche and Berkeley. This groundwork is done in 3.1. I explain the doctrine of the Trinity as well as some developments on that theory from Augustine and Jonathan Edwards since these developments are found in Berkeley and Malebranche.¹ Then in 3.2, I discuss Malebranche's Trinitarian metaphysics and show how this theological doctrine is relevant to his occasionalism. In 3.3, I argue that Berkeley also held to a Trinitarian metaphysical position that is philosophically relevant to his theory of causation. Finally in 3.4, I conclude this chapter by summarizing the similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley concerning the doctrine of the Trinity and I apply my findings to some relevant discussions in the secondary literature.

¹ Jonathan Edwards is a helpful figure to introduce since he was basically a contemporary of both Malebranche and Berkeley. I give a full explanation for my use of Edwards below in section 3.1.

3.1

Before I can show that Malebranche and Berkeley accept the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, I introduce the doctrine so that its features may be more clearly recognized in the works of these philosophers. As was the case with divine revelation, the Trinity is one of the Christian doctrines that Catholic and Protestant theology hold in common. So Malebranche, the French Roman Catholic Priest, and Berkeley, the English Anglican Bishop, would have both been familiar with the same basic formulation of the Trinity from their respective theological backgrounds. For example, Malebranche and Berkeley both follow Augustine's analogy of the Trinity as being, understanding, and will. One of the explanations for this is that Augustine, who wrote one of the more important treatises on the Trinity in the west, was widely read and respected by both Catholic and Protestant theologians.

The Trinity as a Christian doctrine has a history of its own. A lengthy account of this history is unnecessary, but it is important to introduce enough of it to allow us to recognize the doctrine as it would have been taught during the early modern period.

The doctrine of the Trinity is a difficult doctrine for Christians and non-Christians alike. At best it has been called a doctrine that is shrouded in mystery and at worst it has been called nonsensical.² St. Augustine is said to have stated that anyone who tried to understand the Trinity is in danger of losing their mind.³ Some theologians have attempted to explain it rationally while others have claimed that it is a mystery beyond

² For a contemporary attempt to defend the Trinity in philosophical terms see Brian Hebblethwaite, *Philosophical Theology and Christian Doctrine* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 75-90.

³ Roger Olsen reports that Augustine said this, but does not cite it in Roger E. Olson and Christopher A. Hall, *The Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 1.

human comprehension.⁴ The approach to the rationality of the Trinity that has dominated the Church in the west is derived from both Augustine and Aquinas, both of whom accepted that the Trinity is not learned from natural reason. While human reason can learn certain things about God, such as his existence and some of his attributes, the Trinity is not a doctrine that can be inferred from the existence of the natural world.⁵ Instead it can only be learned from Divine Revelation in the form of the Christian Scriptures. I have already shown in Chapter 2 that both Malebranche and Berkeley accept Divine Revelation, so it is not hard to imagine that they both might have agreed with Augustine and Aquinas concerning this issue. But, even though this doctrine is not accessible by human reason alone, it is still a doctrine that is open to rational scrutiny. Both Augustine and Aquinas held that the Trinity is a mystery beyond mere natural reason but it was not incomprehensible. It could be known, discussed, and debated in light of God's divine revelation.⁶

⁴ Jonathan Edwards, who I will introduce below, says that the Trinity is a mystery.

“But I don't pretend to fully explain how these things are, and I am sensible a hundred other objections may be made, and puzzling doubts and questions raised, that I can't solve. I am far from pretending to explaining the Trinity so as to render it no longer a mystery. I think it to be the highest and deepest of all divine mysteries still, notwithstanding anything that I have said or conceived about it.” Jonathan Edwards, *Works*, ed. Various Editors (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1957-), Vol 21, no 135. (Discourse on the Trinity).

⁵ For a quick summary of Aquinas on the rationality of the Trinity see Hebblethwaite, *Philosophical Theology and Christian Doctrine*, 76-78. For the same concerning Augustine, see Mary T. Clark, “*De Trinitate*,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, ed. Elenore Stump and Norman Kretzmann (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 91.

⁶ My intention here is not to become involved in the argument concerning the understandability of doctrine of the Trinity. Nor is my intention here to argue that the Trinity is philosophically understandable. I merely intend to show that both Malebranche and Berkeley accepted the doctrine and that they applied it to their metaphysics. My goal in this section is merely to explain this doctrine in a way that will help us recognize it in the writings of Malebranche and Berkeley. Since this is the case, I need not give a comprehensive introduction to this doctrine, but only highlight those aspects of the Trinity that come into play for Malebranche and Berkeley. This explains why I only give the theological arguments concerning the Trinity rather than its Biblical support. Even though many of the theologians in question grounded these arguments in the Christian Scriptures, I do not explore any of the Biblical grounds for the Trinity.

As we will see in section 3.2 and 3.3, Malebranche and Berkeley accept the traditional formulation of the Trinity: God is one substance and three persons. The Trinity is the claim in Christian Theology that God exists in three persons. But since Christianity is committed to monotheism, this doctrine does not imply that there are three Gods. God is one substance and three persons. The first person of the Trinity is God the Father. The second person is the Son, Jesus Christ. The third person is the Holy Spirit. These three are not individual substances but are one substance— God. This formulation is intended to mean that the three persons of the Trinity share essential qualities equally but are still distinct in relations with one another and distinct concerning missions in relation to the world.⁷ Augustine summarizes the Trinity in this way.

There is one God; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Son is not the Father, the Father is not the Son. Neither the Father nor the Son is the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son. These three are an inseparable trinity; equal, co-eternal, and absolutely of one inseparable nature, yet distinct in mutual relation to one another and in presentation to humans.⁸

Here is a more concise summary statement of the Trinity from a contemporary theologian:

The doctrine of the Trinity affirms that God’s whole and undivided essence belongs equally, eternally, simultaneously, and fully to each of the three distinct persons of the Godhead.⁹

⁷ Olson and Hall, *The Trinity*, 3.

⁸ I have cleaned up the statement on the Trinity that Letham extracted from one of Augustine’s letters. Here is Letham’s full version, “There is ‘one God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit... [The Son is not the Father, the Father is not the Son, and neither the Father nor the Son is the Holy Spirit.]...[T]hese are equal and co-eternal, and absolutely of one nature... and inseparable trinity, yet ... a trinity In inseparable union ,, distinctively and in mutual relation to each other ... presenting the three to our attention separately ... but in no wise separated.” Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2004), 186.

⁹ Bruce A. Ware, *Father, Son, & Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005).

Since the early church councils of Nicea and Constantinople the doctrine of the Trinity has been cast in metaphysical terms: God is one substance with three persons. This means that God has one being or substance (*ousia*) yet is also three distinct persons or subsistences (*hypostases*).¹⁰ The general framework has not changed from these councils to the modern period. Because of the role they played in the formulation of the Trinity, I summarize the creeds that came from these early councils below.

The background to the early church councils is helpful for understanding the doctrine of the Trinity. It is also helpful for locating the doctrine of the Trinity in Malebranche and Berkeley since they adopt the Nicene formulation and terminology. The Nicene council was sparked by various controversies concerning the reconciliation of the Deity of Jesus with Christian monotheism. There is an apparent inconsistency between the claim that there is only one God and the claim that Jesus Christ is somehow also God (not to mention the Holy Spirit). There were two views that were gaining an audience in the third and fourth centuries. The first, taught by Sabellius, was called modalism. Modalism proposed that the way to reconcile the apparent inconsistency was that God fulfills the roles of all three persons of the Trinity by manifesting himself in only one mode at a time. So, God can manifest himself as the Father, or as the Son, or as the Holy Spirit at any one given time. In other words, modalism held that God is successively Father, Son, and Holy Spirit but God is not simultaneously all three.¹¹ The second view that led to the Nicene council was proposed by the Arians. This view was more instrumental in the formulation of the Trinity than Modalism. Arius, the leader of

¹⁰ Olson and Hall, *The Trinity*, 2-3.

¹¹ Modalism did not have much of a following after the council at Antioch in 268. Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship*, 109. The theology of Modalism is summarized in Ware, *Father, Son, & Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance*, 36-37.

the Arians, advanced the claim that, rather than God himself, Jesus was God's first creation. Jesus was the first begotten of all God's creations. Arius concluded that that there is only one God, the Father, and the Son is not co-eternal with the father. There was a time when the Son was not.¹²

These two views led to the council of Nicaea, and the later council of Constantinople, where various leaders of the early church gathered to discuss the orthodoxy of these teachings. The product of these councils was a creed: a formal statement of doctrine. This creed introduced the language that has been adopted by theologians since that time.¹³ Here is the Nicene Creed in its entirety (325 AD):

We believe in one God Father Almighty maker of all things, seen and unseen:

And in one Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, begotten as only begotten of the Father, that is the substance (*ousia*) of the father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father, through whom all things came into existence, both things in heaven and things on earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down and was incarnate and became man, suffered and rose again the third day, ascended into the heavens, is coming to judge the living and the dead:

And in the Holy Spirit.

But those who say, "There was a time when he did not exist," and "Before being begotten he did not exist," and that he came into beings from non-existence, or who allege that the Son of God is of another *hypostasis* or *ousia*, or who is alterable or changeable, these the Catholic and Apostolic Church condemns.¹⁴

The creed that is today known as the Nicene Creed was not crafted at the council at Nicaea but was crafted at a later council, in Constantinople. However, the two creeds are very similar since the council at Constantinople was based on the creed that was written at Nicaea. The creed that is known today as the Nicene Creed is perhaps more accurately

¹²Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship*, 112.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 115-17, 68-69.

¹⁴ This is a translation from the original Greek by Hanson as quoted in *Ibid.*, 115-16.

called the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. Here is that creed which was the product of the later council of Constantinople (381 AD):

We believe in one God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ the Son or God, the Only-begotten, begotten by his Father before all ages, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father, through whom all things came into existence, who for us men and for our salvation came down from the heavens and became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became a man, and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate and suffered and was buried and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures and ascended into the heavens and is seated at the right hand of the Father and will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, and there will be no end to his kingdom;

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and life-giver, who proceeds from the Father, who is worshipped and glorified together with the Father and the Son, who spoke by the prophets;

And in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church;

We confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins;

We wait for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the coming age. Amen.¹⁵

While there is some variation, both statements say the same basic thing about the Trinity.

The Son is of the same substance (*ousia*) or consubstantial (*homoousios*) with the Father.

The choice of the term *homoousios*, same substance, was deliberate. There was a

competing interpretation of the Trinity at the time that taught that the Son was

homoiousios, or of like substance.¹⁶ The councils deliberately chose to declare that the

Son was of the same substance or one substance with the Father to preserve the notion

that persons of the Trinity were of the same nature or substance. The Holy Spirit, by

extension, was also considered of the same substance as the Father.

In the end, the result of these councils was that the Trinity was cast in metaphysical terms. These are the same general metaphysical claims that Malebranche

¹⁵ Translated from the Greek by Hanson. Ibid., 171-72.

¹⁶ Ware, *Father, Son, & Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance*, 37. And Allan Coppedge, *The God Who Is Triune* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 94-95.

and Berkeley accept. God the Son (and God the Holy Spirit) was of the same substance with God the Father. To say that they are the same substance or one substance is to say that they share essential qualities equally.

“When the church says that the Son and the Holy Spirit are fully God, it means that the whole being of God, without remainder, is in each person. All that is God, all that can ever be said to be God, without dilution or subtraction, constitutes the person of the Son, and in turn the person of the Spirit, just as it is with the person of the Father. Each person of the Trinity, when considered in Himself, is absolutely, one hundred percent God, and at the same time one hundred percent of God is in each person. The whole God is in each person, and each person is the whole God.”¹⁷

The conclusion from these early creeds is that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct yet numerically one in substance.¹⁸ This notion of the unity within the Trinity found in these early creeds continues into contemporary Christian theology.

Malebranche and Berkeley both accept the notion that the second and third persons of the Trinity share the same substance with God the Father, the first person of the Trinity. Also, as I will point out, both philosophers hold accounts of substance that leaves room for the Trinitarian formulation of God being one substance with three persons.

At this point in the discussion, it may seem that the sameness of the three persons of the Trinity erases any distinction between each of the persons of the trinity. However, many theologians throughout history, both before and after the councils of Nicaea and Constantinople, have worked on the distinctiveness of the three persons of the Trinity. This is where we turn to Augustine. Augustine wrote extensively on the Trinity, most notably in *De Trinitate*, an entire treatise dedicated to the subject. The influence of Augustine’s work on the Trinity is hard to overestimate as Olsen and Hall point out:

¹⁷ This is summarized by Letham. Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship*, 176.

¹⁸ This is the way that Coppedge puts it in Coppedge, *The God Who Is Triune*, 102.

Christian reflection on the Trinity of God declined in creativity and depth after the great achievements of the patristic era which ended around 500 to 600 CE. Many theologians and church leaders in the Latin West regarded Augustine's constructive proposals – especially *De Trinitate* – the final word on the subject.¹⁹

Augustine wrote extensively on the Trinity refining numerous points. The aspect of his work on the Trinity that is important later in the philosophy of Malebranche and Berkeley is the differentiation of the persons of the Trinity.

Augustine held firmly that three persons of the Trinity were comprised of only one substance. While in the creeds the Holy Spirit was implicitly considered consubstantial or of the same substance with the Father, Augustine made this explicit.²⁰ Augustine stressed that the three persons of the Trinity were differentiated by their works or attributes. The work of the Trinity is complex. On the one hand, all three persons of the Trinity are involved in all the works of God, but, on the other hand, each work can be appropriately applied to one of the persons of the Trinity. For example, the Son alone is the subject of the incarnation since only the Son becomes man. But the Father and the Holy Spirit are both also directly engaged in this work.²¹

Augustine also differentiated among the Trinity by means of their relations within the Trinity. This was perhaps the major impact that Augustine had on later Trinitarian discussions. Augustine was somewhat uncomfortable with the term “person” as being applied to the Trinity because he feared it led to a conception of the Trinity where the three could be separated from the one. Augustine held that the Trinity was one

¹⁹ Olson and Hall, *The Trinity*, 51.

²⁰ Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship*, 188.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 187.

inseparable being.²² He did however use the term ‘persons’ in relation to the Trinity, but with some explanation. He did not want the three persons of the Trinity to be understood in an analogous way as three separate individual human beings since the persons of the Godhead share one substance. Instead, Augustine expressed that the three persons should be identified as a part of the whole first and foremost.²³ So, the emphasis for Augustine is on the one substance over and above the separate persons of the Trinity.

Once the term “person” is correctly understood as not being three separate beings analogous to three human beings, Augustine moves on to talk about the relations within the Trinity that distinguishes each person from the other. God the Father is absolute being, simple, and indivisible. In short, the Father is the *principium*, or source of all deity.²⁴ The Father being the source of all deity is important for understanding the relations within the Trinity. The Father is the source of being. The Father begets the Son, but this begetting is not a temporal begetting since both the Father and Son are eternal.²⁵ The Father is also the source of the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son. Augustine famously explained the Holy Spirit as the communion or mutual love between the Father and the Son.²⁶ Yet, the Holy Spirit is still consubstantial with the Father.

Augustine also advanced the differentiation of the persons of the Trinity through analogies or illustrations. This is an important feature of Augustine’s formulation of the

²² Clark, “*De Trinitate*,” 96.

²³ Coppedge, *The God Who Is Triune*, 102.

²⁴ Clark, “*De Trinitate*,” 94.

²⁵ This is called the eternal begetting or generation of the Son and is not unique to Augustine, but predates even the early councils of Nicaea and Constantinople. Olson and Hall, *The Trinity*, 33-50.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 103-04.

Trinity that is found in Malebranche and Berkeley. Augustine's analogies are very influential in both Roman Catholic churches as well as Protestant churches in the Modern period.

In books 8 – 15 of *De Trinitate*, Augustine looked for analogies of the Trinity within humans. He felt he was justified in looking at the created human for evidence of the creator God because of the Christian claim that humans are made in the image of God. This doctrine that humans are created in the image of God is found in the Old Testament book of Genesis and is therefore sometimes called the Genesis doctrine.²⁷ The analogy that is repeated by Malebranche, Berkeley, and Jonathan Edwards is his triad of being, understanding, and will.

Augustine presents analogies for the Trinity in the *De Trinitate* and in the *Confessions*. Augustine uses three analogies that are quite similar concerning the human mind. The first is the triad of the mind, its knowledge, and its love.

And so there is a certain image of the Trinity: the mind itself, its knowledge, which is its offspring, and love is the third: these three are one and one substance. The offspring is not less, while the mind knows itself as much as it is; nor is the love less, while the mind loves itself as much as it knows and as much as it is.²⁸

The second analogy is found in *De Trinitate* involving memory, understanding, and will.

Since these three, memory, understanding, and will, are, therefore, not three lives but one life, not three minds but one mind, it follows that they are certainly not three substances, but one substance... Therefore, these three are one in that they are one life, one mind, and one essence. And whatever else they are called in respect to themselves, they are spoken of together, not in the plural but in the singular.²⁹

²⁷ Jolley refers to this as the Genesis doctrine in Nicholas Jolley, "Berkeley and Malebranche on Causality and Volition," in *Central Themes in Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. J. A. Cover and Mark Kulstad (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1990).

²⁸ In the same section as this quote, Augustine says that the love that seeks knowledge is also called 'will'. Augustine, *On the Trinity*, ed. Gareth B. Matthews, trans. Stephen McKenna (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 40 [9.12.18].

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 58 [10.11.18].

We can compare these two analogies. The first aspect of the analogies is the mind or memory. The second part of both analogies is similar: knowledge and understanding. The third looks somewhat different since the first is love and the second is will. In fact, Augustine states in the midst of the first analogy that the love is the same thing as the will.³⁰

Augustine presents a third analogy concerning the human mind in the *Confessions*. This is the analogy that seems to have the most staying power, at least for Malebranche and Berkeley; both present similar analogies to this one. In Chapter 13, Augustine uses analogy of being, knowledge, and will as a means of understanding the Trinity.

Who can understand the omnipotent Trinity? ... There are three things, all found in man himself, which I should like men to consider... The three things are existence, knowledge, and will, for I can say that I am, I know, and I will... In these three – being, knowledge, and will – there is one inseparable life, one life, one mind, one essence; and therefore, although they are distinct from one another, the distinction does not separate them.³¹

Augustine's primary goal in using these analogies is to explain the Trinity. These analogies are examples from human experience that are intended to help us understand how something can be both three and one.

Augustine does not typically connect the three parts of the analogy directly to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. However, in one passage he does make a connection from each of the persons of the Trinity to one of the features of the mind. Augustine says that the memory is like the Father or first person of the Trinity, the understanding is like the

³⁰ Ibid., 40 [9.12.18].

³¹ Translation by R. S. Pine-Coffin in Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin (London, UK: Penguin Books, 1961).

Son, and the love or will is like the Holy Spirit.³² In all three respects he is very guarded in these associations, repeatedly stating that these likenesses are only to be understood loosely. He does not make these same connections for the being, knowledge, and will triad although such a connection would not be contrary to the spirit of what he writes here. Augustine frequently uses the analogy of the being, mind, and will, but he is reluctant to connect these three parts of the analogy to different persons of the Trinity. As will be seen below, this connection of each person of the Trinity to a part of the analogy to the human mind will become emphasized more than Augustine himself desired.³³

This analogy of the Trinity to being, understanding, and will is found in the metaphysics of Malebranche and Berkeley. In the history of interpretation of Augustine, what he intended as a mere analogy or illustration of the Trinity shows up as a full metaphysical picture. This metaphysical picture connects each of these features of the mind to one person of the Trinity. The mind, memory, and being are all associated with the Father. Knowledge, reason, and understanding are connected to the Son. And the love or will of God is connected to the Holy Spirit. I call this the “amplified analogy”. What was merely a psychological illustration of the Trinity for Augustine became a

³² “Although the memory of man, and particularly that which beasts do not have, namely, that in which intelligible things are so contained that they do not come into it through the senses of the body, has, in proportion to its own small measure in this image of the Trinity, a likeness, incomparably unequal, of course, but yet a likeness of whatever kind it may be to the Father; and similarly, although the understanding of man, which is formed from the memory by the attention of thought, when that which is known is spoken—it is a word of the heart and belongs to no language—has in its great unlikeness some likeness to the Son; and although the love of man which proceeded from knowledge and combines the memory and the understanding, as though common to the parent and the offspring—whence it is understood to be neither the parent and the offspring—whence it is understood to be neither the parent nor the offspring—has in this image some likeness, although very unequal, to the Holy Spirit, yet we do not find that, as in this image of the Trinity, these three are not the one man, but belong to the one man, so in the highest Trinity itself, whose image this is, are those three of one God, but they are the one God, and there are three Persons, not one. Augustine, *On the Trinity*, 213 [15.23.43].

³³ This is what I call the amplified analogy that we see in Edwards.

component of later systematic theology because of how this illustration was used by Anselm and St. Thomas Aquinas.³⁴

We will see in sections 3.2 and 3.3 that Malebranche and Berkeley hold versions of this amplified analogy. Jonathan Edwards also held the amplified analogy. His development of this analogy is very close to what we will see in Malebranche and Berkeley. Since Jonathan Edwards was an American philosopher and theologian who lived in New England his entire life, it may seem strange to examine his account here. He was in North America while Malebranche and Berkeley were in France and Britain, respectively, and Edwards was younger than both Malebranche and Berkeley. While it is possible that Augustine was a common influence on both Malebranche and Berkeley's views on the Trinity, it is impossible that Edwards could have been a common influence on both earlier philosophers. So, why dedicate time and space to Edwards' view of the Trinity?

It is helpful to look at Edwards's account for a number of reasons. First, as was pointed out earlier, some strands of Augustine's thought on the Trinity were picked up and altered in some ways by later thinkers. One way to see what these strands looked like by the time of Malebranche and Berkeley is to trace them through all the philosophers and theologians that advanced Augustine's ideas. But, another way to get a similar result is by looking at what contemporaries of Malebranche and Berkeley had also picked up concerning Augustine's account of the Trinity. I think that Edwards' use of the amplified analogy shows that this interpretation of Augustine was in the air during the early modern period.

³⁴ Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship*, 198.

One reason to look at Edwards is that he was a contemporary of both Malebranche and Berkeley. Edwards was not part of the philosophical and theological circles of Malebranche or Berkeley, nor did Malebranche or Berkeley write in response to any of Edwards' works. Still, Edwards was alive at the same time as both Malebranche and Berkeley and therefore was a part of the same intellectual era.³⁵ While Edwards' actual life only overlapped Malebranche's for a bit over 10 years, I am calling Edwards a contemporary of these men because all three philosophers lived and wrote during the later parts of the early modern period.³⁶ Since Edwards was a contemporary of Malebranche and Berkeley, we can examine the writing of Edwards to get a feel for the shape of philosophical theology during the early modern period.

In addition to being a contemporary of Malebranche and Berkeley, albeit a bit younger, Edwards also held some philosophical similarities to both Malebranche and

³⁵ Of the three, Malebranche was the oldest. He lived from 1638 to 1715 and published his first edition of the *Search* in 1674 at the age of 36. But Malebranche lived to the age of 77 so he was alive at the same time as both younger men. Berkeley, who lived from 1685-1753 was 47 years younger than Malebranche. But Berkeley published early, the *Principles* was published in 1710 when he was 25 years old and when Malebranche was 72 years old. Despite Malebranche's age, there is some historical evidence that Malebranche was aware of Berkeley and there is conjecture that they may have even met. Edwards was the youngest of the three, he lived from 1703 to 1758, making him 65 years younger than Malebranche and 18 years younger than Berkeley. Edwards studied at Yale and was a tutor there before becoming a pastor. While Berkeley was living in Rhode Island, Edwards was serving as a pastor in nearby Massachusetts. There is reason to think that Edwards read Berkeley, but there is no evidence that the two men met while Berkeley was living in New England. For these dates see Nicolas Malebranche, *The Search after Truth*, ed. Thomas M. Lennon and Paul J. Olscamp, trans. Thomas M. Lennon and Paul J. Olscamp, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy* (Cambridge: UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997). For discussions of the alleged meeting between Malebranche and Berkeley see A. A. Luce, *Berkeley and Malebranche; a Study in the Origins of Berkeley's Thought* (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 1934), 208-10. Charles J. McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy* (New York: NY: Clarendon Press, 1983), 210. See also Kenneth P. Minkema' Chronology at the beginning of Sang Hyun Lee, *The Princeton Companion to Jonathan Edwards* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), xxiii-xxviii. And David Berman, *George Berkeley: Idealism and the Man* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1994), 101-04.

³⁶ I am using here the timetable that holds that the Early Modern period ends with Kant's publication of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in 1781.

Berkeley.³⁷ There are good reasons to think that Edwards read both Malebranche and Berkeley while at Yale. The library had copies of Malebranche's *Search* as well as Berkeley's *Principles*.³⁸ But even if Edwards did not actually read these philosophers, the philosophical similarities are striking. Edwards held that the world which we perceive is an ideal world that is in God.³⁹ Edwards was associated with occasionalism and held a doctrine of continuous creation.⁴⁰ Given Edwards philosophical affinities with both Malebranche and Berkeley and his being a contemporary of both, his thought will prove to be enlightening concerning the Trinity because he states the amplified analogy more sharply than what can be found in Malebranche or Berkeley.

But the most important reason to look at Edwards' view of the Trinity before we look to Malebranche and Berkeley is that Edwards gives a more thoroughgoing discussion of the Trinity. Edwards is a good resource because, as I show in sections 3.2 and 3.3, Malebranche and Berkeley adopt views of the Trinity that are similar to that of Edwards.

³⁷ For the relationship and similarities between Malebranche and Edwards, see McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*, 329-40, Jasper Reid, "The Trinitarian Metaphysics of Jonathan Edwards and Nicolas Malebranche," *The Heythrop Journal* 43, no. 2 (2002). For the same between Berkeley and Edwards see Stephen H. Daniel, "Berkeley's Christian Neoplatonism, Archetypes, and Divine Ideas," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 39 (2001), Sang Hyun Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

³⁸ While Edwards never states that he read both Malebranche and Berkeley, both Malebranche's *Search* and Berkeley's *Principles* were available at the library at Yale while Edwards was a student. The evidence that Edwards may have read both Berkeley and Malebranche is pointed out in Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 59, footnote 29. McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*, 329-31.

³⁹ Reid, "The Trinitarian Metaphysics of Jonathan Edwards and Nicolas Malebranche," 152-53. McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*, 330-31.

⁴⁰ There is debate concerning Edwards position on occasionalism. McCracken says that Edwards "taught a thoroughgoing doctrine of occasionalism" while Lee rejects that Edwards held to the position at all. Lee points out that Edwards instead holds a doctrine of continuous creation but is not occasionalism. McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*, 331. Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 107.

Perhaps Edwards wrote more carefully on the matter of the Trinity because he was more interested in doing theology than Malebranche or Berkeley. As I argued in section 1.1, Malebranche and Berkeley were not concerned with doing the work of a theologian. Their concerns were philosophical in nature and they borrow from their theological views at times to aid them in their philosophical projects. On the other hand, Edwards was a theologian. His works include treatises on the Christian Scriptures, human sin, and the Trinity. Edwards was also interested in philosophical matters, but he was more interested in theology than either Malebranche or Berkeley. Whatever the reason, Edwards wrote more fully and systematically on the Trinity than Malebranche or Berkeley. This is the primary reason that Edwards' work is helpful.

Edwards stresses the same two characteristics of the Trinity that were pointed out from Augustine: the relational differentiation between the three persons of the Trinity and the analogy of being, understanding, and will. The first follows Augustine's account fairly closely while the second is an advance on Augustine's analogy, which is why I call it the "amplified analogy".

Edwards clearly held the Augustinian distinctions between persons of the Trinity, as well as the Nicæan formulation.

I think that it is within the reach of naked reason to perceive certainly that there are three distinct things in God, each which is the same [God], three that must be distinct; and that there are not nor can be any more distinct, really and truly distinct, but three, either distinct persons or properties or anything else; and that of these three, one is (more properly than anything else) begotten of the other, and that the third proceeds alike from both, and that the first neither is begotten nor proceeds.⁴¹

Edwards shows that he embraced the three in one doctrine.

⁴¹ Edwards, *Works*, Vol 13, pg 258. (The 'Miscellanies', no.94). In this passage, it seems that Edwards disagrees with Augustine and Aquinas that the Trinity is a doctrine that is not open to natural reason, but he says more about this elsewhere where he lines up with the notion that the Trinity is only available from Divine revelation.

Secondly, and more importantly for our purposes, Edwards embraced the analogy of being, understanding, and will from Augustine.

There are two more eminent and remarkable images of the Trinity among the creatures. The one is in the spiritual creation, [the] soul of man. There is the mind, and the understanding or idea, and the spirit of the mind, as it is called in Scripture, i.e. the disposition, the will or affection.⁴²

But Edwards places more emphasis on this analogy than does Augustine. While Augustine uses the psychological analogy only to help understand the nature of the Trinity, Edwards holds the amplified analogy. He connects each of the persons of the trinity to a different attribute or activity of God, something that Augustine was hesitant to do. God the Father is God in pure essence or being. God the Son is the intellect, wisdom, or understanding of God, also called God's Word. God the Holy Spirit is the active nature of God, hence the love or will of God.

And this I suppose to that blessed Trinity that we read of in the holy Scriptures. The Father is the Deity subsisting in the prime, unoriginated and most absolute manner, or the Deity is in its direct existence. The Son is the Deity generated by God's understanding, or having an idea of himself, and subsisting in that idea. The Holy Ghost is the Deity subsisting in act of the divine essence flowing out and breathed forth, in God's infinite love to and delight himself. And I believe the whole divine essence does truly and distinctly subsist both in the divine idea and divine love, and that therefore each of them are properly distinct persons. And it confirms me in it, that this the true Trinity, because reason is sufficient to tell us that there must be these distinctions in the Deity, viz. of God (absolutely considered), and the idea of God, and the love and delight; and there are no other real distinctions in God that can be thought [of].⁴³

The primary reason to introduce Edwards is due to this development on Augustine's analogy. As I show below, both Malebranche and Berkeley hold similar accounts of the

⁴² Ibid., Vol 21, pg 139. (Discourse on the Trinity).

⁴³ Ibid., Vol 21, pg 132 (Discourse on the Trinity). Edwards says the same thing in Edwards, *Works*.(The 'Miscellanies', no.94).

amplified analogy as Edwards and both attach these activities to each of the persons of the Trinity.

There are metaphysical implications from these attachments. The first concerns the metaphysical definition of a substance. A philosopher who believes that the Trinity consists of three persons and one substance is going to try and define substance in such a way to make sense of this claim. Secondly, a philosopher who embraces the amplified analogy will hold that each of the persons of the Trinity is distinct in relation to the creation concerning their roles. God the Father will be connected to the creation as its source of being. God the Son will be connected to the creation as intelligence of understanding and the Holy Spirit will play the role of God's efficacious will. I show below that Malebranche and Berkeley connect the persons of the Trinity to the creation in this way. Both speak of the Holy Spirit as the will of God.

3.2

Malebranche nowhere explicitly states that he embraces the doctrine of the Trinity or that it influences his metaphysics.⁴⁴ Nevertheless some of the recent secondary literature on Malebranche has pointed out that he embraced a Trinitarian metaphysical picture.⁴⁵ Jasper Reid argues that Malebranche structured his metaphysics from a

⁴⁴ Malebranche does talk about the Trinity, but he does not give any arguments in support of this doctrine, perhaps because he considered it a mystery.

“We believe the mystery of the Trinity, for example, although the human mind cannot conceive it; and yet we do not give up our belief that two things now differing from a third are not different from each other, although this proposition seems to overthrow it.” (LO 245)

⁴⁵ The seminal work seems to be by Jasper Reid in two articles. Reid, “The Trinitarian Metaphysics of Jonathan Edwards and Nicolas Malebranche.” And Jasper Reid, “Malebranche on Intelligible Extension,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 11 (2003). This same idea has also been mentioned by Andrew Pessin, “Malebranche's "Vision in God",” *Philosophy Compass* 1, no. 1 (2006). There is a section concerning Malebranche's Trinitarian metaphysics in a PhD dissertation by Brandon Watson at the University of Toronto Brandon Watson, “The External World and the Fall from Reason: Malebranche's

traditional Trinitarian model that was common during his day in two works:

“Malebranche on Intelligible Extension” and “The Trinitarian Metaphysics of Jonathan Edwards and Nicolas Malebranche.”⁴⁶ While Reid notices that that Malebranche accepts a Trinitarian model of metaphysics, he does not show how the Trinity is relevant in Malebranche’s other metaphysical doctrines. I go beyond Reid’s work in two ways. First, I give more textual support for the claim that Malebranche accepts the Trinity. Secondly, I show how the Trinity is philosophically relevant to Malebranche’s theory of causation.

Reid argues that a metaphysical outlook derived from the Trinity was common during Malebranche’s time, largely due to the influence of Augustine.⁴⁷ Reid highlights some of the same features of Augustine’s view of the Trinity that I pointed out above in section 3.1. Namely, that Augustine’s work on the Trinity was grounded in the historical dispute that led to the Nicene Creed which affirmed that the three Persons of the Trinity were consubstantial or held common being.⁴⁸ Augustine held that there are three persons of the Trinity but only one substance, God. This Trinitarian account goes on to explain how God creates the world. God creates all things through the relationship that exists between all three members of the Trinity. The Father creates through wisdom, or the Son, as well as through love or will, the Holy Spirit. Therefore, all three persons are

Account of Our Knowledge of the Existence and Nature of Bodies” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2005).

⁴⁶ Reid, “Malebranche on Intelligible Extension.”, Reid, “The Trinitarian Metaphysics of Jonathan Edwards and Nicolas Malebranche.”

⁴⁷ Reid, “Malebranche on Intelligible Extension,” 588. and Reid, “The Trinitarian Metaphysics of Jonathan Edwards and Nicolas Malebranche,” 153.

⁴⁸Clark, “*De Trinitate*,” 91-95.

involved in the creation of the world. Reid points out that Malebranche embraced this Trinitarian framework from Augustine.

I expand upon Reid's work by giving a more comprehensive textual argument that Malebranche holds to a Trinitarian picture.⁴⁹ More than that, I show that Malebranche actually holds the theological doctrine of the Trinity alongside his philosophical doctrines. While talking about occasionalism, Malebranche says some things that will strike many of his philosophical readers as strange. An understanding of his Trinitarian picture will help make those sayings less strange.

Malebranche accepts the Trinity as formulated by the Nicene Creed. He thinks that the Son is consubstantial with the Father. Malebranche does not explicitly state this, but this conclusion follows from what he does say. First of all, Malebranche states that the Son, Jesus Christ, is the same as the Word and Wisdom of God.

We have but one true Master, Jesus Christ, our Lord, the eternal Wisdom, the Word of the Father in whom are all the treasures of the knowledge and wisdom of God. (LO 649)⁵⁰

From this passage, we are justified in reading Malebranche's uses of Word and Wisdom as referring to the Son. Malebranche adds that the Word of God is also Reason.

Although this idea that we receive through the immediate union we have with the Word of God, sovereign Reason, never deceives us by itself as do those we receive because of the union we have with our bodies (LO 242-242)

The final move to see Malebranche's Nicene account of the Trinity is that Reason is also God Himself.

⁴⁹ This is because I find that some of the texts that he presents in support for these claims are reaching for the conclusion that Malebranche holds a traditional account of the Trinity. I provide stronger textual support for the claim that Malebranche embraces a Trinitarian picture. I present a number of passages from Malebranche that Reid does not consider. .

⁵⁰ Malebranche states that Jesus Christ is the Word elsewhere:
“... and which overturns the entire edifice of the Christian religion by despoiling Jesus Christ or the Word of God of His divinity,...” (LO 650)

This reason, therefore, is not different from God Himself; it is, therefore, coeternal and consubstantial with Him. (LO 614)

Malebranche says that the Son is the same thing as the Word or Reason and that Reason is coeternal and consubstantial with God.⁵¹ This language reminds us of the precise language from the Nicene Creed concerning the relationship between the Father and the Son. The creed states that the Son is consubstantial with the Father.⁵²

Malebranche also says that the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit receives the entirety of the substance of God.

The Son and the Holy Spirit do not participate in the divine Being, they receive it in its entirety. (DM 22)

Another way of saying this is that the Holy Spirit is also consubstantial with the Father and the Son.⁵³ So, Malebranche's theory of the Trinity matches the traditional account from the Nicene Creed. God is one substance in three persons; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Malebranche also makes the same differentiation of the persons of the Trinity as Augustine. God begets the Son, and the Holy Spirit is generated from the Father and the Son.

⁵¹ Malebranche also writes:

“This learned man did not notice that there was an order, a law, a sovereign reason that God necessarily loves, which is coeternal with Him and according to which He necessarily acts, given that he wills to act.” (LO 587)

⁵² Notice the similarity between what Malebranche says and the Nicene Creed quoted above:

And in one Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, begotten as only begotten of the Father, that is for the substance of the father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father, through whom all things came into existence, both things in heaven and things on earth;

⁵³ Reid takes Malebranche to hold that the Holy Spirit is also consubstantial with the Son and the Father from a passage from LO 620 which I quote below in reference to the Holy Spirit. “But, again, He could conclude this without ever having to look outside Himself at the created world itself, because His will was also consubstantial with Him, this time as the third person of the Trinity. Reid, “Malebranche on Intelligible Extension,” 589.

The saints in heaven see by an evident light that the Father begets His Son and that the Father and the Son produce the Holy Spirit, for these emanations are necessary.” (LO 574)

In this passage Malebranche displays both the eternal begetting of the Son and the eternal proceeding of the Holy Spirit, which are both found from Augustine’s differentiation of the persons of the Trinity. He also agrees with this Augustinian picture that God creates the world in accord with this Trinitarian account.

For since God cannot act in ignorance and in spite of Himself, He created the world according to wisdom and through the impulse of His love—He made all things through his Son and the Holy Spirit as Scripture teaches us. (LO 620)

We can conclude that Malebranche accepts both the Nicene account of the Trinity—that God is one substance with three persons—and he also accepts Augustine’s differentiation of the persons of the Trinity.

Malebranche also embraces the amplified analogy. He equates God the father with absolute being.

God’s essence is His own absolute being (LO 231)⁵⁴

Malebranche equates the second person of the Trinity with reason, wisdom, or the word.

Malebranche is clear that he speaks of the second person of the Trinity in many different ways.

I have said this before and I repeat it: only sovereign Reason makes us rational, only sovereign Truth enlightens us, only God speaks to us clearly and can teach us. We have but one true Master, Jesus Christ, our Lord, the eternal Wisdom, the Word of the Father in whom are all the treasures of the knowledge and wisdom of God:… (LO 649)⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Here are other passages where Malebranche makes this same claim concerning God:

“But such is not the case with created minds, which can see in themselves neither the essence nor the existence of things. They cannot see the essence of things within themselves since, given their own limitations, created minds cannot contain all things as God does, who might be termed universal being, or simply, *He Who Is*, as He calls Himself.” (LO 229)

“There are only three kinds of beings about which we have any knowledge and to which we can have any connection: God, or the infinitely perfect Being who is the principle or cause of all things” (DM 93)

So, from these passages, we see that Malebranche embraces the amplified analogy concerning the Father and the Son. God the Father is absolute being and therefore the source of everything and the Son is God's word, wisdom, or reason.

The final part of the amplified analogy is that Malebranche also connects the third person of the Trinity to God's love or will, as Edwards did. Malebranche clearly connects the Holy Spirit to God's love. In the same passage quoted above, he creates a parallel between God's wisdom and love and then between the Son and the Holy Spirit.

He created the world according to wisdom and through the impulse of His love—He made all things through his Son and the Holy Spirit as Scripture teaches us. (LO 620)

In this passage the Holy Spirit, or the love of God, is active in the creation of the world. Malebranche extends this activity to the will of God, thereby showing that the Holy Spirit is also connected to God's will.

We ought to know that it is God's will that creates and rules nature, that the force or power of natural causes is but his will, and in a word, that all things depend upon God in every way. (LO 291)

God wills that a certain kind of world exist. His will is omnipotent, and this world is thus created. Let God no longer will there to be a world, and it is thereby annihilated. For the world assuredly depends on the will of the creator. (DM 112)

Malebranche in these passages and many more like them is talking about the third person of the Trinity. We know this because of the similar language with both Augustine and Edwards. Malebranche says that God creates the world through the Holy Spirit or love, but in the vast majority of passages he simply refers to this active part of God as God's will. Therefore, we can see that Malebranche holds the amplified analogy.

⁵⁵ "All ideas are present in the divine Word or universal Reason, and our intellects discover ideas in it, insofar as God wishes to reveal them to us". (DM 32)

Malebranche's acceptance of the amplified analogy causes him to speak about the persons of the Trinity according to this analogy. So, when he speaks of absolute being, he is referring to that distinguishing feature of first person of the Trinity. When he speaks of God's word, reason, or wisdom, he is talking about the second person of the Trinity. And finally, when he talks about God's will or love, he is referring to the action of the third person of the Trinity.

Malebranche's amplified analogy is found throughout his works. We can now begin to see the philosophical application of the theology of the Trinity for Malebranche. Puzzling passages from Malebranche are made clearer with an understanding of his position on the Trinity. For example, Malebranche appears inconsistent concerning who or what can act upon or enlighten the human mind. Malebranche's occasionalism entails that God is the only true cause.

...God alone can act in us and enlighten us... (DM 78)⁵⁶

Yet Malebranche states in other passages that many other entities act on the human mind. The Word enlightens.

We believe, finally, that all minds see eternal laws, as well as other things, in God, but with a certain difference. They know order and eternal truths, and even the beings that God has made according to these truths or according to order, through the union these minds necessarily have with the Word, or wisdom of God, which enlightens them, as has just been explained. (LO 234)

Reason enlightens.

⁵⁶ See also this passage translated by Susan Peppers-Bates, "Does Malebranche Need Efficacious Ideas? The Cognitive Faculties, the Ontological Status of Ideas, and Human Attention," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 43 (2005). 96

Thus, God, the infinitely perfect Being, including eminently in himself all that there is of reality or perfection in all Beings, can represent them to us in touching us with his essence, not taken absolutely, but taken insofar as it is relative to those beings, because his infinite essence includes all there is of true reality in all finite beings. Thus God alone acts immediately in our soul; he alone is our life, our light, and our wisdom. (OC XV 23)

I suggest this to you, I say, on the ground that it is only Reason which enlightens us, that we are not a light unto ourselves nor an intelligence to anyone else. (DM 37)

In a word, they can never discover the truth by contemplating themselves. They cannot be nourished by their own substance. They can find the life of the intellect only in the universal Reason which animates all minds, which enlightens and leads all people.⁵⁷ (DM 33)

Malebranche also refers to the Word as Wisdom which also enlightens.

Since most men do not distinctly know that only Eternal Wisdom enlightens them, and that intelligible ideas that are their mind's immediate object are not created, they imagine that eternal laws and immutable truths are established as such by a free volition of God: (LO 587)

And, finally, Malebranche thinks that the will of God is efficacious and can enlighten humans.

Therefore, His power is His will, and to communicate His power is to communicate the efficacy of His will." (LO 450)

These passages taken together generate a mystery at best and a stream of inconsistencies at worst unless they are interpreted in light of Malebranche's Trinitarian formulation.⁵⁸ If Malebranche's philosophical theology is ignored, these passages must be dismissed or written off as an unsolvable puzzle. The key to understanding Malebranche here is his

⁵⁷ There are other passages where Reason enlightens:

"They know nothing except by the light of the universal Reason which enlightens all minds, by the intelligible ideas it reveals to them in its wholly luminous substance" (DM 32)

"For I cannot reiterate this to you too often: we must not consult our senses, our own modalities, which are only darkness, but Reason which enlightens us by its divine ideas, but the immutable, necessary, eternal truths." (DM 47)

⁵⁸ There are other passages that are mysterious until they are interpreted in light of Malebranche's Trinitarian metaphysics:

"... It is, then, the idea or archetype of bodies which affects us in different ways. I mean, it is the intelligible substance of Reason which acts in our mind through its all-powerful efficacy and which touches and modifies it with color, taste, pain, by what there is within it representing bodies." (DM 77)

"But it should be carefully noted that we cannot conclude from their seeing all things in God in this way that our minds see the essence of God. God's essence is His own absolute being, and minds do not see the divine substance taken absolutely but only as relative to creatures and to the degree that they can participate in it" (LO 231)

"Only He can enlighten our mind with His own substance" (LO 237)

"Surely, only God, only His always efficacious substance, can affect, enlighten and nourish our minds, as Saint Augustine says". (LO 626)

acceptance of the Trinity and its metaphysical relevance. Since all of these other entities are connected to the Trinity, Malebranche is making the same claim in every statement above. When he says that the Word, Reason, and Will enlighten us, Malebranche is making the same claim in each passage— “God alone can act in us and enlighten us” (DM 78). Malebranche holds that all three of these persons of the Trinity enlighten or act upon the mind or soul: God enlightens, the Son enlightens, and the Holy Spirit enlightens.

What is particularly interesting about the list of passages above is the number of times that the particular agent Malebranche is talking about is the *only* agent that can act or enlighten. Malebranche says that only God enlightens (DM 78), only Reason enlightens (DM 33), and that only Wisdom enlightens (LO 587). Apart from an understanding of Malebranche’s philosophical theology, it would be a mystery how Malebranche can claim that more than one entity is the only one than can enlighten. But this does not create a puzzle given Malebranche’s Trinitarian perspective, which he makes clear in the *Search*.

I have said this before and I repeat it: only sovereign Reason makes us rational, only sovereign Truth enlightens us, only God speaks to us clearly and can teach us. We have but one true Master, Jesus Christ, our Lord, the eternal Wisdom, the Word of the Father in whom are all the treasures of the knowledge and wisdom of God:… (LO 649)

This passage makes clear Malebranche’s view concerning the relationship between the first two persons of the Trinity, the Father and the Son. Both hold the full substance of God, so to say that only Reason, or the Second person of the Trinity, can enlighten is the same as saying that only God does this activity.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Here is another similar passage where Malebranche makes clear this same relationship.

I have shown that Malebranche holds an account of the Trinity that is similar to the Nicene Creed, Augustine, and Edwards. He holds that God is one substance with three distinct parts or persons. He also follows the Augustinian tradition concerning the differentiation between the persons of the Trinity. And he holds the amplified analogy, connecting each person of the Trinity with a particular attribute or activity of God.

I have already shown that an understanding of Malebranche's commitment to the Trinity helps us understand passages that would otherwise be mysterious. There are also three other ways in which the doctrine of the Trinity is philosophically relevant for Malebranche. The first concerns Malebranche's notion of divine substance.

Malebranche holds an account of God's substance that is consistent with his account of the Trinity. Malebranche not only says that the three persons of the Trinity share the same divine substance with God, he also says that ideas share in the divine substance as well. Just as he spoke of each of the persons of the Trinity being able to act upon or enlighten the mind, he also says the same thing concerning ideas.

I believe that there are essential differences between knowing and sensing, between the ideas which enlighten the mind and the sensations which affect it. (DM 35)

Malebranche makes similar statements concerning ideas holding divine properties throughout his works. For example, Malebranche holds that ideas are causally active. This generates a puzzle. Given his occasionalism, Malebranche thinks that God is the only true cause. But he also says that ideas are causally active. I show how Malebranche's Trinitarian metaphysics solves this puzzle in section 4.2. For now, it is enough to point out that Malebranche's acceptance of the Trinity is philosophically

"He is indeed able not to produce anything external to Himself; but if He wills to act, He can do so only according to the immutable order of wisdom that He necessarily loves. For religion and wisdom teach me that He does nothing without His Son, without His Word, without His wisdom." (LO 587)

relevant for his metaphysical view on the divine substance: all three persons of the Trinity share the divine substance and, apparently, Malebranche says that ideas share this divine substance as well.

The second area where we see the philosophical relevance of Malebranche's doctrine of the Trinity is his theory of causation. As was pointed out in 1.2, Malebranche is an occasionalist: that is the view that God is the only true cause. All other apparent causes are merely occasional causes for God to work. Malebranche's theory of the Trinity from his philosophical theology is relevant to his occasionalism because of the emphasis Malebranche places on the third person of the Trinity, or the will of God.

Andrew Pyle suggests that Malebranche supports his occasionalism with two very different lines of argument: a "thin argument" concerning necessary connection and a "deep argument" from continuous creation.⁶⁰ I agree with Pyle that Malebranche uses both arguments to support this theory, and I add that there is one important similarity found in both arguments that Pyle does not highlight—both rely upon the will of God, or the third person of the Trinity.

According to his "thin" argument, Malebranche believes that a cause must be necessarily connected with its effect. The only substance that meets this requirement is the will of God. Since God is omnipotent, what he wills necessarily comes about.

A true cause as I understand it is one such that the mind perceives a necessary connection between it and its effect. Now the mind perceives a necessary connection only between the will of an infinitely perfect being and its effects. Therefore, it is only God who is the true cause and who truly has the power to move bodies... God needs no instrument to act; it suffices that He wills in order that a thing be, because it

⁶⁰ "Malebranche has two very different lines of argument in support of his occasionalism. There is what might be called the 'thin' argument, starting with the notion of cause as a necessary connection, and arguing that only God's will meets this condition. Then there is the 'deep' argument, taking its origin from the theological doctrine of continuous creation, which we touched on briefly in our discussion of Descartes in Chapter Two." Andrew Pyle, *Malebranche* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 97-98.

is a contradiction that He should will and that what He wills should not happen. Therefore, His power is His will, and to communicate His power is to communicate the efficacy of His will. (LO 450)

All that God willed then, He wills yet; and because His will is efficacious, He produces what he wills (LO 340)⁶¹

Recall that Malebranche's acceptance of the amplified analogy of the Trinity means that when he refers to God's will, he is referring to the third person of the Trinity: the Holy Spirit. With that in mind, Malebranche's view of causation hangs on the Holy Spirit. Only God's will, the Holy Spirit, is necessarily connected with effects. So, Malebranche's argument from necessary connection highlights the role of the Holy Spirit in his occasionalism.

The same thing is true of Malebranche's "deep" argument from continuous creation. It also rests upon the third person of the Trinity. In short, Malebranche believes that the earth and everything in it remains in existence only because God is continuously re-creating them.⁶² Malebranche's argument for continuous creation rests on the will of God.

For I believe it certain that conservation is but continued creation, for it is but the same will of God, who continues to will what He has willed, and this is the general view among theologians. A body, for example, exists because God wills that it exist, and He wills that it exist either here or there, for He cannot create it nowhere. And if He creates it here, is it conceivable that a creature should displace it and move it

⁶¹ Here are two other passages where Malebranche's view of causation rests on the will of God:
"But what is a moving body? It is a body transported by a divine action. The action which transports it can also transport that body which it meets, if it is extended to it. Who doubts this? However, this action—this motive force—does not in any way belong to body. It is the efficacy of the will of Him who creates them or who conserves them successively in different places." (DM 119)
"We ought to know that it is God's will that creates and rules nature, that force or power of natural causes is but His will, and in a word, that all things depend upon God in every way." (LO 291)

⁶² For two good treatments of Malebranche's continuous creation see Pyle, *Malebranche*. And the Introduction to Nicolas Malebranche, *Dialogues on Metaphysics and on Religion*, ed. Nicholas Jolley, trans. David Scott, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

elsewhere unless God at the same time wills to create it elsewhere in order to share His power with His creature as far as it is capable of it?

... an ignorance of God's continuous operations on His creatures could make us imagine a cause of this union other than the always efficacious will of God (LO 339)

Malebranche's Trinitarian metaphysics is philosophically relevant to his occasionalism. Both arguments that Malebranche uses to support his occasionalism rest upon the will of God, or the third person of the Trinity. Malebranche has constructed a theory of causation that is consistent with his acceptance of the amplified analogy of Trinity.

The final way in which Malebranche's Trinitarian metaphysics is relevant for his view of causation does not concern his occasionalism *per se*, but his theory of the creation of the world. Malebranche considered all three persons of the Trinity involved in the creation of the earth, including humans. In one of the strongest Trinitarian passages in Malebranche, he states that all three persons of the Trinity are involved in the creation of humans.

It is through this dependence, this relation, this union of our mind with the Word of God, and of our will with his love, that we are made in the image and likeness of God. And though this image be greatly effaced through sin, yet it must subsist as long as we do. But if we bear the image of the Word humiliated upon earth, and if we follow the impulses of the Holy Ghost, this union of our mind with the Word of the Father, and with the love of the Father and the Son, will be reestablished and made indelible. (LO 235)

Since humans are the image-bearers of God, all three persons of the Trinity are involved in our creation.⁶³

To summarize, Malebranche accepts an account of the Trinity that is similar to the Nicene formulation. He also differentiates between the persons of the Trinity in the same

⁶³ Jolley refers to the doctrine that humans are made in the image of God as the "Genesis doctrine". Jolley, "Berkeley and Malebranche on Causality and Volition."

way as Augustine. Malebranche advances Augustine's thought by embracing the amplified analogy that connects the persons of the Trinity to a specific action or characteristic of God. Recognizing these features of Malebranche's Trinitarian doctrine from his philosophical theology helps make sense of many passages that would be puzzling otherwise. Malebranche's Trinitarianism is also philosophically relevant for his views concerning the divine substance, causation, and the creation of man. Malebranche's commitment to the doctrine of the Trinity is philosophically relevant to his metaphysics.

3.3

Berkeley also held a Traditional account of the Trinity that is philosophically relevant to his metaphysics. Berkeley's Trinitarianism has not been the subject of much attention. The only paper that recognizes that Berkeley holds the doctrine of the Trinity is by Stephen Daniel.⁶⁴ Daniel argues that Berkeley's doctrine of the Trinity is important for understanding Berkeley's divine ideas and alleged Neoplatonism. He suggests that Berkeley evokes the Trinity in the context of a discussion on personal identity in the *Philosophical Commentaries* and in *Alciphron*. Daniel cites passage from these works to support his thesis that Berkeley holds to a Trinitarian metaphysical picture.⁶⁵ I go beyond Daniel's work by giving stronger textual support that Berkeley accepts the

⁶⁴ Daniel, "Berkeley's Christian Neoplatonism, Archetypes, and Divine Ideas."

⁶⁵ Many of the passages that Daniel cites are not clear. The passages from the *Commentaries* are not Berkeley's clearest presentation of the Trinity:

"The danger of Expounding the H: Trinity by extension" (*PC*, 310)

"The Concrete of the Will & Understanding I must call Mind not person, lest offence be given, there being but one volition acknowledge to be God. Mem: Carefully to omit Defining of Person, or making much mention of it." (*PC*, 713)

Alciphron is a much clearer presentation of Berkeley's view of the Trinity and how it is related to understanding personal identity. (*Alc.* 7.5–7.9)

Trinity. I show that Berkeley's doctrine of the Trinity can be found throughout his works, including the *Principles*. I also point out that the Trinity is relevant to areas of Berkeley's philosophy that Daniel does not mention.

It is surprising that Daniel is the only commentator who mentions Berkeley's acceptance of the Trinity in light of the fact that there have been articles dedicated to explaining certain theological positions of Berkeley.⁶⁶ This neglect of the Trinity in Berkeley is also surprising because of the amount of textual evidence for the Trinity from his works. Neglecting Berkeley's philosophical theology has philosophical ramifications. The philosopher who neglects Berkeley's philosophical theology misses important background information that aids in his interpretation.

Unlike Malebranche, Berkeley explicitly states that he accepts the Trinity. He also explicitly states that his view of the Trinity holds philosophical implications. These explicit statements are found in two of his later, more theological works: *Alciphron* and *Siris*.⁶⁷ In *Alciphron*, Berkeley endorses the Nicene formulation of the Trinity. He states that Monotheism is true and that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are God. He also states that the Trinity holds philosophical implications concerning substance and personality.⁶⁸

“Whence it seems to follow that a man may believe the doctrine of the Trinity, if he finds it revealed in the Holy Scripture that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,

⁶⁶ While many of these works imply that they are working on Berkeley's theology, they are largely concerned with explaining Berkeley's arguments for the existence of God. Issues from Berkeley's philosophical theology such as divine revelation and the Trinity are strangely absent. Robert R. Hurlbutt, “Berkeley's Theology,” in *George Berkeley: Lectures Delivered before the Philosophical Union of the University of California*, ed. S. C. Pepper, Karl Aschenbrenner, and Benson Mates, *University of California Publications in Philosophy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1957), Douglas Jesseph, “Berkeley, God, and Explanation,” in *Early Modern Philosophy: Mind, Matter, and Metaphysics*, ed. Christia Mercer (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), Douglas Jesseph, “Faith and Fluxions: Berkeley on Theology and Mathematics,” in *New Interpretations of Berkeley's Thought*, ed. Stephen H. Daniel (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2008).

⁶⁷ But these are not the only works where Berkeley's doctrine of the Trinity can be found.

⁶⁸ Later in this same section I will show how Berkeley's formulation of substance has a Trinitarian flavor.

are God, and that there is but one God, although he doth not frame in his mind any abstract or distinct ideas of trinity, substance, or personality; (*Alc.* 7.7)⁶⁹

Later in the work, Berkeley displays that he is familiar with the council of Nicaea when he mentions the dispute between the *homoousians* and the *homoiousians*.⁷⁰ Berkeley was certainly familiar with the traditional formulation of the Trinity and he affirms that he accepts this doctrine.

While his Trinitarian metaphysical picture can be found throughout his works, Berkeley gives the doctrine of the Trinity the most prominent role in *Siris*. *Siris* is a book where Berkeley weaves many strands of thought together, leading to a theological conclusion. In the later sections of this book, Berkeley begins to trace a historical argument for the doctrine of the Trinity. After looking at this doctrine from other historical philosophers, Berkeley concludes the *Siris* with a defense of the Trinity. In this conclusion, we see hints of all three of the historical elements of the Trinity that were introduced in section 3.1: The Nicene formulation, Augustine's differentiation, and the amplified analogy:

There is first the source of all perfection, or *Fons Deitatis*; secondly, the supreme reason, order, or *lógos*; and lastly, the spirit, which quickens and inspires. We are sprung from the Father, irradiated or enlightened by the Son, and moved by the Spirit. Certainly, that there is Father, Son, and Spirit; that these bear analogy to the sun, light, and heat; and are

⁶⁹ Here is the full passage:

“Whence it seems to follow that a man may believe the doctrine of the Trinity, if he finds it revealed in the Holy Scripture that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are God, and that there is but one God, although he doth not frame in his mind any abstract or distinct ideas of trinity, substance, or personality; provided that this doctrine of a Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier makes proper impressions on his mind, producing in therein love, hope, gratitude, and obedience, and thereby becomes a lively operative principle, influencing his life and actions, agreeably to that notion of saving faith which is required in a Christian.” (*Alc.*, 7.7)

⁷⁰ “What are we to think of then of the disputes and decisions of the famous Council of Nicaea, and so many subsequent Councils? What was the intention of those venerable Fathers, the *homoousians* and the *homoiousians*? Why did they disturb themselves and the world with harsh words, and subtle controversies?” (*Alc.*, 7.9)

otherwise expressed by the terms Principle, Mind, and Soul, by One or *tò én*, Intellect, and Life, by Good, Word, and Love;... (*Siris*, 362)⁷¹

The first person of the Trinity is the source of divinity, the second person is the reason, and the third person, the Holy Spirit, is active. Berkeley gives a few analogies of the Trinity, all loosely connected to the analogies from Augustine. So, we see Berkeley's acceptance of the formulation of the Trinity from the Nicene Council: God is three persons and one substance.

While the passage just mentioned hints that Berkeley accepts the amplified analogy, this becomes clearer in another set of passages from *Siris*. When speaking about the first person of the Trinity, Berkeley states that God is pure being.

The one, or *tò én*, being immutable and indivisible, always the same and entire, was therefore thought to exist truly and originally... This gives unity, stability, reality, to things. (*Siris*, 342)

Berkeley also refers to Christ, the second person of the Trinity, as the Word and wisdom of God.⁷²

He produced or made the Word ... Christ is the wisdom of God by which all things were made (*Siris*, 359)

But perhaps most significant for seeing the amplified analogy in Berkeley is through the way that Berkeley talks about the third person of the Trinity. Berkeley stresses the casually efficacious will of God.

But I say, the things by me perceived are known by the understanding, and produced by the will, of an infinite spirit. (*DHP*, 215)

⁷¹ See also:

And these were conceived to be necessary universal principals, co-existing and co-operating in such sort as never to exist asunder, but on the contrary to constitute one Sovereign of all things. And, indeed, how could power or authority avail or subsist without knowledge? Or either without life and action? (*Siris*, 361)

⁷² This is found in the section where Berkeley is finding these doctrines in philosophers of the past. So these comments are made concerning what others believe, but from Berkeley's conclusion to this section quoted in the text above, we know that he is also endorsing these views concerning the Trinity.

How therefore can you suppose, than an ill-perfect spirit, on whose will all things have an absolute and immediate dependence, should need an instrument in his operations, or not needing it make use of it? (*DHP*, 219)

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. (*DHP*, 240)

In these passages Berkeley nowhere connects the will of God with the third person of the Trinity. But through the preponderance of evidence that Berkeley accepts the doctrine of the Trinity, and the evidence that he accepts the amplified analogy, we can safely assume that Berkeley sees a connection between the will of God and the Holy Spirit.

While it has gone largely unnoticed, it is clear that Berkeley accepts the doctrine of the Trinity. Berkeley accepts the Nicene formulation of the Trinity; that God is one substance in three persons. His formulation of the Trinity follows Augustine's differentiation of the persons. Berkeley also accepts the amplified analogy, creating connections between each of the persons of the Trinity with various roles: Father with being, Son with wisdom or understanding, and Holy Spirit with will.

Berkeley also held that the doctrine of the Trinity is philosophically relevant to his metaphysics. First of all, *Siris* is important for understanding how Berkeley considered this doctrine to be philosophically relevant. As I said before, the work is considered mysterious since it begins by prescribing the drinking of tar water for medicinal purposes and it ends with a defense of Theism. There is disagreement concerning Berkeley's aim in writing this book. Some interpreters dismiss it as the ramblings of a senile philosopher, while others attempt to construct a logical argument

out of its twists and turns.⁷³ I interpret this work as providing one long argument that the Trinity is philosophically relevant for his contemporaries. He is advising that philosophers should take heed before abandoning this doctrine.

At the end of the *Siris*, Berkeley points out that there are traces of the doctrine of the Trinity in non-Christian philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus as well as in early philosophical schools such as the Egyptians and Chaldeans.⁷⁴ From this historical survey he concludes the entire book by saying that the doctrine of the Trinity is philosophically important even if the vast number of contemporary philosophers disagree.

Therefore, how unphilosophical soever that doctrine may seem to many of the present age, yet it is certain the man of greatest fame and learning among the ancient philosophers held a Trinity in the Godhead. It must be owned that upon this point some later Platonists of the Gentile world seem to have bewildered themselves (as many Christians have also done) while they pursued the hints derived from their predecessors with too much curiosity.” (*Siris*, 364)

Berkeley’s goal in writing this work is to argue that the Trinity is philosophically relevant and that the philosophers of his day should recognize it so. He uses these important historical philosophers to support his claim.⁷⁵

⁷³ *Siris* is often dismissed and not given much attention compared to Berkeley’s others works, so not many commentators have set out to explain Berkeley’s aim in this work. For a work dedicated to explaining the nature and structure of the *Siris*, see Timo Airaksinen, “The Path of Fire: The Meaning and Interpretation of Berkeley’s *Siris*,” in *New Interpretations of Berkeley’s Thought*, ed. Stephen H. Daniel (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2008). There are other commentators who mention this work and make comments on it. Daniel, “Berkeley’s Christian Neoplatonism, Archetypes, and Divine Ideas.” Berman focuses on the religious element of Berkeley, so he talks about Berkeley’s intentions in writing *Siris*. Berman, *George Berkeley: Idealism and the Man*.

⁷⁴ On a personal note, I think that Berkeley’s approach here is an example of how not to do philosophical theology. It sounds frighteningly close to those early church Fathers such as Justin Martyr who claimed that earlier philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle were Christians without knowing it.

⁷⁵ I cannot say that I agree with Berkeley’s strategy or conclusion. I only intend to show that this is his goal. I also cannot say that he is altogether successful in achieving that goal. I am not sure he is successful in showing how tar water and all the other things from earlier in the book are explained or point in some way to the Trinity.

Berkeley also shows that the doctrine of the Trinity is philosophically relevant for solving mysteries concerning personal identity. In *Alciphron* Berkeley introduces the idea that the Trinity can “clear up the notion of person” and “untie the knots and answer the objections which may be raised even about human personal identity.” (*Alc.* 7.8)⁷⁶ It is not clear how Berkeley thinks that the Trinity resolves these puzzles, but for our purposes it is enough to show that Berkeley thinks that the Trinity is philosophically relevant to issues such as personal identity.

We can also see that the Trinity is philosophically relevant in his view of substance, or what he calls “spirit”. In the *Principles*, Berkeley suggests that a substance or spirit alone can cause ideas, “the cause of ideas is an incorporeal active substance or spirit” (PHK 26). He then defines what he means by spirit.

A spirit is one simple, undivided, active being: as it perceives ideas, it is called the *understanding*, and as it produces or otherwise operates about them, it is called the *will*... If any man shall doubt of the truth of what is here delivered, let him but reflect and try if he can frame the idea of any power or being: and whatever he had ideas of two principal powers, marked by the names *will* and *understanding*, distinct from each other as well as from a third idea of substance or being in general, with a relative notion of its supporting or being the subject of the aforesaid powers, which is signified by the name *soul* or *spirit*. (PHK, 27)

He defines a spirit as holding three essential features: being in general, understanding, and will. This is a Trinitarian formulation. We see that Berkeley defines substance or spirit according to the three features of the amplified analogy.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Daniel comments on this use of the Trinity by Malebranche. Daniel, “Berkeley's Christian Neoplatonism, Archetypes, and Divine Ideas.”

⁷⁷ This is a good example of why I say that the doctrine of the Trinity is philosophically relevant for Berkeley. I am not claiming that Berkeley's theory of the Trinity directly influenced this account of substance. I do not think that he is deliberately defining spirit in such a way that God, and humans to a lesser extent, can fill that role. In other words, I do not think that initially held a theological conception of the Trinity and then defined spirit according to what that conception would allow. Instead, I think he defines spirit or substance in such a way that is consistent with this view that God is a substance.

Finally, Berkeley's doctrine of the Trinity is philosophically relevant in his view of causation. Like Malebranche, Berkeley holds an account of causation that relies on the will of God. Berkeley thinks that the natural world holds no causal powers. Therefore, causation only comes from a mental or spiritual realm.

... I have a mind to have some notion or meaning in what I say; but I have no notion of any action distinct from volition, neither can I conceive volition to be any where but in a spirit: therefore when I speak of an active being, I am obliged to mean a spirit. (*DHP*, 239)

Not only must causation come from a spirit, but it is only the will of God that causes all things.

But God, whom no external being can affect, who perceives nothing by sense as we do, whose will is absolute and independent, causing all things, and liable to be thwarted or resisted by nothing. (*DHP*, 241)

Given Berkeley's acceptance of the amplified analogy of the Trinity, we know that he is referring to the third person of the Trinity when he speaks of the will of God.

Berkeley holds that the only causally efficacious substance is that of the spirit or will.

In summary, Berkeley accepts the doctrine of the Trinity. He embraces the Nicene formulation as well as Augustine's differentiation of the persons of the Trinity. The amplified analogy where God is being, the son is wisdom or reason, and the Holy Spirit is the will of God is also found in Berkeley's work. This doctrine of the Trinity from Berkeley's philosophical theology is relevant in his metaphysics. He defines substance or spirit as being, understanding, and will. Berkeley's theory of causation relies on the third person of the Trinity, the will of God, which is the source of all causation.

3.4

While some commentators have noted, although in passing, the similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley on divine revelation, their similar acceptance of the Trinity has not been mentioned in the secondary literature. A few studies have pointed out that either Malebranche or Berkeley accepts the doctrine of the Christian Trinity,⁷⁸ but it has not been noticed that both philosophers accept a similar version of this doctrine. Nor has it been mentioned that Malebranche and Berkeley's shared acceptance of the Trinity is helpful for understanding some of their similar metaphysical positions.

Commentators have pointed out that both Malebranche and Berkeley construct their entire philosophical systems around God. Copleston comments that both "developed theocentric metaphysical systems".⁷⁹ Jessop points out that both Malebranche and Berkeley structure their metaphysics around the claim that all life is grounded in God as is evidenced by the fact that both of them quote the same passages from the New Testament.⁸⁰ Also, both McCracken and Jolley point out that both Malebranche and Berkeley are driven by a desire to remove natural causes and place God in the center of their metaphysical structure.⁸¹ So, I am not the first to point out that there

⁷⁸ There has been more work done on Malebranche's acceptance of the Trinity than on Berkeley. For Malebranche see: Reid, "Malebranche on Intelligible Extension.", Reid, "The Trinitarian Metaphysics of Jonathan Edwards and Nicolas Malebranche." Pessin, "Malebranche's "Vision in God".", Watson, "The External World and the Fall from Reason: Malebranche's Account of Our Knowledge of the Existence and Nature of Bodies". Pessin, "Malebranche's "Vision in God"." For Berkeley see Daniel, "Berkeley's Christian Neoplatonism, Archetypes, and Divine Ideas."

⁷⁹ Frederick Charles Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* (Westminster, MD: Newman Bookshop, 1946), Vol 4, pg 203. Vol 4, 203

⁸⁰ To my knowledge, Jessop is the first to point out that both Malebranche and Berkeley quote most often Acts 17:28 "In Him we live and move and have our being." Other later commentators also recognize this similarity. T. E. Jessop, "Malebranche and Berkeley," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 1 (1938).

are similarities concerning the role of God or religion in Malebranche and Berkeley. Nor am I the first to point out similarities in the metaphysics of Malebranche and Berkeley. As we have seen, many commentators have noticed similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley on causation. But, to my knowledge, I am the first to argue that they both accept a traditional, Nicene formulation of the Trinity that is relevant for their metaphysical doctrines.

Throughout this chapter, we have seen that there are many similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley concerning their acceptance of the Trinity and the philosophical relevance of that doctrine. Both accept the Christian doctrine of the Trinity as formulated by the historic creeds like the Nicene Creed. That is, both philosophers believe that God is one substance in three persons. Augustine's differentiation between the persons of the Trinity can also be found in the works of Malebranche and Berkeley. Both think that the three persons of the Trinity each play a different role in the creation of the world. Another similarity between Malebranche and Berkeley's theories of the Trinity is that they both accept the amplified analogy. We saw through numerous passages that both philosophers connect each person of the Trinity with a certain work or attribute of God. They use this analogy in the same way that Jonathan Edwards does: God the Father is connected with true being, God the Son is connected with Reason or the Word, and God the Holy Spirit is connected with the active will of God.

Malebranche and Berkeley also agree that the doctrine of the Trinity is philosophically relevant to their metaphysics. Both Malebranche and Berkeley construct metaphysical positions that can be held consistently alongside the doctrine of the Trinity.

⁸¹ The first to point this out was McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*, 211. And this was followed and expanded by Jolley, "Berkeley and Malebranche on Causality and Volition," 235.

For example, both hold accounts of the divine substance that make room for their Trinitarian perspective.⁸² Malebranche and Berkeley's Trinitarian metaphysical commitments can also be seen in their similar theories of causation. Malebranche, the occasionalist, held that God's will is the only source of causation. Berkeley held a similar position that God's will is responsible for all causation, but he added that human wills are also causal.

These similarities in philosophical theology and metaphysics are so striking that it is easy to see why some scholars argue that Malebranche influenced Berkeley. One way of explaining why Berkeley is similar to Malebranche on these matters is to suggest that Berkeley read Malebranche and adopted his views. However, a better explanation of these similarities is that Malebranche and Berkeley shared common sources. It is likely that many of these similar features of their theories of the Trinity are from Augustine. Augustine held the Nicene account of the Trinity and he also differentiated between the persons of the Trinity by their work in creation. Malebranche and Berkeley's shared acceptance of the amplified analogy, the one feature of their theories of the Trinity that goes beyond Augustine, can also be explained by a common source. However, we do not know much about that common source, other than it was also available to Edwards. It is possible that the amplified analogy was in vogue during the early modern period. This would explain why Malebranche, Berkeley, and Edwards all hold the amplified analogy.

While I am not the first to mention that Malebranche and Berkeley each accept the doctrine of the Trinity, I am the first to argue this in detail. As I pointed out, Reid

⁸² Hight argues that Malebranche and Berkeley hold a similar account of substance. Marc A. Hight, *Idea and Ontology: An Essay in Early Modern Metaphysics of Ideas* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University, 2008).

argues that Malebranche holds a Trinitarian view of metaphysics and Daniel does the same concerning Berkeley, but I advance their positions by providing stronger textual evidence for their claims.⁸³ I am, however, the first to argue that Malebranche and Berkeley hold similar theories of the Trinity. Commentators have ignored the similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley's philosophical theology including their shared acceptance of the Trinity.

While commentators have pointed out various metaphysical similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley, they have not mentioned how these metaphysical similarities can be explained by Malebranche and Berkeley's similarities in philosophical theology. Ignoring the similar views of Malebranche and Berkeley concerning the Trinity has robbed commentators of a full understanding of their metaphysics. In section 1.4, I introduced many different commentators who point out various similarities between the metaphysics of Malebranche and Berkeley. Now that we have done a systematic study of the Trinity in these philosophers, we are in a position to see the philosophical relevance of this doctrine as it is applied to some of the issues brought up in this literature. When we look at these similarities in metaphysics in light of Malebranche and Berkeley's shared acceptance of the Trinity, there is a payoff: we gain a better understanding of the metaphysical similarities.

The most often mentioned metaphysical similarity between Malebranche and Berkeley concerns their similar theories of causation. Immerwahr, McCracken, Jolley,

⁸³ Reid argues that Malebranche accepts the Trinity. Reid, "The Trinitarian Metaphysics of Jonathan Edwards and Nicolas Malebranche." Reid, "Malebranche on Intelligible Extension." And Daniel argues that Berkeley accepts the Trinity. Daniel, "Berkeley's Christian Neoplatonism, Archetypes, and Divine Ideas."

and Downing all point out that these philosophers hold similar accounts of causation.⁸⁴

Malebranche is a full occasionalist and Berkeley has been called a near-occasionalist.

After noticing this similarity, there are two questions that should be answered: Why do Malebranche and Berkeley hold similar theories of causality to begin with? Why does Berkeley abandon full occasionalism?

One way to answer the first question concerning their similarities, it is common to suggest that Malebranche influenced Berkeley. But, this is not a satisfying explanation given Berkeley's denial that he was influenced by Malebranche. It would be more satisfying to find an explanation of their similar views on causation that allows Berkeley to be taken at his word.

Malebranche and Berkeley's shared acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity can explain why they hold similar views of causation without claiming that Berkeley was influenced by Malebranche. Both hold a common theory of causation that is consistent with their Trinitarian metaphysical structure. Both Malebranche and Berkeley accept the amplified analogy where God's causal power is connected to the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. God creates the world through the Holy Spirit, or His will. We saw the influence of the amplified analogy in both philosophers. Malebranche holds that the will of God is necessary for all causation, while Berkeley thinks that the will of God is necessary for most causation. That is, causation that is not generated by the will of humans. One payoff of understanding Malebranche and Berkeley's Trinitarian metaphysical picture is that we now have the apparatus to explain Malebranche and

⁸⁴ John Immerwahr, "Berkeley's Causal Thesis," *New Scholasticism* 68 (1974). McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*. Jolley, "Berkeley and Malebranche on Causality and Volition." Lisa Downing, "Occasionalism and Strict Mechanism: Malebranche, Berkeley, Fontenelle," in *Early Modern Philosophy: Mind, Matter, and Metaphysics*, ed. Christia Mercer (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005).

Berkeley's similar metaphysical doctrine of causation without charging that Berkeley is being disingenuous when he says that denies any influence from Malebranche.

Malebranche and Berkeley both construct God-centered theories of causation that can be held consistently alongside their view that the will of God is the fundamental causal force in the world.

To answer the second question, we need to find an explanation of why Berkeley rejects full occasionalism for the position that humans hold causal powers as well as God. McCracken gives two reasons for Berkeley's rejection of occasionalism. He suggests that Berkeley thought that occasionalism denies the freewill of humans and he also thought that that occasionalism assumes matter.⁸⁵ Jolley gives an entirely different account of Berkeley's stopping short of full occasionalism. He argues that Berkeley does not follow Malebranche on this point because of his commitment to the claim that man was made in the image of God, what Jolley calls the Genesis doctrine.⁸⁶

The Trinitarian metaphysics of Berkeley provides a more satisfying explanation for why Berkeley rejects full occasionalism. I think that Jolley is correct when he says that Berkeley was committed to the Genesis doctrine and that had something to do with his rejection of occasionalism. But Berkeley's commitment to the Trinity can also help explain why he places so much weight on the Genesis doctrine. According to the doctrine of the Trinity, God is a triad of being, wisdom, and will. According to the Genesis doctrine, we are made in the image of God. The two doctrines together imply that humans too are a triad of being, understanding, and will. A Trinitarian commitment added to the Genesis doctrine leads to the view that we share these same three attributes

⁸⁵ McCracken, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*. 245-247.

⁸⁶ Jolley, "Berkeley and Malebranche on Causality and Volition." 238.

with God, although to a lesser extent. If God has a will that is efficacious, man should also have an efficacious will. Berkeley combined these two theological positions and thereby derived a doctrine where God and humans are both causally active.

An objection can be brought against this solution. Malebranche held to the Trinity as well, so why would Berkeley's Trinitarian metaphysics be able to explain his departure from Malebranche's view of causation? It seems that Malebranche's commitment to the Trinity would have also led him to reject occasionalism. In response, Berkeley recognized an application of his commitment to the Trinity that Malebranche either missed or did not think was relevant. Berkeley realized that his belief in the Trinity alongside his acceptance of the Genesis doctrine showed that man should be able to cause as well as God. This is not to say that Berkeley's view is consistent with his acceptance of the Trinity and Malebranche's occasionalism is inconsistent. Both philosophers accept the doctrine of the Trinity which is philosophically relevant in their metaphysical doctrine of causation. They both build theories of causation that they believe are consistent with the doctrine of the Trinity, it just so happens that they disagree concerning which account of causation is consistent with the Trinity.

An understanding of Malebranche and Berkeley's shared acceptance of the Trinity is a desirable explanation of their similar views of causation as well as their differences. Berkeley's account of causation is similar to that of Malebranche because they both held theories of causation that could be held alongside their commitment to the Trinity. And, Berkeley rejects full occasionalism because his commitment to the Trinity combined with the Genesis doctrine suggests that human are also casually efficacious.

CHAPTER 4

An Example: Applying Malebranche's theory of the Trinity

I have concluded the chief argument of this project in chapters 1 through 3. I have shown that Malebranche and Berkeley hold similar philosophical theologies. I have also shown that some of Malebranche and Berkeley's philosophical similarities can be explained by their similar theories of philosophical theology. Since this chapter does not add to that argument, it should be viewed as a supplement to the other three.

Rather than add to the argument from the first three chapters, in this final chapter I give one example of how a proper understanding of these theories of divine revelation and the Trinity can be applied to one of the philosophers in isolation; that is, not as they relate to each other. Up until this point, I have only focused on these philosophers as they relate to each other, but there are also important implications of these doctrines of philosophical theology concerning the philosophers individually. In other words, not only does an understanding of the philosophical theology of Malebranche and Berkeley help us understand where their philosophical systems are similar, it also helps us interpret the philosophers by themselves.

The doctrines of divine revelation and the Trinity shed light on interpretive difficulties that arise when interpreting Malebranche or Berkeley. We saw in chapters 2 and 3 that a proper appreciation of Malebranche and Berkeley's acceptance of divine revelation and the Trinity helps explain why these philosophers hold similar theories of epistemology and metaphysics. In this chapter, we will see that these doctrines also shed light on issues, puzzles, and disputes brought up in the secondary literature that concerns either philosopher. In this final section, I give one example of how to apply the results I have drawn from the earlier chapters to this secondary literature.

In earlier chapters, I pointed out two separate doctrines of philosophical theology that are held by both philosophers. Since this is the case, there are four different ways one could apply these theories to the relevant secondary literature:

[1] An application of Malebranche's theory of the Trinity

[2] An application of Malebranche's theory of divine revelation

[3] An application of Berkeley's theory of the Trinity

[4] An application of Berkeley's theory of divine revelation

I will not attempt all four. Rather, I will focus on [1]. I will take results of this study concerning Malebranche's theory of the Trinity in the earlier chapters and apply those results to two different puzzles discussed in the current literature. The hope and expectation is that my work in this chapter can be used as an example of how to do the same with the other three possibilities.

Applying Malebranche's theory of the Trinity sheds light on two puzzles found in the secondary literature. The first is a puzzle concerning the ontological status of ideas for Malebranche. The second is a puzzle concerning Malebranche's view of efficacious ideas. I apply Malebranche's theory of the Trinity to the first puzzle in section 4.1, and I do the same to the second puzzle in 4.2.

4.1

The first puzzle concerns the ontological status of Malebranche's ideas. This puzzle has been mentioned by Nadler and Jolley, and it has been presented at length by

Cook.¹ Malebranche's Trinitarian metaphysics, while it has not been considered in this debate, provides support for the proper interpretation of Malebranche's ideas.

Nadler points out this puzzle:

... we are brought back to a fundamental problem in Malebranche's theory of ideas. What is the ontological status or nature of ideas? They are neither substances nor modifications of any substance. Yet in the Cartesian schema these are the only alternatives: something is either a substance or a modification of a substance. And Malebranche, however modified his Cartesianism, is at least explicit in accepting this ontological dualism.²

As Nadler points out, Malebranche accepts the Cartesian principle that everything is either a substance or a mode (Malebranche also refers to "substance" as "being").³

It suffices to reflect that everything that exists reduces to being or to modes of being. (LO 639)

I will call Malebranche's principle that everything must be either a substance or a mode the "Substance/Mode Principle" [SMP]. The puzzle raises its head when we consider where Malebranche's ideas fit in this disjunction.

Malebranche says ideas are not modes. They cannot be modifications of either the human or divine mind. According to Malebranche, ideas cannot be modifications of

¹ Nadler only presents the puzzle: Steven Nadler, *Malebranche and Ideas* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992), 96-97, 149. Jolley presents the puzzle and suggests a solution for Malebranche, but admits that Malebranche does not use his solution. Nicholas Jolley, *The Light of the Soul: Theories of Ideas in Leibniz, Malebranche, and Descartes* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1990), 78-80. Cook discusses it at length and gives a solution to the puzzle in Monte Cook, "The Ontological Status of Malebranchean Ideas," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 36, no. 4 (1998). Other papers that mention this problem or are relevant in some way include: Susan Peppers-Bates, "Does Malebranche Need Efficacious Ideas? The Cognitive Faculties, the Ontological Status of Ideas, and Human Attention," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 43 (2005). Richard A. Watson, "Arnauld, Malebranche, and the Ontology of Ideas," in *The Great Arnauld and Some of His Philosophical Correspondents*, ed. Elmar J. Kremer (Toronto, CA: University of Toronto Press, 1994). Craig Walton, "Malebranche's Ontology," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 7 (1969).

² Nadler, *Malebranche and Ideas*, 96.

³ A substance can be conceived by itself while a mode cannot:

By *being* I mean what is absolute, or what can be conceived alone and without relation to anything else. (LO 639-40)

By *modes* I mean what is relative, or what cannot be conceived alone. (LO 640)

human minds like the more orthodox Cartesians Régis and Arnauld since ideas are in God, rather than in human minds. Ideas also cannot be modifications of God since God has no modifications according to Malebranche: “the Infinite Being is incapable of modifications” (LO 625). So, ideas cannot be modes [I ~M].

If this were all Malebranche had to say, there would be no puzzle. Ideas cannot fall into the category of mode, so they must fall into the category of substance. But Malebranche says that ideas cannot be substances either:

“But if it be said that an idea is not a substance, I would agree—but it is still a spiritual thing, and as it is impossible to make a square out of a mind, though a square is not a substance, so a spiritual idea cannot be formed from a material substance, even though an idea is not a substance.” (LO 223)

Malebranche is clear; ideas cannot be substances [I ~S].

All the pieces of the puzzle are now in play. Malebranche presents a principle that everything is either a mode or a substance, only to break that principle when he talks about ideas. Malebranche denies both disjuncts. Ideas can be neither modes nor substances.

[SMP]	Everything is either a mode or a Substance
[I ~M]	Ideas cannot be modes
[I ~S]	Ideas cannot be substances

It appears that Malebranche cannot hold all three commitments.

Nadler suggests that Malebranche has no solution to this puzzle: “As far as I can tell, Malebranche does not provide an answer to this question—and in the context of his Cartesianism, I do not see how he can.”⁴ Other commentators have presented solutions. Jolley advises Malebranche to get out of the puzzle by denying the Cartesian principle, [SMP].

⁴ Nadler, *Malebranche and Ideas.*, 96-96.

In retrospect it is tempting to say that Malebranche could have made his philosophy more consistent by breaking openly with the framework of Cartesian ontology ... Malebranche could have given up the Cartesian assumption that everything there is, is either a substance or mode.⁵

Had Malebranche taken Jolley's advice and rejected [SMP], he could hold both [I ~M] and [I ~S] without any problem. Ideas, then, are neither modes nor substances, but fall into a third realm of logical, abstract entities.⁶ While Jolley thinks that such a solution would have gotten Malebranche off the hook, he recognizes that Malebranche does not opt for this solution to the problem.⁷ According to Jolley, Malebranche's commitment to Descartes' dualistic metaphysics is too strong for this to be a plausible option.

⁵ Jolley, *The Light of the Soul: Theories of Ideas in Leibniz, Malebranche, and Descartes*, 79.

⁶ Peppers-Bates ascribes this solution to Jolley in Peppers-Bates, "Does Malebranche Need Efficacious Ideas? The Cognitive Faculties, the Ontological Status of Ideas, and Human Attention." She cites as evidence both his book, *The Light of the Soul*, as well as his article, Nicholas Jolley, "Intellect and Illumination in Malebranche," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 32 (1994).

But Peppers-Bates goes further. On more than one occasion she claims that Jolley holds the position that Malebranche's ideas are neither substances nor modes, but a third class: "In a recent article, Jolley offers an account of the divine ideas that turns them into third-realm entities—and consequently "solves" the problem of their ontological status (although the latter concern does not figure into his argument)" (87). "Jolley explicates both the role of the divine ideas and the relation between God and human beings in perception by positing ideas as a special class of entity, that exists in God as neither substance nor mode, and acts upon the inert human mind" (87-88). "So Jolley is wrong in trying to make ideas into some third class of things, 'efficacious ideas'" (89).

But this treatment of Jolley's view is misguided. In *The Light of the Soul*, Jolley suggests that Malebranche *could* have broken with the Cartesian ontology and rejected that everything is either a substance or a mode. Jolley even says that this is "tempting" and suggests that such a move would have aided Malebranche in his project. However, Jolley explicitly states that Malebranche did not take this route, "he remained committed to the substantial dualism and to the framework of substance and mode" (79). Peppers-Bates is correct when she says that Jolley does say that ideas belong to a third realm in "Intellect and Illumination in Malebranche." But is doubtful that Jolley means that this third realm should be contrasted with the substance/mode distinction. Jolley has not even introduced the substance/mode distinction in this work since he is not concerned with the ontological status of ideas here. Instead, when he says that ideas belong to a third realm, Jolley means simply to suggest that they should be regarded as logical, abstract objects.

⁷ "Malebranche of course never made an open break with the fundamental tenets of Cartesian ontology: at least nominally, he remained committed to substantial dualism and to the framework of substance and mode." Jolley, *The Light of the Soul: Theories of Ideas in Leibniz, Malebranche, and Descartes*, 79.

The most satisfying solution to this problem is that ideas are not different substances but they are identical with one substance, God.⁸ This is the solution presented by Cook. Cook concludes that Malebranche consistently holds all three positions described above: [SMP], [IM], and [IS] without contradiction. According to Cook:

He escapes inconsistency by maintaining that although ideas fit into the category of substance, they are not *different* substances. Rather than being substances (plural), they are identical with one substance, God.⁹

Cook argues in detail for this position. First he shows that the principle that everything is either a substance or a mode applies to everything for Malebranche, not just created things. This principle applies to ideas as well. He also shows that Malebranche does indeed say that ideas can be neither substances nor modes. Then Cook argues that Malebranche can hold all three positions consistently due to the fact that ideas *are* God, insofar as God is understood in a certain way.¹⁰ Malebranche does say that ideas are the essence of God.

God's ideas of creatures are, as Saint Thomas says, only His essence, insofar as it is participable or imperfectly imitable, for God contains every creaturely perfection, through in a divine and infinite way; He is one and He is all. (LO 625)

Malebranche also says the same thing about intelligible extension, which is one particular idea, in a way that makes it representative of all ideas.

But intelligible extension is simply the substance of God insofar as it is representative of bodies and participable by them, with the limitations or imperfections which pertain to them and are represented by this same intelligible extension, which is their idea or archetype. (DM 137)

⁸ Jolley makes the same point about ideas being identical with the substance of God. *Ibid.*, 79.

⁹ Cook, "The Ontological Status of Malebranchean Ideas," 526, 29. Support from Malebranche comes from a letter to Dortous in 1714, "these are not different substances, for they are in God, and everything that is in God is wholly God"

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 531.

Cook states that these kinds of passages where Malebranche says that ideas are the substance of God insofar as they are participable by them are “puzzling” and “dark”.¹¹ Cook notes that the “insofar” is doing a lot of work in these passages. “Insofar” is an important disclaimer for Malebranche. In the passages where Malebranche says that ideas are the substance of God, he employs this terminology.¹² Cook concludes concerning the “insofar” language from Malebranche:

Malebranche does not want to suggest that intelligible extension is something other than the substance of God, but he has reason to reject any crude identification of the two. For one thing, he wants to deny that intelligible extension exhausts the nature of God. The divine substance contains in its simplicity all perfections without limitations, whereas intelligible extension is the essence of God only ‘insofar as it contains, among all its realities and infinite perfections, that of extension’”.¹³

Cook suggests that Malebranche uses the “insofar” language to allow a certain amount of flexibility concerning how ideas are the substance of God. On the one hand, God’s nature is more than ideas. But on the other hand, ideas truly are identical with the substance of God. According to the solution proposed by Cook, there are two different conceptions of how ideas are substances.

[I S]¹ Ideas cannot be individual substances

[I S]² Ideas cannot share in the substance of God¹⁴

¹¹ “It is puzzling what Malebranche means by such dark sayings as ‘ideas are the substance itself of God, not according to his absolute being, but insofar as he is representative of creatures and participable by them.’ Ibid., 532.

¹² Malebranche often says that ideas are “in God”. His catch phrase is that we see all things in God, where we do this by seeing ideas in God. This talk of ideas being *in* God does indeed suggest that ideas are distinct from God but in some way intimately related to him—that they are in God as modifications of him or as substances that are somehow parts of him or at least coeternal with him.

Nevertheless, in numerous passages, rather than saying that ideas are in God, Malebranche seems to say that they *are* God. Rather than taking ideas to be different substances, he seems to say that ideas are *one* substance, God. In these passages, he often cites St. Thomas, and he invariably explains that ideas are God only insofar as God is understood in a certain way.” Ibid., 531.

¹³ Ibid., 542.

When Malebranche says that ideas cannot be substances, he is saying that they cannot be individual substances. Malebranche holds [I~S]¹. When he says that ideas are “simply the substance of God insofar as it is representative of bodies and participable by them” (LO 625), he is saying that ideas share in the substance of God. Malebranche rejects [I~S]². Cook’s solution is that Malebranche holds all three commitments, if we understand his rejection of ideas as substances applies only to ideas as individual substances.

Cook suggests that there is an element of mystery in what Malebranche says about the relation of ideas to God’s substance. We, as finite beings, cannot comprehend how God and ideas share in the same substance. This is not a problem for Malebranche, the incomprehensibility of God is “part of his philosophical system”.¹⁵ Cook concludes that while interpreters might find Malebranche’s solution to this puzzle confusing, some of this confusion is to be expected due to God’s incomprehensible nature.

Even if the status of ideas cannot be fully intelligible to us, it cannot involve a contradiction of the sort standardly attributed to Malebranche.¹⁶

Appreciating Malebranche’s Trinitarian metaphysics enables us to explain more of Malebranche’s position before retreating into mystery. Malebranche’s theory of the Trinity helps explain how he can hold that ideas share in the substance of God. As we have seen, Malebranche thinks that there is room for distinctions within the substance of God. There is room for three persons within God’s substance: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. By extension, it should not be surprising that Malebranche also holds further

¹⁴ This wording “ideas share in the substance of God” is my wording, not Cook’s.

¹⁵ Cook, “The Ontological Status of Malebranchean Ideas,” 530.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 531.

distinctions within the substance of God. If the substance of God can be participated in by three different persons, it seems that it could also be participated in by ideas.

While this interpretation may prove helpful for the philosophical puzzle concerning the ontological status of ideas, it seems to create a theological problem for Malebranche. If ideas are the substance of God in the same way as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, it seems that the Trinity has been replaced by a Quad-rinity. Ideas become a fourth person added to the Trinity. This creates a problem for my interpretation of Malebranche's philosophical theology since I have argued that Malebranche held a traditional, Nicene account of the Trinity, not a Quad-rinity.

Malebranche does not propose that ideas constitute a fourth person of the Trinity. Instead, he argues that the second person of the Trinity is, in some way, the idea of God. In a similar move Edwards suggests that the Son of God is generated by God's idea of himself, when introducing the notion of the eternal generation of the Son.

Therefore as God with perfect clearness, fullness and strength understands himself, views his own essence (in which there is no distinction of substance and act, but it is wholly substance and wholly act), that idea which God hath of himself is absolutely himself. This representation of the divine nature and essence is the divine nature and essence again. So that by God's thinking of the Deity, [the Deity] must certainly be generated. Hereby there is another person begotten; there is another infinite, eternal, almighty, and most holy and the same God, the very same divine nature. And this person is the second person of the Trinity, the only begotten and dearly beloved Son of God. He is eternal, necessary, perfect, substantial and personal idea which God hath of himself.¹⁷

Edwards' point is that when God the Father considers his own essence, the Father has an idea of himself. The idea God the Father has of himself must share the same essence, so God's idea is the second person of the Trinity.

¹⁷ Jonathan Edwards, *Works*, ed. Various Editors (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1957-), Vol 21, pg 116-17. (Discourse on the Trinity). Edwards makes the same argument in the Vol 13, pg 258-259 (The 'Miscellanies', no.94).

If Malebranche adopted a line similar to Edwards he could be saying that God's ideas are identical to the second person of the Trinity. In this sense, Malebranche could be saying that ideas are the substance of God but do not exhaust the nature of God in the same way that the Son is God but does not exhaust the full nature of God.

There is evidence that Malebranche does make the same move that we see in Edwards. Malebranche states that there is a connection between ideas and the Son or Word of God. After introducing the vision of God doctrine in the *Search*, Malebranche sums up the theory as a union that minds have with the Word.

We believe, finally, that all minds see eternal laws, as well as other things, in God, but with a certain difference. They know order and eternal truths, and even the beings that God has made according to these truths or according to order, through the union these minds necessarily have with the Word, or the wisdom of God, which enlightens them, as has just been explained. (LO 234)

And the same claim is found in the *Dialogues*.

You know, Aristes, that the divine Word, as universal Reason, contains in its substance the primordial ideas of all beings, created and possible. You know that all intellects, which are united to that sovereign Reason, discover some of these ideas in it, inasmuch as God wishes to reveal these ideas to them. (DM 32)¹⁸

Malebranche's way out of the Quad-rinity problem is that ideas are contained within the Son. God the father has an idea of himself. This idea is God the Son, who shares the same substance with God the father. Contained within the Son are the ideas of all created things. So, ideas are within God the Son, and thereby share in the substance of God by means of being identical with the Son.

While the Trinitarian metaphysics of Malebranche sheds light on this discussion concerning the ontological status of ideas, it has not been mentioned in the secondary

¹⁸ Reid translates another passage that makes the same point: "this idea will be God Himself. For there is no other idea of God at all but His Word. The Son of God is the perfect expression and resemblance of His Father. Translated by Reid. Jasper Reid, "Malebranche on Intelligible Extension," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 11 (2003): 588, footnote 33.

literature. Cook, Nadler, and Jolley do not mention Malebranche's views on the Trinity and how it might impact his views on substance in general.

It is clear that Malebranche's Trinitarian metaphysics is relevant to this discussion of the ontological status of ideas. Understanding Malebranche's metaphysical commitment to the Trinity aids in understanding how ideas could be the same substance as God.

4.2

The second puzzle concerns Malebranche's efficacious ideas. Malebranche says that ideas are efficacious since they act upon the mind. He argues that some ideas are efficacious in the section of the *Search* where he is defending the vision in God.

Here is an argument that may prove demonstrative for those accustomed to abstract reasoning. It is certain that certain ideas are efficacious, since they act upon the mind and enlighten it, and since they make it happy or unhappy through the pleasant or unpleasant perceptions by which they affect it. (LO 232)

Malebranche also says that ideas alone enlighten or causally act upon the mind or soul:

We would see that the soul is essentially a substance that thinks or perceives everything that affects it, that it is an intelligence that nonetheless is actually made intelligent only through the efficacy of divine ideas, which alone can act on it, affect it, modify it, enlighten it, as I have explained elsewhere. (LO 560)

There are many such passages where Malebranche attributes causal powers to ideas.¹⁹

¹⁹ There are many passages where Malebranche says that ideas enlighten, affect, or act upon the soul: "Nor it is clear that the soul's modes are changeable but ideas are immutable; that its modes are particular, but ideas are universal and general to all intelligences; ... that these ideas are indeed efficacious because they act in the mind, they enlighten it and make it happy or unhappy, which is evident by the pain that the idea of the hand causes in those who have had an arm cut off." (LO 323) "It is therefore necessary to distinguish the ideas that enlighten us, that affect us, and that represent these beings, from the modes of our soul, i.e., from our perceptions of them." (LO 319) "All these ideas have some reality while I think them... For they enlighten the mind or make themselves known to it; some even strike it and make themselves sensed by it, and this is in a thousand different ways." (DM 10) "I believe that there are essential differences between knowing and sensing, between the ideas which enlighten the mind and the sensations which affect it." (DM 35)

This doctrine has its own history of interpretation.²⁰ The general line is that Malebranche originally held that ideas were not efficacious, or at least did not emphasize the efficacious nature of ideas in his earlier editions of the *Search*. Then, later in his philosophy when pressed by Régis to explain the union between human minds and God, Malebranche introduced the notion that ideas hold causal powers. Some interpreters suggest that Malebranche shifted his view from a vision *in* God to a theory of a vision *by* God.²¹ In short this interpretation holds that Malebranche moved to a position where God's ideas act on and modify the soul or mind.²²

“... I am delighted to point out that this resolution depends, like all other truths, on the great principle that universal Reason contains the ideas which enlighten us, and that as God's works have been formed on the basis of these ideas, we can do no better than contemplate them, in order to discover the nature and properties of created beings.” (DM 39)

“We would see that the soul is essentially a substance that thinks or perceives everything that affects it, that it is an intelligence that nonetheless is actually made intelligent only through the efficacy of divine ideas, which alone can act on it, affect it, modify it, enlighten it, as I have explained elsewhere.” (LO 560)

“There is then one and only one idea of our hand which affects us in different ways, which acts on our soul and modifies it by color, heat, pain, etc. ... It is, then, the idea or archetype of bodies which affects us in different ways. I mean, it is the intelligible substance of Reason which acts in our mind through its all-powerful efficacy and which touches and modifies it with color, taste, pain, by what there is within it representing bodies.” (DM 77)

²⁰ This theory by Malebranche has produced scrutiny in the literature in the past 5 years. Some support Malebranche's move toward efficacious ideas in his mature thought. Jolley, “Intellect and Illumination in Malebranche.” Nicholas Jolley, “Berkeley, Malebranche, and Vision in God,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 34 (1996). Ferdinand Alquié, *Le Cartésianisme De Malebranche* (Paris, FR: J. Vrin, 1974). André Robinet, *Système Et Existence Dans L'oeuvre De Malebranche* (Paris, FR: J. Vrin, 1965). And other think that efficacious ideas are unnecessary for Malebranche's system. Peppers-Bates, “Does Malebranche Need Efficacious Ideas? The Cognitive Faculties, the Ontological Status of Ideas, and Human Attention.”

²¹ This is how Ferdinand Alquié and Tad Schmaltz represent this shift. Alquié, *Le Cartésianisme De Malebranche*. Tad M. Schmaltz, “Malebranche on Ideas and the Vision in God,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Malebranche*, ed. Steven Nadler (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Jolley refers to the same shift as Malebranche abandoning a view of pure intellect for a view where the mind is “intrinsically devoid of all properties except sentiments”. Jolley, “Intellect and Illumination in Malebranche.”

²² The two earliest proponents of this historical shift in Malebranche are Alquié, *Le Cartésianisme De Malebranche*. and Robinet, *Système Et Existence Dans L'oeuvre De Malebranche*. Other sources that accept this kind of a historical shift in Malebranche's system include. Jolley, *The Light of the Soul: Theories of Ideas in Leibniz, Malebranche, and Descartes*. Peppers-Bates, “Does Malebranche Need Efficacious Ideas? The Cognitive Faculties, the Ontological Status of Ideas, and Human Attention.” Tad M. Schmaltz, *Malebranche's Theory of the Soul: A Cartesian Interpretation* (New York, NY: Oxford

Malebranche's theory of efficacious ideas creates a puzzle in light of his occasionalism: how can ideas be causally active if God is the only true cause?²³

Malebranche seems committed to both occasionalism which denies that ideas can be causally active and a theory of efficacious ideas which suggests that ideas are indeed causally active.

Susan Peppers-Bates discusses this puzzle in her paper "Does Malebranche Need Efficacious Ideas? The Cognitive Faculties, the Ontological Status of Ideas, and Human Attention".²⁴ She concludes that whatever Malebranche means by efficacious ideas, he must not take them to be true causal agents. One of her primary reasons for this conclusion is that understanding ideas as true causal agents would violate Malebranche's occasionalism.²⁵

University Press, 1996). I will not take a position in this debate concerning the shift, all I am interested for the purposes of this paper is that Malebranche was committed to the view that ideas were causally active. It does not matter to my position if this was a later development or not.

²³ The fact that there is a puzzle between these two claims has also been pointed out in the literature by Peppers-Bates, "Does Malebranche Need Efficacious Ideas? The Cognitive Faculties, the Ontological Status of Ideas, and Human Attention." and Alquié, *Le Cartésianisme De Malebranche*, 210-122. and in a less direct way by Jolley, "Intellect and Illumination in Malebranche." However, only Peppers-Bates gives a detailed solution to this puzzle.

²⁴ Peppers-Bates, "Does Malebranche Need Efficacious Ideas? The Cognitive Faculties, the Ontological Status of Ideas, and Human Attention."

²⁵ "Making ideas *qua* ideas casually active violates both the strictures of Malebranche's occasionalist metaphysics and his substance-mode ontology". Ibid., 85. The second reason Peppers-Bates rejects efficacious ideas is that such an interpretation nullifies the role of human faculties that Malebranche holds. "Additionally, denying Malebranche's commitment to the soul's cognitive and volitional capacities makes it impossible to understand the belief in human intellectual and moral agency that motivated much of Malebranche's work. Indeed, denying Malebranche's commitment to the real use of the intellect effectively places him outside of the rationalist tradition." Peppers-Bates, "Does Malebranche Need Efficacious Ideas? The Cognitive Faculties, the Ontological Status of Ideas, and Human Attention." Ibid., 85.

I am not arguing the role of human faculties in this paper, but I do suggest that this passage contains a puzzling claim. Peppers-Bates claims in the opening paragraph of her paper that replacing the deliverances of the senses with the deliverances of the intellect for knowledge acquisition is the key to rationalism. Then in this passage she suggests that one reason to think that Malebranche did not hold a strong interpretation of efficacious ideas is because it would place him outside of the rationalist camp.

Peppers-Bates summarizes her argument toward the beginning of her paper.

In this paper, I argue that a strong interpretation of efficacious ideas, whereby they appear to become true causal agents, must be rejected because it pushes us into an incorrect reading of Malebranche's theory of the divine and human faculties...

Making ideas *qua* ideas causally active violates both the strictures of Malebranche's occasionalist metaphysics and his substance-mode ontology.²⁶

Before I examine her argument, I need to explain what Peppers-Bates is rejecting. She is rejecting that ideas could be true casual agents in Malebranche's philosophy. Peppers-Bates cites Jolley as a representative of such a view of efficacious ideas and summarizes his view in the following manner:

On Jolley's account, Malebranche explains the union between the human intellect and God's Reason needed in both intellectual and sensory perception in terms of efficacious divine ideas acting upon our minds. God's ideas, not God himself, become true causes on this schema.²⁷

She says that the theory of efficacious ideas makes "ideas *qua* ideas causally active"²⁸ and holds that ideas are agents with efficacy independent of the divine will.²⁹ In short, she is rejecting that ideas are causally active *of themselves* or on their own accord.³⁰

This is puzzling because Malebranche would not have accepted or rejected interpretations based on where those interpretations would place him on the philosophical map. While Malebranche did consider himself following in the tradition of Descartes, we have no reason to think that he was committed to a system of rationalism as has been since defined by historians. Therefore his accepting of a view that places him outside of the rationalist tradition should be no reason to think that he would not hold such a view. After all, the rationalist and empiricist names and distinction is nothing more than our attempt to classify philosophers into schools that they were not concerned about. This is particularly evident when current literature has been re-examining this distinction and attempting to re-classify some philosophers. So, suggesting that a strong interpretation of efficacious ideas would place Malebranche outside of the rationalist camp should not be taken as any kind of evidence that he couldn't have held such a position.

²⁶ Peppers-Bates, "Does Malebranche Need Efficacious Ideas? The Cognitive Faculties, the Ontological Status of Ideas, and Human Attention," 85.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 87.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 85.

²⁹ "However, I believe that it fits with the account I am developing, by rejecting the view of ideas as agents with efficacy independent of the divine will." *Ibid.*, 89, footnote 34.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 90, 91, 93, and 95.

Peppers-Bates presents two reasons that the theory of efficacious ideas contradicts Malebranche's occasionalism. First, ideas cannot act in Malebranche's philosophical system due to their ontological status. Ideas are not the kinds of things that could be causally active. Second, ideas cannot be true causes due to their relationship with God's Word rather than God's Will. Only God's will is causally active and ideas are related to God's Word which is not causally active.

In developing her first reason for rejecting efficacious ideas she begins by explaining the ontological status of ideas for Malebranche. She says that such a discussion will explain what it means for God to "contain" ideas and must be properly understood before we can understand the causal relations between God and humans.³¹ Peppers-Bates concludes two things from this discussion of ontology. The first is that ideas are not the kinds of things that could hold causal powers.³² "In sum, ideas—interpreted either as abstract logical items or as partially revealed aspects of the divine substance—do not themselves possess causal properties."³³ This is because ideas do not possess a will or an intellect.³⁴ Only God possesses causal powers from his being a substance. Only God himself can be said to be a true cause. Peppers-Bates recognizes that Malebranche often speaks as if ideas act upon our mind. But she qualifies this by

³¹ Ibid., 86.

³² It is hard to know exactly where Peppers-Bates comes down in this debate. At times she seems to accept the solution presented above. "Ideas cannot be a bridge between human beings and God because ideas are the substance of God, the perfections that are his essence" (95). At other times she seems to present a different solution, "ideas are, strictly speaking, limited aspects of God's essence with which he affects us" (89). Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 93. Jolley makes the same point about ideas not being the kinds of entities that can possess causal powers. Jolley, "Intellect and Illumination in Malebranche," 200.

³⁴ "Indeed, ideas are not the kinds of entity that could initiate causal sequences—they do not possess a will, they do not individually possess an intellect, although in their totality they are identified with divine Reason." Peppers-Bates, "Does Malebranche Need Efficacious Ideas? The Cognitive Faculties, the Ontological Status of Ideas, and Human Attention," 91.

pointing out that when Malebranche is most precise these kinds of statements are followed by reminders that God is the only true cause. This language where Malebranche says that ideas are efficacious is misleading.³⁵ Malebranche's occasionalism clearly shows that ideas cannot be efficacious.³⁶ Given Malebranche's occasionalism and the ontological status he gives to ideas, Peppers-Bates concludes, ideas are not the kinds of things that could be efficacious.

The second reason Peppers-Bates rejects that ideas are efficacious concerns a division she introduces from Malebranche between the Word and will of God. She makes a distinction between God *qua* Word and God *qua* will.³⁷ She points out that Malebranche connects causation to the will of God since God's will is necessarily efficacious.³⁸ She quotes the following passage from the *Search* as support that Malebranche holds such a distinction.

A true cause as I understand it is one such that the mind perceives a necessary connection between it and its effect. Now the mind perceives a necessary connection only between the will of an infinitely perfect being and its effects. Therefore, it is only God who is the true cause and who truly has the power to move bodies... God needs no instrument to act; it suffices that He wills in order that a thing be, because it is a contradiction that He should will and that what He wills should not happen. Therefore, His power is His will, and to communicate His power is to communicate the efficacy of His will. (LO 450).

For something to hold causal powers, it must be related or connected in some way to the will of God. But, Peppers-Bates points out, ideas are contained in the Word of God

³⁵ Ibid., 90. Also pointing out the confusing nature of this language is Nadler, *Malebranche and Ideas*, 6.

³⁶ "Malebranche's point is that nothing besides God can act on human minds. This is just his occasionalism. Ideas cannot, strictly speaking, be efficacious." Peppers-Bates, "Does Malebranche Need Efficacious Ideas? The Cognitive Faculties, the Ontological Status of Ideas, and Human Attention," 95.

³⁷ She uses this terminology only at one point, but she alludes to it at other places throughout this part of her argument. Ibid., 92-95.

³⁸ Malebranche highlights this same idea throughout Book 6, Part 2, Chapter 3 of the *Search* (LO 446-452).

according to Malebranche's vision in God.³⁹ Peppers-Bates concludes that the Word of God is passive and inert. Ideas are contained in the passive Word of God and not in the efficacious will of God. Therefore, they cannot be true causes.⁴⁰

In summary, Peppers-Bates argues that efficacious ideas should be rejected as a theory held by Malebranche since it is impossible for ideas to hold causal powers due to their ontological structure and their containment in God's Word rather than in God's will.

It is now possible to show how Malebranche's Trinitarian metaphysics enables us to present a different, and more satisfying solution to the puzzle. The doctrine of the Trinity explains how Malebranche can hold that ideas are casually efficacious without contradicting his occasionalism. Peppers-Bates argues that Malebranche's occasionalism is inconsistent with this theory of efficacious ideas. She solves the problem by rejecting efficacious ideas: that is by denying that they are true causal agents. I argue that Malebranche's occasionalism is not inconsistent with his theory of efficacious ideas and that his Trinitarian metaphysics allows him to hold both consistently.

Given what I have shown above concerning the ontological status of ideas, it is possible to extend what Malebranche says about the Trinity to show that ideas can be true causal agents. Peppers-Bates agrees with my position in section 4.1 that ideas are identical with the substance of God, but we disagree concerning the application of this conclusion to the puzzle at hand. While she agrees that ideas are the substance of God, she still continues to say that ideas are not true causes. I say that this conclusion leaves room for ideas to become true causes. As we saw from section 3.2, Malebranche holds

³⁹ This is the same point that I just made concerning ideas being connected to the Word of God.

⁴⁰ Peppers-Bates, "Does Malebranche Need Efficacious Ideas? The Cognitive Faculties, the Ontological Status of Ideas, and Human Attention," 93.

that the Son shares the same substance with the Father. These two persons of the Trinity are the same substance and therefore they share certain properties. In the same way, Malebranche holds that ideas share the same substance with God and thereby share certain properties. The property that God shares with ideas is the property of being causally efficacious.

Peppers-Bates argues that Malebranche rejects that ideas hold the property of being causally efficacious. She is aware of the many passages where Malebranche says that ideas are in fact true causal agents:

It is therefore necessary to distinguish the ideas that enlighten us, that affect us, and that represent these beings, from the modes of our soul, i.e., from our perceptions of them. (LO 319)

For it is clear that the soul's modes are changeable but ideas are immutable; that its modes are particular, but ideas are universal and general to all intelligences; ... that these ideas are indeed efficacious because they act in the mind, they enlighten it and make it happy or unhappy, which is evident by the pain that the idea of the hand causes in those who have had an arm cut off. (LO 323)

Peppers-Bates believes that passages such as these are misleading. On her interpretation Malebranche may say that ideas are true causes, but he really means that God is the only true cause. As I mentioned earlier, she adds that Malebranche, when he is being the most careful, points out in the context of these kinds of passages that it is really God who is the true cause.⁴¹ Peppers-Bates gives the following example from *Dialogues between a Christian and a Chinese Philosopher*.

Certainly then the hand that touches them, and affects them with a sensation of pain, is not the one that was cut off. Thus it can only be the idea of the hand, in consequence of the disturbances in the brain, similar to those we have when someone hurts our hand. Indeed, the matter of which our body is composed cannot act on our

⁴¹ "He often speaks of ideas as acting on our mind. At his most precise, however, he does qualify these kinds of statements with remainders that God is the only causal agent that God operates on us by revealing the ideas he encloses." Ibid., 90.

soul; *only he who is superior to it and has created it can do so*, by the idea of the body, that is to say, by his very essence insofar as it represents extension.⁴²

Peppers-Bates intends this passage to serve as an example that when he is being the most careful, Malebranche dismisses any claim that ideas cause with the additional statement that only God causes. “Malebranche first talks of the idea of a hand acting on and causing amputees’ pain, then notes that only God acts on the mind in this way.”⁴³

Peppers-Bates interprets these kinds of statements as a retraction of the claim that ideas are causes. According to Peppers-Bates, when Malebranche adds a line similar to “only he who is superior to it and has created it can do so”—that is act on the body—he is retracting the claim concerning the causal efficacy of ideas. In other words, Malebranche recognizes his loose and confusing language and takes it back by restating his assertion in a more precise way.⁴⁴

There are a few things to point out about this passage and Peppers- Bates claim. First, Malebranche does sometimes follow his statement that ideas cause with the qualifier that only God causes, but Malebranche does not add this further explanatory note in every instance.⁴⁵ In fact, such additional claims are the exception rather than the

⁴² OC XV 9, the emphasis is by Peppers-Bates when she quotes the passage at *Ibid.*, 90 – 91.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁴⁴ Peppers-Bates makes the claim that when Malebranche is being the most careful he follows passages that seem to support efficacious ideas with statements such as these, but she does not catalogue such passages.

⁴⁵ Peppers-Bates is aware of this, which is why she suggests that he gives the qualification when he is the most precise. Peppers-Bates, “Does Malebranche Need Efficacious Ideas? The Cognitive Faculties, the Ontological Status of Ideas, and Human Attention,” 90. Here is a list of some passages where ideas are said to act that have no additional comment that only God acts:

“... these ideas are indeed efficacious because they act in the mind, they enlighten it and make it happy or unhappy...” (LO 323)

“It is therefore necessary to distinguish the ideas that enlighten us, that affect us, and that represent these beings, from the modes of our soul, i.e., from our perceptions of them.” (LO 319)

rule. Of course, frequency does not determine truthfulness. Just because Malebranche adds this additional statement infrequently does not mean that his intention was not to imply it everywhere else.

But even where Malebranche does add the additional qualifier that only God causes, we have reason to think that this is not a retraction of the claim that ideas are causally efficacious. I interpret these kinds of additional statements not as a retraction but as a reinforcement. In the passage quoted above, Malebranche first says that the idea of the hand affects the soul. Then he adds that only God acts on the soul. This addition does not read as if Malebranche is retracting the claim that the idea has affected the soul. It reads like Malebranche is reinforcing, explaining, or simply restating the claim already made. This particular example supports my interpretation Peppers-Bates. When Malebranche follows statements that ideas are causally active with the additional claim that only God is a true cause, he is applying the ontological status of ideas. To say that ideas act upon the soul is the same thing as saying that God acts upon the soul. These passages support my claim that ideas share the property of being a true cause with God.

In the passage from *Dialogues between a Christian and a Chinese Philosopher* that Peppers-Bates argues that Malebranche also equates ideas with God.

“... that it (the soul) is an intelligence that nonetheless is actually made intelligent only through the efficacy of divine ideas, which alone can act on it, affect it, modify it, enlighten it, as I have explained elsewhere.” (LO 560)

“... I am delighted to point out that this resolution depends, like all other truths, on the great principle that universal Reason contains the ideas which enlighten us...” (DM 39)

“I believe that there are essential differences between knowing and sensing, between the ideas which enlighten the mind and the sensations which affect it.” (DM 35)

“Never, Aristes, take your own sensations for our ideas, the modifications which affect your soul for the ideas which enlighten all minds.” (DM 31)

“All these ideas have some reality while I think them... For they enlighten the mind or make themselves known to it; some even strike it and make themselves sensed by it, and this is in a thousand different ways.” (DM 10)

Certainly then the hand that touches them, and affects them with a sensation of pain, is not the one that was cut off. Thus it can only be the idea of the hand, in consequence of the disturbances in the brain, similar to those we have when someone hurts our hand. Indeed, the matter of which our body is composed cannot act on our soul; only he who is superior to it and has created it can do so, *by the idea of the body, that is to say, by his very essence insofar as it represents extension.*⁴⁶

Malebranche is not retracting his claim that the idea acts upon the body. He is reinforcing that ideas are God. This passage supports my claim that the ideas share in the substance of God, or in this passage, ideas are “his very essence”. The idea, which is the very essence of God, is causally efficacious.

There also passages where Pepper-Bates’ interpretation does not work. In a passage that sounds a bit like his occasionalism, Malebranche says that ideas *alone* can act on or enlighten the mind.

We would see that the soul is essentially a substance that thinks or perceives everything that affects it, that it is an intelligence that nonetheless is actually made intelligent only through the efficacy of divine ideas, which alone can act on it, affect it, modify it, enlighten it, as I have explained elsewhere. (LO 560)⁴⁷

In this passage, Malebranche not only says that ideas are causally active; he says that they *alone* are casually active. If Malebranche followed this claim with the suggestion that only God is causally active (which he does not), such a retraction would make no sense. However, this additional statement fits the logic of the passage perfectly according to my reinforcement interpretation. Malebranche says that only ideas are efficacious, and by that he means to say that only God is efficacious.

⁴⁶ OC XV 9. This time the emphasis is mine, highlighting that Malebranche says that the idea is the very essence of God.

⁴⁷ This passage highlights the puzzle between Malebranche’s occasionalism and his theory of efficacious ideas. Malebranche, due to his occasionalism, holds that God is the only cause and therefore the only substance that can act on the soul. However, in this passage he says that ideas *alone* can act on, affect, modify, or enlighten the soul. This passage gives support to the claim that Malebranche thinks that ideas share this divine property of being efficacious.

So far I have argued that ideas and God both share the divine attribute of being true causes. What is needed is an account of how Malebranche could hold that ideas and God are both true causes without inconsistency. Another way of saying this is that Malebranche needs to give us reason to think that he is entitled to hold that both ideas and God can share the property of being a true cause.

One available move at this point is to suggest that Malebranche evokes the mysteries of God. Malebranche is not shy about claiming that some truth is beyond human understanding and is therefore imbedded in the mystery of God. But in this situation, we can do more than evoke the mysteries of God because Malebranche's commitment to a Trinitarian metaphysical explains how he can hold that both ideas and God are true causes.

As I pointed out in chapter 3, Malebranche holds that all three persons of the Trinity are casually efficacious. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all involved in the process of enlightening. He can say this because each of these persons of the Trinity is consubstantial or one substance with God. To say that the Word enlightens is the same as saying God enlightens. To say that the will of God enlightens, is the same as saying that God enlightens. Malebranche holds that each of these is a distinct person, yet shares the property of enlightening due to the fact that they are all identical with God.

This Trinitarian metaphysical structure is very closely related to the problem at hand concerning efficacious ideas and occasionalism. We have already seen that Malebranche thinks that ideas are one substance with God, which is another way of saying that they are consubstantial with God. God alone can enlighten *and* ideas alone can enlighten since they are the same substance. Just like the Word alone and God alone

can enlighten. According to Malebranche, to say that ideas act on the soul is the same as saying that God acts on the soul since they are the same substance.

This responds to Peppers-Bates' first reason for suggesting that efficacious ideas are incompatible with his occasionalism: that ideas do not hold the ontological status necessary to be true causes. Instead, we have seen that the ontological status of ideas is exactly why they can be causally efficacious. Ideas share the same substance with God.

This Trinitarian structure also holds implications for the second reason Peppers-Bates suggest that efficacious ideas are incompatible with occasionalism. Recall that she concluded that ideas cannot be efficacious because they are contained in God *qua* Word rather than God *qua* will. Peppers-Bates concluded that God's causal power is found in God *qua* will alone, not in God *qua* Word. Since ideas are not contained in the part of God that is necessarily efficacious, ideas cannot be efficacious.

According to Malebranche's Trinitarian metaphysical picture, God *qua* will is the third person of the Trinity while God *qua* Word is the second person of the Trinity. Peppers-Bates is correct to point out that Malebranche holds that God's efficacious nature is found in his will, the Holy Spirit. But, as we have seen in section 3.2, Malebranche also suggests that causal power is located in other persons of the Trinity as well. Malebranche explicitly says that the second person of the Trinity, rather than being inert, enlightens and acts on human minds in a causal manner.

They know order and eternal truths, and even the beings that God has made according to these truths or according to order, through the union these minds necessarily have with the Word, or wisdom of God, which enlightens them, as has just been explained. (LO 234)

... It is, then, the idea or archetype of bodies which affects us in different ways. I mean, it is the intelligible substance of Reason which acts in our mind through its all-

powerful efficacy and which touches and modifies it with color, taste, pain, by what there is within it representing bodies. (DM 77)

These passages would be confusing apart from Malebranche's Trinitarian picture. The will of God holds casual properties and the Word or Reason also holds causal properties since they both share the same substance of God.

Therefore, God *qua* will cannot be contrasted with God *qua* Word in the sense that the former is efficacious while the latter is inert. Peppers-Bates is mistaken to conclude that ideas are not efficacious because they are contained in God *qua* Word rather than God *qua* will. The placement of ideas within the Word does not show that they cannot be efficacious.

Once we appreciate Malebranche's Trinitarian metaphysics we see that there is no problem in Malebranche's claim that both ideas and God are casually efficacious. Both can be true causes since they are the same substance. While the doctrine of the Trinity is philosophically relevant in this discussion, Peppers-Bates nowhere mentions that Malebranche holds this position. Failing to appreciate Malebranche's Trinitarian picture leads Peppers-Bates astray. Malebranche's Trinitarian metaphysics shows how both her reasons that efficacious ideas are inconsistent with occasionalism are misled. A correct understanding of the ontological status of ideas shows that ideas can indeed be true causes. Malebranche's Trinitarian metaphysics also will not allow Pepper-Bates to apply the God *qua* Word and God *qua* will distinction as she does. Since the Word and will are both the substance of God, it cannot be said that only the will is efficacious.

I have shown that Malebranche can consistently hold both occasionalism and efficacious ideas because of his Trinitarian metaphysics. God and ideas are both true

causes since they are the same substance, thereby sharing the property of being a true cause.⁴⁸ I think that one final passage from Malebranche makes this point.

“It is certain that certain ideas are efficacious, since they act upon the mind and enlighten it, and since they make it happy or unhappy through the pleasant or unpleasant perceptions by which they affect it. Now nothing can act immediately upon the mind unless it is superior to it—nothing but God alone; for only the Author of our being can change its modifications. All our ideas, therefore, must be located in the efficacious substance of the Divinity, which alone is intelligible or capable of enlightening us, because it alone can affect intelligences. (LO 232)

While a proper appreciation of Malebranche’s Trinitarian metaphysics helps us understand his theories better, this is not to say that we have removed the element of mystery entirely from Malebranche. There are still numerous “dark statements” in Malebranche including the notion that ideas and God share the same substance. Malebranche considered the Trinity itself is a mystery beyond comprehension.

We believe the mystery of the Trinity, for example, although the human mind cannot conceive it; and yet we do not give up our belief that two things now differing from a third are not different from each other, although this proposition seems to overthrow it. (LO 245)

There are other mysteries concerning the nature of God that are at play in these discussions. Malebranche holds that God is simple.

But it should be carefully noted that we cannot conclude from their seeing all things in God in this way that our minds see the essence of God... Yet what we see is but one or more particular beings, and we do not understand this perfect simplicity of God, which includes all beings. (LO 231)

God’s simplicity seems to conflict with Malebranche’s commitment to the Trinity, which is not simple but complex. There will always be mysteries in some aspects of

⁴⁸ I want to very quickly consider what was perhaps Peppers-Bates’ main problem with the strong interpretation of efficacious ideas, that ideas are a cause themselves or a cause apart from the will of God. One the one hand I suggest that ideas are a true cause themselves. It is the ideas that cause, but they cause because they are one substance with God. On the other hand, I do not think that ideas cause apart from the will of God, since they are one substance with the will of God.

“But although something must be in order to be perceived, everything that is, is not thereby perceptible in itself; for in order to be so, it must be able to act immediately on the soul, it must be able *of itself* to enlighten, affect, or modify minds”. (LO 320)

Malebranche's philosophy, but his Trinitarian metaphysics helps us understand a little more of his overall philosophical system than before. In other words, we have pushed back the hedge of mystery a little further.

As we have seen, Malebranche's philosophical theology is not only helpful for understanding his philosophical similarities with Berkeley; it is also helpful to understand Malebranche as he stands alone. His acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity sheds light on some of the issues and disputes that arise from the secondary literature.

CONCLUSION

I have shown that Malebranche and Berkeley have remarkably similar views both of divine revelation and of the Trinity. I have also shown that these neglected similarities prove useful in understanding some of the philosophical similarities between these two philosophers. For years commentators have pointed out that Malebranche and Berkeley hold certain metaphysical and epistemological similarities and I have shown that some of these similarities can be explained by Malebranche and Berkeley's similar theories of divine revelation and the Trinity. This is due to the fact that both philosophers construct systems where their theological and philosophical doctrines are held consistently alongside each other.

I conclude by summarizing the accomplishments of this project as well as the contributions it makes. First, steps have been taken to restore Malebranche and Berkeley's commitment to philosophical theology to its proper place. By showing that their doctrines of the Trinity and divine revelation are philosophically relevant, I have shown that philosophical theology is an important part of the overall project of both philosophers. The doctrines of divine revelation and the Trinity held by both philosophers make up an important component of their thought.

Another accomplishment is that the overall philosophical relationship between Malebranche and Berkeley is made clearer. This is because a correct understanding of their philosophical theology has helped us see why these philosophers hold similar positions at times and disagree at others. For example, Berkeley's theory of causation is in some ways similar to Malebranche's occasionalism. I have shown that the best way to explain this similarity is through their shared acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity.

But, there are important differences between their theories of causation. Most notably, Berkeley rejects full occasionalism since he accepts that humans are also true causal agents. Berkeley's commitments to philosophical theology also explain why he rejects full occasionalism. His commitment to the Genesis doctrine alongside the Trinity led him to hold that humans must also have wills that are efficacious in a way that is similar to God. While, these similarities and disagreements have been mentioned, I have given a cohesive explanation that up until this point has been lacking.

These accomplishments make various contributions both to the work done concerning the relationship between Malebranche and Berkeley as well as work done on each philosopher individually. I have pointed out a philosophical similarity between Malebranche and Berkeley that has not been mentioned: their similar philosophical theology. While many similarities have been pointed out between these philosophers in the secondary literature, it has not been pointed out that both accept the doctrines of divine revelation and the Trinity and then apply those doctrines to their philosophical systems in similar ways. I have shown in detail that they hold theories of philosophical theology that are remarkably similar.

Malebranche and Berkeley's theories of divine revelation agree on many points. They both accept a causal theory of divine revelation that serve as historical examples of George Mavrodes' causation theory of divine revelation where God directly affects psychological states in humans. Even though they do not use the terminology in the same way, both philosophers accept the distinction between general and special revelation from Christian theology. They both apply the doctrine of special revelation to their philosophical systems in ways that are typical of their day. They accept the Christian

scriptures as God's special revelation and they quote from these scriptures to support their philosophical positions. However, the way that they apply the doctrine of general revelation is unusual. Both construct theories of perception around their commitment to general revelation. Malebranche's vision in God is his theory of general revelation and the same is true for Berkeley's language of vision. Both connect these theories with the natural law and use the same passage from Acts 17 to support them. Both philosophers hold that the vast majority of human knowledge comes through God's general revelation through ideas. Both hold very robust views of natural revelation which are relevant to their overall epistemological systems.

Malebranche and Berkeley also accept the doctrine of the Trinity from traditional Christian theology. Both accept a Nicene formulation of the Trinity that God is one substance and three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Augustine's influence on their theories of the Trinity is evident. Malebranche and Berkeley differentiate between the persons of the Trinity in the same way as Augustine. They also follow Augustine's analogy of the Trinity as being, mind, and will. This Augustinian influence on Malebranche and Berkeley can be seen in their accounts of creation. God creates the world through the Son and the Holy Spirit. The amplified analogy of the Trinity can be found in the works of both philosophers. Both connect being with God the Father, reason or knowledge with the Son, and the will with the Holy Spirit.

The most important contribution of this project is that I show how Malebranche and Berkeley's acceptance of these doctrines is philosophically relevant in their systems of metaphysics and epistemology. It might be merely interesting if it were only the case

that they held similar philosophical theologies, but the fact that a correct understanding of these philosophers' theological commitments sheds light on their philosophical doctrines shows that the philosophical theology of both thinkers cannot be ignored.

We see the philosophical relevance of Malebranche and Berkeley's theories of divine revelation through their epistemological positions. Malebranche's vision in God and Berkeley's language of vision are both theories of general revelation. While they accept both special and general revelation, Malebranche and Berkeley place the emphasis on general revelation. We also see the philosophical relevance of the doctrine of divine revelation through their similar claim that human knowledge is derived from divine revelation. Malebranche thinks that all knowledge is revealed from God while Berkeley thinks that the vast amount of knowledge we have is derived from divine revelation.

We see the philosophical relevance of their shared acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity through their similar theories of causation. Both philosophers construct theories of causation and divine substance that are consistent with their acceptance of the Trinity. Since these are relevant in this way, we can explain why Malebranche and Berkeley's theories of causation are similar. They both accept, due to their shared acceptance of the amplified analogy, that causation is connected to the will of God or the third person of the Trinity. Also, the Trinity can explain why Berkeley rejects full occasionalism. Berkeley merges his theory of the Trinity with a commitment to the Genesis Doctrine and thereby concludes that humans also must be composed of a triad of being, knowledge, and will. This means that the will of humans must also be efficacious, although to a lesser degree.

Commentators often explain the similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley's theories of causation and perception by suggesting that Berkeley was influenced by Malebranche. As I have pointed out, this is not a desirable explanation since Berkeley stresses that his philosophy is not at all similar to that of Malebranche. With an understanding of these similarities in philosophical theology, we can explain these similarities while at the same time taking Berkeley's claims seriously. We need not suggest that Berkeley was influenced by Malebranche. Berkeley's theories look like Malebranche's because both hold similar theories of divine revelation and the Trinity and construct theories of causation and perception that are consistent with these theological doctrines.

That concludes the accomplishments of my chief argument concerning the philosophical similarities between Malebranche and Berkeley. There are also additional benefits that arise in the philosophers in isolation. Concerning Berkeley, we can understand the cohesive nature of his works over the course of his career. The language of vision, Berkeley's theory of general revelation, is present throughout his works from the earliest to the latest *Siris*. We also see how Berkeley, through the language of vision, can say that the world is a text that requires interpretation. Also, understanding the philosophical relevance of the Trinity in Berkeley helps us understand the puzzling book *Siris*.

In chapter 4 I introduced two more ways that the findings of this project could be applied to Berkeley.

[3] An application of Berkeley's theory of the Trinity

[4] An application of Berkeley's theory of divine revelation

While I did not attempt to do either, I think that both [3] and [4] are areas where the literature on Berkeley could be improved with a correct understanding of his philosophical theology. For example, there is a dispute concerning the role of divine ideas in Berkeley.¹ I think that both [3] and [4] provide important insights into this dispute that have been up until this point been neglected. In particular I think that a correct understanding of these doctrines in Berkeley's philosophical theology supports the interpretation of Berkeley's divine ideas presented by Marc Hight.

We saw that Malebranche's commitment to the Trinity helps us understand passages that would otherwise be confusing. And, since we used Malebranche's theory of the Trinity as our example in chapter 4, we see some other implications of this theory. Given this doctrine, we can explain the ontological status of ideas in Malebranche. He holds that ideas share in the substance of God. While Cook does not mention Malebranche's doctrine of the Trinity, this doctrine supports his conclusion that ideas are identical with the substance of God. We also see that Malebranche can hold occasionalism alongside his theory of efficacious ideas without any inconsistency. Had Peppers-Bates been aware of Malebranche's commitment to the Trinity, she would not have been so quick to conclude that his occasionalism does not allow for ideas to be efficacious.

While the contributions are not as direct as the ones just pointed out, this project also contributes to some of the other movements mentioned in section 1.4. While I have

¹ Marc A. Hight, *Idea and Ontology: An Essay in Early Modern Metaphysics of Ideas* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University, 2008). Marc A. Hight, "Defending Berkeley's Divine Ideas," *Philosophia* 33 (2005). Stephen H. Daniel, "Berkeley's Christian Neoplatonism, Archetypes, and Divine Ideas," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 39 (2001). Michael Ayers, "Divine Ideas and Berkeley's Proofs of God's Existence," in *Essays on the Philosophy of George Berkeley*, ed. Ernest Sosa (Boston, MA: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1987). Leopold Stubenberg, "Divine Ideas: The Cure-All for Berkeley's Immaterialism?," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 28 (1990).

not directly argued for the position that Malebranche should not be considered a Rationalist or that Berkeley should not be considered an Empiricist, I have shown that these philosophers hold remarkably similar theories of philosophical theology which could be expanded to support such a claim. In a similar vein, this project would be of interest to the current movement that is seeking to understand the theological commitments of the philosophers from the early modern period.

Finally, from this study of the philosophical theology of Malebranche and Berkeley, we gain important insight into some of the motivations of both of these philosophers. Both wanted to show that God is near and that everything we do is centered in God. This can be seen in the fact that both produce systems of metaphysics and epistemology that highlight the role of God. For both philosophers, God is of great importance to our existence and to our knowledge. This is why both philosophers find Paul's sermon in Acts compelling enough to cite multiple times. They agree with Paul that God is not far from each one of us. Indeed, according to the philosophical theology of both Malebranche and Berkeley we live and move and have our being in God.

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him-- though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring.' Acts 17:22-28

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APPENDIX
Abbreviations

Malebranche

- DM Malebranche, Nicolas. *Dialogues on Metaphysics and on Religion*. Translated by David Scott. Edited by Nicholas Jolley, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- LO Malebranche, Nicolas. *The Search after Truth*. Translated by Thomas M. Lennon and Paul J. Olscamp. Edited by Thomas M. Lennon and Paul J. Olscamp, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

*Berkeley*¹

- Alc. *Alciphron* in “The Works of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne.” Vol III.
- DHP *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous* in “The Works of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne.” Vol III.
- NTV *An Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision* in “The Works of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne.” Vol I.
- PC *Philosophical Commentaries* in “The Works of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne.” Vol I.
- PHK *Principles of Human Knowledge* in “The Works of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne.” Vol II.
- Siris* *Siris* in “The Works of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne.” Vol V.

¹ All texts are found in George Berkeley, “The Works of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne,” ed. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop (Camden, NJ: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1953). The abbreviations I adopt for Berkeley are the same as found in David Berman, *George Berkeley: Idealism and the Man* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1994), x-xi. For page citations of Berkeley’s works, I have followed Marc Hight by citing the paragraph or section number if Berkeley used them. This is the case for most of Berkeley’s works (PC, NTV, PHK, Alc., *Siris*). The exception is the *Three Dialogues* which I will cite by giving the page number from *The Works of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne* (DHP). Marc A. Hight, *Idea and Ontology: An Essay in Early Modern Metaphysics of Ideas* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University, 2008). xiii.