

## George Berkeley

(1685-1753) [Dysert, Dublin, London, Paris, Rhode Island,  
Cloyne, Oxford]



George Berkeley studied Descartes, Malebranche, and Locke. In 1709 he published his *New Theory of Vision*, which was a purely psychological interpretation of space, and in 1710 his *Principles of Human Knowledge*, and in 1715 his *Three Dialogues*.

Berkeley maintains that sensations are always in some knower's mind and that the contents of ideas are always sensations. Any object is thus only a package of sensations. The distinction Locke made between primary and secondary qualities – the former is supposedly independent of mind and the latter is supposedly dependent on it – vanishes upon careful analysis, all being equally functions of the knowing experience. The attempt to picture a material world beyond the sense realm duplicates the problem, giving a second realm with all the characteristics of the first. The concept of material substance is self-contradictory, being regarded sometimes as an active reality, sometimes as a passive one. When we try to describe an object we are not seeing, we tacitly assume that some other observer is there seeing it.

Berkeley reasoned that mind is the <sup>النفس</sup> active principle of experience, and when we think of the <sup>الكون</sup> universe as existing before there were any finite minds to experience it, we assume there is an omnipresent Mind observing the <sup>كالم</sup> universe through all time. Hence, Berkeley regards his <sup>تفسير</sup> interpretation of experience as a new <sup>دليل</sup> proof of the <sup>وجود</sup> existence of God. The individual realizes that at most moments in experience he does not originate his own ideas by means of deliberate efforts. This is an <sup>ملاحظة</sup> indication that something besides himself exists, but it must be understood as another <sup>روح</sup> spirit, not matter, because spirit is active and matter is not.

When objection is raised that we have no more idea of spirit than of matter, Berkeley concedes that knowledge of spirit is not attained by way of idea, but by way of a reflective process, which he designates by the term 'notion' instead of 'idea'. Idea signifies the passive object of sense knowledge, whereas notion indicates the active side of the knowing process.

In trying to clarify further the relation of finite to infinite mind, he moved in later years to an intellectual interpretation of the unity of finite with infinite mind, an appreciation of unity similar to that of the Mystic but attained by intellectual analysis, not by immediate intuition. In a sense we see God in all nature, as we see other persons through their bodily presence. But this is in both cases an interpretation through a mental process that is not merely sensory. Berkeley was really an objective idealist.

## Exercises

### Vocabulary Focus

appreciation /əˌpriːʃi'eɪʃən/ noun [U]

1 **VALUE** when you understand how good something or someone is and are able to enjoy them

*His appreciation of art increased as he grew older.*

2 **FEEL GRATEFUL** when you feel grateful for something

*To show our appreciation, we've bought you a little gift.*

**3 UNDERSTANDING** when you understand something about a situation, especially that it is complicated or difficult  
*He has no appreciation of the size of the problem.*

**4 INCREASE FORMAL** an increase in value  
*the pound's rapid appreciation*

**assume** /ə'sju:m/ verb [T]

**1** to think that something is likely to be true, although you have no proof  
[+ (that)] *Everything was quiet when I got home so I assumed that you had gone out.*

**2 assume control/power/responsibility, etc.** to take a position of control/power/responsibility, etc.  
*He has assumed the role of spokesman for the group.*

**3 assume an air/expression, etc. FORMAL** to pretend to have a feeling that you do not have

**4 assume a false identity/name, etc.** to pretend to be someone else  
*an assumed name*

**clarify** /'klærɪfaɪ/ verb [T]

to make something easier to understand by explaining it

*The law aims to clarify building regulations.*

**clarification** /,klærɪfɪ'keɪʃən/ noun [C,U]

clarifying or being clarified

*The whole issue needs clarification.*

**indicate** /'ɪndɪkeɪt/ verb

**1 SHOW** [T] to show that something exists or is likely to be true

[+ (that)] *Recent evidence indicates that the skeleton is about 3 million years old.*

2 **SAY** [T] to say something or give a signal to show what you mean or what you intend to do

*He has indicated his intention to resign.*

*She nodded to indicate she was listening.*

3 **POINT** [T] to point to someone or something

*He indicated a man in a dark coat.*

4 **SIGNAL** [I,T] UK to show that you intend to turn left or right when you are driving

*The driver turned right without indicating.*

sensation /sen'seɪʃən/ noun

1 **PHYSICAL** [C,U] a physical feeling, or the ability to physically feel things

*a burning sensation*

*Three months after the accident she still has no sensation in her right foot.*

2 **FEELING** [C] a strange feeling or idea that you cannot explain

*I had the strangest sensation that I had met him before.*

3 **EXCITEMENT** [no plural] a lot of excitement, surprise, or interest, or the person or event that causes these feelings

*Their affair caused a sensation.*

### *Comprehension Focus*

#### **A. Answer the following questions.**

1. Why does Berkeley maintain that any object is only a package of sensations?
2. What does he think of the distinction Locke made between primary and secondary qualities?
3. Why does the attempt to picture a material world beyond the realm of senses fail?



القدره على الشعور أو الشعور الجسدي  
 d. a physical feeling, or the ability to physically  
 بالاشياء جسديا  
 feel things  
 عندما تفهم مدى جودة شيء ما أو شخص ما  
 e. when you understand how good something  
 وتكون قادرين على الاستمتاع به  
 or someone is and are able to enjoy them

D. Each of the following sentences contains a blank. Select the word that best completes the sentence. Apply any necessary change.

تساوي	اسم
equal	equally
	مساوية

- This job could be done equally well by a computer.
- There is an equal number of boys and girls in the class.
- We try to treat every member of staff equally.
- Divide the cake into equal parts.
- Diet and exercise are equally important.

يفترض	اسم
assume	assumption
	افتراض

- It is reasonable to assume (that) the economy will continue to improve.
- We need to challenge some of the basic assumption of western philosophy.
- We are working on the assumption that everyone invited will turn up.
- Let us assume for a moment that the plan succeeds.
- It was impossible to make assumption about people's reactions.

اسم	فعل	اسم	اسم
intuition	intuitive	intuitively	بشعور أو بحدس
	فعل		أو بحدس

- intuitively told her that he had spoken the truth.
- Is the feminine nature generally more intuitive?
- He was guided by intuition and personal judgment.
- intuitively, she knew that he was lying.
- I had an intuition that something awful was about to happen.

E. From the list of words given, select the correct word for each blank space. Apply any necessary change.

1 duplicate	2 clarify	3 omnipresent	4 appreciate	5 indicate
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- Record profits in the retail market *duplicate*
- Her family doesn't ..... her. *appreciate*
- Talking to someone has helped ..... my feelings. *clarify*
- A yellowing of the skin ..... jaundice. *indicate*
- These days the media are ..... work already done. *omni-present*
- There's no point in ..... a decline in moral standards. *appreciate*
- The article claims that an increase in crime ..... a decline in moral standards. *indicate*
- I'd ..... some help. *appreciate*

**Preposition Focus**

F. From the list of words given, select a preposition for each blank.

- |         |       |      |      |     |    |    |
|---------|-------|------|------|-----|----|----|
| through | about | upon | into | off | on | as |
| against | from  | with | out  | by  | in | to |
| across  | after | over | for  | up  | of | at |

Berkeley reasoned that mind is the active principle ... experience, and when we think ... the universe ... existing before there were any finite minds ... experience it, we assume there is an omnipresent Mind observing the universe ... all time. Hence, Berkeley regards his interpretation ... experience ... a new proof ... the existence ... God. The individual realizes that at most moments ... experience he does not originate his own ideas ... means ... deliberate efforts. This is an indication that something besides himself exists, but it must be understood ... another spirit, not matter, because spirit is active and matter is not.