

impressions were taken to be discernible marks at least *of their own presence*. Thus if ordinary objects—trees, horses and the like—were made out of impressions, then perhaps we had discernible mark of truths for our ordinary beliefs after all. Thus the epistemological troubles of Classical Infallibilism motivated the revisionary metaphysics of Idealism.

Locke flirted with Idealism in his reply to scepticism. In case his main answer was not granted he proposed an alternative. Even if what he calls “fire” turns out to be an idea in him, it is no less a cause (or temporal predecessor) of pain, and knowing that is all that matters.⁶³ The assumption is that even if he lacks discernible marks of truth about the existence of fire, he has at least discernible marks of truths for the existence of *sensations* of fire and what follows from them. For—his thought may be—the sensations play the role of discernible marks of their own presence. The further step, taken by Berkeley and subsequent Idealists, was to claim that “fire” in fact refers to these sensations.⁶⁴ Thus we may hope to have discernible marks of the presence of fire after all.

The Classical Infallibilist motivation is evident in Berkeley and Kant. Berkeley grants the sceptical claim that we have no discernible mark of truths for the existence of unperceived bodies.⁶⁵ In line with Classical Infallibilism, he concludes that we do not know that there are such things. He claims, however, that we do know our ideas and what they necessary entail.⁶⁶ He avoids outright scepticism by claiming that ordinary things like apples are collections of ideas.⁶⁷

Kant’s “refutation of Idealism” (B274–9) is meant to show that the existence

⁶³Locke (1975, IV, 2, §14): “But yet if [one who argues that a dream may produce the same idea] be resolved to appear so sceptical as to maintain, that what I call being actually in the fire is nothing but a dream; and that we cannot thereby certainly know, that any such thing as fire actually exists without us: I answer, That we certainly finding that pleasure or pain follows upon the application of certain objects to us, whose existence we perceive, or dream that we perceive, by our senses; this certainty is as great as our happiness or misery, beyond which we have no concernment to know or to be.” The reply is pragmatic rather than Idealist.

⁶⁴See Berkeley (57, §1) “Thus, for example a certain colour, taste, smell, figure and consistence having been observed to go together, are accounted one distinct thing, signified by the name *apple*. Other collections of ideas constitute a stone, a tree, a book, and the like sensible things—which as they are pleasing or disagreeable excite the passions of love, hatred, joy, grief, and so forth.”

⁶⁵Berkeley (57, §18): “But what reason can induce us to believe the existence of bodies without the mind, from what we perceive, since the very patrons of Matter themselves do not pretend there is *any necessary connexion betwixt them and our ideas*? I say it is granted on all hands (and what happens in dreams, phrensies, and the like, puts it beyond dispute) that *it is possible we might be affected with all the ideas we have now, though there were no bodies existing without resembling them*”.

⁶⁶See Berkeley (57, §18): “Either we must know [the existence of unperceived bodies] by sense or by reason. As for our senses, by them we have the knowledge ONLY OF OUR SENSATIONS, ideas, or those things that are immediately perceived by sense, call them what you will: but they do not inform us that things exist without the mind, or unperceived, like to those which are perceived.” The rest of the paragraph, quoted above, shows that Berkeley assumes that something is known by reason only if it is entailed by the existence of our ideas. Berkeley takes this to include the immortality of souls, the existence of other minds and the existence of God.

⁶⁷See e.g. Berkeley (57, §1), quoted fn. 64 above.