

**BERKELEY, MYSTERIES, AND MEANING:
A CRITIQUE OF THE NON-COGNITIVIST
INTERPRETATION**

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INTERPRETATION**

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LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

This thesis is based on the following original publications:

1. 'Entry 720 of Berkeley's *Philosophical Commentaries* and "non-cognitive" propositions in Scripture', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* (forthcoming).
2. 'Emotive Meaning and Christian Mysteries in Berkeley's *Alciphron*', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* (forthcoming).
3. 'Ayer, Berman, Berkeley, and emotive meaning', *Akadeemia* (in Estonian, forthcoming).

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INTRODUCTION

George Berkeley's (1685–1753) views on language, meaning, and signs have many facets and, accordingly, have been considered by scholars from a number of perspectives, concentrating on his conceptions of signification, analogy, 'visual language', etc.

At the same time, there are few comprehensive studies of the early development (1707–1708) of Berkeley's understanding of the meaning of words and other signs. The most detailed studies (in English) of that short but significant period in Berkeley's thought regarding semantics have been offered by Bertil Belfrage and David Berman. Berman's reading of *Alciphron* (1732) is closely related to these studies and follows the same pattern of interpretation.

My concern in this thesis is to examine, firstly, Belfrage's and Berman's accounts of the early development of Berkeley's views on the meaning of words and other signs, that is, the development from strict cognitivism to an emotive theory of meaning as they conceive it. (Their understanding of 'cognitivism', 'emotivism' and other relevant conceptions shall be explained in the course of the presentation and examination of their position.) Secondly, I want to examine Berman's reading of *Alciphron*, dialogue VII, and consider it in connection with his and Belfrage's analysis of Berkeley's early writings.

By and large, these accounts form a coherent whole, which I shall refer to as the *non-cognitivist interpretation* of (the relevant passages in) Berkeley's works which, according to these scholars, reflect his non-cognitivist or emotivist understanding of the meaning of certain terms, signs, and utterances. Central and crucial in this respect are passages dealing with certain religious discourse, more precisely, terms and utterances concerning the Christian mysteries such as the eternal rewards and punishments, the Holy Trinity, and the Incarnation. Belfrage and Berman claim that Berkeley held such discourse to be non-cognitive (non-descriptive, non-informative), and, in addition, ascribed an emotive meaning to it in his final position.

The non-cognitivist interpretation, I believe, and hope to show, is fundamentally mistaken. So my approach in this thesis will be mainly critical. However, in the course of my criticism various nuances of Berkeley's thought and writings will emerge.

The thesis is based on my papers included in this volume, but the present analysis of the non-cognitivist interpretation is more detailed, and, accordingly, my argumentation against it is expanded and more systematic.

In the first chapter of the thesis I shall expose in detail Belfrage's and Berman's accounts of Berkeley's early development as well as Berman's reading of *Alciphron*. I shall try to point out the essential similarities and the marginal dissimilarities between their reconstructions of Berkeley's development from strict cognitivism to an emotive theory of meaning.

The chapter is divided into five sections. In each of the first three sections, I shall focus on Belfrage's and Berman's reading of one or more of Berkeley's writings, which, according to them, give evidence of his view on meaning at a certain stage, or reveal a certain aspect, of his early intellectual development. The first section is concerned with the paper *Of Infinites* (1707) and the sermon on *On Immortality* (1708), the second with the *Philosophical Commentaries* (1707–1708), and the third with the *Draft Introduction* (1708). In the fourth section I shall outline Berman's account of *Alciphron*, dialogue VII. After that, in the fifth section, I shall summarize the main points of the whole non-cognitivist interpretation.

In the second chapter I shall offer detailed objections to, and produce textual evidence against, this interpretation, following the structure of the first chapter.

Finally, I shall present my conclusions about the account Berman and Belfrage have given of Berkeley's relevant works and views. The conclusions also embody my observations concerning the latter.

References to the *Philosophical Commentaries* (Berkeley 1976) will cite the entry number, those to the *Draft* (Berkeley 1987) the folio number. All other references to Berkeley's works are from the standard edition, Berkeley 1948–57 [*Works*]. References to *Alciphron* will in addition to the volume number and page number also cite the dialogue number and section number.

CHAPTER 1.

EXPOSITION OF THE NON-COGNITIVIST INTERPRETATION

1.1. The doctrinal clash between the paper *Of Infinites* (1707) and the sermon *On Immortality* (1708)

Belfrage and Berman hold that the early development of Berkeley's views on meaning contained a significant doctrinal shift. They believe that the shift took place in a short period of time, that is, between 19 November 1707, when Berkeley read his short paper *Of Infinites* before the Dublin Philosophical Society, and 11 January 1708, when he delivered his sermon *On Immortality* in the Trinity College Chapel. According to Belfrage's reconstruction, Berkeley changed his mind concerning the issue of meaning after being criticized, during the actual discussion of the paper *Of Infinites*, by 'an audience of educated Irish Anglicans' (Belfrage 1985: 118). Berman, for his part, suggests, more confidently, that the change was occasioned by comments from two prominent churchmen and philosophers, William King and Peter Browne (Berman 1986: 604).

Belfrage and Berman take in effect the shift to have been so sudden and radical that they prefer to call it, respectively, a 'clash on semantics' and 'semantic revolution'.

The view on the meaning of terms supposedly held by Berkeley before and whilst reading the *Of Infinites* is termed 'Lockean' or 'cognitivist' by these scholars. This, 'Lockean' position amounts to the principle that all meaningful signs (including words, names, terms) stand for ideas. In the *Of Infinites*, they observe, it is enunciated in the following extract (Berman 1986: 603; Belfrage 1985: 119; 1986a: 320):

'Tis plain to me *we ought to use no sign without an idea answering it*; & 'tis as plain that we have no idea of a line infinitely small, nay, 'tis evidently impossible there should be any such thing, for every line, how minute soever, is still divisible into parts less than itself; therefore there can be no such thing as a line *quavis data minor* or infinitely small.

(*Works* 4: 235–236, emphasis added)

Berkeley's target in the paper is the mathematical doctrine of infinitesimals; the passage just quoted is intended to show that we have no ideas of 'quantities infinitely small' or 'infinitesimals of several orders' and thus 'there can be no' such quantities (ibid).

Belfrage's and Berman's readings of the passage diverge slightly, but they agree in essence. According to Belfrage, Berkeley is concerned here (in fact, in the whole paper) with the issue of 'the proper use of terms in valid demonstra-

tions', and, more narrowly, with the problem whether 'infinitesimal' is a meaningful term. So, given the Lockean semantic principle, it appears that the term/concept is 'descriptively empty' and should be rejected, along with demonstrations based on it (Belfrage 1986a: 320). Berman points to Locke's distinction (embraced by Berkeley) between 'two conceptions of infinity: (1) that of an "endless growing idea" and (2) that of a positive, completed idea or "standing measure"', the first being called 'infinity' and the second 'infinite'. In the paper, the first conception is deemed legitimate, the second illegitimate, since, Berkeley says, 'we have an idea of the former, but none at all of the later' (*Works* 4: 235; Berman 1986: 604).

On the whole, both commentators claim that in the paper 'infinite' is taken to be a meaningless, or, *illegitimate* or *descriptively empty* term, as they call it.

In the sermon, however, the term is used to express Berkeley's own position on immortality (*Works* 7: 11). Berman says: 'here he [Berkeley] happily uses certain words which he knows do not stand for ideas' (Berman 1986: 603). So the illegitimate term is being 'happily' used by Berkeley himself some weeks after reading the cognitivist paper, in which the term is regarded as meaningless.

In Belfrage's opinion, as noted above, what is at issue is not just the using of the (illegitimate) term 'infinite'. He argues that the sermon contains 'a *demonstration* in which the reference to "infinite eternal bliss" — that "we have no idea of" — is crucial to the whole argument' (Belfrage 1986a: 320, emphasis added). Whereas in the paper Berkeley argues 'that a demonstration based on such a descriptively empty term is invalid' (*ibid.*). Thus in both cases the general problem to be considered is the (proper) use of terms in (valid) demonstrations.

Despite the minor differences in interpretation, the two commentators jointly declare that in the sermon the austere cognitivist view on meaning has been abandoned. This is what they call 'clash on semantics' or 'semantic revolution'.

Belfrage and Berman also concur with each other that the motivation behind this dramatic change of mind must have been theological. For, in their view, after reading the paper and considering the criticisms of the 'educated Irish Anglicans', Berkeley realized that the strict, Lockean, cognitivist view on, or theory of, meaning undermines the meaningfulness of some religious discourse. 'If the word "infinite" is meaningless, and if there is no legitimate notion of a positive infinity', Berman asks, 'then how can we say that God is infinite or that the mysterious joys of heaven are infinite?' (Berman 1986: 605). Given Berkeley's cognitivist semantic principle, Belfrage, for his part, raises these questions: 'how are we to understand non-descriptive propositions in Scripture', 'what descriptive [cognitive] meaning does a proposition about inconceivable things have?' (Belfrage 1986a: 321). Berman notes that Berkeley, advancing the Lockean theory of meaning, 'seemed to be playing into the hands of [John]

Toland', a freethinker, who had used the Lockean theory to 'undermine belief in Christian mysteries' (Berman 1986: 605; 1994: 15; cf. Belfrage 1985: 118).¹

The sermon, Berman and Belfrage state, provides a preliminary solution to these problems, and marks an important change in the early development of Berkeley's linguistic thought. Berman's and Belfrage's accounts of what precisely the solution was differ again to some extent. What we find in the sermon, Berman asserts, is a 'new non-Lockean, non-cognitive semantics' or 'a non-cognitive view of statements about religious mystery', which is an intermediate position between the early *cognitivism* and the later *emotive theory* of meaning first advanced in the *Draft Introduction*. The non-cognitive view entails just that non-cognitive terms (e.g. 'infinite'), that is, such that do not stand for ideas or inform, *can* be legitimately or meaningfully used, as in the expression 'infinite eternal bliss' in Berkeley's sermon. In addition, Berman notes, Berkeley comes close here to 'theological representationalism', a position held by Browne and King.² That is to say, Berkeley admits that we have no 'determin'd idea' of heavenly pleasures because they transcend our cognitive capacities (Berman 1986: 605; 1994: 12–13, 16–17; *Works* 7: 13).

Despite the lack of determinate ideas, Berkeley assures, on this reading, we ought to believe St. Paul's 'empty tho emphatical description' of Heaven:

'tis wt eye hath not seen nor ear heard neither hath it enter'd into the heart of man to conceive.

(*Works* 7: 12)

Contrary to the doctrine put forward in the *Of Infinities*, then, here some non-cognitive discourse is adopted as legitimate and meaningful. 'Berkeley also seems to have moved in the *Sermon* to a more pragmatic, Kingean approach to theological language', Berman finally remarks, — 'the word "infinite" is meaningful if it is used to mark off one thing from another' (Berman 1986: 605; 1994: 17).

Belfrage, relying on the same textual evidence, contends that in the sermon Berkeley expressed an entirely new position that he soon rejected and never returned to. He namely considered the 'non-cognitive propositions in the Scripture' as 'metaphysical descriptions' that 'were supposed to refer to things outside the scope of human knowledge', these things being 'in principle observable' (Belfrage 1986b: 643). That is to say, St. Paul's promise of future rewards as well as other relevant non-cognitive propositions in Scripture are 'empty descriptions' and thus meaningless to *us*, human beings, yet 'true descriptions' to blessed souls in heaven and non-human observers (such as angels). 'Metaphysical descriptions' (or, 'metaphysical propositions') cognitively meaningless for us, one could say, describe transcendent heavenly things

¹ For a recent account of the views of freethinkers (including Toland) and their opponents (including Berkeley), see Rivers 2000, vol. 2, ch.1.

² For a closer examination of that position see Berman 1982: 156–161.

observable to higher spirits and the souls of the blessed, and thus are true and meaningful for them (See Belfrage 1986a: 321–323). This way of thinking, Belfrage concludes, led to absurd consequences, ‘which Berkeley did not accept either before or after that sermon’ (Belfrage 1986b: 643). For, from the view taken in the sermon it follows that one should believe in the existence of something without knowing at all what it is or having an idea of it, that is, to believe in something unknown, which is a position rejected by Berkeley both in his published works and the *Philosophical Commentaries* (Belfrage 1986a: 323–324).

To conclude. On Berman’s reading, the sermon represents but an intermediate (non-cognitivist) position between the strict cognitivism of the *Of Infinites* and the emotive theory in the *Draft Introduction*. For Belfrage, on the other hand, the sermon entails a distinctive position to be found nowhere else in Berkeley’s writings. Unlike Berman, Belfrage suggests that the main relevant issue to be considered *both* in the paper and the sermon is the (proper) use of terms in (valid) demonstrations.

I want to stress that despite the differences in detail, Berman’s and Belfrage’s interpretations of the sermon coincide as regards to Berkeley’s understanding of the relevant religious terms and propositions such as the word ‘infinite’ in religious contexts or the promise of heavenly rewards by St. Paul. According to their proposal, these terms and propositions were considered by Berkeley, in the sermon, to be *non-cognitive*, or, to have *no cognitive meaning*, in the sense that they do not stand for ideas, or, do not impart any knowledge.

1.2. The doctrinal clash in the *Philosophical Commentaries* (1707–1708), *Notebook A*

The ‘clash’ or ‘revolution’ in the development of Berkeley’s early semantics, Belfrage and Berman maintain, is also reflected in the *Philosophical Commentaries*. ‘In the earlier notebook [*Notebook B*],’ Berman says, ‘the Lockean theory of meaning was very important to him’ (Berman 1994: 13). ‘Thus,’ Berman continues, ‘towards the end of this notebook (entry 378) he sets out a fifteen-step demonstration, which begins’:

+1 All significant words Stand for Ideas

Belfrage points out that the view on infinitesimals presented in the *Of Infinites* is clearly stated in the *Commentaries* too, and it is related there to the Lockean conception of meaning. In the paper, Belfrage explains, Berkeley argued from the two principles brought forward in *Notebook B* and styled ‘axioms’ by him (Belfrage 1987: 52):

Axiom. No reasoning about things whereof we have no idea. Therefore no reasoning about Infinitesimals.

(354)

Axiom. No word to be used without an idea.

(356; cf. 421–422)

The ‘clash’ or ‘revolution’, though, is manifested in the later notebook [*Notebook A*]. Belfrage divides all entries of that notebook into two sections: ‘the Lockean entries (400–696)’ and ‘the later entries (697–888)’ (Belfrage 1985: 117). In the former, he contends, Berkeley ‘accepted the semantic rule that terms which do not denote particular ideas are empty, meaningless terms’ (Belfrage 1985: 120–121).

For Belfrage, the ‘clash on semantics’ is clearly discernible in the development of Berkeley’s understanding of the ‘concept of number’ and ‘nature of demonstration’ within *Notebook A*. Therefore he offers a comprehensive account of that drastic change in Berkeley’s views in the field of mathematics. He observes that, in ‘the Lockean entries’, the ‘semantic rule’ applies to ‘mathematical concepts’, too. Thus numbers are taken there to denote ideas, or, ‘particular things “conceiv’d [...] as consisting of parts w^{ch} may be distinctly & successively perceiv’d”’ (460; Belfrage 1985: 121). In the later entries, however, numbers are ‘considered to be mere words or signs.’ They are regarded as having ‘an instrumental, non-descriptive, meaning when used as signs’ (Belfrage 1987: 53; 1985: 121–122; see entries 762–768). Terms or signs used instrumentally, Belfrage says, ‘do *not* denote ideas’. This is an important remark since he argues the same concerning Berkeley’s later conception of the *emotive* use of language, which is but ‘one form of non-descriptive use of language’ along with the *instrumental* (Belfrage 1985: 121). Neither instrumentally nor emotively used terms (signs) stand for ideas, on this reading.

Here we have then a shift parallel to the one Belfrage claims to have found by juxtaposing the paper *Of Infinites* and the sermon *On Immortality*.

For Belfrage, as expounded above, the shift concerned the issue of ‘the proper use of terms in valid demonstrations’, one view being taken in the paper, an essentially different one in the sermon. Similarly, Belfrage claims, in the earlier, Lockean entries of the *Commentaries* it is held that in demonstrations we have to ‘define the words we use & never go beyond our ideas’ (584, cf. 551, 595; Belfrage 1985: 122; 1987: 54). This is, then, precisely what Berkeley demands in the paper: in a valid demonstration, no term is to be used ‘without an idea answering it.’

In the later entries the earlier conception is abandoned. Demonstrations in arithmetic and algebra do not entail ‘comparing of ideas’, these sciences being ‘purely verbal’ (767–768, 803). Thus, Belfrage concludes, in the later entries Berkeley ‘has come to look upon a mathematical demonstration as a mere “computing in signs”’, which is Berkeley’s view in the later, published works (See *Principles*, sects. 120–122, *Works* 2: 96–97; *Alc.* VII. 14, *Works* 3: 307–

308). In the latter, mathematical demonstrations are seen as 'convenient scientific instruments' (Belfrage 1985: 122–123; 1987: 53–54).

So, both in the sermon *On Immortality* and later entries of *Notebook A*, the earlier Lockean strictly cognitivist semantics is rejected, on Belfrage's account. For now Berkeley allows that (at least some) terms (signs) which do not stand for ideas *can* be properly used in valid demonstrations.

The sudden rejection of the strict cognitivism, Berman and Belfrage consider, is clearly evidenced by two significant entries in *Notebook A*, to wit, 696 and 720. By entry 696, they claim, Berkeley was still a cognitivist, rejecting all terms that do not stand for determinate ideas or significations as meaningless. In Berkeley's words, they are 'Gibberish, Jargon & deserve not the name of Language.' Here, in the 'last radically Lockean entry', the position expressed in the *Of Infinities* as well as earlier entries of the *Commentaries*, is forcefully stated. In entry 720, however (along with the sermon, and other later entries of the *Commentaries*), the strict cognitivism is repudiated. For now Berkeley allows a certain kind of *non-cognitive propositions* — those *concerning revelation and mystery* — to be legitimate.

In Belfrage's view, entry 720 contains a distinction between two radically different kinds of propositions: cognitive (informative) and non-cognitive (non-informative). The former kind (termed 'Matters of Reason & Philosophy') does have a cognitive meaning, on this reading, the latter ('Matters of Revelation') does not. Here the latter category of propositions is left 'out of consideration', but in the *Draft Introduction* the *emotive theory* is applied precisely to it (Belfrage 1987: 56).

While Belfrage does not see any significant doctrinal similarity between the view exposed in entry 720 and that of the sermon (the startling doctrine of 'metaphysical descriptions' being unique in Berkeley's works), Berman links the two together. In entry 720, he says, 'Berkeley has reached, or nearly reached, the non-cognitive position of the first sermon.' And there, he continues, Berkeley 'appears to be following the advice contained in entry 720' (Berman 1994: 13; 1986: 603). That is, in the sermon the relevant, non-cognitive propositions in Scripture are not subjected to the Lockean, cognitivist account of meaning. Yet the 'specific emotive component' of the new, non-cognitivist semantics is first formulated in the *Draft Introduction* (Berman 1994: 17; 1986: 605).

With respect to entry 720, Berman also reflects on the issue whether the non-cognitive propositions in question were taken to be *true* by Berkeley. This, in turn, hinges on the question whether, given the non-cognitivist semantics, they 'have sufficient cognitive content to be true' (Berman 1994: 161). Berman concludes that the description of those propositions as concerning 'things out of our reach...altogether above our knowledge' as well as the comparison with 'words spoken in a language that we do not understand' implies that 'they can have no cognitive content for us' and thus cannot be true for us. On the other hand, he remarks, the final sentence of the entry suggests that 'such propo-

sitions can have cognitive content and can be true, if only in the next life' (Berman 1994: 162).

I wish to point out that Berman's reading of entry 720 is close to Belfrage's account of the "'metaphysical descriptions" in the first sermon' inasmuch as in both cases the 'non-cognitive'/'non-descriptive' propositions in Scripture are seen as being cognitively 'empty' or meaningless for us and possibly meaningful and true for those in Heaven.

To sum up Berman's and Belfrage's position. The 'clash' or 'revolution' in the early development of Berkeley's views on meaning is discernible not only in the paper *Of Infinites* and the sermon *On Immortality*, but also in the *Philosophical Commentaries*. The early Lockean cognitivism, or, the doctrine that every meaningful word (term, sign) stands for an idea, applies both to terms in natural language and mathematical conceptions. The last strictly cognitivist entry is 696. Thereafter a non-cognitivist position on the meaning or use of signs appears. The strict cognitivism is now repudiated and, Belfrage contends, a more pragmatic notion of mathematical conceptions is adopted. Signs in arithmetic and algebra do not denote ideas, on that account, and yet they are not meaningless since they can be used instrumentally. In entry 720 a particular kind of propositions — non-cognitive propositions in Scripture — is presented as remaining untouched by the strict cognitivism. The latter propositions *have no cognitive meaning, give no information whatsoever to human beings and are not true for them*. At that stage of his development Berkeley already viewed such propositions to be legitimate, but he did not yet ascribe an *emotive meaning* to them. In Belfrage's view, both the instrumentalism and emotivism are forms of non-cognitivism and thus interrelated in Berkeley's later non-cognitivist position.

1.3. *Draft Introduction* (1708)

1.3.1. The emotive theory of meaning

It is first in the *Draft Introduction* that the 'theory of emotive meaning', 'emotive theory (of meaning)', 'emotive theory of religious utterances' or 'account of emotive language' is in Berman's and Belfrage's opinion advanced. The appearance of the theory, they believe, marks a significant step forward not only in Berkeley's intellectual development, but also in the history of philosophy in general. 'Berkeley', Berman states, 'was the first modern philosopher to formulate and support the theory that words have legitimate uses which do not involve informing or standing for ideas.' Whereas the sermon *On Immortality* and entry 720 of the *Commentaries* reflect only the 'negative, non-cognitive' aspect of the theory, Berman continues, in the *Draft Introduction*, 'the whole theory is clearly presented' (Berman 1994: 144–145). Belfrage, for

his part, thinks that it is 'the first emotive theory of meaning in the history of ideas' (Belfrage 1985: 120; 1986b: 644).

The core of the new doctrine is supposedly formulated in the following passage:

Farther [From which it follows, that *crossed out*] the Communicating of Ideas marked by Words is not the chief and only End of Language, as is commonly Suppos'd. There are other Ends [viz *crossed out*] as the raising of some Passion the exciting to or deterring from an Action the putting the Mind in some particular Disposition. To which the former is in many cases barely subservient and sometimes [entirely *crossed out*] omitted when these can be obtain'd without it as, I think does not infrequently happen in the familiar use of Language.

(25)

The passage, Berman says, entails a description of the 'three non-cognitive functions of language', to wit, the evoking of (1) emotions (passions), (2) dispositions, and (3) actions. Thus, in addition to the common, cognitive function of language — the evoking of ideas or informing — three more, non-cognitive functions are allowed. In the *Draft*, Berman insists, Berkeley gives an emotivist account of the mystery of afterlife in terms of the theory (Berman 1994: 145–146). I shall return to this point in the next subsection (1.3.2.).

Belfrage offers a more specific and formalistic account of the emotive theory. In his commentary on the *Draft* he defines the cognitive meaning of an expression in terms of its correlation 'with a (possible) image-picture [i.e. an idea] of some particular thing' (Belfrage 1987: 44). Given that, he formulates what he takes to be Berkeley's definition of 'emotive meaning' (noting, though, that Berkeley himself did not use the modern term):

An expression has emotive meaning = def.

(1) It does *not*, or is *not* intended to, communicate descriptive information; that is to say, it has *no* cognitive meaning.

(2) But it is used for (some of) the following ends: (a) 'the raising of some Passion'; (b) 'the putting the Mind in some particular Disposition'; (c) 'the exciting to or deterring from an Action'.

(Belfrage 1987: 46; cf. 1986: 644)

Berkeley's theory as introduced in the *Draft Introduction*, Belfrage says, entails a distinction between cognitive/descriptive propositions that '*do* communicate human knowledge', and non-cognitive/non-informative propositions that '*do not* communicate any human knowledge.' The latter, though, 'can be properly used for other, "emotive", purposes' (Belfrage 1986b: 644). Put differently, there are propositions which do, and are intended to, evoke ideas in the minds of hearers or readers, and those that do not. Nevertheless, according to the alleged emotive theory, the latter propositions are meaningful if being used for one or more of the purposes listed above. I shall consider Belfrage's reading of

the crucial passage, the one concerning 'the Pauline promise', separately in the following subsection. In addition to that, Belfrage points out Berkeley's 'further examples of emotive usage' following the threefold distinction above. Some of those cases, he says, 'could still be interpreted descriptively; others exhibit an interaction between, or a mixture of, descriptive and emotive elements; and (most interesting) a few have no cognitive meaning whatsoever' (Belfrage 1987: 48). Apparently Belfrage allows that, according to Berkeley's theory, some propositions can be used in both ways, descriptively/cognitively and emotively.

So, Belfrage explicates, as an example of expressions of the type (a), Berkeley points to the terms 'Lie' and 'Rascal'. When 'the raising of some Passion' by means of these words (or, in effect, by propositions containing them) is intended, Belfrage says, they 'should earlier in the hearer's experience have been connected — though later "quite omitted" — with ideas "apt to produce those Emotions of Mind"' (Belfrage, *ibid.*; 25, 26).

The type (b) is illustrated by the proposition '*Aristotle* hath said it' when uttered by a 'Schoolman' in order 'to dispose you to receive his Opinion with that deference and Submission that Custom has annex'd to that Name' (24, 25). This, Belfrage says, is a 'purely persuasive use of a reference to Aristotle'. It looks like a descriptive statement, and it can be used descriptively. Yet in this case it is not intended to give any descriptive information about Aristotle or his writings. So, here we have 'a perfect example of a purely emotive, non-descriptive usage' (Belfrage 1986b: 645; 1987: 48–49).

Finally, Belfrage asserts, Berkeley uses a 'value statement' to illustrate the type (c): 'Such an Action is Honourable' (25). The meaning of this utterance, on this reading, is identical with the speaker's intention, which is not to evoke ideas in the mind of the hearer, but to provoke certain action. The intention is, in Berkeley's words,

that those Words should excite in the Mind of the Hearer an esteem of that particular Action and stirr him up to the performance of it.

(Ibid.)

The meaning of the utterance in question, Belfrage says, is 'exactly the same' as if the speaker had uttered the imperative 'Perform and esteem such an action!' The utterance containing a descriptive/cognitive element (the action) and an emotive element (the value term 'honourable') has a 'seemingly descriptive form', which is changed by the latter element to the non-descriptive imperative (Belfrage 1987: 49).

1.3.2. The Pauline promise

Berman's and Belfrage's positions, once again, agree in essential points, the main divergence lying in the understanding of the relation of the *Draft* to the sermon *On Immortality*. Whereas Berman insists on the addition of a new 'specific emotive component' to the non-cognitivist theory already present in the sermon and entry 720, Belfrage sees in the *Draft* 'an entirely new approach':

Earlier, in the sermon, he [Berkeley] asked (assuming that non-referential usage is an abuse of language): to what kind of *thing* do religious mysteries refer? His new way of asking — now speaking about *words*, not about *things* — was: how is language used in non-cognitive discourse?

(Belfrage 1986b: 643)

Thus propositions, say, concerning heavenly pleasures are no more seen as 'metaphysical descriptions' referring to those, transcendent pleasures. The new, emotive theory of meaning does not concern the latter at all. It is a theory 'about *words* in ordinary speech acts, *not* about *things*' (Belfrage 1986a: 324). Berkeley observed, according to Belfrage, that 'language is often used for non-referential purposes' (Belfrage 1986b: 643). The relevant terms and propositions neither stand for ideas nor refer to things (inside or outside of the scope of human knowledge). Non-cognitive discourse, furthermore, gives no information whatsoever, but it is meaningful if used for some emotive purpose.

Crucial to both commentators' accounts is a passage in the *Draft* where St. Paul's mysterious promise of heavenly rewards is allegedly introduced as an instance of emotive, non-cognitive language use. The relevant proposition to be considered is the same as that quoted in the sermon, Belfrage and Berman maintain, but it is interpreted differently. Berkeley says:

We are told [that] the Good Things which God hath prepared for them that love him are such as Eye hath not seen nor Ear heard nor hath it enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive. What man will pretend to say these Words of the Inspir'd Writer are empty and insignificant?

(22)³

The purpose of uttering these words, he explains, is not to 'bring into' human minds ideas of those heavenly things. Instead the design

is to make them [men] more chearfull and fervent in their Duty.

(23)

³ Berkeley's wording of the promise appears to be a synthesis of 1 Cor. 2:9 and a passage from the *The Book of Common Prayer*, The Collect for the sixth Saturday after Trinity (See Belfrage 1987: 20; Stewart 1989/1990: 19).

Here, then, the emotive theory is supposedly applied to the mystery of afterlife. For, Berman thinks, the words of St. Paul about the mysterious 'good things' are considered by Berkeley to be 'cognitively empty' (Berman 1994: 145) and yet meaningful insofar as they are used for an emotive purpose: to make Christians 'more chearfull and fervent in their Duty.' In Belfrage's terminology, 'language is here used non-referentially'. For St. Paul does *not* refer to any *things* at all, Belfrage claims, 'he uses language emotively with the end in view of making people act in a certain way.' The mysterious proposition, Berkeley seems to say, does not evoke 'any ideas at all' in the hearers' or readers' minds (Belfrage 1986a: 324–325). Accordingly, these scholars aver, nothing has been communicated by uttering the proposition in question (Berman 1994: 144–145, 162). Belfrage is particularly resolved in this point:

One thing is clear: St. Paul's promise does *not* communicate any descriptive information. That is to say (at this stage of Berkeley's development), the Pauline promise does *not* have any cognitive meaning.

(Belfrage 1986b: 645)

...no one can possibly get any information out of that passage.

(Belfrage 1986b: 646)

...the Pauline promise is void of cognitive meaning, neither is it intended to communicate any information.

(Ibid.)

Not surprisingly, he transforms the promise of heavenly rewards into an imperative. Given Berkeley's description of the emotive intention of the speaker, he suggests, 'instead of saying':

There are inconceivably pleasant joys in store for blessed souls in heaven,
one could equally well say:

Act in accordance with what Christian doctrine prescribes as being our duty!

(Ibid.)

Berman, for his part, observes that in the *Draft* Berkeley seems to hold that St. Paul's words do not have enough cognitive content to be *true*. So here it becomes questionable whether the 'proposition can have cognitive content and can be true' even 'in the next life' (See Berman 1994: 162).

On the whole, according to the emotivist reading of the *Draft*, Berkeley sees the Pauline promise as a proposition that does not evoke ideas or inform. It is 'cognitively empty', or, has no cognitive meaning. In other words, it does not refer to, or stand for, anything. Neither is it true, Berkeley appears to think. However, the proposition does have an emotive meaning. For it is used by the speaker in order to make 'people act in a certain way'.

Finally, Berman and Belfrage point to the 'mechanism' — association or 'customary connection' of non-cognitive words with certain emotions, actions,

and dispositions, without any ideas occurring in the minds of the hearer — which Berkeley proposes to explain how St. Paul's 'empty description' can provoke appropriate reactions in the hearers (23, 24; Belfrage 1986b: 646, 1987: 46–47; Berman 1994: 145, 162).

For both scholars, the way Berkeley discusses in the *Draft* the Pauline promise and other relevant examples of language use strongly supports the attribution of the emotive theory to him.

1.4. *Alciphron* (1732)

According to Berman's relevant distinction, *Alciphron* (1732), Berkeley's 'most comprehensive statement on religion' (Berman 1994: 134), contains a statement of *natural or rational theology* and a defence of *Christian mysteries*. This is where, after two decades of its first publication in the Introduction to the *Principles of Human Knowledge* (I §20), the 'emotive theory' comes into play again. The following two subsections (1.4.1. and 1.4.2.) aim to point out main assertions in, and features of, Berman's reading of *Alciphron*.

1.4.1. The emotive theory and (utterances about) mysteries

1. Berman claims to have detected a close resemblance between Berkeley's innovative theory of meaning and the emotive theory offered by (former) Logical Positivists, e.g. Alfred J Ayer. There is, Berman says:

no doubt that he [Berkeley] anticipates the emotive analysis of metaphysical and religious language offered by such (former) Logical Positivists as A. J. Ayer, in *Language, Truth and Logic* (London, 1936), chs. 1 and 6. The irony, of course, is that the Logical Positivists applied the emotive theory destructively to religion, whereas Berkeley used it to defend religion.

(Berman 1994: 155; cf. 1981: 229; 1993: 212)

2. In accordance with his account of the Pauline promise in the *Draft Introduction*, Berman maintains that in *Alciphron*, dialogue VII, the 'emotive theory' is used to explain the significance of a certain kind of religious utterances,⁴ namely those concerning Christian mysteries. The objective, again, Berman thinks, is to defend mysteries by showing that the relevant utterances are significant, despite the fact that they do not inform or stand for ideas. Remarkably the position advanced in the Lockean entries of the *Commentaries*

⁴ I take it that by 'utterances' Berman means spoken or written sentences. In his reading of *Alciphron* he is primarily concerned with *emotive utterances* as contrasted with *cognitive* (informative) *statements*. Berkeley himself makes no explicit distinction, using the term 'proposition' to cover both cases.

and the paper *Of Infinities* is presented in *Alciphron* as a position of freethinking opponents. Strict cognitivism, with its application to mysteries, is represented as a too narrow conception of meaning which is to be rejected by friends of religion. By giving up the Lockean position and allowing words, which are used in some non-cognitive function, to be significant, Berkeley could now represent mysteries as being 'emotive and not cognitive', and therefore meaningful (Berman 1994: 149).

Berkeley's philosophical theology in *Alciphron*, as Berman sees it,⁵ relies on the *linguistic distinction* between *cognitive statements* and *emotive utterances*, or, more generally, between the cognitive and three non-cognitive functions of language. The characterization of the latter, Berman says, 'has changed little between 1708, 1710 and 1732.' The following extract from section 14 of dialogue VII seems to include a lucid reformulation of the emotive theory:

Thus much, upon the whole, may be said of all signs:— that they do not always suggest ideas signified to the mind: that when they suggest ideas, they are not general abstract ideas: that they have other uses besides barely standing for and exhibiting ideas, such as [1] raising proper emotions, [2] producing certain dispositions or habits of mind, and [3] directing our actions in pursuit of that happiness which is the ultimate end and design, the primary spring and motive, that sets rational agents at work...

(*Works* 3: 307)

Given the mentioned distinctions, Berman accordingly endeavours to reconstruct Berkeley's 'linguistic' theology. The interpretation runs as follows. Cognitive statements such as 'That cow is brown'⁶ inform (or 'suggest' ideas), whereas emotive utterances such as 'Cheer up!', 'Life's a bore' or 'Get out!' produce (1) emotions, (2) dispositions, and (3) actions. Both the statements and utterances are meaningful, the former in so far as they inform or stand for ideas, the latter as they provoke these reactions in hearers and readers. Statements of natural theology, particularly those about the existence and attributes of God, belong, on Berman's reading, to the first, and utterances concerning mysteries to the second category. Thus the statement 'God exists and is wise' conveys some information or knowledge about God and has cognitive content. Utterances concerning the Holy Trinity or a future state, on the other hand, 'have little or no cognitive content' and thus are 'essentially emotive' for Berkeley. The latter are meaningful in the sense that they produce certain emotional effects in those who hear or read them, and also provoke morally right actions. (See Berman 1981: 223–224, 227; 1993: 205–207, 210; 1994: 147–148, 159, 162.)

⁵ See Berman 1981; 1993; 1994: 144–163. Berman's interpretation in its most elaborated form is contained in the latter monograph.

⁶ The relevant examples are given by Berman (Berman 1981: 224; 1993: 206; 1994: 148).

Furthermore, Berman asserts, Berkeley held that certain words or names have ‘emotive power’ or a tendency to produce ‘emotions, habits, and actions’, and that words or utterances used in talking about mysteries, along with the words ‘matter’, ‘freethinker’ and several others are of that kind. Words may have, Berman continues, either positive or negative emotive power, provoking, respectively, desirable and undesirable effects (See Berman 1994: 150–154).

3. Berkeley’s alleged emotive theory can hardly be examined separately from his notion of faith. Furthermore, in dialogue VII, section 10, Berman argues, Berkeley ‘identifies faith with the three non-cognitive functions of language’:

Faith, I say, is not an indolent perception, but an operative persuasion of mind, which ever worketh some suitable action, disposition, or emotion in those who have it...

(Works 3: 301)

Given that, Berman says, in dialogue VII the ‘emotive theory’ is applied to four specific mysteries: grace, the Holy Trinity, original sin and a future state. Thus in section 8 an emotive account of the Trinity is given. Berman paraphrases:

Although a man may form no distinct idea of trinity, substance, or personality, this does not imply, Berkeley maintains, that the mystery is meaningless; because it may well produce in his mind ‘love, hope, gratitude, and obedience, and thereby become a lively operative principle influencing his life and actions...’

(Berman 1994: 146–7)

The effects mentioned by Berkeley — ‘love, hope, gratitude, and obedience’ as well as the influence on life and actions — are taken by Berman to be effects of *emotive utterances* concerning the Trinity. *These effects*, Berman seems to think, are specific to *this* mystery.⁷ He continues:

Berkeley deals in a similar way with grace, original sin, and a future state. He admits that they have little or no cognitive content, but this does not prevent their meaningful use. Thus talk of grace has the tendency to produce good habits and piety; original sin can deter people from committing an evil deed, and a future state is likely to produce good habits and a salutary sense of one’s unworthiness. Religious mysteries are pragmatic; they are justified by their utility.

(Berman 1994: 147)

⁷ Berman is accompanied here by Peter Walmsley who puts it explicitly that a “proper impression” of the words [relating to the Trinity] depends on the reader’s having *quite specific emotional responses* — “love, hope, gratitude, and obedience” — and then acting appropriately on these feelings — “agreeably to the notion of saving faith” (Walmsley 1990: 186, emphasis added).

Berman does not argue that in *Alciphron* — as he says is the case in the *Draft Introduction* — Berkeley explained this effectiveness of utterances as a consequence of customary connection between them and certain emotions, dispositions, and actions. Yet they have, as he says, a ‘tendency to’ or are ‘likely to’, or at least ‘can’, produce these effects. On this reading, (utterances concerning) different mysteries have different effects and the effects, as it were, make or render them meaningful (See Berman 1981: 223–224; 1993: 205; 1994: 146–147).

4. In accordance with the non-cognitivist reading of the sermon *On Immortality*, entry 720 of the *Commentaries*, and the *Draft Introduction*, Berman maintains that in *Alciphron*, too, utterances (propositions) about Christian mysteries are seen as giving no information whatsoever.

According to Berman, the issue whether these utterances are *true* for Berkeley, in *Alciphron*, remains undecided. That is, Berkeley seems to be less radical now than in the *Draft*, where a purely emotive account of afterlife is given. But in *Alciphron* too, he merely allows that propositions about grace ‘may possibly’ be true (See Berman 1994: 161–163).

5. Berman indicates that in some passages (e.g. IV. 15 and VII. 13) Berkeley allows words about mysteries to be ‘symbolic expressions’ that give us ‘some ‘glimmering’ representation of what is beyond our understanding’, but it remains unclear whether these expressions, in his view, have cognitive content (Berman 1994: 163).

1.4.2. Cognitive theology, emotive mysteries, and science

1. For Berkeley, Berman says, faith (concerning mysteries) is not “‘an act of the understanding”; it is an emotional act’ (Berman 1982: 164). However, faith concerning, or talk of, mysteries, according to his interpretation, does rely on ‘cognitive theology’. Thus, he insists, the emotive effectiveness of talk of mysteries rests on our background belief in the existence of a good, wise, and just God, whose existence Berkeley undertakes to prove in dialogue IV. For ‘in order to believe sensibly in mysteries’, Berman says, ‘we must, according to Berkeley, first believe that there is a God.’ If ‘the God of theism [...] did not exist’, he continues, ‘then there would hardly be much point in speaking about his grace or his three-in-one nature’ (Berman 1994: 134–135; cf. 1981: 219; 1993: 200). Put in terms of the basic *linguistic distinction*, cognitive statements of natural or rational theology — so Berman says — *support* emotive utterances about mysteries (Berman 1981: 224; 1993: 207; 1994: 148).

2. The belief in, and knowledge of, the perfections of God is related to faith (concerning mysteries) in a specific way, Berman explains:

Because we know from the optic language that God is good, wise, knowing, and just, we must also realize that we ought to act and feel in certain ways. Because God is just, it is right to be fearful of doing the wrong thing; and it is imperative to develop such moral habits. Because God is good, it is right to love him; because he is wise and knowing, it is appropriate to respect him (*Alc.* IV, 18). *Now, in Berkeley's view, belief in the Christian mysteries is an excellent way of bringing about these desirable ends. Nothing will so effectively make people fear God's justice as the mystery of a future state. Similarly, the best way of bringing people to love God is by means of the symbolism embodied in the Holy Trinity.*

(Berman 1994: 147, emphasis added; cf. 1981: 224; 1993: 206)

Unlike the cognitive talk of God and his attributes, the emotive talk of mysteries is not intended to express or communicate knowledge. The purpose is to make us 'act and feel in certain ways', that is, to make us perform morally right actions and to have certain attitude towards God: to fear his justice and to love him (*ibid.*). This exegesis of the relevant passages in *Alciphron* clearly follows the same pattern as that of the Pauline promise in the *Draft* (see sect. 1.3.2. above).

3. Berkeley's apology has one more salient facet, to wit, in Berman's words, 'the defence and illustration of mysteries by parity of reasoning'. In dialogue VII of *Alciphron*, sects. 7 and 11–14, he makes use of the method of 'parity of reasoning' for apologetic purposes. That is, he compares religious mysteries with certain cherished tenets in philosophy and science, e.g. the 'doctrine of force', with the view to show that the latter are no more comprehensible than the former (See Berman 1981: 226–227; 1993: 209–210; 1994: 156–158).

To summarize all aspects of Berkeley's 'emotive account of mysteries', Berman says:

Berkeley's defence of religious mysteries has, broadly speaking, three prongs or components: (i) utterances about mysteries are shown to be essentially emotive; (ii) while justified pragmatically, by their effectiveness, they are also supported and evaluated by rational theology; (iii) their apparent obscurities and difficulties are shown to have parallels in the received theories of the most admired thinkers of the time, Locke and Newton. Hence one must either accept religious mysteries or reject them along with cherished philosophical, mathematical, and scientific mysteries.

(Berman 1994: 159; cf. 1981: 227; 1993: 210)

1.5. Summary of the non-cognitivist interpretation

Belfrage's and Berman's account of the early development of Berkeley's views on meaning, and Berman's emotivist reading of *Alciphron*, may be summarized thus. In Berkeley's early works, a radical doctrinal shift reflecting a sudden change in his view on semantics can be discerned. For in the paper *Of Infinities* (1707) and the *Philosophical Commentaries* (1707–1708), up to entry 696, Berkeley adhered to a strict, Lockean, cognitivist position, which entails that every meaningful sign (including words [terms] and mathematical signs) stands for an idea. But in the sermon *On Immortality* as well as the 'later entries' of the *Commentaries*, the austere cognitivist view is abandoned. Now at least some words which do not stand for ideas, and some propositions which do not inform, are seen as legitimate and meaningful. Notable in this respect is entry 720, where a clear distinction between two radically different kinds of proposition — cognitive and non-cognitive — is made. After that, in the *Draft Introduction* (1708), an 'emotive theory' of meaning is introduced.

According to the theory, words can be, and are, used not only to signify, and 'communicate' ideas (in other words, to inform), but also to evoke (1) emotions, (2) dispositions, and (3) actions. In the first case they have a cognitive, in the second, an emotive, meaning.

An outline of the theory is published in the Introduction to the *Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710). After two decades the theory reappears in *Alciphron* (1732), where it is incorporated into Berkeley's defence of natural and revealed religion against freethinkers' objections.

Belfrage's and Berman's reconstruction of Berkeley's early development up to the appearance of the 'emotive theory' in the *Draft*, as well as the emotivist account of *Alciphron*, turn on their understanding of Berkeley's view on what they call 'non-cognitive' propositions in Scripture. More precisely, the attribution of both the earlier non-cognitivism and the later emotive theory to Berkeley hinges on the interpretation of a number of passages (in some of the writings referred to above) which concern propositions related to Christian mysteries (such as the Pauline promise of heavenly rewards, or the talk of the grace of God, in the New Testament). In these scholars' opinion, such propositions are seen as 'non-cognitive', 'non-descriptive' or 'non-informative' in all of Berkeley's relevant texts, and in addition, 'emotive' in the *Draft* and *Alciphron*. In other words, they think that, for Berkeley, the propositions in question, firstly, do not evoke ideas or inform — that is, they do not give us the least knowledge of anything; secondly, are used merely to provoke certain emotional effects, and actions; thirdly, are 'cognitively empty', and therefore not true, for us.

CHAPTER 2. ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE NON-COGNITIVIST INTERPRETATION

2.1. No clash between the paper and the sermon

I shall not directly argue either for or against the historical reconstruction offered by Berman and Belfrage of the presentation of the paper *Of Infinites*, and the alleged disputation with Browne, King or other 'educated Irish Anglicans'. For the question whether Berkeley's radical change of mind was occasioned by criticisms from that audience makes sense only if it is shown that the doctrinal clash is indeed discernible in his *writings*. This section is concerned with Berman's and Belfrage's thesis that the view on the meaning of 'non-cognitive' terms and propositions taken in the sermon *On Immortality* is in direct contradiction to the one put forward in the paper.

In what follows I shall express a few doubts about this account and hope to produce some evidence against it.

First, it seems highly unlikely that before reading the paper Berkeley was not aware of the theological implications of the current discussion on 'infinities', or did not realize the significance of the term 'infinite', or, more widely, of the notion of infinity, in religious discourse.

On the contrary, as Wolfgang Breidert points out, the very criticism of the new mathematical doctrine of infinitesimals may have had a religious motivation.⁸ For previously the employment of the notion of infinity had been a privilege of theology (See Breidert 1989: 93–94). Further, Breidert says:

Der Vortrag zeigt — abgesehen vom *Philosophischen Tagebuch* —, daß BERKELEYS Denken mindestens seit 1707 auf eine Kritik an der Infinitesimalmathematik ausgerichtet war, und diese Kritik war von Anfang an auch mit theologischen Problemen verknüpft, jedenfalls dürfte das Interesse, das diese Fragen für BERKELEY hatten, theologische bzw. religionspolitische Motive haben. Eine solche Verbindung liegt in der abendländischen Tradition nahe, in der die Unendlichkeit das wichtigste Merkmal göttlicher Attribute ist. Wer den Begriff der Unendlichkeit gebrauchte, rührte damit immer auch an theologische Probleme.

(Breidert 1989: 94)

Thus in the intellectual environment in which Berkeley developed his ideas, infinity was seen as 'the most important characteristic of divine attributes', which means that to use the notion (or, one could add, the relevant terms, including 'infinite') unavoidably meant to touch theological problems.

⁸ A similar point has been made by Ben Vermeulen (Vermeulen 1985).

In the light of this, the idea that Berkeley, the young Christian apologist, while writing the paper, did not realize the theological implications of what he says about the 'infinities' looks bizarre. And it is hard to take seriously the contention that until a certain time (the 'Lockean') Berkeley thought, in a contextual vacuum, the term 'infinite' was 'illegitimate' or 'meaningless', but then, after reading the paper, changed his mind and started to think that it is 'legitimate', though 'non-cognitive'. There is simply no reason to make him look so ingenuous as Berman and Belfrage want to have it.

On the other hand, it seems clear that the two texts, the sermon regarding afterlife and the paper on infinitesimals, are remarkably different as to their content, even though there is the common element Belfrage and Berman insist on, to wit, the term 'infinite', in one case being used in a mathematical and in the other in religious context. In this connection, it is hard to understand Belfrage's suggestion that the sermon contains a *demonstration* in which the term 'infinite' is used in a way contradicting the position of the paper. I can see no sign in the sermon of a new semantic position being endorsed in the framework of a discussion on the 'proper use of terms in valid demonstrations.' This is clearly not the problem the sermon deals with. Berkeley reflects rather on why people do not bother to think about immortality or eternal happiness and 'scarce do any thing for the obtaining it' (*Works* 7: 11). The cause being that we have 'no determin'd idea of the pleasures of Heaven' (*Works* 7: 13), that is, we make use of our imagination to conceive the latter, but they remain transcendent. For Berkeley, of course, the bliss in Heaven is *eternal* and *infinite*, regardless of his view on infinitesimals (and demonstrations in mathematics). There is, in fact, nothing extraordinary or revolutionary in his use of the term 'infinite' in religious context.

I agree with Belfrage that, in the sermon, Berkeley takes the words 'infinite eternal bliss' etc. to stand for something real outside the scope of human knowledge in this life. Thus in the following passage:

Whoever beheld a Xtian would straightway take him for a pilgrim on earth walking in ye direct path to Heaven. So regardless should he be of the things of this life, so full of the next & so free from yt vice & corruption wch at present stains our profession. if then we can discover how it comes to pass yt our desire of life & immortality is so weak & ineffectual, we shall in some measure see into the cause of those many contradictions wch are too conspicuous betwixt the faith & practice of Xtians. & be able to solve yt great riddle namely yt men should think infinite eternal bliss within their reach & scarce do any thing for the obtaining it.

(*Works* 7: 11)

However, I cannot see why should we think Berkeley adhered to the same view neither before nor after the sermon. Quite a natural supposition would be that he always did. In this respect, I tend to agree with Robert McKim when he says:

It seems plain that Berkeley, as an Anglican cleric, ought not to have been satisfied with ensuring only a non-cognitive meaning for religious discourse. Surely he thought that propositions which express orthodox Christian views about God, the afterlife, and so on, *describe how things are*.

(McKim 1985: 157, emphasis added)

In fact, I think, Belfrage has not produced persuasive evidence for the claim that in the later writings the position of the sermon has been rejected. I shall say more on that in the sections below. For now it suffices to say that the belief (which is natural for a Christian philosopher like Berkeley to hold), that the relevant propositions about afterlife ‘describe how things are’, is perfectly compatible with what he later says about the influence of such propositions on human minds and actions.

Belfrage’s and Berman’s assertion that, for Berkeley, such propositions do not inform, can also be questioned. For he speaks in the sermon of ‘those new discover’d regions of life & immortality’ (*Works* 7: 10). So, one would think, we have been informed of something (by means of relevant propositions), namely, the eternal happiness, which is possible for us to gain, and this is what Berkeley admonishes us to believe. In the light of this, a further objection to Belfrage’s reading of the sermon arises. His explanation of why Berkeley rejected the ‘metaphysical descriptions’ view is that it leads to the ‘absurd consequence’ that we ought to believe ‘in the existence of unknown things’ of which we have no idea (Belfrage 1986a: 323–324). Belfrage’s claim, however, is too strong. For, according to the sermon, we know the desirable thing to be eternal *happiness*, or everlasting *pleasures*:

1st we have no determin’d idea of the pleasures of Heaven & therefore they may not so forcibly engage us in the contemplation of them. 2dly they are the less thought on because we imagine them at a great distance. as to ye 1st, ’tis true we can in this life have no determin’d idea of the pleasures of the next & yt because of their surpassing, transcendent nature wch is not suited to our present weak & narrow faculties. But this methinks should suffice yt they shall be excellent beyond ye compass of our imagination, yt they shall be such as God wise, powerfull & good shall think fit to honour & bless his saints withall.

(*Works* 7: 13)

Note that, for Berkeley, we *imagine* these eternal pleasures. It is also to be noted that the passage is introduced to explain why ‘we never *think*, we never *reason*’ about ‘(ye revelation of) life & immortality’ (ibid., emphasis added). This does not look as an admittance of a *complete* ignorance of what is believed in, even though the ideas of things in this world we use for imagining the eternal

happiness, are not adequate representations of the supernatural (*Works* 7: 12),⁹ so that we have but St. Paul's 'empty description' of it.

Berman acknowledges to some extent the relevance of metaphorical representations in this context for Berkeley. However, in the light of the foregoing considerations, his description of Berkeley's position in the sermon as a 'new non-Lockean, non-cognitive semantics' or 'a non-cognitive view of statements about religious mystery' is strongly exaggerated. Berkeley's use of the term 'infinite' in religious context should be seen as a commonplace rather than a manifestation of a new revolutionary theory of meaning. In the sermon he merely observes that by 'our present weak & narrow faculties' we cannot grasp the infinite pleasures of the life to come. He seems to take the pleasures to be there and to be infinite. And, accordingly, he does *not* seem to think that we know *absolutely nothing* of them, although we are unable to form a 'determin'd idea' of them.

My main point here is that the sermon hardly counts as a persuasive evidence of a sudden and radical change in Berkeley's view regarding semantics.

If, as the case appears to be, Berkeley was aware of the theological implications of the debate on infinitesimals, or, more generally, on infinity, and if the position expressed in the sermon is neither unique in Berkeley's writings nor revolutionary from the semantic point of view, then it seems to follow that no 'clash on semantics' or 'semantic revolution' can be discerned in what he says on the infinite or infinity in his paper and sermon. This, however, is not to say that no clash may have taken place at all. Therefore I proceed to the alleged parallel development in the *Philosophical Commentaries*.

2.2. Entry 720 and 'non-cognitive' propositions in Scripture

It does seem that in the course of writing *Notebook A* Berkeley abandoned the principle that 'we ought to use no sign without an idea answering it' (*Of Infinites*) or 'No word to be used without an idea' (*Commentaries*, entry 356) and, accordingly, his view on the use of signs in mathematics changed into a more 'pragmatic' one. However, as I just asserted, the sermon *On Immortality* does not support Berman's and Belfrage's thesis that the change in Berkeley's thought on meaning took place in a remarkably short period of time, that is, between 19 November 1707 and 11 January 1708.

Now I want to argue that the further evidence they have drawn from the *Commentaries* concerning the dramatic shift from *strict cognitivism* to the acceptance of some *non-cognitive terms and propositions* (as being meaning-

⁹ Similar remarks can be found in Berkeley's later works, e.g. the essays *The Future State and Immortality* in *The Guardian* (1713), *Works* 7: 181–184, 183–184; 222–224, 223.

ful), is far from convincing. More precisely, I have in view their reading of entry 720 as opposed to entry 696.

In entry 696, indeed, Berkeley adheres to the strict semantic principle:

Let him [the Reader] beware that I do not impose on him by plausible empty talk that common dangerous way of cheating men into absurditys. Let him not regard my Words any otherwise than as occasions of bringing into his mind determin'd [ideas *crossed out*] significations so far as they fail of this they are Gibberish, Jargon & deserve not the name of Language.

In entry 720, the principle or a related rule or criterion is confined to 'Matters of Reason & Philosophy':

When I say I will reject all Propositions wherein I know not [the full ordinary *crossed out*] fully & adequately & clearly so far as knowable the Thing meant thereby This is not to be extended to propositions in the Scripture. I speak of Matters of Reason & Philosophy not Revelation, In this I think an Humble Implicit faith becomes us just (where we cannot [fully *crossed out*] comprehend & Understand the proposition) such as a popish peasant gives to propositions he hears at Mass in Latin. This proud men call blind, popish, implicit, irrational. for my part I think it more irrational to pretend to dispute at cavil & ridicule [things *crossed out*] holy mysteries i. e propositions about things out of our reach that are altogether above our knowlege out of our reach. Wⁿ I shall come to plenary knowlege of the Meaning of any Text then I shall yield an explicit belief. Introd:

Berkeley does indeed allow here an exception to the strict rule formulated in the beginning of the entry. I do not believe, however, that the 'Matters of Revelation' in general and 'propositions about things out of our reach' in particular are understood here in the way Belfrage and Berman think they are.

For one thing, again, it seems natural to suppose that Berkeley thought such propositions really do concern, or are about, 'things out of our reach', and, further, as 'Matters of Revelation', reveal something about them. This, I think, can be concluded regardless of the issue of whether or how he would have explained the content of revelation in terms of ideas.

As for the meaning of these propositions, Berkeley admits he knows not 'fully & adequately & clearly so far as knowable the Thing meant thereby.' This is clearly not to say that the propositions have no 'cognitive meaning' whatsoever or that we know absolutely nothing of the 'Thing meant thereby'. Rather we know what is meant by them, but only in so far as it has been revealed. We know from Scripture, say, to take an example from the sermon *On Immortality*, that the faithful will obtain 'eternal happiness'. According to the sermon, people try to conceive of that state of everlasting happiness by means of 'pleasant ideas' such as 'green meadows, fragrant groves, refreshing shades, crystal streams' (*Works* 7: 12). And yet, our fancy being weak, the desirable 'pleasures of Heaven' or 'cœlestial joys' remain hidden from us at present (*Works* 7: 13).

These reflections in the sermon very well confirm with entry 720, for propositions about eternal happiness or ‘cœlestial joys’ are nothing but ‘propositions about things out of our reach’.

It appears that the chief point Berkeley makes in entry 720 is not about the *meaning* of the propositions in Scripture. In matters of revelation, he insists, ‘an Humble Implicit faith becomes us just (where we cannot comprehend & Understand the proposition) such as a popish peasant gives to propositions he hears at Mass in Latin’. Berkeley’s point, I think, is that we ought to *assent* to the relevant propositions in Scripture, that is, to believe what has been said about the mysterious things, although we do not understand this talk completely. His comparison implies that these propositions can be understood to some extent. For presumably the ‘popish peasant’ has some idea of what is being said at ‘Mass in Latin’. The last sentence of the entry also suggests that, in our present life, we lack *complete* understanding of the propositions in question.¹⁰

Thus, contrary to Belfrage’s suggestion, Berkeley, in contrasting ‘Matters of Reason & Philosophy’ with ‘Matters of Revelation’, does not introduce a rough distinction between the two completely different kinds of propositions: cognitive (informative) and non-cognitive (non-informative). What he does in effect, I propose, is that he distinguishes between propositions to be examined, and accepted or rejected, on the basis of *reason*, and those to be accepted on the basis of *faith*. Likewise in entry 584 he contrasts ‘implicit faith’ with reasoning and demonstrations:

There may be Demonstrations used even in Divinity. I mean in reveal’d Theology, as contradistinguish’d from natural. for tho the Principles may be founded in Faith yet this hinders not but that legitimate Demonstrations might be [drawn *crossed out*] built thereon. Provided still that we define the words we use & never go beyond our Ideas. Hence ‘twere no very hard matter for those who hold Episcopacy or Monarchy to be establish’d jure Divino. to demonstrate their Doctrines if they are true. But to pretend to demonstrate or reason any thing about the Trinity is absurd here an implicit Faith becomes us.

There is hardly any doubt, I think, that Berkeley held the relevant propositions in Scripture to be true, regardless of his philosophical views on language, signification, ideas, metaphors, etc. Not so on Berman’s reading, as I explained in the previous chapter. However, he has offered no evidence for the claim implied by his reading that Berkeley did not hold the orthodox view, which entails that these propositions are true just because they come from God, who never lies. The view derived by Berman from entry 720, that such propositions cannot be true in this life and can be true in the next, seems incomprehensible. To my knowledge Berkeley has nowhere in his writings suggested that

¹⁰ For the latter details of interpretation I owe thanks to Robert McKim.

propositions concerning the Trinity, divinity of Christ and the like may not be true (for us). I shall discuss this issue more fully in the section on *Alciphron*.

So far I have raised some objections to the account given by Belfrage and Berman of the early development of Berkeley's thought about meaning.

Firstly, there appears to be no evidence that Berkeley repudiated the principle 'No word to be used without an idea' *during that particular period of time*, to wit, between 19 November 1707 and 11 January 1708.

The occurrence of the term 'infinite' in the sermon in the context of talking about afterlife is not surprising, unique, or revolutionary. The term is used there to express a commonplace theological position rather than a new position in semantics.

Secondly, neither in the sermon nor in entry 720 propositions related to divine mysteries are seen as being 'cognitively empty' and thus possibly not true for us (human beings in this world). For Berkeley seems to allow some knowledge to be imparted by them. At the same time, unlike Berman, he does not seem to link the truth of such propositions to the 'amount' of their 'cognitive content'.

I wish to stress, finally, that the central point made in entry 720 concerns *faith*, more precisely, *assent* to the propositions in question, rather than their *meaning*.

It is worthwhile to keep these reflections in mind whilst interpreting Berkeley's later works. I proceed now to the *Draft Introduction*.

2.3. *Draft Introduction*

2.3.1. Berkeley's new doctrine and the 'emotive theory'

I will not discuss here whether Berkeley's account of language and meaning, in the *Draft Introduction*, is the first of its kind in the history of philosophy.¹¹ But I want to discuss Belfrage's and Berman's alleged discovery of the doctrine which they call an 'emotive theory'.

Berkeley maintains in the *Draft* that words can be meaningfully used without evoking ideas in the minds of readers or hearers inasmuch as language has other ends or uses (25, cited above). The same point is famously made in § 20 of the published Introduction to the *Principles*, where Berkeley appears to have summarized the substance of his reflections in the *Draft* on these matters:

Besides, the communicating of ideas marked by words is not the chief and only end of language, as is commonly supposed. There are other ends, as the raising of some passion, the exciting to, or deterring from an action, the putting the mind in some particular disposition; to which the former is in

¹¹ See Stewart 1989/1990: 16; Brykman 1993: 191.

many cases barely subservient, and sometimes entirely omitted, when these can be obtained without it, as I think does not infrequently happen in the familiar use of language. I entreat the reader to reflect with himself, and see if it doth not often happen either in hearing or reading a discourse, that the passions of fear, love, hatred, admiration, disdain, and the like arise, immediately in his mind upon the perception of certain words, without any ideas coming between. At first, indeed, the words might have occasioned ideas that were fit to produce those emotions; but, if I mistake not, it will be found that when language is once grown familiar, the hearing of the sounds or sight of the characters is oft immediately attended with those passions, which at first were wont to be produced by the intervention of ideas, that are now quite omitted. May we not, for example, be affected with the promise of a good thing, though we have not an idea of what it is?...

There may be more or less significant differences between the published account of language and meaning, and that in the *Draft*. But clearly, the core of Berkeley's new doctrine remains the same: language has 'other ends' or 'other uses' besides the 'communicating of ideas' (which is not to deny that prior to a given occasion of such language use the words used 'might have occasioned ideas'). The substance of the doctrine is stated again in *Alciphron* VII, sects. 5 and 14.

Belfrage and Berman, I want to emphasize, *do not* assert that the doctrine published in the *Principles* (and *Alciphron*) differs from the one in the *Draft* in any substantial respect.¹² For they assert, respectively, that Berkeley *published* his 'emotive theory' in the *Principles* (Berman 1994: 146), and that after writing the *Draft* he 'did not *abandon* his theory of emotive meaning, he *expanded* his view on non-referential usage' (Belfrage 1986b: 647, emphasis added). The extract from the *Draft* they refer to as the one embodying the 'emotive theory' (25) is very similar in wording to the beginning of the passage just quoted.

The question I want to put is whether we are enlightened by being told that the 'other ends' or 'other uses' of language, as Berkeley himself calls them, constitute 'non-cognitive functions of language', or that words used for a 'good purpose' other than the 'communicating of ideas' have an 'emotive meaning', or that his doctrine is an 'emotive theory' of meaning.

Now, both before and after Belfrage's and Berman's 'discovery', Berkeley's account of the 'other uses' of language has been pointed at, and more or less comprehensively considered, by a number of scholars,¹³ some of whom also

¹² Geneviève Brykman, on the other hand, sees a significant difference: 'the generally admitted correspondence between words and ideas is, in the first draft of the Introduction, a very small part of what could be taken to constitute the meaning of words' (Brykman 1982/1983: 14).

¹³ See e.g. Warnock 1953: 73–76, Rauter 1961: 402, Hay 1970: 38, Bennett 1971: 52–58; Flew 1974; Tipton 1994 (1974): 140–141, 283–284; Kearney 1975: 292–293;

speak of 'emotive uses' of language in these contexts, at the same time not ascribing ethical emotivism to Berkeley.¹⁴

It is true that, as a rule, only the published Introduction has been considered by scholars. However, given the fact that Belfrage and Berman themselves take the doctrine stated in the *Principles* to be basically the same as the one expressed in the *Draft*, they do not seem to add anything of importance concerning *the very account of the 'other uses' of language* in Berkeley's works, except, perhaps, the claim that when language is used for some other purpose than to 'communicate' ideas, then it is not informative (not used informatively).¹⁵

A remarkable feature of their exegesis of the *Draft* and section 20 of the published Introduction to the *Principles*, but also of Berman's reading of *Alciphron*, is *the extensive use of anachronistic terminology*. They try and claim to elucidate Berkeley's doctrine, as a number of scholars before them, but, in effect, I think, the description of it as an 'emotive theory' hardly suggests anything besides misleading associations. In this respect, I agree with M. A. Stewart's critical comments regarding Belfrage's interpretation of the *Draft* (See Stewart 1989/1990: 15–17). Among other things, Stewart says:

an unfortunate consequence of the anachronistic labelling ['emotive theory of meaning' or 'theory of emotive meaning'] is that, besides misleading the commentator into adopting 20th-century analogues, it suggests a historical doctrine which Berkeley never contemplates, that there are uses of language which, without explicitly asserting that anything is the case, express or evince the feelings of the speaker.

(Stewart 1989/1990: 16)

Woozley 1976: 429–430, 432–433; Pitcher 1977: 78–79, 88, 250, 259; Land 1978: 10–13; 1986: 79–89; Nuchelmans 1983: 147–154; Brykman 1984: 299–324; 1993: 189–224; Formigari 1988: 130; Bonk 1997: 66–69; Dancy 1998: 197; Williford 2000, ch. 1. Also see M. W. Beal's account of Berkeley's 'conditions of meaningfulness' (Beal 1971: 505–512).

¹⁴ See Stroll 1954: 22–25, Olscamp 1970, ch. 5. By calling Berkeley's doctrine an 'emotive theory', note, Belfrage and Berman do not ascribe an emotive theory of ethics to him. For what we have in the *Draft* is, according to them, a theory of various non-cognitive/emotive uses of language. Only one of Berkeley's examples — 'Such an action is honourable' — is referred to as 'a value statement' by Belfrage. In his opinion, Berkeley uses the statement merely as 'an example of emotive, non-cognitive, usage' (Belfrage 1987: 49). In this connection it is remarkable that Stephen Clark does ascribe ethical emotivism to Berkeley (See Clark 1985: 240–241, 244). Alan White speaks of 'hints in Berkeley of what we may call an 'emotive' or an 'imperative' theory of ethics' (White: 1955: 178).

¹⁵ To be precise, A. D. Woozley (Woozley 1976: 429) has made a similar point.

Berman, true, appears to see the point when he remarks:

Berkeley's emotive theory can also be criticized. One shortcoming is that he failed to see that, while non-cognitive words are able to evoke emotions, for instance, conversely emotions are able to evoke words; that is, language has an expressive function, as in 'Oh dear!' and 'Gosh!'

(Berman 1994: 161)

In any case, to avoid obscurity and delusion, it would be better, I think, not to describe Berkeley's doctrine in terms of the 'emotive theory', that is, to make use of such expressions as 'emotive meaning', 'cognitive meaning', 'cognitive content', '*non-cognitive* propositions', 'descriptive information', etc, in this context.

Belfrage's reply to Stewart (Belfrage 1991), it has to be noted, does not address the problem of using misleading anachronistic terms.

2.3.2. The Pauline promise reconsidered

I return now to the Pauline promise. For, according to Berman and Belfrage, in the *Draft* it is interpreted differently than in the sermon, and, in a way that strongly supports the attribution of the emotive theory to Berkeley. As explained in the first chapter, for Berman, merely a new, emotivist component is added in the *Draft* to the non-cognitivism already present in the sermon and entry 720 of the *Commentaries*. For Belfrage, on the other hand, the position adopted in the *Draft* diverges essentially from that in the sermon insofar as Berkeley has now rejected the idea of 'metaphysical descriptions' of transcendent reality.

In both scholars' opinion, Berkeley, in the *Draft*, offers an *emotive* account of St. Paul's promise of heavenly rewards. This reading is mistaken, I believe. The crucial passage is this:

But farther, to make it evident that Words may be used to good purpose without bringing into the Mind determinate Ideas, I shall add this Instance. We are told [that] the Good Things which God hath prepared for them that love him are such as Eye hath not seen nor Ear heard nor hath it enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive. What man will pretend to say these Words of the Inspir'd Writer are empty and insignificant? And yet who is there that can say they bring into his Mind clear and determinate Ideas or in Truth any Ideas at all of the Good Things in store for them that love God? It may perhaps be said that those Words lay before us the clear and determinate abstract Ideas of Good in general and Thing in general. but I am afraid it will be found that those very abstract Ideas are every whit as remote from the Comprehension of Men as the particular pleasures of the Saints in Heaven. But, say you, those Words of the Apostle must have some import They cannot be suppos'd to have been utter'd without all meaning and design

whatsoever. I answer the saying is very weighty and carrys with it a great design, but it is not to raise in the Minds of Men the Abstract Ideas of Thing or Good nor yet the particular Ideas of the Joys of the Blessed. The Design is to make them more chearfull and fervent in their Duty.

(22, 23)

The passage has in fact much more in common with the sermon *On Immortality* and entry 720 of the *Commentaries* than Berman and Belfrage recognize. Firstly, note that here again it is pointed to the weakness of our mental capacities (with respect to transcendent heavenly pleasures): the relevant abstract ideas are ‘as remote from the Comprehension of Men as the particular pleasures of the Saints in Heaven’. To put it differently, we are unable to form and communicate ideas of the latter. A little later Berkeley says: ‘’tis evident the Apostle never intended the Words [*Good things*] should [mark out to] our Understandings the Ideas of those particular Things our Faculties never attain’d to’ (24). St. Paul’s words are not intended to evoke such ideas in our minds since we cannot have such ideas. This, however, secondly, is not to say that the words ‘good things’ in the proposition ‘the Good Things which God hath prepared for them that love him...’ do not (as Belfrage puts it) ‘refer to’, or, in Berkeley’s terms, stand for, heavenly rewards. I cannot see whence it follows that, contrary to the view brought forward in the sermon, Berkeley now thinks ‘good things’, in this context, *do not* stand for good things in Heaven. The ‘customary connection’ account (23, 24) does not entail that. To say, as Berkeley does, that the purpose of the talk of heavenly rewards is to make people ‘more chearfull and fervent in their Duty’, which effect may follow without forming ‘the Abstract Ideas of Thing or Good nor yet the particular Ideas of the Joys of the Blessed’, is not to deny the reality of these rewards. For the duty is to love God and behave in such a way as to obtain the desirable ‘good things’, ‘eternal life’ or ‘eternal happiness’ (See *Works* 7: 10–14, 28–29, 34, 46, 115). I am in agreement here with Paul Olscamp (Olscamp 1970: 153) and Kenneth Wayne Williford (Williford 2000: 43–44).

So it seems to be taken for granted in the passage that there are desirable ‘Good Things which God hath prepared for those that love him’, and these things are beyond our comprehension in this life.

Thirdly, it seems clear that if St. Paul had not ‘referred to’ the mysterious things in Heaven, nobody would have ever talked about them.

Now, in the light of these clarifications, the Pauline promise, relating to supernatural realm, can hardly be termed an ‘ordinary speech act’ that, according to Belfrage, Berkeley’s alleged ‘emotive theory’ was applied to. On the contrary, this is quite an extraordinary speech act, which is by no means equivalent to the imperative ‘Act in accordance with what Christian doctrine prescribes as being our duty!’

Whether one calls Berkeley’s account of the ‘other uses’ of language an ‘emotive theory’ or otherwise might not be a substantial issue. What matters

here is the following. Berman's and Belfrage's reconstruction of Berkeley's early development from austere cognitivism towards the 'emotive theory' relies (to a significant extent) on their interpretation of his remarks on the Pauline description of Heaven. This interpretation, however, looks seriously flawed. For neither in the sermon *On Immortality* nor in the *Draft* the words of St. Paul seem to be considered 'non-cognitive' ('non-informative') in the sense explained by these scholars. That is, in these works, Berkeley rather assumes that by his mystical description St. Paul has made something known to mankind, namely, that there are inestimable rewards in Heaven to be obtained by the pious.

2.4. *Alciphron*

I have divided my objections to, and comments on, Berman's emotivist reading of *Alciphron* into two subsections, first of which dealing primarily with the issues of language and meaning that, however, are closely related to Berkeley's conception of faith, and the second with the relation between natural and revealed religion as well as faith and science.

2.4.1. Faith, truth, revelation, and signification

1. Berman refers to chs. 1 and 6 of A. J. Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic* as places where an 'emotive analysis of metaphysical and religious language' is given, an analysis allegedly anticipated by Berkeley in the *Draft Introduction* and *Alciphron*. However, Ayer's book does not contain such an analysis. For he offers an emotivist account of the meaning of 'ethical statements' such as 'exhortations to moral virtue', and 'ethical judgements' of the type 'x is wrong', but metaphysical and religious statements or utterances are taken to be literally insignificant or nonsensical by him.¹⁶ It is true that, unlike Berkeley, Ayer considers only relevant utterances of *theism*, not of the *revealed religion* (including mysteries). But still it is not correct to state that Ayer's *emotive* analysis of religious language has been anticipated by Berkeley.

It is worth of inquiring, nonetheless, whether Berkeley, in *Alciphron*, dialogue VII, as Berman claims the case to be, made use of an 'emotive theory' to explain the significance of utterances concerning Christian mysteries.

2. To begin with, I want to spell out some preliminary reasons to oppose Berman's ascription of a distinction between *cognitive statements* of rational theology and *emotive utterances* concerning mysteries to Berkeley.

¹⁶ See Ayer 1990, ch 6. For this objection I owe thanks to Tom Stoneham and Tiitu Hallap.

Berman tends to regard Christian mysteries as if they were (for Berkeley) nothing more than (emotive, non-cognitive) words or utterances. Consider, for example, the following passage where he links Berkeley's account of mysteries to Toland's view:

that if a word does not signify a distinct idea, then it is meaningless; and that since Christian mysteries do not stand for ideas, they must be as meaningless as 'Blictri'.

Now Berkeley accepted part of Toland's claim, namely, that religious mysteries do not signify distinct ideas; but this does not imply, Berkeley urged, that they are meaningless. That conclusion only follows if one accepts the Lockean *either/or* [...] that words either communicate ideas and are meaningful, or do not signify ideas and are meaningless.

(Berman 1994: 148–9; cf. 1981: 225; 1993: 207.)

Mysteries appear to be regarded here as words rather than something signified, meant or expressed by them. More generally it could be said that in the passages describing the alleged 'emotive theory', Berman describes Christian mysteries as bearing characteristics that he ascribes to words, statements and utterances such as being 'emotive', having 'little or no cognitive content', standing or not standing for ideas, etc. (See Berman 1981: 223–5; 1993: 205–8; 1994: 145–149, 162.)

On the other hand he frequently distinguishes between *mysteries* and their *verbal expressions* or the terms signifying them:

By skilfully using some of the critical results of his early work in philosophy and philosophy of science, Berkeley tries to show that there is nothing 'absurd or repugnant' in the Christian mysteries. Thus he contends that while it is hard to understand grace, it is not any harder than understanding the scientist's concept of force; although both 'grace' and 'force' are of considerable use (*Alc.* VII, 7). And while there seem to be difficulties in understanding the Athanasian doctrine of the Trinity, there are similar perplexities, Berkeley holds, in the widely accepted (Lockean) theory of personal identity (developed in *Essay*, II. xxvi), that personal identity consists in identity of consciousness.

(Berman 1994: 156; 1981: 226–7; 1993: 209–10.)

The religious mysteries along with the 'mysteries' in science and philosophy are considered here as doctrines that may contain difficulties, be more or less comprehensible, but not as mere (emotive, non-cognitive) words or utterances. In one place, Berman says that the mysteries are *expressed* in emotive language, which also implies a distinction.¹⁷ He asks, further, whether the mysteries as distinguished from statements about them can be true, on Berkeley's scheme (Berkeley 1994: 161–162). And finally, he points to Berkeley's suggestion that

¹⁷ See the figure in Berman 1981, p. 226; 1993, p. 209; 1994, p. 155.

‘words about mysteries can function symbolically’ (Berman 1994: 163). So in these cases he allows that there is more to mysteries than mere ‘sensible signs’ used by speakers for emotive purposes (See Berman 1981: 226–7; 1993: 209–11; 1994: 155–9).¹⁸

Apparently the ambiguity of the term ‘mystery’ is present in Berkeley’s own, and also in his contemporaries’, works.¹⁹ However, Berkeley clearly maintains that ‘the wording of a mystery’ or ‘retaining or rejecting a term’ in talking about mysteries is not a substantial issue (VII. 10, *Works* 3: 302) and that, for instance, the same mystery of the Trinity or ‘Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier’ is expressed in various ways and propositions (VII. 8, *Works* 3: 297). So he does not seem to regard the mysteries as merely emotive, cognitively meaningless utterances. The mysteries as central tenets or doctrines of Christianity are not reduced to ‘cognitively empty’ words. Furthermore, in *Alciphron* there appears to be one sense of the term ‘mystery’ not mentioned by Berman at all. Pointing to the use and effects of faith, Berkeley says of the evil intentions of a freethinker:

Whereas that very man, do but produce in him a sincere belief of a Future State, although it be a mystery, although it be what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, he shall, nevertheless, by virtue of such belief, be withheld from executing his wicked project: and that for reasons which all men can comprehend, though nobody can be the object of them.

(VII. 10, *Works* 3: 303)

And concerning the Christian mysteries in general he observes:

why men that are so easily and so often gravelled in common points, in things natural and visible, should yet be so sharp-sighted and dogmatical about the invisible world and its mysteries is to me a point utterly unaccountable by all the rules of logic and good sense.

(VI. 30, *Works* 3: 280)

The ‘mysteries’ in this sense appear to signify certain hidden realities, which the doctrines and utterances concern. Berkeley’s description of the effects arising from the belief in mysteries is, accordingly, intended to show that the ‘*doctrines relating to heavenly mysteries* might be taught, in this saving sense, to vulgar minds’ (VII. 9, *Works* 3: 299–300, emphasis added). The *heavenly mysteries*, then, are distinguished from doctrines and utterances (propositions) relating to them. Consequently, Berman’s assertion that Berkeley gives an ‘emotive account of mysteries’ — in either of his senses of the word — that is, takes the Christian mysteries to be merely emotive utterances or something expressed in emotive language, is, at best, misleading.

¹⁸ The same confusion arises in Berman 1996: 139–140.

¹⁹ See e.g. Browne 1990 (1733), ch. 5.

There is a further reason to question the attribution of the distinction to Berkeley.

According to Berman, Berkeley believed certain words or names to have an 'emotive power' or a tendency to produce 'emotions, habits, and actions'. However, such mystery-terms as 'trinity' or 'incarnation' may hardly be said to bear a particular emotive or action-promoting power. There is nothing 'essentially emotive' in them. The same applies to the theological propositions in which such terms occur. For Berkeley mentions disputes about the 'nature, extent, and effects' as well as other aspects of *grace* and compares them with discussions about *force* in science. In that context, utterances about force and grace are obviously not intended to evoke emotions. Neither are they utterly meaningless for Berkeley (VII. 7, *Works* 3: 296). Despite his insistence on practical faith and a critical attitude towards useless speculations (VII. 15, *Works* 3: 308), there is no evidence that he held all theological propositions and discussions concerning mysteries to be either emotive or senseless.

Some of Berman's expressions suggest that, for Berkeley, mysteries are not at all a subject of theology. For example Berman says:

Berkeley's emotive account of mysteries rests squarely on his cognitive account of theology.

(Berman 1981: 224; 1993: 206; 1994: 147)

However, as already said, Berkeley does refer to theological discussions about mysteries. From Berman's reading it follows that theological — like any other — talk of mysteries is emotive; and then, to be consistent, it is necessary to introduce an extraordinary distinction between cognitive and emotive theology which has no foundation in *Alciphron*.

3. Now I want to examine more closely Berman's interpretation of *Alciphron* regarding the meaning of utterances concerning mysteries.

First, in the passages cited, or referred to, by Berman to demonstrate the presence of the 'emotive theory', Berkeley speaks, in fact, about the effects of *faith* or 'belief of mysteries' in general and about the effects of one's *belief* in particular mysteries, and not about the effects of mere *utterances*.²⁰ Thus he talks about 'the saving faith of Christians' which is 'a vital operative principle, productive of charity and obedience' (VII. 9, *Works* 3: 300) and the effects of the belief in original sin and a future state (VII. 10, *Works* 3: 301–303). Faith or belief, according to Berkeley, is or at least implies assent to a proposition, and in one place he is inclined to say that it is the propositions concerning the Trinity which direct and affect the mind (VII. 8, *Works* 3: 297). However, he clearly relates this influence to the belief in the Trinity:

²⁰ Cf. Gelber 1952: 512.

Alciphron. Fear not: by all the rules of right reason, it is absolutely impossible that any mystery, and least of all the Trinity, should really *be the object of man's faith*.

Euphranor. I do not wonder you thought so, as long as you maintained that no man could *assent to a proposition* without perceiving or framing in his mind distinct ideas marked by the terms of it. But, although terms are signs, yet having granted that those signs may be significant, though they should not suggest ideas represented by them, provided they serve to regulate and influence our wills, passions, or conduct, you have consequently granted that the mind of man *may assent to propositions containing such terms*, when it is so directed or affected by them, notwithstanding it should not perceive distinct ideas marked by those terms. Whence it seems to follow that a man *may believe the doctrine of the Trinity*, if he finds it revealed in 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 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*.

(VII. 8, *Works* 3: 296–297, emphasis added)

And in another passage he refers to the ‘articles of our Christian faith which, *in proportion as they are believed*, persuade, and, as they persuade, influence the lives and actions of men’ (VII. 15, *Works* 3: 308, emphasis added).

It seems that Berkeley’s account of the efficacy of the Christian faith cannot be construed as the introduction of a theory of emotive meaning, unless one first assumes that by ‘effects of faith’ he means effects produced by certain emotive utterances. And this is indeed what Berman appears to assume on his emotivist reading. He also expresses this assumption by the puzzling statement that, in the following passage, Berkeley ‘identifies faith with the three non-cognitive functions of language’:

Original sin, for instance, a man may find it impossible to form an idea of in abstract, or of the manner of its transmission; and yet *the belief thereof* may produce in his mind a salutary sense of his own unworthiness, and the goodness of his Redeemer: from whence may follow good habits, and from them good actions, *the genuine effects of faith*; which, considered in its true light, is a thing neither repugnant nor incomprehensible, as some men would persuade us, but suited even to vulgar capacities, placed in the will and affections rather than in the understanding, and producing holy lives rather than subtle theories. *Faith*, I say, is not an indolent perception, but *an operative persuasion of mind*, which ever worketh some suitable action, disposition, or emotion in those who have it; as it were easy to prove and illustrate by innumerable instances taken from human affairs.

(VII. 10, *Works* 3: 301; emphasis added)

However, from the fact that in some passages *faith*, and in others *language*, is related to the provoking of emotions, dispositions and actions, it does not follow that faith and the 'other uses' of language are one and the same thing.

Rather it seems to follow that, for Berkeley, faith and language are related in a specific way. Faith concerning mysteries entails assent to certain propositions in Scripture (and other relevant texts).²¹ A closer look at the text reveals that Berkeley's concern in dialogue VII, sects. 1–15 (or, 1–18, in the first two editions), is to show that such assent is possible and reasonable.²² Note that his reflections on the uses and significance of words and other signs are put forward in this framework.

Freethinkers' understanding of assent is said to rest on a primitive (too narrow) view on the use of signs:

Words are signs: they do or should stand for ideas, which so far as they suggest they are significant. But words that suggest no ideas are insignificant. He who annexeth a clear idea to every word he makes use of speaks sense; but where such ideas are wanting, the speaker utters nonsense.

(VII, 2, *Works* 3: 287)

Since the terms like 'Trinity' or 'future state' do not stand for such ideas, Christians are in effect accused of *assenting to nonsensical propositions*.

To address the objection, Berkeley insists on his conception, already known from the *Draft* and published Introduction to the *Principles*, of the *various* uses of words and other signs. He points to a number of cases where signs are used in a way that makes them 'useful and significant' even though they do not stand for (clear and distinct) ideas (See VII. 5–7, *Works* 3: 291–296). He further argues that one can assent to (or, it is not absurd to assent to) propositions related to mysteries insofar as they, if assented to, have good impact on one's mind and actions. Neither in science nor in faith, (clear and distinct) ideas are necessary for assent (VII. 7–12, 14–15, *Works* 3: 295–305, 307–309).²³

Clearly, Berkeley does not attribute any 'emotive power' to the relevant words and propositions as such. He speaks about the effects of faith, or, of assenting to certain propositions

One interesting problem the emotivist reading has to face is the meaning or meaningful use of utterances concerning particular mysteries. If they do not evoke distinct ideas, inform or have cognitive content, what, then, makes a difference between the *meaningful* use of the utterances concerning a particular

²¹ E.g. the *Creeds* and 39 *Articles of Religion*.

²² This is clear from VII, 1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 11, *Works* 3: 286, 288, 290–291, 296–297, 299, 303.

²³ The issue of assent (to propositions concerning mysteries), as I already noted, is central in entry 720 of the *Commentaries*. In the *Draft Introduction*, too, Berkeley disagrees with those 'Who think it nonsense for a Man to assent to any Proposition each term whereof doth not bring into his Mind a clear and distinct Idea...' (26).

mystery and those concerning another such mystery or all others? Berman seems to think that the difference lies in the effects produced by those utterances. He relies on the examples that Berkeley gives of the good effects resulting from the belief in particular mysteries; but, as already noted, Berman describes these effects as effects of the 'talk of' mysteries. Thus he links utterances about the Trinity to 'love, hope, gratitude, and obedience', those about grace to 'good habits and piety', those about original sin to deterring 'people from committing an evil deed', and those about a future state to 'good habits and a salutary sense of one's unworthiness'. Utterances concerning different mysteries have, on this reading, distinctive emotive meaning since they produce different or at least not wholly coinciding effects.

In this context, however, Berman, first of all, mismatches Berkeley's claims concerning original sin and a future state. According to Berman:

original sin can deter people from committing an evil deed, and a future state is likely to produce good habits and a salutary sense of one's unworthiness.

(Berman 1994: 147; cf. 1981: 224; 1993: 205)

In Berkeley we find that a man's belief in original sin:

may produce in his mind a salutary sense of his own unworthiness, and the goodness of his Redeemer: from whence may follow good habits, and from them good actions...

(VII. 10, *Works* 3: 301)

And in the passage regarding afterlife, Berkeley says:

Whereas that very man, do but produce in him a sincere belief of a Future State, although it be a mystery [...] he shall, nevertheless, by virtue of such belief, be withheld from executing his wicked project.

(VII. 10, *Works* 3: 303)

Berman's slip would be insignificant if it did not reveal a more serious problem in his interpretation. In removing (almost) everything cognitive from the talk and faith or belief concerning mysteries, there appears to be nothing that makes this particular effect, abstaining from an evil action, appropriate to the belief in future state and those other effects, the sense of one's unworthiness and of the goodness of Redeemer, to the belief in original sin. The connection between particular effects and beliefs remains inexplicable.²⁴

4. Now I want to put forward my final, and, to my mind, conclusive arguments against the non-cognitivist (emotivist) understanding of what Berkeley, in *Alciphron* and elsewhere, says about the *use* and *truth* of the propositions concerning mysteries.

²⁴ Michael Ayers drew my attention to this difficulty.

Berman does not take seriously Berkeley's claim that the 'doctrines relating to heavenly mysteries' are 'revelations of God' (VII. 8, *Works* 3: 296).²⁵ The emotivist reading of *Alciphron* entails that Berkeley took God's revelation concerning heavenly mysteries to be non-informative. However, again, to *reveal* (*revelare*) something concerning these mysteries means nothing other than to make something known about them; and Berkeley held the words and propositions of Scripture to be instrumental in this informative process (VI. 4, 6–8, *Works* 3: 225, 228–233). He says that revelation was not intended to 'convey a perfect knowledge' but rather imperfect 'hints and glimpses' (VI. 8, *Works* 3: 233–234). Yet if it gave some knowledge about the 'heavenly mysteries', however imperfect it be, the propositions used for that purpose were not *essentially emotive*; and there appears to be no point in asking whether or not he ever 'intended to explain all mysteries in the way he explained that of the future state, as purely emotive' (Berman 1994: 163). It also seems to follow then that Berkeley regarded propositions concerning God's revelation as true propositions, not as merely emotive utterances, 'neither true nor false'.²⁶

After all, in Scripture, Berkeley thinks, God, not man, is the *speaker*. Whereas in using regularly the 'visual language' God speaks to men *immediately*, in Scripture he speaks by the *mediation* of inspired writers (VI. 6–10, *Works* 3: 227–240). This is to say that the divinely inspired persons have been 'committed to writing' (VI. 10, *Works* 3: 239), but 'the Spirit did not dictate every particle and syllable, or preserve them from every minute alteration by miracle' (VI. 7, *Works* 3: 232). All in all, the writers express what God has revealed to them, Scripture is 'the Word of God' (VI. 7, *Works* 3: 233). Now Berkeley, I take it, was committed to the traditional Christian view that the genuine word of God is necessarily true. For him, God neither lies nor speaks (reveals) nonsense.

Further, Berkeley thought that certain views and propositions about mysteries were false, like those of the Sabellians (VII. 9, *Works* 3: 300–301). Hence there is an additional reason to suppose that he thought the Anglican 'doctrines relating to heavenly mysteries' and the relevant propositions were true. He has, in fact, expressed no doubt about that. His saying that 'there may be possibly divers true and useful propositions' concerning grace (VII. 7, *Works* 3: 296), is, I think, not an expression of uncertainty about the truth of the Christian doctrine of grace (See Berman 1994: 162–163), but rather an admittance that no proposition concerning grace can be shown to be true and yet the queries about it and not having ideas of it do not prove that these propositions cannot be useful and true.

Finally, as I argued above, in the relevant passages Berkeley is primarily concerned with the issue of assent. Now, in this context, I take it, assent to a

²⁵ Berkeley held the view that all of these doctrines are contained in Scripture (VI. 10; VII. 4, 8, 15, *Works* 3: 239, 289, 297, 309).

²⁶ Cf. Ayer 1990, ch. 6.

proposition in Scripture means to accept, approve or receive it as coming from (veracious) God and thus as being true or expressing truth.²⁷

Everything said in this section about Berkeley's understanding of revelation, truth, and the text of Scripture seems to agree not only with what he says on these matters in *Alciphron*, but also in the other texts examined above. A bulk of evidence from Berkeley's writings and some hard speculation about his thought is needed to support the claim that, at any stage of his intellectual development between 1707 and 1732, he *did not* adhere to the view that in Scripture God has revealed a number of important mysterious *truths* formerly unknown to mankind, including those about the grace of God, heavenly rewards, etc. As far as I can see, Berman and Belfrage have not provided such evidence.

All the evidence we have suggests that Berkeley was of opinion that the Christian religion relies on saving truths revealed in Scripture. Consider, for example his note for a sermon preached in 1729:

10. after all — what mysterious truths come by Xt? St Mat. 13.11 to you it is given to know the mysteries of heaven. Wt are these important principal truths? True God revealed. our own state by original sin & our own corruption. The cure thereof. life & immortality with the way to come at it. our eyes open'd as to sin & duty, hell & heaven &c, Rom 15. 29 25. Xt king wt his kingdom. Priest wt his sacrifice. Prophet wt his doctrine. Love of God & neighbour Summary thereof. other doctrines try'd by this touch-stone.

(*Works* 7: 84)²⁸

5. As for the 'symbolic expressions' related to mysteries and the meaning or signification of relevant terms and propositions, I want to say the following.

As already noted in the first section of this chapter (2.1.), there are several places in Berkeley's works where he talks of representing supernatural things by means of ideas we have of natural ones. This line of thought is present in *Alciphron*, too.

In some passages he seems to suggest that mysteries can be illustrated by analogies, metaphors, similes, etc. (See VI. 11, VII. 13, *Works* 3: 240–241, 305–307).²⁹ This way of expression is common in Scripture, fitting to its 'simple, unaffected, artless, unequal, bold, figurative style' (VI. 7, *Works* 3: 232). Significant in this respect are his arguments concerning the analogy of nature between the 'things spiritual, supernatural, or relating to another world'

²⁷ Cf. Locke 1975, bk. IV, ch. 16, sect. 14 (p. 667), bk. IV, ch. 18, sect. 2 (p. 689).

²⁸ See also *A Discourse addressed to Magistrates* (1738), *Works* 6: 201–222, 219, and Olscamp 1970: 216.

²⁹ Some scholars have observed the significance of the talk of analogies and metaphors in this context. See Johnson 1752: 47–49; Olscamp 1970: 146–153; Brykman 1984: 505–509; 1993: 392–396.

and natural things.³⁰ Thus on the one hand, we are unable to form an idea of, say, the union of the divine and human nature in Christ, this being beyond our comprehension.³¹ But on the other hand, the mystery can be illustrated by the analogy with the union of human soul and body (VI. 11, *Works* 3: 240–241). This form of representation, though, one could say, belongs to ‘hints and glimpses, rather than views’. It is clear that Berkeley, unlike Peter Browne, offers no *theory* or precise explanation of how the supernatural realm is represented by ideas and conceptions in our minds. As compared to the conception of metaphorical and proper analogy in talking about the attributes of God (in dialogue IV), his remarks on the use of metaphors and the like ways of representation with respect to mysteries (in dialogue VII) are rather vague and indefinite. The obscurity in this point, I surmise, is meant to avoid various problems and objections that could have possibly risen concerning any explication of the literal or metaphorical meaning of the terms like ‘grace’, ‘Trinity’, ‘Father’, ‘Son’, etc. Instead of that Berkeley insists on the ‘another use of words besides that of marking and suggesting distinct ideas’ (VII. 5, *Works* 3: 292).

I also think that Berkeley himself did not see the meaning of the propositions concerning mysteries as a genuine problem or interesting philosophical question. Rather he thought we cannot possibly know, at least in this life, what ‘the invisible world and its mysteries’ they describe are really like — and nevertheless we ought to assent to them, relying on the authority of God (See VI. 2, *Works* 3: 221). In any case, what these propositions ultimately *mean*, or what their terms *stand for*, is not identical with the emotional effects of faith (assent).

2.4.2. The role of mysteries, and ‘parity of reasoning’

Finally, I want to comment on the alleged relation of ‘cognitive theology’ to ‘emotive mysteries’ and the comparison of faith with science.

1. I agree with Berman’s notion that, for Berkeley, the belief in mysteries relies on the belief in, or knowledge of, the existence and attributes of God. For this is basically as much as to say that revealed religion rests on natural religion. I cannot see, however, why should one express that notion in the obscure, anachronistic terminology of *emotive utterances* of a certain kind being *supported by cognitive statements* of a certain kind. From what has been said so

³⁰ See also Berkeley’s sermon *On Eternal Life*, *Works* 7: 105–113, 107.

³¹ Note the following remark made by G. A. Johnston in his account of Berkeley’s conception of faith: ‘Faith assures us of the reality of things of which we have no ideas’ (Johnston 1965: 356).

far it seems clear that for Berkeley faith is not something purely linguistic. Neither is it purely emotional.

Religious assent and its effects imply, on his account, some comprehension of what is believed and how it relates to us. For example, the belief in a future state, implies, among other things, the realization that evil intentions and actions in this life will bring about some (in our present condition unknown) dreadful punishments in the next. Such belief is possible, according to Berkeley, without having ideas of those particular punishments (VII. 10, *Works* 3: 302–303). This makes it still harder to make sense of the alleged identification of faith with ‘non-cognitive functions of language’.

2. In Berman’s view, Berkeley held that God disclosed the mysteries or doctrines of the Trinity, future state etc. just in order to make people act virtuously and have the right feeling or attitude towards God: to fear His justice and to love Him. The mysteries serve, then, merely as tools to produce in people such effects as love, hope, gratitude, piety and good habits. It is not quite clear whether or not this ‘emotive account of mysteries’ implies that Berkeley himself believed that, for example, God is a trinity and has truly been ‘manifest in the flesh’ (VI. 10, *Works* 3: 239). So Berman may be understood as attributing to Berkeley somewhat unorthodox views on basic Christian doctrines.

There is, however, inadequate textual evidence for Berman’s claim that Berkeley thought the mysteries served no other purpose than to produce certain emotions, dispositions, and actions, and to deepen a belief in the existence and attributes of God. The passages quoted or mentioned by Berman to support his claims (IV. 18; V. 27, 29; VII. 7, 8, 10, and *Works* 7: 146–147)³² in no way indicate that Berkeley regarded mysteries merely as tools to bring about ‘good habits’ and that they were utterly in the service of natural religion. For instance, Berman asserts:

Nothing will so effectively make people fear God’s justice as the mystery of a future state.

(Berman 1994: 147; cf. 1981: 224; 1993: 206)

All that Berkeley says on this point is that the ‘belief of a Future State’ is more effective in avoiding an evil action than a theoretical talk of the ‘beauty of virtue’, which ‘powerful effect’ relies on the fear of future punishment (VII. 10, *Works* 3: 302–303).³³ It does not follow from this, however, that he thought talk and belief about the future state is needed only or primarily to evoke morally right actions and the feeling of fear. If Berkeley held that God’s revelation concerning the future state was not intended to make us *aware* of the future rewards and punishments, then, it seems, he believed there was nothing to fear.

³² See Berman 1981: 224; 1993: 207; 1994: 147–148.

³³ See also Berkeley’s essays in *The Guardian* (1713), No. 55, *The Sanctions of Religion*, *Works* 7: 198–201, 199, and No. 89, *Immortality*, *Works* 7: 222–224, 223.

‘For why should a bad man fear a being that is not literally just’, Berman asks (Berman 1981: 224; 1993: 206; 1994: 147). But why should a bad man fear God’s justice if he thought with Berkeley that the talk of future punishments was merely emotive?

3. I shall not discuss Berkeley’s ‘parity arguments’ in detail here. However, I would like to make a brief remark on this topic to conclude the whole examination of the non-cognitivist interpretation.

Comparing the physical doctrine of *force* with the theological doctrine of divine *grace*, Berkeley asks:

shall we deny that it [the ‘doctrine of force’] is of use, either in practice or speculation, because we have no distinct idea of force? Or that which we admit with regard to force, upon what pretence can we deny concerning grace? If there are queries, disputes, perplexities, diversity of notions and opinions about the one, so there are about the other also: if we can form no precise distinct idea of the one, so neither can we of the other. Ought we not therefore, by a parity of reason, to conclude there may be possibly divers true and useful propositions concerning the one as well as the other? And that grace may, for aught you know, be an object of our faith, and influence our life and actions, as a principle destructive of evil habits and productive of good ones, although we cannot attain a distinct idea of it, separate or abstracted from God the author, from man the subject, and from virtue and piety its effects?

(VII. 7, *Works* 3: 295–296)

Note that he argues here to the effect that grace ‘may [...] be an object of our faith’ which means as much as ‘we can assent to propositions about grace.’ Faith and science ‘both imply an assent of the mind’ (VII. 11, *Works* 3: 303) and both are evaluated on the basis of their good influence on human minds, actions, lives (VII. 14–15, *Works* 3: 307–309). By the ‘parity of reason’ a number of similarities between force as an object of science and grace as an object of faith can be found. The symmetry has its limits, though. In the light of the foregoing discussions, I think, it can hardly be denied that Berkeley held the grace of God to be *real* and *effective*, whereas in case of force he notes, ‘the reality of the thing itself is made a question’ (VII. 6, *Works* 3: 295).³⁴

³⁴ M. W. Beal’s talk of ‘religious and scientific instrumentalism’ in this context (Beal 1971: 510–511) is to my mind misleading.

CONCLUSIONS

Belfrage's and Berman's accounts of the early development of Berkeley's views on meaning (more precisely, the alleged development from strict cognitivism to an emotive theory of meaning), as well as Berman's emotivist reading of *Alciphron*, are mistaken. (See sect. 1.5. above for a summary of their non-cognitivist reading of Berkeley's relevant works.)

My main conclusions about, and objections to, Belfrage's and Berman's non-cognitivist interpretation, as well as my own observations concerning Berkeley's writings, are these.

1. Neither the sermon *On Immortality* nor entry 720 of the *Philosophical Commentaries* gives evidence of a sudden and radical change in Berkeley's view regarding semantics, that is, a repudiation of the earlier *strict cognitivism* and acceptance of some *non-cognitive* ('non-descriptive', 'non-informative') discourse, more precisely, the non-cognitive term 'infinite', and 'non-cognitive propositions in Scripture', as Belfrage and Berman understand them.
2. Berkeley's use, in the sermon, of the term 'infinite' in religious context is to be seen as an expression of a commonplace theological position rather than advancing a new position in semantics. So there is no contradiction or doctrinal clash to be discerned between the paper *Of Infinites* and the sermon. The subject matter of the sermon — immortality, and 'infinite eternal bliss' in Heaven — and that of the paper — the mathematical doctrine of infinitesimals — are remarkably different. Contrary to Belfrage's account, the sermon does not concern the issue of 'the proper use of terms in valid demonstrations' and it does not contain a *demonstration*. Rather it contains reflections on the promised eternal happiness and the cause of why people do not bother to think about it.
3. In entry 720 Berkeley differentiates between propositions to be examined, and accepted or rejected, on the basis of *reason*, and those to be accepted on the basis of *faith*. This, however, contrary to Belfrage's suggestion, is not to distinguish between cognitive (informative) and non-cognitive (non-informative) propositions. For in the entry Berkeley does not suggest that the latter propositions, those concerning Christian mysteries, have no 'cognitive meaning' whatsoever or that we know absolutely nothing of what is meant by them. Likewise, contrary to Berman, he does not take these propositions to be 'cognitively empty', for he appears to suggest that we lack *complete* understanding of them, not understanding as such.
4. Berkeley's accounts, in the sermon and the *Draft Introduction*, of St. Paul's description of heavenly rewards, do not differ to the extent Belfrage and Berman think they do. Both in the sermon and the *Draft* Berkeley seems to assume that, firstly, the heavenly rewards or pleasures are there (and are infinite), and, secondly, we know of them by means of St. Paul's words. For

Berkeley, St. Paul's words are not *emotive* in the sense explained by Berman and Belfrage.

5. Berkeley, as it is known, gives in the *Draft* an account of the 'other ends' or 'other uses' of language besides the 'communicating of ideas'. Berman's and Belfrage's description of it in the anachronistic terms of the 'emotive theory' of meaning does not seem to suggest anything enlightening about the very doctrine of the various uses of language itself. Also, my analysis of the non-cognitivist interpretation has shown, I believe, that the description of the development of Berkeley's early views on meaning in terms of cognitivism/non-cognitivism is obscure and misleading.
6. It appears that both in entry 720 of the *Commentaries* and the first half of dialogue VII of *Alciphron* Berkeley's *main* concern is the issue of *assenting* to propositions about Christian mysteries. His reflections in *Alciphron* on the uses and significance of signs are introduced in this framework. For Berkeley, freethinkers accuse Christians of *assenting to nonsensical propositions* insofar as the propositions in question contain terms that do not 'suggest' (clear and distinct) ideas. It is in this context that he insists on the 'another use of words besides that of marking and suggesting distinct ideas.' Berkeley argues that it is not absurd to believe, or assent to, the propositions concerning mysteries given the good influence they have, or rather, this belief has, on our 'life and actions'. This is not to say, contrary to what the emotivist reading suggests, that such propositions do not describe, or inform human beings of, anything.
7. In *Alciphron*, dialogue VII, Berkeley does not, as Berman claims the case to be, introduce an 'emotive theory' of meaning to explain the significance of terms and propositions concerning mysteries by ascribing to them a power to evoke emotions, dispositions and actions. For in the passages Berman refers to, or cites, to support his claim Berkeley speaks of the good influence and effects of *faith*, or, of *assenting* to relevant propositions, not of the effects of uttering 'cognitively empty' words. Berman's suggestion, which seems to be intended to address this problem, that Berkeley 'identifies' faith with 'non-cognitive functions of language' is incomprehensible. Berkeley, contrary to Berman's contention, does not ascribe any 'emotive power' to the relevant terms and propositions as such.
8. In the light of the evidence we have both from the writings more closely discussed in this thesis and Berkeley's other works, it seems clear that he held propositions concerning mysteries to be *true* and also *informative*, which makes them essentially different from 'non-cognitive' or 'emotive' expressions or utterances as Belfrage and Berman understand them. Unlike Berman, he does not link the question of the truth of such propositions to the 'amount' of their 'cognitive content'. For him, Scripture is the word of (veracious) God. The relevant propositions in Scripture serve as 'instruments' of revelation. They are used to inform mankind of the heavenly rewards and other mysterious things which he, for all we know, believed to

be there. The Christian mysteries as revealed doctrines or truths, which concern supernatural realm, are by no means identified with 'emotive utterances'.

9. Berkeley seems to have assumed that the relevant terms in propositions regarding mysteries (e.g. 'good things' in Heaven, 'the grace of God', etc.) stand for supernatural realities even though the metaphorical representations we use to think about the latter are not adequate. He refers to such representations with respect to mysteries in several writings, but he advances no *theory* or detailed account about them.

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SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Berkeley, müsteeriumid ja tähendus. Mittekognitivistliku tõlgenduse kriitika

George Berkeley (1685–1753) arusaamu keelest, tähendusest ja märkidest on uuritud paljude vaatenurkade alt. Samas leidub vaid üksikuid uurimusi Berkeley tähenduskontseptsiooni kujunemise varase faasi (1707–1708) kohta. Kõige põhjalikumad uurimused sel teemal pärinevad Bertil Belfragelt ja David Bermanilt. Viimane on esitanud ka üksikasjaliku tõlgenduse Berkeley hilisematest vaadetest keelele ja tähendusele, mis ilmnevad teosest *Alciphron* (1732). Üldjoontes moodustavad Bermani ja Belfrage uurimused koherentse terviku, mida nimetan väitekirjas (teemasse puutuvate Berkeley teoste ja neis sisalduvate asjakohaste lõikude) *mittekognitivistlikuks tõlgenduseks*.

Selle tõlgenduse kohaselt kujunes Berkeley tähenduskontseptsioon aastatel 1707–1708 järgnevalt. Esmalt pooldas Berkeley ranget kognitivismi, leides, et kõik sõnad ja teised märgid, mis ei tähista ideid (Locke'i ja Berkeley tähenduses), on mõttetud; seejärel ütles ta sellest vaatest ootamatult lahti, mööndes, et vähemasti osa mittekognitiivsetest (mitteinformatiivsetest) sõnadest ja lausungitest [*utterances, propositions*] on mõttekad; ja viimaks jõudis Berkeley emotiivse tähenduse teooriani, mille kohaselt mittekognitiivsed sõnad ja lausungid on mõttekad ja tähenduslikud, kui neid kasutatakse emotsioonide, hoiakute või teatud tegude esilekutsumiseks. Sama teooria on väidetavalt avaldatud ka *Printsiipide* sissejuhatuses (1710) ja *Alciphron*'is. Mittekognitivistlikus tõlgenduses on kesksel kohal Belfrage ja Bermani arusaam sellest, mida väidab Berkeley oma kirjutistes kristlikke müsteeriume puudutavate lausungite kohta. Belfrage ja Bermani väitel oli Berkeley nii aastatel 1707–1708 kui ka hiljem arvamisel, et säärased lausungid on kognitiivse sisuta (mitteinformatiivsed, mittedeskriptiivsed) ja viimaks omistas neile emotiivse tähenduse.

Käesoleva doktoriväitekirja põhieesmärgiks on mittekognitivistliku tõlgenduse analüüsimine ja hindamine. Püüan näidata, et see tõlgendus on ekslik, anakronistlik ja vastuolus tekstilõikudega, mida Berman ja Belfrage on esitanud oma seisukohtade kinnituseks. Seega on mu lähenemisviis peamiselt kriitiline. Samas tulevad selle kriitika tulemusel nähtavale mitmed nüansid nii Berkeley varasemates kui ka hilisemates kirjutistes ja vaadetes.

Väitekirja esimeses peatükis kirjeldan detailselt mittekognitivistlikku tõlgendust, pöörates erilist tähelepanu sarnasustele ja erinevustele Belfrage ja Bermani arusaamades Berkeley tähenduskontseptsiooni kujunemisest. Teises peatükis esitan oma üksikasjaliku vastuargumentatsiooni sellele tõlgendusele, järgides esimese peatüki struktuuri. Väitekirja lõpus toon ära mittekognitivistliku tõlgenduse vaatlusest sündinud järeldused.

Berkeley varaste kirjutiste ja *Alciphron*'i analüüsi põhjal näitan väitekirjas, et

1. puudub tekstiline tõendusmaterjal selle kohta, et Berkeley oleks hüljanud oma varase tähenduskontseptsiooni selle lühikese ajavahemiku jooksul, mida Belfrage ja Berman on pakkunud;
2. vastupidi ühele mittekognitivistliku tõlgenduse põhipunktidest ei käsitle Berkeley üheski vaadeldud kirjutistest kristlikke müsteeriume puudutavaid lausungeid mittekognitiivsete (kognitiivse sisuta, kognitiivse tähenduseta), mitteinformatiivsete või emotiivsete lausungitena;
3. Berkeley tähenduskontseptsiooni kujunemise kirjeldus kognitivismi-mittekognitivismi-emotivismi terminites on väga ebamäärase sisuga ja eksitav;
4. Berkeley kirjutised ei anna alust omistada talle emotiivse tähenduse teooriat (nii nagu Berman ja Belfrage seda mõistavad).

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PUBLICATIONS

'Entry 720 of Berkeley's *Philosophical Commentaries* and "non-cognitive" propositions in Scripture', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* (forthcoming).

Entry 720 of Berkeley's *Philosophical Commentaries* and 'non-cognitive' propositions in Scripture

by Roomet Jakapi (Tartu)

This article is concerned with the development of Berkeley's early views on language and meaning. Two eminent Berkeley scholars, Bertil Belfrage and David Berman, have described that development as a transition from the Lockean, cognitivist view that all significant words or names stand for ideas, to an emotive theory of meaning, which allows words to be significant even if they do not signify ideas, provided that they evoke appropriate emotions, dispositions or actions.¹ Briefly, according to this interpretation Berkeley first held the cognitivist view, which is manifested in his early notebooks, the *Philosophical Commentaries* (written 1707–8), up to entry 696, and also in the paper "Of Infinites".² Then, Belfrage and Berman argue, he gave up the strict cognitivist position, accepting also certain non-cognitive propositions, and words that do not stand for ideas. That view is allegedly expressed in entry 720 of the *Commentaries* as well as in Berkeley's sermon "On Immortality".³

¹ See Bertil Belfrage, "The clash on semantics in Berkeley's *Notebook A*", *Hermathena*, 139 (1985), pp. 117–126, "Berkeley's Theory of Emotive Meaning (1708)", *History of European Ideas*, 7, (1986a) No. 6, pp. 643–649, "Development of Berkeley's early theory of meaning", *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger*, (1986b) No. 3, pp. 319–330, "Editor's Commentary" in *George Berkeley's Manuscript Introduction*, ed. B. Belfrage (Oxford: Doxa, 1987), pp. 25–57, esp. pp. 44–57, David Berman, "Berkeley's Semantic Revolution: 19 November 1707–11 January 1708", *History of European Ideas*, 7, (1986) No. 6, pp. 603–607, *George Berkeley. Idealism and the Man* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 11–17, 144–146, 161f. According to Belfrage, a parallel shift, or, clash, as he calls it, can be seen in the development of Berkeley's views on the 'concept of number' and 'nature of demonstration'. For in that case, Belfrage argues, Berkeley gave up his earlier view that numbers denote ideas, and demonstrations are 'confined' to ideas, and instead evolved an instrumentalist conception of numbers and demonstrations (Belfrage 1985, pp. 120–123; 1987, pp. 52–54).

² Berkeley read the paper before the Dublin Philosophical Society on 19 November 1707 (Berman 1986, p. 603, Belfrage 1986a, p. 643).

³ The sermon was delivered in the Trinity College Chapel, Dublin, on 11 January 1708 (Ibid.). It is published in *The Works of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne [Works]*, ed. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop (9 vols.; London: Thomas Nelson, 1948–57), vol. 7, pp. 9–15. On Belfrage's view, Berkeley, in the sermon, gave an account of non-cognitive propositions in Scripture — considering them as 'metaphysical descriptions' of transcendent reality — that he later rejected (Belfrage 1986a, p. 643; 1986b, pp. 321–324). Nevertheless, Berman and Belfrage share the opinion that Berkeley, in his earlier

Finally, in the *Draft Introduction* (written in 1708), Berkeley reached the emotive theory.

This account may contain other questionable points as well, but I will object here to Belfrage's and Berman's reading of entry 720 of the *Commentaries*.⁴ In particular, I disagree with their claim that in this entry Berkeley points out a particular kind of legitimate non-cognitive propositions, that is to say, propositions that do not inform and have no 'cognitive meaning' or 'cognitive content'.⁵ The propositions in question are those in Scripture concerning Christian mysteries.⁶

The entry reads as follows:

When I say I will reject all Propositions wherein I know not [the full ordinary *crossed out*] fully & adequately & clearly so far as knowable the Thing meant thereby This is not to be extended to propositions in the Scripture. I speak of Matters of Reason & Philosophy not Revelation, In this I think an Humble Implicit faith becomes us just (where we cannot [fully *crossed out*] comprehend & Understand the proposition) such as a popish peasant gives to propositions he hears at Mass in Latin. This proud men call blind, popish, implicit, irrational. for my part I think it more irrational to pretend to dispute at cavil & ridicule [things *crossed out*] holy mysteries i. e. propositions about things out of our reach that are altogether above our knowlege out of our reach. Wⁿ I shall come to plenary knowlege of the Meaning of any Text then I shall yield an explicit belief. Introd.⁷

as well as later writings, viewed the propositions or statements in question as *non-cognitive* (non-informative).

⁴ For critical commentaries on Berman's and Belfrage's accounts of Berkeley's early intellectual development, see Robert McKim, "The entries in Berkeley's Notebooks: a reply to Bertil Belfrage", *Hermathena*, 139 (1985), pp. 156–161, M. A. Stewart, "Berkeley's Introduction Draft", *Berkeley Newsletter*, 11 (1989/1990), pp. 10–19 (reply by B. Belfrage: "A Response to M. A. Stewart's 'Berkeley's Introduction Draft'", *Berkeley Newsletter*, 12, 1991/1992, pp. 1–10), Geneviève Brykman, *Berkeley et le Voile des Mots* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1993), pp. 78–84, Kenneth Wayne Williford, *Three Studies on Berkeley's Philosophy of Language* (Master's Thesis, University of Iowa, 2000), pp. 22–45. For a detailed examination of Berman's emotivist reading of Berkeley's *Alciphron* (1732), dialogue 7, see Roomet Jakapi, "Emotive Meaning and Christian Mysteries in Berkeley's *Alciphron*", *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, forthcoming.

⁵ Belfrage 1987, p. 56, Berman 1994, pp. 144f., 161f.

⁶ I do not discuss here Berkeley's putative account of non-cognitive language use in other contexts. For a comprehensive exposition of Berkeley's position as *cognitivism* allowing *emotive uses* of ethical language, see Paul J. Olscamp, *The Moral Philosophy of George Berkeley* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), ch. 5, pp. 130–153.

⁷ George Berkeley, *Philosophical Commentaries*, ed. George H. Thomas (Ohio: Alliance 1976), p. 94f.

What Berkeley expressly says here about the relevant propositions in Scripture is that they belong to “Matters of [...] Revelation” and are “about things out of our reach”⁸. This is to say, on a traditional account of revelation, that they serve precisely the purpose to inform mankind of (the existence of) these remote things. Accordingly, in the sermon “On Immortality” Berkeley speaks of the “revelation of eternal happiness or misery” and “new discover’d regions of life & immortality”⁹. In several other sermons and writings he (explicitly or implicitly) says it to be revealed in the Scriptures that God is a trinity, that the grace of God operates on Christians, that there will be a general resurrection and last judgement, etc.¹⁰ To state with Berman and Belfrage that, according to Berkeley, biblical propositions about those supernatural matters give *no* information¹¹, is in fact to deny that Berkeley acknowledged a genuine revelation concerning “the invisible world and its mysteries”¹². However, there seems to be nothing in Berkeley’s works to support that assertion.¹³ So he did consider such propositions to be informative; and this can be concluded regardless of the issue of whether or how he would have explained the content of revelation in terms of ideas.

⁸ In *Alciphron*, dial. 6, sect. 6, Berkeley distinguishes between the ‘narrative’, ‘devotional and prophetic’, and ‘doctrinal’ parts of the Scripture (*Works*, vol. 3, p. 228). Entry 720, it would seem, is primarily concerned with certain ‘doctrinal’ parts containing such mysterious doctrines as the Holy Trinity, rewards and punishments in a future state, etc.

⁹ *Works*, vol. 7, p. 10.

¹⁰ See *Commentaries*, entry 776, p. 102; sermons “On Charity”, “On the Mystery of Godliness” and the “Anniversary Sermon”, *Works*, vol. 7, pp. 30, 87, 92, 116; *Alciphron*, dial. 6, sect. 10, dial. 7, sects. 4, 7, 8, *Works*, vol. 3, pp. 239, 289, 296f.

¹¹ See Belfrage 1986a, pp. 644–646; Berman 1994, pp. 12, 144f., 162.

¹² *Alciphron*, dial. 6, sect. 30, *Works*, vol. 3, p. 280.

¹³ Elsewhere Berkeley points indeed, as Berman and Belfrage observe, to St. Paul’s ‘empty tho emphatical’ or ‘indefinite’ description of a future state:

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for those that love him.

(1 Cor 2: 9; essay “Immortality” in the *Guardian*, 1713, *Works*, vol. 7, p. 223)

See also “On Immortality”, *Works*, vol. 7, p. 12. However, on a traditional Christian reading, this description does inform us about the following: there are desirable “things which God hath prepared for those that love him”, these things are above our comprehension in this life. Berkeley definitely does not reject this view by claiming in the *Draft Introduction* that the purpose of using these words is not to bring “into the Mind determinate Ideas” of these things, but make men “more chearfull and fervent in their Duty” (Belfrage 1987, p. 105ff.). For the duty is to love God and behave in such a way as to obtain the desirable things, ‘highest and most inestimable rewards’ or ‘eternal happiness’ (See *Works*, vol. 7, pp. 11f., 28f., 34, 46, 115). I am in agreement here with Olscamp (Olscamp 1970, p. 153) and Williford (Williford 2000, p. 43f.).

As to the meaning of these propositions, Berkeley admits that he knows not “fully & adequately & clearly so far as knowable the Thing meant thereby”. This is clearly not to say that the propositions have no ‘cognitive meaning’ whatsoever or that we know absolutely nothing of the “Thing meant thereby”. Rather we know what is meant by them, but only so far as it has been revealed. We know from Scripture, say, that the faithful will obtain ‘eternal happiness’. According to Berkeley’s sermon from 1708, people try to conceive of that state of everlasting happiness by means of ‘pleasant ideas’ such as “green meadows, fragrant groves, refreshing shades, crystal streams”¹⁴. And yet, our fancy being weak, the desirable ‘pleasures of Heaven’ or ‘cœlestial joys’ remain hidden from us at present. These pleasures and joys, Berkeley assures, “shall be excellent beyond ye compass of our imagination”¹⁵.

It appears, further, that the chief point Berkeley makes in entry 720 is not about the *meaning* of the propositions in Scripture. In matters of revelation, he insists, “an Humble Implicit faith becomes us just (where we cannot comprehend & Understand the proposition) such as a popish peasant gives to propositions he hears at Mass in Latin”. Berkeley’s point, I think, is that we ought to *assent* to the relevant propositions in the Bible, that is, to believe what the speaker, i. e. God, tells us about the mysterious things, although we do not understand His talk completely. Berkeley’s comparison seems to imply that these propositions can be understood to some extent. For presumably the ‘popish peasant’ has some idea of what is being said at ‘Mass in Latin’. The last sentence of the entry also suggests that, in our present life, we lack *complete* understanding of the propositions in question.¹⁶

Thus, contrary to Belfrage’s suggestion¹⁷, Berkeley, in contrasting “Matters of Reason & Philosophy” with “Matters of Revelation”¹⁸, does not introduce a rough distinction between the two completely different kinds of propositions: cognitive (informative) and non-cognitive (non-informative).

There is hardly any doubt, I think, that Berkeley held the relevant propositions in Scripture to be true, regardless of his philosophical views on language, signification, ideas, metaphors, etc. Not so on Berman’s reading. Berman thinks that, on Berkeley’s account the answer to the question whether these propositions are true or not depends on how much cognitive content they have for us. Since, as Berkeley allegedly suggests, they have no cognitive content, it seems that they cannot be true. On the other hand, Berman argues, the final sentence of entry 720 — “Wⁿ I shall come to plenary knowlege of the Meaning

¹⁴ “On Immortality”, *Works*, vol. 7, p. 12.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁶ For the latter details of interpretation I owe thanks to Robert McKim.

¹⁷ See Belfrage 1987, p. 56.

¹⁸ Likewise in entry 584 of the *Commentaries* Berkeley contrasts ‘implicit faith’ with reasoning and demonstrations (p. 76f.).

of any Text then I shall yield an explicit belief” — implies that, for Berkeley, the propositions in question “can have cognitive content and can be true, if only in the next life”¹⁹. However, Berman has offered no evidence for the claim implied by his reading that Berkeley did not hold the orthodox view, which entails that these propositions are true just because they come (by the mediation of inspired writers) from God, who never lies. Berkeley admits elsewhere that “we have no determin’d idea of the pleasures of Heaven”²⁰. Yet he does not indicate that the propositions about these pleasures are not true. The view Berman derives from entry 720, that such propositions cannot be true in this life and can be true in the next, is incomprehensible. To my knowledge Berkeley has nowhere in his writings suggested that propositions concerning the Trinity, divinity of Christ and the like may not be true. On the contrary, he was of opinion that the Christian religion relies on the saving *truths* revealed in Scripture.²¹

Thus Berkeley, in entry 720 of the *Philosophical Commentaries*, does not claim propositions relating to divine mysteries to be non-cognitive in the sense explained by Berman and Belfrage. And it is hardly believable that he later became to regard them as purely emotive. Rather he believed them to be true, informative and indeed meaningful; no ‘development’ occurred in that respect.

¹⁹ Berman 1994, p. 162. Cf. Belfrage 1986b, p. 323.

²⁰ “On Immortality”, *Works*, vol. 7, p. 13.

²¹ Consider, for example his note for a sermon preached in 1729:

10. after all — what mysterious truths come by Xt? St Mat. 13.11 to you it is given to know the mysteries of heaven. Wt are these important pricipal truths? True God revealed. our own state by original sin & our own corruption. The cure thereof. life & immortality with the way to come at it. our eyes open’d as to sin & duty, hell & heaven &c, Rom 15. 29 25. Xt king wt his kingdom. Priest wt his sacrifice. sProphet wt his doctrine. Love of God & neighbour Summary thereof. other doctrines try’d by this touch-stone.

(*Works*, vol. 7, p. 84)

See also *A Discourse addressed to Magistrates* (1738), *Works*, vol. 6, p. 219, and Olscamp 1970, p. 216.

**'Emotive Meaning and Christian Mysteries in Berkeley's
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EMOTIVE MEANING AND CHRISTIAN MYSTERIES IN BERKELEY'S *ALCIPHRON*

Roomet Jakapi

Berkeley's *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher* (1732) is designed as a defence of the Christian religion against free-thinkers. This apology, however, contains philosophical discussions, for instance, on personal identity and freedom of the will that may in principle be considered independently of Berkeley's religious intentions. It has been argued that the most and perhaps the only remarkable philosophical novelty in *Alciphron* is a theory of emotive meaning or emotive language, applied in this case to Christian mysteries. It has also been argued that the theory was already present in Berkeley's *Draft Introduction* (1708).¹ However, my concern here will be to examine the claim that Berkeley uses this kind of theory in *Alciphron*, more precisely, in the seventh dialogue, to explain the meaning of utterances concerning Christian mysteries. In the following I focus on the most detailed account of Berkeley's alleged theory of emotive language in *Alciphron*, that of David Berman,² but I also refer to similar claims of other scholars who have written on the topic.

On Berman's *emotivist* reading, Berkeley held that utterances concerning such mysteries as the Holy Trinity and original sin are emotive, that is, non-

¹ For the claim and related discussion see Geneviève Brykman, *Berkeley: Philosophie et Apologétique*, (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1984) Ch. 6 pp. 299–324, *Berkeley et le Voile des Mots* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1993) Ch. 6 pp. 189–224, Bertil Belfrage, 'The clash on semantics in Berkeley's *Notebook A*', *Hermathena*, 139 (1985): 117–126, 'Berkeley's Theory of Emotive Meaning (1708)', *History of European Ideas*, 7, (1986) No. 6: 643–649, 'Development of Berkeley's early theory of meaning', *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger*, (1986) No. 3, pp. 319–30, 'Editor's Commentary' in *George Berkeley's Manuscript Introduction*, ed. B. Belfrage (Oxford: Doxa, 1987) 25–57, pp. 46–50, Robert McKim, 'The entries in Berkeley's Notebooks: a reply to Bertil Belfrage', *Hermathena*, 139 (1985): 156–161, p. 157, David Berman, 'Berkeley's Semantic Revolution: 19 November 1707–11 January 1708', *History of European Ideas*, 7 (1986) No. 6: 603–607, M. A. Stewart, 'Berkeley's Introduction Draft', *Berkeley Newsletter*, 11 (1989–90): 10–19, pp. 16–7, Kenneth Wayne Williford, *Three Studies on Berkeley's Philosophy of Language* (Master's Thesis, The University of Iowa, 2000) Ch. 1 pp. 1–45.

² D. Berman, 'Cognitive theology and emotive mysteries in Berkeley's *Alciphron*', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 81c (1981) No 7: 219–229, reprinted in *George Berkeley: Alciphron, or the minute philosopher in focus*, ed. D. Berman (London: Routledge, 1993) 200–213, *George Berkeley. Idealism and the Man* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) 144–163. Berman's interpretation in its most elaborated form is contained in the latter monograph.

informative, and yet meaningful in the sense that they produce certain emotional effects in those who hear or read them, and also evoke morally right actions.³ Berkeley used, then, the theory in *Alciphron* to defend mysteries by showing that utterances about them are significant, despite the fact that they do not inform or stand for ideas.

The main purpose of this paper is to refute the claim that Berkeley, in *Alciphron*, considered propositions concerning the Christian mysteries to be non-informative, and reduced their meaning to the ability to evoke emotional effects, and actions.⁴ I also attempt to show what he actually said about faith and mysteries, and the propositions in relation to them.

In section I, I give a brief description of Berman's interpretation. In section II, I point out a fundamental ambiguity in Berman's talk of mysteries and try to clarify what Berkeley himself meant by 'mysteries'. In sections III and IV, I offer objections to the emotivist reading. I argue that this reading attributes to Berkeley views which either are inconsistent with what Berkeley explicitly says in *Alciphron* or bear too little or no textual support. Finally, I reach the conclusion that Berkeley held that at least some of the propositions concerning the mysteries are true and informative, and that the relevant effects and actions are produced in part by comprehension of what is communicated by those propositions.

I

Berkeley's philosophical theology in *Alciphron*, as Berman sees it, relies on the *linguistic distinction* between cognitive statements and emotive utterances, or, more generally, between the cognitive and three non-cognitive functions of language. Thus cognitive statements such as 'That cow is brown'⁵ inform, whereas emotive utterances such as 'Cheer up!', 'Life's a bore' or 'Get out!' produce (1) emotions, (2) dispositions, and (3) actions. Both the statements and utterances are meaningful, the former so far as they inform or stand for ideas, the latter as they produce those effects in the minds of the readers and hearers.

³ I take it that by 'utterances' Berman means spoken or written expressions. His interpretation is primarily concerned with *emotive utterances* as contrasted with *cognitive* (informative) *statements* (See sect. I below). Berkeley himself makes no explicit distinction, using the term 'proposition' to cover both cases.

⁴ Thus I do not intend to give a general account of his views on language and meaning either in *Alciphron* or elsewhere. Nor do I at present intend to examine the question whether certain early texts such as the *Philosophical Commentaries* and sermon 'On Immortality' justify attributing to Berkeley an appeal to an emotive theory of meaning in these contexts.

⁵ The relevant examples are given by Berman (Berman 1981, p. 224; 1993, p. 206; 1994, p. 148).

Statements of natural or rational theology, particularly those about the existence and attributes of God, belong, on Berman's reading, to the first, and utterances concerning mysteries to the second category.⁶ Thus the statement 'God exists and is wise' conveys some information or knowledge about God and has cognitive content. Utterances concerning the Holy Trinity, grace of God, original sin or a future state, on the other hand, 'have little or no cognitive content'⁷ and thus are 'essentially emotive'⁸ for Berkeley.

According to this emotivist reading, Berkeley held that certain words have emotive power and that words or utterances used in talking about mysteries are of that kind, producing such effects as love, hope, obedience, and good habits.⁹ Berman does not argue that in *Alciphron* — as he says is the case in the *Draft Introduction* — Berkeley explained this effectiveness of utterances as a consequence of customary connection between them and certain emotions, dispositions, and actions. Yet they have, Berman says, a 'tendency' or are 'likely to', or at least 'can', produce these effects.¹⁰ Berman insists that, for Berkeley, the emotive effectiveness of talk of mysteries rests on our background belief in the existence of a good, wise, and just God. Talk of mysteries is intended to make us 'act and feel in certain ways', that is, to make us perform morally right actions and to have certain attitude towards God: to fear his justice and to love him.¹¹

II

While talking about Berkeley's putative use of the theory of emotive language to defend Christian mysteries, the first thing to be clarified is what he meant by 'mysteries' and whether he thought there were mysteries in some sense or another as distinguished from utterances about them. The notion of mysteries involved in Berman's interpretation is not clear-cut. On the one hand he is close to saying that mysteries *are* certain (emotive, non-cognitive) words or

⁶ Berkeley saw, according to Berman, that non-cognitive words can *evoke* emotions, but not that (such) words can *express* them too, as in 'Oh dear!' or 'Gosh!' (Berman 1994, p. 161). There is, however, Berman says:

no doubt that he [Berkeley] anticipates the emotive analysis of metaphysical and religious language offered by such (former) Logical Positivists as A. J. Ayer, in *Language, Truth and Logic* (London, 1936), chs. 1 and 6. The irony, of course, is that the Logical Positivists applied the emotive theory destructively to religion, whereas Berkeley used it to defend religion.

(Berman 1994, p. 155; cf. 1981, p. 229; 1993, p. 212)

⁷ Berman 1981, p. 223; 1993, p. 205; 1994, p. 147, 162.

⁸ Berman 1981, p. 227; 1993, p. 210; 1994, p. 159.

⁹ Berman 1994, pp. 146–7, 150–4; cf. 1981, pp. 223–4; 1993, p. 205

¹⁰ Berman 1981, pp. 223–4; 1993, p. 205; 1994, p. 147.

¹¹ Berman 1981, pp. 219, 224; 1993, pp. 200, 206; 1994, pp. 134, 147.

utterances. Consider the following passage where he links Berkeley's account of mysteries to Toland's view:

that if a word does not signify a distinct idea, then it is meaningless; and that since Christian mysteries do not stand for ideas, they must be as meaningless as 'Blictri'.

Now Berkeley accepted part of Toland's claim, namely, that religious mysteries do not signify distinct ideas; but this does not imply, Berkeley urged, that they are meaningless. That conclusion only follows if one accepts the Lockean *either/or* [...] that words either communicate ideas and are meaningful, or do not signify ideas and are meaningless.

(Berman 1994, pp. 148–9)¹²

Mysteries, it would seem, are regarded here as words rather than something signified, meant or expressed by them. On the other hand Berman frequently distinguishes between mysteries and their verbal expressions or the terms signifying them:

By skilfully using some of the critical results of his early work in philosophy and philosophy of science, Berkeley tries to show that there is nothing 'absurd or repugnant' in the Christian mysteries. Thus he contends that while it is hard to understand grace, it is not any harder than understanding the scientist's concept of force; although both 'grace' and 'force' are of considerable use (*Alc.* vii. 7). And while there seem to be difficulties in understanding the Athanasian doctrine of the Trinity, there are similar perplexities, Berkeley holds, in the widely accepted (Lockean) theory of personal identity (developed in *Essay*, II. xxvi), that personal identity consists in identity of consciousness.

(*Ibid.*, p. 156)¹³

The religious mysteries along with the 'mysteries' in science and philosophy are considered here as doctrines that may contain difficulties, be more or less comprehensible, but not as mere (emotive, non-cognitive) words or utterances. In one place, Berman says that the mysteries are *expressed* in emotive language, which also implies a distinction.¹⁴ He asks, further, whether the mysteries as distinguished from statements about them can be true, on Berkeley's scheme.¹⁵

¹² Cf. *ibid.*, p. 15; 1981, p. 225; 1993, p. 207.

¹³ Cf. Berman 1981, pp. 226–7; 1993, pp. 209–10.

¹⁴ See the figure in Berman 1981, p. 226; 1993, p. 209; 1994, p. 155. Note that this view seems incompatible with Berman's claim that utterances concerning mysteries are essentially emotive — if they are not essentially different from such utterances as 'Cheer up!' and 'Get out!', they cannot express even obscure or incomprehensible doctrines since the latter utterances do not inform and do not express anything, according to Berman.

¹⁵ Berman 1994, pp. 161–2.

And finally, he points to Berkeley's suggestion that 'words about mysteries can function symbolically'.¹⁶

Berman's interpretation appears to turn on a confused conception of mysteries. For in the passages describing the theory of emotive meaning, he says both of the verbal expressions of mysteries and the mysteries themselves that they are 'emotive', have 'little or no cognitive content', which, however, 'does not prevent their meaningful use', and that they 'do not stand for ideas'.¹⁷ The mysteries bear, on that account, characteristics that Berman ascribes to words, statements and utterances. In the discussion of Berkeley's 'parity arguments' concerning faith, science, and philosophy, however, the mysteries are distinguished from utterances about them; they are, then, something that can be expressed in (emotive) language.¹⁸

Berkeley himself maintains clearly that 'the wording of a mystery' or 'retaining or rejecting a term' in talking about mysteries is not a substantial issue (VII. 10; *Works* 3: 302)¹⁹ and that, for instance, the same doctrine of the Trinity or 'Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier' is expressed in various ways and propositions (VII. 8; *Works* 3: 297). It is hard to understand then the question of whether the doctrine or mystery itself (not the term 'Trinity') does or does not signify ideas.²⁰

In general, it is indeed the revealed doctrines of grace, original sin, and others that Berkeley calls mysteries (VI. 10, 12; VII. 4, 8; *Works* 3: 239, 242–3, 289, 296–7). This, however, is not the only signification of the term 'mystery'. Pointing to the use and effects of faith, Berkeley says concerning the evil intentions of a freethinker:

Whereas that very man, do but produce in him a sincere belief of a Future State, although it be a mystery, although it be what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, he shall, nevertheless, by virtue of such belief, be withheld from executing his wicked project: and that for reasons which all men can comprehend, though nobody can be the object of them.

(VII. 10; *Works* 3: 303)

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 163.

¹⁷ See Berman 1981, pp. 223–5; 1993, pp. 205–8; 1994, pp. 145–149, 162.

¹⁸ See Berman 1981, pp. 226–7; 1993, pp. 209–11; 1994, pp. 155–9. The same confusion arises in Berman's article 'George Berkeley' in *Routledge History of Philosophy*, Vol. V, *British Philosophy and the Age of Enlightenment*, ed. S. Brown (London: Routledge, 1996) 123–149, pp. 139–40.

¹⁹ References to Berkeley's works are from *The Works of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne*, ed. A. A. Luce and T.E. Jessop (London, 1948–57). References to *Alciphron* additionally cite dialogue number and section number.

²⁰ Cf. Berman 1994, pp. 148–9, 162.

And concerning the Christian mysteries in general he observes:

why men that are so easily and so often gravelled in common points, in things natural and visible, should yet be so sharp-sighted and dogmatical about the invisible world and its mysteries is to me a point utterly unaccountable by all the rules of logic and good sense.

(VI. 30; *Works* 3: 280)

It appears that the ‘mysteries’ in this sense signify certain hidden realities, which the doctrines and utterances concern. Berkeley’s description of the effects arising from the belief in mysteries is, accordingly, intended to prove that the ‘*doctrines relating to heavenly mysteries* might be taught, in this saving sense, to vulgar minds’ (VII. 9; *Works* 3: 299–300, emphasis added). The *heavenly mysteries*, then, are distinguished both from doctrines relating to them and utterances about them. Consequently, Berman’s assertion that Berkeley gives an ‘emotive account of mysteries’²¹ — in either of his senses of the word — that is, takes the Christian mysteries to be merely emotive utterances or doctrines expressed in emotive language, is, at best, misleading.

III

Nevertheless, it is still worth inquiring whether there is to be found, in *Alciphron*, an emotivist theory of the meaning of *utterances* concerning mysteries. There are, I argue, several reasons why such a theory cannot be reasonably ascribed to Berkeley.

Berkeley speaks, in fact, about the effects of *faith* or ‘belief of mysteries’ in general and about the effects of one’s *belief* in particular mysteries, and not about the effects of mere *utterances*. Thus he talks about ‘the saving faith of Christians’ which is ‘a vital operative principle, productive of charity and obedience’ (VII. 9; *Works* 3: 300) and the effects of the belief in original sin and a future state (VII. 10; *Works* 3: 301–3). Faith or belief, according to Berkeley, is or at least implies assent to a proposition, and in one place he is inclined to say that it is the propositions concerning the Trinity which direct and affect the mind (VII. 8; *Works* 3: 297). However, he clearly relates this influence to the belief in the Trinity. And in another passage he refers to the ‘articles of our Christian faith which, *in proportion as they are believed*, persuade, and, as they persuade, influence the lives and actions of men’ (VII. 15; *Works* 3: 308, emphasis added).

It seems that Berkeley’s account of the efficacy of the Christian faith cannot be construed as the introduction of a theory of emotive meaning, unless one first assumes that by ‘effects of faith’ he means effects produced by certain emotive utterances. And this is indeed what Berman appears to assume on his emotivist

²¹ Berman 1981, p. 224; 1993, p. 206; 1994, p. 147.

reading. He also expresses this assumption by the puzzling statement that Berkeley ‘identifies faith with the three non-cognitive functions of language’.²² This emotivist reading makes it difficult to understand what Berman means elsewhere by the ‘*belief* in the Christian mysteries’,²³ and how such belief could be related to faith.

In any case, regardless of internal coherence of Berman’s position there is no evidence for his general claim that Berkeley held the relevant propositions to be non-cognitive, or merely emotive.

The emotivist reading faces another interesting problem which is the meaning or meaningful use of utterances concerning particular mysteries or the doctrines in question. If they do not suggest distinct ideas, inform or have cognitive content, what, then, makes a difference between the *meaningful* use of the utterances concerning a particular mystery and those concerning another such mystery or all others? Berman seems to think that the difference lies in the effects produced by those utterances. He relies on the examples that Berkeley gives of the good effects resulting from the belief in particular mysteries; but, as already noted, Berman describes these effects as effects of the ‘talk of’ mysteries. Thus he links utterances about the Trinity to ‘love, hope, gratitude, and obedience’, those about grace to ‘good habits and piety’, those about original sin to deterring ‘people from committing an evil deed’, and those about the future state to ‘good habits and a salutary sense of one’s unworthiness’.²⁴ Utterances concerning different mysteries have, on this reading, distinctive emotive meaning since they produce different or at least not wholly coinciding effects.

In this context, however, Berman, first of all, mismatches Berkeley’s claims concerning original sin and a future state. According to Berman:

original sin can deter people from committing an evil deed, and a future state is likely to produce good habits and a salutary sense of one’s unworthiness.

(Berman 1994, p. 147)²⁵

²² Berman 1981, p. 223; 1993, p. 205; 1994, p. 146.

²³ Berman 1981, p. 224; 1993, p. 206; 1994, p. 147, emphasis added.

²⁴ Berman 1994, pp. 146–7; cf. 1981, pp. 223–4; 1993, pp. 205–6. Berman is accompanied here by Peter Walmsley who puts it explicitly that a “proper impression” of the words [relating to the Trinity] depends on the reader’s having *quite specific emotional responses* — “love, hope, gratitude, and obedience” — and then acting appropriately on these feelings — “agreeably to the notion of saving faith”. (*The Rhetoric of Berkeley’s Philosophy. Cambridge Studies in Eighteenth-Century English Literature and Thought* 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 186, emphasis added).

²⁵ Cf. Berman 1981, p. 224; 1993, p. 205.

In Berkeley we find that a man's belief in original sin:

may produce in his mind a salutary sense of his own unworthiness, and the goodness of his Redeemer: from whence may follow good habits, and from them good actions.

(VII. 10; *Works* 3: 301)

And in the passage cited above, Berkeley says:

Whereas that very man, do but produce in him a sincere belief of a Future State, although it be a mystery [...] he shall, nevertheless, by virtue of such belief, be withheld from executing his wicked project.

(VII. 10; *Works* 3: 303)

Berman's slip would be insignificant if it did not reveal a more serious problem in his interpretation. In removing (almost) everything cognitive from the talk and faith or belief concerning mysteries, there appears to be nothing that makes this particular effect, abstaining from an evil action, appropriate to the belief in future state and those other effects, the sense of one's unworthiness and of the goodness of Redeemer, to the belief in original sin. The connection between particular effects and beliefs remains inexplicable.

The whole emotivist reading relies on Berkeley's remarks on the Trinity, grace, original sin and future state. Yet Berman even does not mention that Berkeley talks about the belief in a number of other mysteries such as the divinity of Christ, resurrection of the dead and 'God manifest in the flesh', that is, incarnation (VI. 10, 11; VII. 8; *Works* 3: 239–41, 298), and in those cases without mentioning distinctive or any emotional effects.

According to Berman, Berkeley held that certain words or names have 'emotive power' or a tendency to produce 'emotions, habits, and actions'.²⁶ However, the words like 'trinity' or 'incarnation' may hardly be said to bear a particular emotive or action-promoting power. There is nothing essentially emotive in them. The same applies to the theological propositions in which such terms occur. For Berkeley mentions disputes about the 'nature, extent, and effects' as well as other aspects of *grace* and compares them with discussions about *force* in science. In that context, utterances about force and grace are obviously not intended to evoke emotions. Neither are they utterly meaningless for Berkeley (VII. 7; *Works* 3: 296). Despite his insistence on practical faith and a critical attitude towards useless speculations (VII. 15; *Works* 3: 308), there is no evidence that he held all theological propositions and discussions concerning mysteries to be either emotive or senseless. Furthermore, Berkeley certainly thought that certain views and propositions concerning mysteries were false, like those of the Sabellians (VII. 9; *Works* 3: 300–1). Hence it is reasonable to suppose that he thought the Anglican 'doctrines relating to heavenly mysteries' and the relevant propositions were true. He has, in fact, expressed no doubt

²⁶ Berman 1994, pp. 150, 152–3.

about that. His saying that ‘there may be possibly divers true and useful propositions’ concerning grace (VII. 7; *Works* 3: 296), is, I think, not an expression of uncertainty about the truth of the Christian doctrine of grace,²⁷ but rather an admittance that no proposition concerning grace can be shown to be true and yet the queries about it and not having ideas of it do not prove that these propositions cannot be useful and true.

Berman, perhaps, tries to escape the difficulty by saying that:

Berkeley’s emotive account of mysteries rests squarely on his cognitive account of theology.

(Berman 1981, p. 224; 1993, p. 206; 1994, p. 147)

The mysteries, on this account, are not a subject of theology. Yet this is not Berkeley’s view for, as already said, he refers to theological discussions about mysteries. From Berman’s reading it follows that theological — like any other — talk of mysteries is emotive; and then, to be consistent, it is necessary to introduce an extraordinary distinction between cognitive and emotive theology which has no foundation in *Alciphron*.

IV

In addition to the previous objections, there are also strong reasons in Berkeley’s theology to reject the emotivist reading.

In Berman’s view, Berkeley held that God disclosed the mysteries or doctrines of the Trinity, future state etc. just in order to make people act virtuously and have the right feeling or attitude towards God: to fear His justice and to love Him.²⁸ The mysteries serve, then, merely as tools to produce in people such effects as love, hope, gratitude, piety and good habits. It is not quite clear whether or not this ‘emotive account of mysteries’ implies that Berkeley himself believed that, for example, God is a trinity and has truly been ‘manifest in the flesh’. So Berman may be understood as attributing to Berkeley somewhat unorthodox views on basic Christian doctrines.

There is, however, inadequate textual evidence for Berman’s claim that Berkeley thought the mysteries (doctrines) served no other purpose than to produce certain emotions, dispositions, and actions, and to deepen a belief in the existence and attributes of God. The passages quoted or mentioned by Berman

²⁷ Cf. Berman 1994, pp. 162–3.

²⁸ This accords with Bertil Belfrage’s comment on ‘Berkeley’s emotive theory’ in the *Draft Introduction*: “‘There are good things in heaven’ seems to be a recommendation to act in accordance with what Christian doctrine prescribes as our duty” (Belfrage 1987, p. 48). For alternative readings, see Paul J. Olscamp, *The Moral Philosophy of George Berkeley* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 149–153, and Williford 2000, Ch. 1, pp. 7–22.

to support his claims (IV. 18; V. 27, 29; VII, 7, 8, 10, and *Works* 7: 146–7)²⁹ in no way indicate that Berkeley regarded mysteries merely as tools to bring about ‘good habits’ and that they were utterly in the service of natural religion. For instance, Berman asserts:

Nothing will so effectively make people fear God’s justice as the mystery of a future state.

(Berman 1994, p. 147)³⁰

All that Berkeley says on this point is that the ‘belief of a Future State’ is more effective in avoiding an evil action than a theoretical talk of the ‘beauty of virtue’, which ‘powerful effect’ relies on the fear of future punishment (VII. 10; *Works* 3: 302–3).³¹ It does not follow from this, however, that he thought talk and belief about the future state is needed only or primarily to evoke morally right actions and the feeling of fear. If Berkeley held that God’s revelation concerning the future state was not intended to make us *aware* of the future rewards and punishments, then, it seems, he believed there was nothing to fear. ‘For why should a bad man fear a being that is not literally just’, Berman asks.³² But why should a bad man fear God’s justice if he thought with Berkeley that the talk of future punishments was merely emotive?

Berman does not take seriously Berkeley’s claim that the ‘doctrines relating to heavenly mysteries’ are ‘revelations of God’ (VII. 8; *Works* 3: 296).³³ The emotivist reading entails that Berkeley took God’s revelation concerning heavenly mysteries to be non-informative. However, to *reveal* (*revelare*) something concerning these mysteries means nothing other than to make something known about them; and Berkeley held the words and propositions of the Scriptures to be instrumental in this informative process (VI, 4, 6–8; *Works* 3: 225, 228–233). He says that revelation was not intended to ‘convey a perfect knowledge’ but rather imperfect ‘hints and glimpses’ (VI. 8; *Works* 3: 233–4). Yet if it gave some knowledge about the mysteries, however imperfect it be, the utterances used for that purpose were not *essentially emotive*; and there appears to be no point in asking whether or not he ever ‘intended to explain all mysteries in the way he explained that of the future state, as purely emotive’.³⁴ It also seems to follow then that Berkeley regarded propositions concerning

²⁹ See Berman 1981, pp. 223–4; 1993, pp. 205–7; 1994 pp. 146–8.

³⁰ Cf. Berman 1981, p. 224; 1993, p. 206.

³¹ See also Berkeley’s essays in *The Guardian* (1713), No. 55, ‘The Sanctions of Religion’, *Works* 7: 198–201, p. 199, and No. 89, ‘Immortality’, *Works* 7: 222–4, p. 223.

³² Berman 1981, p. 224; 1993, p. 206; 1994, p. 147.

³³ Berkeley held the view that all of these doctrines are contained in the Scripture (VI. 10; VII. 4, 8, 15; *Works* 3: 239, 289, 297, 309).

³⁴ Berman 1994, p. 163.

God's revelation as true propositions, not as merely emotive utterances, 'neither true nor false'.³⁵

Finally, Berman's reading seems incompatible with Berkeley's arguments from the analogy of nature between the 'things spiritual, supernatural, or relating to another world' and natural things (VI. 11; *Works* 3: 240–1).³⁶ For instance, Berkeley says:

I cannot comprehend why any one who admits the union of the soul and body should pronounce it impossible for the human nature to be united to the divine, in a manner ineffable and incomprehensible by reason.

(Ibid.)

The purpose of this comparison is to show that the doctrine of the two natures being united in Christ is not absurd (VI. 10, 12; *Works* 3: 239–40, 242–3) which implies that so far as analogy goes, something can be understood concerning the mystery. It is hard to conceive how this fits the assumption that utterances about the two natures of Christ are merely emotive, that is, meaningless, except in so far as they produce emotional effects, and that Berkeley excluded meaningful non-emotive talk of mysteries.³⁷

I conclude therefore, on the whole, that in *Alciphron* Berkeley does not consider propositions concerning heavenly mysteries as emotive, non-informative utterances. It seems, rather, that he assumed the relevant propositions (in the Scriptures, *Creeds*, *39 Articles of Religion*, etc.) were true and conveyed some information about supernatural things, eternal, past, present, or to come. There seems to be, accordingly, no reason to doubt that he thought, simply, that the terms in question do signify heavenly mysteries: that, for instance, 'incarnation' stands for incarnation, and 'grace', in its religious sense, as Berkeley says, denotes 'an active, vital, ruling principle, influencing and operating on the mind of man, distinct from every natural power or motive' (VII. 4; *Works* 3: 290), notwithstanding our not having 'clear and distinct', 'abstract', 'precise', 'positive' or indeed any ideas of those mysteries (VII. 8–10; *Works* 3: 297, 300, 303). Berkeley's concern in *Alciphron*, dialogue VII, is to show that one can reasonably assent to propositions concerning mysteries (VII. 1, 4, 8; *Works* 3: 286, 290, 296–7) and that the terms and propositions in question are not 'senseless and insignificant' (VII. 2; *Works* 3: 287); in that context he insists on the good effects that follow from such belief or what he calls 'the efficacious necessary use of faith without ideas' (VII. 10; *Works* 3: 302). The religious assent and its 'genuine effects' imply, on his account, some comprehension of what is believed and how it relates to us. For example, the belief in a future

³⁵ See Ayer 1936, Ch. 6.

³⁶ See also Berkeley's sermon 'On Eternal Life', *Works* 7: 105–113, p. 107.

³⁷ I do not deny then that, according to Berkeley, such utterances can evoke emotions and dispositions. Rather I deny that he regarded them as *essentially emotive*, non-cognitive, non-informative utterances.

state, implies, among other things, the realization that evil intentions and actions in this life will bring about some (in our present condition unknown) dreadful punishments in the next. Such belief is possible, according to Berkeley, without having ideas of those particular punishments (VII. 10; *Works* 3: 302–3). Thus the influence of Christian faith on human minds does not merely follow, on Berkeley's view, from the emotive power of certain words or utterances. Still less is the meaning of those utterances to be explained in terms of their emotive power.

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'Ayer, Berman, Berkeley, and emotive meaning', *Akadeemia*
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AYER, BERMAN, BERKELEY JA EMOTIIVNE TÄHENDUS

Alljärgnevas arutelus figureerivad kolm põhitegelast, loogilise positivismi kunagine esindaja Alfred J. Ayer (1910–1989), idealismiklassik George Berkeley (1685–1753), meie kaasaegne filosoofia-ajaloolane ja filosoof, Dublini Trinity Kolledži professor David Berman, ja hulk kõrvaltegelasi.

Berman on ilmselt esimene (ja sealjuures väga autoriteetne) Berkeley-uurija, kes on selgesõnaliselt ja üksikasjalikult väljendanud seisukohta, et keele ja tähenduse vallas oli Berkeley Ayer' (ja ka teiste loogiliste positivistide) eelkäijaks. Täpsemalt väidab Berman, et Berkeley on esitanud teooria teatud tüüpi lausungite [*utterances*] emotiivse tähenduse kohta, mis sarnaneb vägagi Ayer' vastava asjakäsitlusega paarsada aastat hiljem. Säärase teooria väljamõtlemine teeb Berkeleyle kahtlemata au ning tõstab ta filosoofia ajaloos esile enam ja hoopis teisel moel, kui seda tavapäraselt kujutatud. Seda muidugi juhul, kui seesugune teooriaomistus õigustatud on.¹

Allpool püüan ma näidata, et lähemal vaatlusel ilmneb, et Bermani Berkeley-tõlgitsus on meelevaldne ja tekstilise kinnitusega.

Arvan, et tegemist on kasuliku õppetunniga, mis puudutab filosoofia ajaloo tõlgendamise problemaatikat üldiselt ja seega võiks huvi pakkuda ka sootuks teiste teemadega tegelevatele filosoofia-ajaloo-tundlikele filosoofidele.

Artikli ülesehitus on järgmine. Pidades silmas Bermani Berkeley-interpretatsiooni lähtekohti annan kõigepealt lühiülevaate Ayer' omaaegsest tähenduslikkuse ehk mõttekuse kontseptsioonist. Seejärel vaatlen ja hindan Bermani võrdlust Ayer' emotivismi ja Berkeley väidetava emotivismi vahel. Järgneb asjaspepuutuvate terminite selgitus. Pärast seda annan üksikasjalikult edasi Bermani tõlgenduse, esitan sellele rea vastuväiteid ja teen kokkuvõtte.

Verifikatsioon ja tähendus

Teatavasti taotlesid loogilise positivismi esindajad teaduse puhastavat eristamist metafüüsikast (või pseudoteadusest), püüdes näidata, et metafüüsika-lausungid (laused, väited) on mõttetud või tähendusetud. Seevastu matemaatika ja loogika analüütilised formulatsioonid ning empiiriliste teaduste lausungid on (nende arusaamise kohaselt) mõttekad ja tähenduslikud. Mõttekate (teaduslike) empiiriliste lausungite eristamiseks metafüüsilisest absurdist võeti tarvitusele verifikatsiooniprintsiip. Sellest lähemalt allpool.

¹ Mõned kommentaatorid on seostanud Berkeley keelekäsitust Austini kõneaktide teooriaga, hilise Wittgensteini arusaamaga keelemängudest jne. Neid tõlgitsusi ma käesolevas artiklis ei vaatle.

Loogilise positivismi tähtseks ingliskeelses filosoofiamaailmas oli Alfred J. Ayer' 1936. aastal ilmunud monograafia "Keel, tõde ja loogika" (Ayer 1990). Võib öelda, et epistemoloogilises plaanis on see teos jätkuks briti empiristlikule mõttesuunale, mille üheks klassikuks peetakse Berkeleyt. Kuna Berman seostab Berkeley 'emotiivse tähenduse teooriat' eelkõige just Ayer' keelekäsitusega, siis püüan järgnevalt mõnevõrra lihtsustatud kujul esitada viimase arusaama verifikatsioonist kui lausete mõttekuse või tähenduslikkuse kontrollimise meetodist ning selle rakendustest metafüüsika ja eetika valda kuuluvatele lausungitele.

Oma verifikatsiooniprintsiibi-esituses teeb Ayer vahet (väit)lausetel [*sentence*] ja propositsioonidel. Selle arusaama kohaselt laused *väljendavad* (või näivad väljendavat) propositsioone; propositsioonidel on tõeväärtus; verifitseeritakse propositsioone, mitte lauseid.² Ayer:

Kontrollimaks säärase otsustuste [*statement*] ehtsust, mis paistavad olevat faktiotsustused, kasutame verifikatsioonikriteeriumi. Ütleme, et lause [*sentence*] on iga antud isiku jaoks faktiliselt tähenduslik [*factually significant*] siis, ja ainult siis, kui isik teab, kuidas verifitseerida propositsiooni, mida see lause paistab väljendavat — see tähendab, kui ta teab, millised vaatlused paneksid ta teatud tingimustel tunnistama seda propositsiooni tõeseks või heitma selle väärana kõrvale. Kui see arvatav propositsioon on aga säärase loomuga, et oletus tema tõesuse või vääruse kohta on kooskõlas ükskõik millise eeldusega isiku tulevikukogemuse suhtes, siis on see isiku seisukohalt võttes pelk pseudo-propositsioon, juhul kui tegu pole tautoloogiaga. Seda propositsiooni väljendav lause võib olla tema jaoks *emotsionaalselt tähenduslik*; kuid ta pole sõna otseses mõttes tähenduslik.

(Ayer 1990: 16)

Ayer eristab *praktilist* ja *põhimõttelist* verifitseeritavust, et tagada säärase lausete vastavus tähenduslikkuse kriteeriumile, mille puhul me teame, millised teoreetiliselt võimalikud vaatlused oleksid arvatavalt nende lausetega väljendatavate propositsioonide tõesuse või vääruse kindlakstegemise seisukohalt relevanted, ehkki niisuguste vaatluste teostamine on praktiliselt võimatu. Ayer viitab siinkohal Moritz Schlicki toodud näitele, milleks on propositsioon, et Kuu tagaküljel on mäed. See propositsioon on praktiliselt verifitseerimatu, ütleb Ayer aastal 1936, sest niisugust raketti pole veel leiutatud, mille pardalt asjakohast vaatlust teostada, kuid me teame, milline teoreetiliselt mõeldav vaatlus seda propositsiooni verifitseerida võiks (Ayer 1990: 17).

Verifikatsioonikriteeriumi rakendamisel metafüüsikale ilmneb, et sinna kuuluvate propositsioonide (näit. "Meelekogemuse maailm tervikuna on eba-

² Tõsi, mitte igal pool oma teoses ei pea ta sellest eksaktselt eristusest kinni, kõneledes kohati ka otsustuste/väidete [*statement*] ja lausete verifitseerimisest (vt. näit. lk. 108, 112). Ayer' enda hilisem selgitus ja verifikatsiooniprintsiibi edasiarendus sisaldub raamatu lisas, mis on kirjutatud aastal 1946 (Ayer 1990: 171–185).

reaalne”) tõesuse või vääruse kindlakstegemiseks on põhimõtteliselt võimatu teostada asjakohaseid vaatlusi ja seega on tegemist pseudo-propositsioonidega. Metafüüsiku lausungitel ei ole faktilist sisu, s.t. nendega tahetakse midagi faktilist väita, ehk teisisõnu, väljendada ehtsaid ehk tõelisi [*genuine*] propositsioone, aga tegelikult ei väideta nendega midagi ja nad on mõttetud [*nonsensical*] (Ayer 1990: 17, 21, 24).

Oma teose 6. peatüki “Eetika ja teoloogia kriitika” lõpuosas rakendab Ayer sama kriteeriumi teoloogiale, leides, et propositsioonid Jumala eksistentsi ja loomuse või inimeste surmajärgse elu [*afterlife*] kohta kuuluvad metafüüsika valda, sest ükski põhimõtteliselt teostatav vaatlus ei ole nende propositsioonide tõesuse või vääruse kindlakstegemise seisukohalt relevantne; neist asjust kõneledes ei öelda maailma kohta midagi, ei väära ega tõest, vastavad lausungid on mõttetud, (otseses mõttes) tähenduseta [*not literally significant*] (Ayer 1990: 123).

Nagu nähtub eelpool tsiteeritud lõigust, arvab Ayer, et mõnedel faktilises plaanis mõttetutel, tähenduseta lausungitel võib lausuja jaoks olla *emotsionaalne* tähendus. See käib ka teatud tüüpi ‘väärtusotsustuste’ [*statements of value, judgements of value*] kohta, millele keskendutaksegi 6. peatükis. Ayer vaatleb ‘eetikaotsustusi’ [*ethical statements*], kinnitades samas, et kõik nende kohta öeldu kehtib ka esteetikaotsustuste puhul [*aesthetical statements*].

Ta eristab eetika vallas kaht sorti lausungeid, millel on kõneleja jaoks emotsionaalne tähendus: “manitsused vooruslikkusele” [*exhortations to moral virtue*] ja “tegelikke eetikaotsustusi” [*actual ethical judgements*] väljendavad lausungid. Nimetatud manitsused või õhutused ei ole Ayer’ väitel “üldsegi mitte propositsioonid” (siin ilmselt ‘väite’ või ‘väitlause’ tähenduses), vaid nad on “hüüatused või käsud, mille eesmärgiks on ajendada lugejat teatud kindlal moel tegutsema” (Ayer 1990: 108). ‘Tegelikke eetikaotsustusi’ käsitledes märgib Ayer, et ta tegeleb üksnes normatiivse (mitte deskriptiivse) eetikaga. Normatiivse eetika lausungid, näiteks lausungid kujul “x on hea” või “x on vale [*wrong*]”, milles esinevad normatiivse eetika sümbolid (näit. ‘vale’), ei väljenda ‘empiirilisi propositsioone’. Teisisõnu, neil pole faktilist sisu ja nad ei ütle ega väljenda midagi tõest ega väära. Kui lauses esineb mingi eetika-sõna ehk ‘-sümbol’, siis on sel vaid ‘emotiivne’ funktsioon: väljendada lause ütleja või kirjutaja *tunnet* teatud objekti(de) suhtes. Näiteks lause “Raha varastamine on vale” [*“Stealing money is wrong.”*] asemel võiks samahästi öelda “... varastatakse raha!!” [*“Stealing money!!”*]. Sõna ‘vale’ kasutatakse siin vaid tunde väljendamiseks. Ayer leiab, et eetikatermineid ei kasutata mitte üksnes tunnete väljendamiseks, vaid ka nende esilekutsumiseks ja seeläbi teatud tegevustele õhutamiseks.

Kokkuvõtteks võib öelda, et Ayer’ arusaamise kohaselt ei väljenda nimeetatud tüüpi, eetika ja esteetika valda kuuluvad lausungid (1) midagi tõest ega väära, (2) neil puudub faktiline sisu (kognitiivne tähendus), kuid (3) neil on emotiivne funktsioon ja tähendus.

Berman, Berkeley ja Ayer

Juba paarikümne aasta vältel on David Berman mitmetes oma artiklites ja samuti ühes monograafias väitnud³, et Ayer' ja teiste omaaegsete loogiliste positivistide poolt esitatud emotivistlik "metafüüsilise ja religioosse keele analüüs" polnud täiesti uudne, sest paarsada aastat varem on Berkeley teoses *Alciphron: or, the minute philosopher* (1732) teinud avalikuks oma 'emotiivse teooria' [*emotive theory*] seletamiseks teatud tüüpi religioossete terminite ja lausete tähendust. Seejuures nendib Berman iroonilist seika, et loogilised positivistid kasutasid oma teooriat religiooni suhtes destruktiivselt, Berkeley aga püüdis sarnase teooria abil religiooni kaitsta. "Oleks veelgi iroonilisem", jätkab Berman, "kui näiteks Ayer' emotiivse keele käsitus pärineks Berkeleylt" (Berman 1994: 155). Siiski on Ayer ühes erakirjas (5. mail 1975) Bermanni vastava pärimise peale kostnud:

Niipalju kui ma mäletan, ei olnud ma KEELE, TÕE JA LOOGIKA 6. peatüki kirjutamise ajal sugugi mõjutatud Berkeley emotiivsest keeleteooriast. Olen täiesti kindel, et kui ma sissejuhatuses tunnistasin oma tänuvõlga Berkeley ees, siis pidasin silmas üksnes tema fenomenalismi.

(Ibid.)

Olgu nende otseste mõjutustega nii või teisiti, näib, et filosoofia ajaloo ühe arenguliini rekonstrueerimise seisukohalt on Berman esitanud tõsise väljakutse. Samas kaasneb tema tõlgendusega algusest peale põhimõttelisi raskusi.

Lausungid 'Jumala', 'surmajärgse elu' jms. kohta on Ayer' järgi lihtsalt ja sõna otseses mõttes nonsenss ning erinevalt eetika valda kuuluvatest lausungitest kujul "x on vale", "x on halb" jne., ei omistata religioossetele lausungitele⁴ emotiivset tähendust. Ayer' raamat ei sisalda *religioosse* keele emotiivse tähenduse teooriat, mille Berman omistab Berkeleyle. Siit põhimõtteline erinevus Ayer' ja Berkeley väidetava emotivismi vahel.⁵ Kui *Alciphron*'is sisaldubki 'emotiivse tähenduse' teooria, siis kasutatakse seda seal teatud tüüpi religioonilausungite, nimelt *kristlike müsteeriumide* kohta käivate lausungite tähenduse selgitamiseks. Kas *Alciphron*'is seesugune teooria või kontseptsioon sisaldub, ongi järgneva diskussiooni põhiküsimuseks. Seni on ilmnenu, et eelkirjeldatud võrdlus Ayer'ga on pinnapealne ja rangelt võttes ebaadekvaatne. Samas on Bermanni Berkeley-tõlgendus Ayer'st inspireeritud ja seetõttu tuleb ka järgnevas seda (olgu meelevaldset) paralleeli silmas pida. Nii näiteks tuleks arvestada sellega, et Berman kõrvutab Berkeley teooriat nimelt Ayer' ja teiste omaaegsete loogiliste positivistide emotivismiga, mis

³ Berman 1981; 1982: 148–165; 1993; 1994: 144–163; 1996. Kuna Bermanni interpretatsioon on kõige põhjalikumal kujul esitatud monograafias (Berman 1994), siis annan viited just sellele.

⁴ Nimetan neid edaspidi ka *religioonilausungiteks*.

⁵ Neile asjaoludele juhtisid mu tähelepanu Tom Stoneham ja Tiiu Hallap.

tähendab, et emotivismi või mittekognitivismi hilisemad arengusuunad ja vormid, nagu ka uuemad psühholoogilised uurimused emotsioonide kohta otsest asjasse ei puutu.

Terminoloogiline selgitus

Emotivismi omistamisega Berkeleyle kaasneb paratamatult terminoloogilisi/semantilisi/kontseptuaalseid nihkeid. Ülalpool tsiteeritud lõigus tegi Ayer vahet lausetel (lausungitel) ja propositsioonidel, nõnda et (selles skeemis) esimesed *väljendavad* viimaseid. Laused on mõttekad või mõttetud, tähenduslikud või tähendusetud, propositsioonid, mida saab lausetega väljendada, on tõesed või väärad, tõelised või pseudo-propositsioonid. Eristus propositsioonide ja neid väljendavate lausete vahel on analüütilise filosoofia traditsioonis püsinud tänapäevani, kusjuures enamasti käsitatakse propositsioone kui lausete tähendusi, abstraktseid objekte jne., vahel ka kui teatud tüüpi mentaalseid entiteete; täielikku üksmeelt küsimuses, mis ja isegi kas propositsioonid on, ei ole saavutatud. Samas mõeldakse ingliskeelses filosoofiakirjanduses 'proposition'i' all tihtipeale ka lihtsalt tähenduslikku väitlauset. Selguse huvides ja võimalike eksitavate assotsiatsioonide peletamiseks annaksin nüüd põgusa ülevaate sellest, mida mõeldi *propositsiooni* all Berkeley ajal ja eel.

Nii (hilis)keskaegsetes loogikaraamatutes kui varauusaegse filosoofia tähtteostes, kaasa arvatud John Locke'i *Essees inimmõistusest* (ilm. 1690), mõeldakse propositsioonide [*propositio, proposition*] all eelkõige väitlauseid, mis koosnevad kategoremaatilistest terminitest ehk 'nimedest' (näit. 'animal') ning neid ühendavatest ja täiendavatest sünkategoremaatilistest terminitest (näit. 'est', 'non est', 'omnis', 'nullus', etc.), nagu näiteks propositsioonis 'omnis asinus est animal'. Kategoremaatiliste terminite ehk 'nimede' tähendus seisneb aga nendes (teatud tüüpi mentaalsete aktidena mõistetud) *kontseptides* [*conceptus*] või (kontseptide või ka kujutluspiltidena mõistetud) *ideedes* [*idea*], mida nad kõneleja või kirjutaja enese vaimus või hinges [*mens, animus, mind, soul*] ning eeldatavasti ka teiste sama keelt kõnelevate inimeste vaimus või hinges tähistama on pandud. Ses mõttes on 'nimede' tähendus või õieti nende tähistus [*significatio, signification*] kokkuleppeline. Traditsioonilise arusaamise kohaselt tähistavad ideed või kontseptid omakorda *asju* vaimust või hingest väljaspool ja see tähistamisviis ei ole mitte kokkuleppeline, vaid loomulik, eri keeli kõnelevate inimeste juures ühesugune. Võib ka öelda, et 'nimed' tähistavad asju ideede või kontseptide vahendusel. Võimalik, et siin ei olegi tegemist *tähendus-teooriaga* tänapäevases mõttes, vaid *tähistamise* teooriaga traditsioonilises mõttes.

Seega (hilis)kesk- ja varauusaegse arusaamise kohaselt ei väljenda väitlaused (verbaalsed propositsioonid) mitte ajalis-ruumilise lokatsioonita propositsioone (s.o. abstraktseid objekte), vaid ennekõike ja vahetult mõtteid ja mõtteosiseid kõneleja või kirjutaja enda 'peas' ning kaudselt või vahendatult

tähistavad need ka asju, sündmusi või seoseid antud vaimu suhtes välises maailmas. Kuna leiti, et ka ideid või kontsepte saab terminitega analoogiliselt omavahel ühendada, siis tunnistasid paljud tollased filosoofid, kaasa arvatud Locke ja varane Berkeley, ka 'mentaalseid propositsioone', s.o. verbaalsete lausete ja nende terminitega vastavuses olevaid vaimseid 'lauseid', ideede või kontseptide ühendusi. Enamgi veel, mitmed keskaegsed mõtlejad, näiteks William Occam leidsid, et me mõtleme mentaalses (s.o. kontseptide) keeles, millel on oma kindel struktuur, grammatika jne. Mentaalne keel on siis verbaalse suhtes koguni primaarne: sõnu kasutatakse mentaalse diskursuse väljendamiseks. Locke peab oma tähistusekäsitluses veel kinni üldisest skolastikas levinud kolmikjaotusest terminite, kontseptide ja asjade vahel, osutades nende vahelistele tähistusseostele, kuid varasematest üsnagi komplitseeritud mentaalse keele kontseptsioonidest on nii tema kui varase Berkeley juures kosta vaid kauget järelkuminat.⁶

Locke'i ja varase Berkeley järgi on verbaalse propositsiooni (sõnalise lause) tähenduse või mõttekuse kriteeriumiks see, kas on võimalik vaimus moodustada vastavat mentaalset propositsiooni (vaimset 'lauset'), s.t. ühendada vaimus ideid või kontsepte analoogiliselt neid tähistama pandud terminite ühendusviisile lauses. Kui kõneleja kasutab sõnu, millele ei vasta mingeid ideid või kontsepte, siis räägib ta mõttetusi. Näiteks lause "Blunga on glunga" oleks vähemasti eesti keeles mõttetu ja nimelt *sellepärast*, et senimaani ei ole eesti keele kõnelejaskond sõnu 'blunga' ja 'glunga' mingeid ideid või kontsepte oma vaimus tähistama pannud ja nõnda need sõnad ka millegi teadaolevaga ei seostu; ei õnnestu moodustada sellele verbaalsele propositsioonile vastavat mentaalset propositsiooni. Ent lause "Valge ei ole must" on mõttekas, sest kumbki 'nimi' ses lauses tähistab teatud ideed ja me saame moodustada vastava mentaalse propositsiooni, nimelt kõrvutades 'vaimusilmas' neid kaht ideed ja märgata või 'tajuda' (vastavalt verbaalsele eitusele 'ei ole'), et need ideed ei ühti, ei sobi kokku (vrd. Locke 1975: 525). Eeldusel, et need ideed või kontseptid tähistavad omakorda asju välisilmas, võib siis ka öelda, et see lause on tõene. Ühesõnaga, me saame ideede või kontseptide tasandil kontrollida, kas antud sõnaühend on mõttekas ja tõene või ei.⁷

Oluline on silmas pidada, et kui Berkeley kõneleb propositsioonist, siis mõtleb ta selle all (väit)lauset (lausungit; nii tõlgendab seda ka Berman), mitte "seda, mida lause väljendab või tähendab" või "seda, mida lausega väidetakse"; säärase lausete osisteks on 'nimed' ja sünkategoremaatilised terminid; 'nimede'

⁶ See tõsiasi jõudis mu teadvusse harivas vestluses Calvin Normore ja Simo Knuutilaga.

⁷ Mõistagi on siin visandatud kesk- ja varauusaegsete tähistuskontseptsioonide üldjoonis ülimalt lihtsustav ja pealiskaudne; põhjalikuma ja täpsema asjakäsitluse esitamine ületaks paraku käesoleva artikli piirid ja võimalused. Mõningase asjakohase ülevaate saab näiteks nendest allikatest: Ashworth 1982, 1984, Normore 1990, Ayers 1991, kd. 1, ptk. 2, Nuchelmans 1998.

tähenduse konstitueerivad (tollal tüüpilise filosoofilise arusaama kohaselt) ideed või kontseptsid kõneleja/kirjutaja ja kuulja/lugeja vaimus; tähendusetuks loeb vähemasti varane Berkeley⁸ üldjuhul säärased propositsioonid, millele ei vasta ehk mis ei kutsu vaimus esile (selgepiirilisi) ideid. Sääraselt mõistetud propositsioonid võivad olla tõesed või väärad, ent, nagu kohe näeme, neid võidakse kasutada ka muudel eesmärkidel kui seda on väitmine, et miski on nii või teisiti.

Bermani emotivistlik Berkeley-tõlgitsus

I

Alciphron'i näol on tegemist ortodoksse anglikaanluse põhiprintsiipe kaitsva teosega, mitmekülse kaitsekõnega loomulikule ja ilmutatud religioonile [*natural religion, revealed religion*], dogmaatilistele arusaamadele Jumalast ja tema atribuutidest, kristlikest müsteeriumidest, tahtevabadusest, kristlikust moraalist jne. Teos koosneb seitsmest dialoogist, millest kahes, neljandas ja seitsmendas, pööratakse erilist tähelepanu religioonikeele problemaatikale. Bermani väitel esitab Berkeley oma 'emotiivse teooria' *Alciphron*'i viimases dialoogis.

Berman rajab oma emotivistliku interpretatsiooni Berkeley väitele, mille leiame nii varasest *Inimteadmise põhiprintsiipide* (1710) sissejuhatuse algvariandist (tõenäoliselt kirjutatud aastal 1708), mis avaldati alles aastal 1987⁹, kui ka *Alciphron*'ist, et ideede tähistamine ja esilekutsumine teiste inimeste vaimus ('ideede kommunikeerimine') ei ole sõnade kasutamise ainukene eesmärk. Berkeley ütleb, et sõnadel

on ka teisi otstarbeid kui lihtsalt ideede tähistamine ja esiletoomine, nimelt sellised otstarbed nagu kohaste emotsioonide esilekutsumine, teatud kindlate vaimu hoiakute või soodumuste tekitamine ning meie tegevuste suunamine...
(VII. 14; *Works* 3: 307)¹⁰

Bermani väitel nähtub siit, et Berkeley teeb vahet keele kognitiivsel funktsioonil, milleks on ideede tähistamine ja kommunikatsioon, ning kolmel mitte-kognitiivsel funktsioonil, milleks on (1) emotsioonide, (2) hoiakute ja (3) tegevuste esilekutsumine.

Nimetatud funktsioonide eristusele vastavalt teeb Berkeley (Bermani tõlgenduse kohaselt) vahet kognitiivsetel väidetel või otsustustel [*cognitive statements*] ja emotiivsetel lausungitel [*emotive utterances*].¹¹ Esimesed, näiteks

⁸ Selle kohta vt. Belfrage 1985 ja 1986.

⁹ Belfrage 1987.

¹⁰ Kõik viited Berkeley kirjutistele pärinevad standardväljaandest (Berkeley 1948–57, lüh. *Works*). *Alciphron*'i puhul tsiteerin dialoogi, paragrahvi, standardväljaande köite ja lehekülje numbrit.

¹¹ Berkeley ise kasutab mõlemal puhul terminit *proposition*.

väide “See lehm on pruun”¹², on informatiivsed, nad annavad meile midagi teada (või, Berkeley terminoloogias, kutsuvad esile ideid), teised, näiteks lausungid “Pea püsti!” või “Ära nukrutse!” [“Cheer up!”], “Elu on tüütu!” [“Life’s a bore!”] ja “Kao minema!” [“Get out!”], kutsuvad esile (üaltpoolt) eristuse kohaselt) emotsioone, hoiakuid või tegevusi. Nii kognitiivsed väited kui emotiivsed lausungid on mõttekad või tähendusega, kuid erineval moel. Esimesed on mõttekad seetõttu, et nad edastavad mingit informatsiooni, teised aga seetõttu, et nad teenivad emotiivseid eesmäärke. Bermani interpretatsiooni järgi teeb Berkeley vahet *loomuliku religiooni väidetel* ja *kristlike müsteeriumide kohta käivatel lausungitel*, nõnda et esimesed kuuluvad kognitiivsete väidete, teised emotiivsete lausungite klassi. Näiteks “Jumal eksisteerib ja on tark” (jällegi Bermani näide) annab meile mingisugust informatsiooni või teadmist Jumala kohta ja seega on sel väitel ‘kognitiivne sisu’. Seevastu lausungid Püha Kolmainsuse või Jumala armu kohta on ‘loomult emotiivsed’ [*essentially emotive*] ning neil “on kas vähe kognitiivset sisu või pole seda üldse”. Ometi on viimast sorti lausungid mõttekad, niivõrd kui nad tekitavad teatud emotsionaalseid efekte ja kutsuvad esile moraalselt õigeid tegusid.

Filosoofia-ajaloolise konteksti mõttes, leiab Berman, on Berkeley ‘emotiivne teooria’ vastuseks John Tolandi ja teiste ‘vabamõttelejate’ etteheitele, et kristlikke müsteeriume puudutavad lausungid on mõttetud, sest neis figureerivad terminid ‘Kolmainsus’, ‘pärispatt’ ja teised sarnased ei tähistaks ega kutsu esile (selgepiirilisi) ideid.¹³ Berkeley väidetava teooria kohaselt on neil terminitel täita emotiivne funktsioon ja seega ei ole nad mõttetud, olgugi et neid sisaldavatel lausungitel pole kognitiivset sisu.¹⁴

Alciphron’i seitsmendas dialoogis, paragrahvides nr. 7, 8 ja 10, rakendab Berkeley oma ‘emotiivset teooriat’ neljale müsteeriumile, leiab Berman. Nendeks müsteeriumideks on Jumala arm, Püha Kolmainsus, pärispatt ja ‘tulevane riik’ [*future state*]. Bermani järgi on iga nimetatud müsteeriumi kohta käivate lausungite kasutamisel spetsiifilised tagajärjed, nimelt tekivad eripärased emotsioonid, hoiakud või kaldutakse sooritama teatud sorti tegusid. Jumala armust kõnelemise tagajärjeks on kuuljate ‘head harjumused või soodumused’ [*good habits*] ja vagadus, lausungid Kolmainsuse kohta kutsuvad esile “armastust, lootust, tänulikkust ja kuulekust”, lausungid pärispatu kohta tekitavad samuti häid harjumusi või soodumusi, aga ka moraalses plaanis kasuliku tunde oma tühisusest või väärtusetusest, tulevase riigi kohta kõneldav hoiab inimesi sooritamast kurje tegusid.

¹² Asjassepuutuvad näited pärinevad Bermanilt, mitte Berkeleylt.

¹³ Hiljuti on sedasama konteksti küllalt põhjalikult kirjeldanud Isabel Rivers (Rivers 2000, kd. I, ptk. 1).

¹⁴ Ayer’ terminoloogiat kasutades võiks seda (Bermani poolt Berkeleyle omistatud) teooriat või vaadet tinglikult esitada ka nii: müsteeriumi-lausungitel pole faktilist sisu, nad ei väljenda propositsioone, kuid neil on emotiivne funktsioon.

Sääraste emotiivsete, kognitiivses plaanis sisutute lausungite ja nende tagajärgede vahel on teatav ärrituse-reaktsiooni laadi seos. Teatud tüüpi lausungite kuulmisele või lugemisele järgneb teatud tüüpi emotsionaalne reaktsioon. Mõnedel sõnadel ja lausungitel on 'emotiivne vägi' [*emotive power*] või 'kalduvus' [*tendency*] tekitada või kutsuda esile "emotsioone, soodumusi ja tegevusi" (Berman 1994: 150, 152–3).

Milline oli Berkeley seisukoht küsimuses, kas müsteeriumi-lausungid võiksid siiski ka *tõesed* olla, jääb (Bermani väitel) ebaselgeks, nii et rahuldavat vastust me tema teostest ei leia. Sama kehtib Berkeley vihjete kohta sellele, et "sõnad müsteeriumide kohta" võivad toimida "sümboolsete väljendustena", mis kuidagi hägusalt representeerivad inimmoistuseülest (Berman 1994: 161–3).

Niimoodi, lingvistilis-semantilises võtmes tõlgitsebki Berkeley kristlikku apologetikat Berman, kes viimaks nendib, et Berkeley ei märganud, et sõnad võivad emotsioone mitte üksnes esile kutsuda, vaid ka *väljendada*, nagu näiteks väljendid "Oh sa issand!" [*Oh dear!*] või "Uau!" [*Gosh!*] (Berman 1994: 161).

II

Kuna Berkeley oletatav 'emotiivne teooria' on esitatud sootuks teises kontekstis kui Ayer' oma, siis väärrib ka see 'taustsüsteem' lähemat valgustamist, mida Berman teebki.

Bermani arvates on Berkeley innovatiivne teooria tihedasti seotud tema vaatega usule, nimelt "samastab [Berkeley] usu keele kolme mittekognitiivse funktsiooniga" (Berman 1994: 146):

Usk, ütlen ma, ei ole loid tajumine, vaid vaimu tegus veendumus [*operative persuasion of the mind*], mis neis, kel see on, kutsub ikka esile mingi kohase teo, hoiaku või emotsiooni...

(VII. 10; *Works* 3: 301)

Usk [*faith*], leiab Berman, ei ole Berkeley jaoks "mõistuslik akt" [*act of the understanding*], vaid "emotsionaalne akt" (Berman 1982: 164). Teisisõnu, usk (müsteeriumidesse) pole kognitiivne, sest ta ei kätke endas mingit teadmist või informeeritust. Samas rajaneb usk müsteeriumidesse või kõne neist 'kognitiivsel teoloogial', mille väited, nagu eelpool seletatud, on Berkeley meelest informatiivsed, tõesed ja kognitiivse sisuga. Müsteeriumi-lausungite emotsionaalsed tagajärjed on võimalikud tänu taustaksolevale uskumusele [*belief*] hea, targa ja õiglase Jumala eksistentsi, mida püütakse kinnistada *Alciphron*'i neljandas dialoogis. Emotiivne kõne müsteeriumidest tugineb kognitiivsele kõnele Jumalast ja tema atribuutidest. Teisisõnu, loomuliku teoloogia kognitiivsed väited (nagu Berman seda väljendab) *toetavad* emotiivseid lausungeid

müsteeriumide kohta (Berman 1994: 148). Kes ei usu Jumalasse, reageerib jutule pärispatust ja muust säärasest teisiti kui see, kes usub.

Kuna müsteeriumi-lausungid sisalduvad eelkõige Pühakirjas või on seal sisalduvast tuletatud, ja Pühakirjas kõneleb (inspireeritud kirjameeste vahendusel) Jumal ise, siis on alust arvata, et neile lausungitele omistatud emotiivne funktsioon on Jumala enda poolt soovitud ja täidab mingit eesmärki. Bermani väitel ei ole Berkeley järgi selleks eesmärgiks inimkonna teavitamine millestki olulisest ja senitundmatust. Need lausungid on kirja pandud selleks, et ajendada inimesi “tegutsema ja tundma teatud kindlal moel” [*act and feel in certain ways*], see tähendab, sooritama moraalselt õigeid tegusid ning evima teatud kindlat hoiakut Jumala suhtes: kartma tema õiglust ja teda armastama (Berman 1994: 134, 147). Müsteeriumidest kõnelemise eesmärgiks on saavutada moraalselt hea või õige käitumine siin ilmas ja kohane hoiak või tunne oma vägeva Looja suhtes. Niisiis on arvatavalt tegemist *mitte-informatiivsete, mitte-kognitiivsete, faktilise või kognitiivse sisuta, emotiivsete religioonilausungitega*.

Kui pöörduda veelkord eelkäsitletud võrdluse juurde, siis võiks öelda ka nii, et Bermani tõlgenduses osutub Berkeley arusaam (aastal 1732) müsteeriumi-lausungitest sarnaseks Ayer’ arusaamisega (aastal 1936) eetika (ja esteetika) valda kuuluvatest emotiivsetest lausungitest, niivõrd kui mõlemal puhul peetakse silmas lausungeid, (1) mis rangelt võttes ei väida midagi, (2) millel puudub faktiline sisu (kognitiivne tähendus), kuid (3) millel on emotiivne funktsioon ja tähendus.

Argumendid emotivistliku tõlgitsuse vastu

Nüüd püüan ma näidata, et religioonilausungite emotiivse tähenduse teooria omistamine Berkeleyle, nagu Berman seda teeb, pole põhjendatud. Jagasin oma argumendid kahte ossa, millest esimeses on rõhuasetus otseselt keele ja tähendusega seotud küsimustel, teises aga Berkeley arvatavatel religioossetel tõekspidamistel.¹⁵

I

Alciphron’i teksti hoolikas lugeja võib tähele panna, et nendes lõikudes, mida Berman kasutab Berkeley väidetava ‘emotiivse teooria’ tekstilise tõendusmaterjalina, ei räägita mitte asjakohaste *propositsioonide* (lausungite) kuulmise või lugemise, vaid müsteeriumidesse *uskumise* headest tagajärgedest. Berkeley räägib nõ. usu headest viljadest, mõjust, mida müsteeriumidesse uskumine inimesele avaldab. Näiteks kõneleb ta “kristlaste päästvast usust”, mis on “elav,

¹⁵ Enamus alljärgnevatest argumentidest on mõnevõrra erineval kujul esitatud artikli Jakapi, “Emotive Meaning...” alajaotustes III ja IV.

tegu alge” [*vital operative principle*], mis kutsub esile ligimesearmastust või heldust [*charity*] ja kuulekust” (VII. 9; *Works* 3: 300), teisel aga pärispattu ja tulevasse riiki uskumise kasulikust toimest (VII. 10; *Works* 3: 301–3). Pärispatu kohta ütleb Berkeley:

Näiteks võidakse leida, et on võimatu moodustada abstraktset ideed pärispatust või selle edasikandumisest, ja ometi võib usk sellesse [*the belief thereof*] kutsuda inimese vaimus esile vajaliku arusaamise [*sense*] oma tühisusest ja Lunastaja headusest, millest omakorda tulenevad head harjumused või soodumused [*habits*] ja neist head teod, need usu tõelised toimed [*genuine effects of faith*].

(VII. 10; *Works* 3: 301)

On päris ilmne, et Berkeley kõneleb siin sellest, et usk asjusse, mille kohta me ei suuda moodustada täpseid või abstraktseid ideid (mida nõutavad taga usu vastased), antud juhul usk pärispattu, avaldab soodsat mõju käitumisele. See on argument ülemeelelisse, mõistusega tabamatusse uskumise poolt, mitte skeemi “ärritus — reaktsioon” järgiv seletus teatud tüüpi lausungite emotiivsele toimele.

On tõsi, et Berkeley järgi kätkeb usk millessegi [*faith, belief*] teatud propositsiooni(de)ga nõustumist [*assent*]. Ühes kohas ütleb ta tõesti, et need on propositsioonid Kolmainususe kohta, mis suunavad ja mõjustavad vaimu, ent ka seal on see mõju selgesti seotud usuga Kolmainususse. Vastav tekstilõik on järgmine:

Alciphron. Ära pelga: kõigi õige arutluse reeglite kohaselt on absoluutselt võimatu, et mingi müsteerium, ja kõige vähem Kolmainus, saaks tõeliselt inimese usu objektiks olla.

Euphranor. Ma ei imesta selle üle, et sa seni nõnda mõtlesid, kuni olid arvamisel, et ükski inimene ei saa nõustuda propositsiooniga, ilma et ta tajuks või moodustaks oma vaimus selle propositsiooni terminitega märgitud selgepiirilisi ideid. Ehkki terminid on märgid, ometi, olles möönnud, et need märgid võivad olla tähenduslikud/mõttekad [*significant*] ka siis, kui nad ei too esile [*suggest*] nende poolt representeeritud ideid, küll aga täidavad seda otstarvet, et juhtida ja mõjutada meie tahet, kirgi või käitumist, siis selle tulemusel mõõnsid sa, et inimese vaim võib nõustuda sääraseid termineid sisaldavate propositsioonidega, kui need propositsioonid teda sel kombel juhivad või mõjustavad; ja seda kõike ka sellele vaatamata, et vaim ei taju nende terminitega tähistatud selgepiirilisi ideid. Sellest paistab järelduvat, et inimene võib uskuda Kolmainu-õpetust, kui ta leiab Pühakirjas ilmutatud olevat, et Isa, Poeg ja Püha Vaim on Jumal ja et on vaid üks Jumal, ehkki ta ei moodusta oma vaimus mingit abstraktset või selgepiirilist ideed kolmainususest, substantisist või personaalsusest; seda eeldusel, et see õpetus Loojast, Lunastajast ja Pühitsejast avaldab tema vaimule kohaseid muljeid, nimelt tekitades seal armastust, lootust, tänulikkust ning kuulekust, ja seeläbi

muutub elavaks tegusaks algeks, mis mõjutab tema elu ja tegevusi, kooskõlas selle arusaamaga päästvast usust, mida ühelt kristlaselt oodatakse.

(VII. 8; *Works* 3: 296–7)

Igatahes on Berkeley seletuses ülalloetletud toimete (armastus, lootus jne.) tekkele kätketud märksa enam kui Bermanni tõlgenduses. Propositsioonidel on hea mõju ja see on aluseks nendega nõustumisele, ent selleks, et nad avaldaksid jätkuvat mõju ja muutuksid “elavateks tegusateks algeteks”, on vaja sedasama nõustumist, usku, mitte lihtsalt teatud propositsioonide kuuldavaletoomist, millele järgneb reaktsioon. Berkeley ei kirjelda usku ja selle toimeid kui reaktsiooni emotiivsetele hüüatustele, vaid kui vaimu kasvavat tegusat veendumust [*operative persuasion of the mind*] ja sellest tulenevaid häid tagajärgi. Nii osutab ta teisel “meie kristliku usu artiklitele, mis, *võrdeliselt sellega, kuivõrd neisse usutakse* [*in proportion as they are believed*], veenavad, ning kui nad veenavad, siis ka mõjutavad inimeste elu ja tegevust” (VII. 15; *Works* 3: 308, kaldkiri lisatud).

Bermanni väide, et Berkeley “samastab usu keele kolme mittekognitiivse funktsiooniga”, näib mõistetamatu.¹⁶ See, et ühes kohas kõneleb ta keele otstarvetest ja teisel usu mõjust ning mõlemal puhul mainib emotsioonide, hoiakute ja tegude esilekutsumist, ei tähenda, et *keele mittekognitiivsed funktsioonid* ja *usk müsteeriumidesse* on üks sama asi. Võiks tuua niisuguse võrdluse. Kui ma ütleksin, et üks kaunis meloodia teeb mu meele härdaks ja seejärel, et see meloodia toob mulle meelde mälestusi, mis teevad meele härdaks, siis ei tähendaks see sugugi ütelda, et nimetatud meloodia ja mälestused on üks ja seesama.

Mitte mingil juhul ei ole *usk* Berkeley jaoks midagi *puhtlingvistilist*. Bermanni kummalise väite kinnituseks puudub tekstiline tõendusmaterjal.

Bermanni emotivistliku interpretatsiooniga kaasneb teinegi päris huvitav probleem, milleks on üksikute müsteeriumide kohta käivate propositsioonide (lausungite) tähendus. Küsimus on selles, mis eristab ühe niisuguse propositsiooni tähendust või tähenduslikku/mõttekat kasutust teise omast. Et väidetavalt on tegu puhtemotiivsete, kognitiivse sisu või tähenduseta propositsioonidega, siis tundub, et tähenduserinevus seisneb nendes spetsiifilistes mittekognitiivsetes tagajärgedes, mida ühe või teise propositsiooni kasutamine kaasa toob. Nagu eelpool mainitud, seobki Berman kokku konkreetsete müsteeriumide kohta käivad propositsioonid ja neile eriomased tagajärjed: jutt pärispatust kutsub esile teistsuguseid emotsionaalseid efekte kui Kolmainust puudutav propositsioon.¹⁷ Paraku tundub, et kui propositsioonides müsteeriumide kohta ja usus müsteeriumidesse ei ole mitte midagi kognitiivset, siis jääb üksikute uskumuste ja nende tagajärgede omavaheline seos seletamatuks. Jääb arusaamatuks, miks on näiteks tulevasse riiki uskumise puhul *kohaseks*

¹⁶ Vt. selle kohta ka Williford 2000: 72–3.

¹⁷ Peter Walmsley paistab samal seisukohal olevat (vt. Walmsley 1990: 186).

reaktsiooniks kurjast teost loobumine ja Kolmainsusse uskumise puhul armastus, lootus jne, ning mitte vastupidi.¹⁸ Ei ole alust seda segadust Berkeleyle omistada. Tema seisukoht paistab küll pigem niisugune olevat, et pärispatust kuuldes mõistab inimene oma tühisust ja süüid, kuuldes Lunastajast ja temasse uskudes tekib inimeses arusaamine Lunastaja headusest jne. Mida veendunumalt inimene usub, seda suuremat mõju see usk tema tunnetele, hoiakutele ja tegudele avaldab. Nii seitsmendas dialoogis kui mujalgi *Alciphron*'is kirjeldab Berkeley kristluse head mõju moraalsele, kommetele, haridusele jne, kuid ta ei seleta seda pelgalt teatud tüüpi lausungite iseäraliku ja loomuomase emotiivse tegususega.

Veel üheks raskuseks, millega emotivistlik tõlgitsus arvestanud pole, on see, et lisaks nimetatutele kõneleb Berkeley usust veel mitmetesse teistesse müsteeriumidesse nagu näiteks surmude ülestõusmine ja inkarnatsioon, mainimata nendega seoses mingeid (eriomaseid) emotiivseid toimeid (Vt. VI. 10–12). Seda asjaolu ei maini Berman sõnagagi.

Tervikuna paistab, et kristliku usu tegususe kirjeldust *Alciphron*'is ei saa käsitada (religiooni)lausungite emotiivse tähenduse teooriana.

Bermani väitel arvas Berkeley, et mõnedel sõnadel on 'emotiivne vägi' või kalduvus kutsuda esile 'emotsioone, soodumusi ja tegevusi' ja müsteeriumilausungite mõju tuleneb just sedalaadi sõnade kasutamisest. On vägagi küsitav, kas sääraстал terminitel nagu 'kolmainsus' või 'inkarnatsioon' on mingi emotiivne vägi, nii et neid või neid sisaldavaid propositsioone võiks võrrelda tavapäraste emotiivsete hüüatustega. Vaevalt küll, et terminid 'kolmainsus' ja 'inkarnatsioon' või neid sisaldavad teoloogilised propositsioonid 'loomult emotiivsed' on. Berkeley on küll kriitiline katsete suhtes müsteeriume ära seletada, kuid ta ei väida kusagil, et igasugune *teoloogiline* diskussioon müsteeriumide üle on kas mõttetu või emotiivne. Ta ei ole väljendanud seisukohta, et säärase teoloogilise diskursuse eesmärgiks on emotsioonide esilekutsumine.

Berman paistab arvavat, et Berkeley jaoks polegi müsteeriumid teoloogilise arutelu objektiks, sest ta lausub, et "Berkeley emotiivne müsteeriumidekäsitus tugineb otseselt tema kognitiivsele teoloogiakäsitlusele" (Berman 1994: 147). Ent Berkeley viitab võrdlevalt teaduslikele vaidlustele *jõu* [force] ja teoloogilistele vaidlustele *Jumala armu* üle, väites, et vastavate selgepiiriliste ideede puudumisest hoolimata võivad need arutelud olla kasulikud ja mõttekad (VII. 7; *Works* 3: 296).

Kokkuvõtteks võib öelda, et vastupidiselt Bermani arvamusele või soovunelmale ei ole Berkeley mõttearendus *Alciphron*'i seitsmendas dialoogis läbinisti keelealane. Juba esitatud argumentide põhjal on alust järeldada, et Berkeley ei esita seal (Ayer' laadis) emotiivse tähenduse teooriat. Järgmises alalõigus tahan ma näidata, et on otsustavaid, teoloogiasse puutuvaid kaalutlusi, mille alusel võib Bermani tõlgitsuse tervikuna kõrvale heita kui väär.

¹⁸ Selle vastuväite eest võlgnen tänu Michael Ayersile.

II

Bermani arusaamise kohaselt arvas Berkeley, et müsteeriumi-lausungeid on Pühakirjas kasutatud vaid selleks, et panna inimesi vooruslikult käituma ning tekitada neis hea ja vägeva Looja suhtes kohane tunne või hoiak. Ilmneb, et need lausungid on vajalikud üksnes selleks, et kutsuda inimestes esile vagadust ja tänutunnet, lootust ja muid sedalaadi toimeid, ning mõjutada inimeste moraalset tegutsemist paremuse suunas. Kuna Bermani järgi on Berkeley vaated nende propositsioonide tõesuse küsimuses ebaselged ja jääbki küsitavaks, kas ta ka tegelikult uskus, et Jumal on tõesti kolmainus ning et surnud tõepoolest üles tõusevad, siis tundub mulle, et Berman kipub Berkeleyle omistama mõnevõrra mitteortodoksseid seisukohti kristluse kesksete õpetuste suhtes.¹⁹ Tema vaate järgi ei erinegi Berkeley arusaam ilmutusreligioonist fundamentaalselt vabamõtlejate omast, kelle destruktivse religioonikriitikaga Berkeley kogu oma teose ulatuses ja samuti reas teistes teostes nii tulihingeliselt polemiseerib.

Paraku ei ole midagi tuua Bermani väite kinnituseks, et Berkeley pidas müsteeriumide kohta käivate propositsioonide kasutamise ainukeseks või põhiliseks eesmärgiks teatud tunnete ja tegude esilekutsumist. Berman ei arvesta sellega, et traditsioonilise vaate kohaselt kasutab Jumal neid propositsioone inimkonna *teavitamiseks* asjust, milleni inimkond mõistuse abil ei jõuaks. Seda seisukohta jagades märgib Berkeley, et Pühakirjas on asjakohastel sõnadel ja propositsioonidel selles informeerimise protsessis täita instrumentaalne roll (VI. 4, 6–8; *Works* 3: 225, 228–233).

Propositsioonid (lausungid), mida Ayer pidanuks faktilises mõttes tähendusetuiks ja mis Bermani tõlgenduses on kognitiivse sisuta, mitteinformatiivsed, emotiivsed 'hüüatused', on Berkeley jaoks kristliku *ilmutuse* kandjaks ehk taevasi müsteeriume puudutava informatsiooni edastamise vahendiks.

Siit on ka ilmne, et Berkeley vaate järgi, mida ta on väljendanud mitmetes oma jutlustes ja kirjutistes²⁰, annavad need propositsioonid mõnesugust *teadmist* üleloomuliku maailma kohta, olgu see teadmine kui tahes piiratud ja ebaselge. Nii näiteks on just vaidlusaluste propositsioonide abil ilmutatud, et Jumal on kolmainus, et Sõna on saanud lihaks jne. Bermani interpretatsioon viib tegelikult järeldusele, mida Berman ise ei tee, et Berkeley ei tunnistanudki kristlikku ilmutust, mis tähendaks jällegi seda, et ta oli vabamõtleja. Paraku tundub, et niisuguse vaate omistamist talle ei õnnestu kinnitada ühegi tekstilõiguga tema teostest.

Tõsi, oma pealtnäha pehmema väite toetuseks tsiteerib või märgib Berman ära mõningaid kohti *Alciphron*'is ja mujal (IV. 18; V. 27, 29; VII. 7, 8, 10 ja *Works* 7: 146–7), kuid need ei anna kuidagi tunnistust sellest, et Berkeley arvates oleksid müsteeriumid ja asjassepuutuvad propositsioonid täielikult

¹⁹ 2001. aasta kevadel Bermaniga sel teemal kõneledes see mulje üksnes süvenes.

²⁰ Selle kohta vt. Jakapi, "Entry 720..."

inimeste moraalse palge täiustamise ja loomuliku religiooni efektiivsema kehtestamise teenistuses, s.t. vajalikud üksnes selleks, et kutsuda esile teatud emotsioone, hoiakuid ja tegusid ning kinnistada usku tõsiasjadesse Jumala ja tema atribuutide kohta, mida on võimalik avastada mõistuse valgel. Näiteks sõnab Berman:

Mitte miski ei pane inimesi nii efektiivselt kartma Jumala õiglust kui tulevase riigi müsteerium.

(Berman 1994: 147)

Berkeley ise ei ütle ses punktis enam kui et “usk tulevasse riiki” on kurja teo ärahoidmisel efektiivsem kui teoreetiline kõne ‘vooruse ilust’ ning see ‘võimas toime’ põhineb kartusel tulevase karistuse ees (Vt. VII. 10; *Works* 3: 302–3)²¹. Siit ei järeldu kuidagi, et tulevases riigist kõnelemise eesmärgiks on üksnes hirmutunde ja moraalselt õigete tegude esilekutsumine. Kui Berkeley oli arvamisel, et propositsioonid tulevase riigi kohta *ei* anna inimkonnale teada, et meid ootavad ees tasud ja karistused siin elus sooritatud tegude eest, s.t. kui need propositsioonid on vaid emotiivsed, mitteinformatiivsed ‘hüüatused’, nagu nad Bermanni interpretatsiooni järgi on, siis tundub, et Berkeley oli seisukohal, et tegelikult pole midagi loota ega karta. Kõike eelöeldut arvesse võttes peaks selge olema, et ta arvas teisiti.

Kui kõnealused propositsioonid on ilmutuse instrumentideks, nõnda et (tõttarmastav) Jumal annab nende kaudu midagi teada teispoolse kohta, siis on ilmne, et need peavad olema tõesed. Seega on need fundamentaalselt erinevad üksnes *emotsionaalselt* tähenduslikest, faktilise sisuta lausungitest loogiliste positivistide käsitluses.

Viimaks väärib märkimist, et *Alciphron*’i kuuendas dialoogis kasutatakse müsteeriumide illustreerimiseks võrdpilte, näiteks võrreldakse Kristuse kahe, s.o. inimliku ja jumaliku loomuse müstilist ühendust hinge ja keha ühendusega (VI. 11; *Works* 3: 240–1). See näitab, et müsteeriumides on midagi, mida on võimalik mõista ning seega pole vastavad propositsioonid mõttekad vaid niivõrd, kui nad emotsioone esile kutsuvad.

Kokkuvõte

Arvan, et esitatud argumentide abil on mul õnnestunud näidata, et *Alciphron*’is ei sisaldu (religioonilausungite) emotiivse tähenduse teooriat, mis oleks Ayer’ ja teiste omaaegsete loogiliste positivistide poolt esitatud sarnase teooria eelkäijaks. Berman väidab, et Berkeley järgi on religioossed lausungid (Berkeley terminoloogias: propositsioonid), millest viimane *Alciphron*’i seitsmendas dialoogis kõneleb, mitteinformatiivsed, ilma kognitiivse või faktilise sisuta,

²¹ Vt. ka neid kaht Berkeley esseed *The Guardian*’is (1713): nr. 55, ‘The Sanctions of Religion’ ja nr. 89, ‘Immortality’ (*Works* 7: 198–201, 222–4).

emotiivsed, ja võimalik, et ka tõeväärtuseta. Lähemal vaatlusel on aga selgunud, et Berkeley vaate seesugune kirjeldus on ebaadekvaatne, tekstilise kinnitusega ning viib uskumatute järeldusteni tema religioossete tõekspidamiste kohta. Ilmnes, et nimetatud religioonilauseid, täpsemalt, kristlikke müsteeriume väljendavad propositsioonid annavad Berkeley järgi inimkonnale midagi teada, on tõesed ning oma supranaturaalsusele vaatamata teataval määral mõistetavad. Berkeley skeemis saavad need propositsioonid ka tõeste ja informatiivsetena, või pigem just säärestena, olla aluseks usule, mille ilmseks tulemuseks on moraalses plaanis head või õiged tunded, hoiakud ja teod.

Lõpetuseks üks üldisemat laadi manitsus. Filosoofia-ajalooliste paralleelide otsimisel ja leidmisel tuleks olla ülimalt ettevaatlik, märgates sarnasusi tuleks teadvustada samas (mõnikord fundamentaalseid) erinevusi, mitte neid erinevusi ignoreerida, asetada sarnased vaated võrdluseks kõrvuti, mitte segada neid kokku. Nii saab hoiduda tahtmatult joonistamast filosoofia-ajaloolisi karikatuure ning arendamast nende põhjal karikatuurset filosoofiat.

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