

WHITELEY

The Non-Existence of Matter

Berkeley's conclusion of the non-existence of the matter is not to say that things we think or perceive do not exist (a chair, a cat), but to say that there can't be any existence outside of perceptible world. There can't be "material" things outside of the perceptible world. There is no unobservable "material" thing which is outside of all experience.

Every word which describes something describes sense-data (a table which is brown, hard, cold). A word does not describe a single experience but a collection of experiences, ie: it doesn't describe sense-datum it describes recurring sense-data (table example again, there isn't one table there are tables.)

Every statement we make about a material thing is equivalent to another one about sense-data.

Phenomenalism

The doctrine that all statements about material objects can be completely analysed into statements about sense-data.

Advantages: Marking the existence of the table the same thing as the occurrence of sense-data removes any doubts as to whether it exists or not.

Since you can only sense what exist this removes any notion of hypothetical things and arguments about them, preserving **empiricism** and removing any unnecessary thought.

Disadvantages:

(1) Distinction between appearance and reality (a stick getting bent underwater, visual illusions). → *A solution to this is to have a stricter sense of the word "real".*

The mistakes regarding illusions come from false expectations of sense-data.

(2) Non-permanence of sense-data. How can a permanent object be made out of sense-data? Why doesn't the table stop existing when I go to sleep? → *A solution is to argue for **possible sense-data**.* If I were to sense the said table it would be there.

(3) Causal Activity. Surely the room can't be warmed up by my visual sense-datum of the fire.