

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.

Even Berkeley insist *that an **idea** is **inert** and can do **nothing**.*

Phenomenalist Analysis of Causation:

Hume:

Hume argues to interpret the relation between cause and effect in an observable way.

The pass from "cause" to "effect" is a psychological fact about oneself. There is nothing observed in the situation itself that suggests there is such a pass, or even cause, effect, power, force.

Then again, how does one differentiate between before and after?

By *repeating the experiment* to see if the same sequence of events occur. If so, the happening were causal and not accidental.

*Causality, to **Hume** is the repetition of an invariable cycle.*

To guess as to what happened in theoretical situation is not straying away from sense-data, but the mere act of referring to the possible sense-data that may have occurred (*Why did the leg of this table broke? Termites likely ate it.*).

Thus Hume and his followers do not deny cause and effect, **but interpret it as a relation between sense-data, actual and possible.**

In his theory, material world is a set of sense-experiences, together with another innumerable set of sense-experiences that may occur under certain specified conditions.

To say “This is a table” is not to rely on partial sense-data or singular sense-datum but to rely on a collection of said sense-data and possible sense-data. When you look at the table from different angles the sense-data of its shape may change, but the “material” shape of it doesn’t change. One has to infer from sense-data to decide on what the table is.