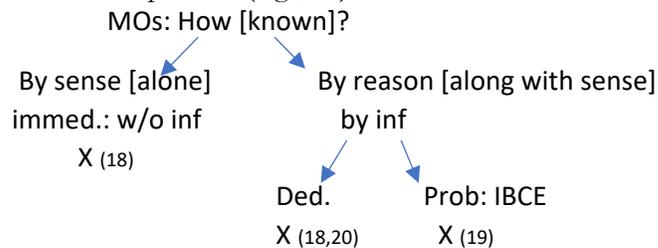


**1. Overview of Berkeley's System:** 1-3, 30-31

- Stones, trees, books, etc. are "collections of ideas" (1); "Their esse is percipi" (3)
- Berkeley not out to deny the existence of bodies/physical objects like stones, etc. (nor that we can kick them! (Samuel Johnson incident)); in fact, he wants to render that existence more secure (87). Denies "matter," material objects: by which he seems to (semi-technically) mean: *mind-independent* physical stuff/objects. (Sometimes also uses "external," as in §19's "external bodies," for the bad stuff.)
- ~~Leibniz's vs. Berkeley's Idealism~~
- Regularities and "foresight" (30-31)
- Two solutions to the Problem of Unobserved Objects (3)

**2. The Epistemological Argument:** 18-20

- senses vs. reason (18); no good deductive inference (18, 20)
- no good probabilistic inference (19, 50, 25-28)
  - materialist explanation, and therefore their inference, no good at all
  - but don't we, at least by now, have some understanding of how our (sensory) ideas are produced?: Taking account of where we are at this point of inquiry
  - a better explanation (146-149, 28)
- Thus, Berkeley's system helps us avoid skepticism (e.g., 87)



- 4 keys: 1. "by sense" means "by sense alone"; 2. "materialists" includes dualists; 3. this is supposed to be how we come to know of the material world in the first place; 4. Force of the skepticism stronger than just a lack of "knowledge"

**3. The Inconceivability Argument:** 8, 22-24, 86, 139-140, 142

- Simple version -- suggested in 22-24. Driven by:
  - my inability to conceive of something shows it can't be
  - my inability to conceive of something as existing independently of my thinking of it can be established by the: "but are not you thinking of them all the while?" move
- The more subtle interpretation: esp. 140. Driven by:
  - immediate objects of conception being a) one's own mind and its operations and b) one's own ideas (see also the start of 86)
  - indirect conception works by resemblance
  - but ideas can only resemble other ideas
- ~~sensationalism~~

**4. Brief Reflection on God in Berkeley's System: What Happens if we take God out?**

- ~~No alternative to the materialist hypothesis. But MH still no good. Agnostic as to the cause of our sensations?~~
- ~~One of the two solutions to the problem of unperceived objects no longer available; they have a merely "hypothetical" existence. Not as good, but still conceivable?~~

## **5. The Common Belief, The “Correction” made by the “Philosophers”, and Berkeley's System: 56-57**

--Berkeley will ask you to give up the mind-independence of physical objects, but argues that this is the best move to make to save most of what is important to common thought

## **6. Real Things: 29-40**

--The Account: Ideas of real things will-independent (29) and strong, lively, distinct, and coherent with one another (30)

--More Important: Berkeley's General Strategy for answering the Objection

Berkeley asks: What are the best grounds you can have, in terms of the occurrence of sensory ideas (to which all your evidence about the physical world boils down), that an object is real? Seems there must be good sensory grounds for this, if it really is a distinction worth accounting for. Berkeley seems to just take whatever is the best general account we can give for how we can know or reasonably believe (in terms of sensory grounds) an object is real, and turn that into an account of what it is for the object to be real – of what realness consists in.

--Tension: Can we avoid skepticism in the way suggested in 87 once we have drawn an intuitively correct line between real & unreal objects?

## **7. Other Objections 34-84**

--Berkeley's General Strategy (a key part of his response to several objections)

Generally, when asked to account, on his system, for a phenomenon that is commonly thought to pertain in the world, Berkeley supposes that, since this is a phenomenon worth accounting for, there must be good grounds, in terms of our sensory ideas, for its occurrence. Berkeley takes whatever is the best general account we can give for how we can know or reasonably believe (in terms of sensory grounds) that the phenomenon is occurring (say, that an object we perceive is real), and turns that into an account of what it is for the phenomenon to occur—so, from above, what it is for an object object to be real – of what realness consists in.

--A Sample Objection: Don't we see often things at a distance from us? How then can they be in our own mind?: 42-44

## **8. Our Knowledge of Other Finite Minds and of God: esp. 145-6**

--argument from analogy for other minds; a design argument/IBE for God

Chart for 5

|  | Relation of ideas / POs  | Materialism?  | Evaluation   |
|--|--|---|--|
| D on common belief   | We take ideas to be caused by resembling POs   | We take the POs to be mind-independent  | D: Some truth to ordinary materialism  |
| B,H on common belief   | We take the ideas to be the physical objects   | We take the POs to be mind-independent  | B,H: Contradiction in ordinary materialism!<br>Arrived at via a bad inference  |
| P/R response to the problem of ordinary materialism, acc. to B,H | X:<br>Philosophers conclude that we are mistaken in ordinarily taking our ideas to be the POs. We should instead take the ideas to be caused by resembling POs | ✓:<br>Philosophers hold on to this aspect of ordinary thought, remaining materialists | H: Philosophers have only made things worse! [We only make things worse when we reflect on this]<br>B: Philosophers chose the wrong aspect of ordinary thought to give up! |
| B  | ✓: We should maintain this aspect of ordinary thought, taking our ideas (or collections of them) to be the POs   | X: We should give up materialism...   | B: ...and everything will be great   |

Descartes: see M3, 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> pars., AT 38.3-39.4

**From Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Book I, Part IV, Section II):**

[H]owever philosophers may distinguish betwixt the objects and perceptions of the senses; which they suppose co-existent and resembling; yet this is a distinction, which is not comprehended by the generality of mankind, who as they perceive only one being, can never assent to the opinion of a double existence and representation. Those very sensations, which enter by the eye or ear, are with them the true objects, nor can they readily conceive that this pen or paper, which is immediately perceiv'd, represents another, which is different from, but resembling it. (*THN* I, IV, 2, p. 202 of the 1978 OUP edition)

A puzzled young man once said, "God  
Must think it exceedingly odd  
That the Juniper tree  
Just ceases to be  
When there's no one about in the quad."

Dear Sir: Your astonishment's odd.  
I am always about in the quad  
So the Juniper tree  
Never ceases to be  
While observed by  
Yours faithfully,  
God

Second limerick seems to be due to Ronald Knox (1888-1957), written while he was an undergraduate at Oxford, in reply to the first limerick, which had been penned by one of his fellow undergraduates.

From Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*:

After we came out of the church, we stood talking for some time together of Bishop Berkeley's ingenious sophistry to prove the non-existence of matter, and that every thing in the universe is merely ideal. I observed, that though we are satisfied his doctrine is not true, it is impossible to refute it. I never shall forget the alacrity with which Johnson answered, striking his foot with mighty force against a large stone, till he rebounded from it, "I refute it thus."