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Critique of Self-idealization in Berkeley's Philosophy

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Abstract

This paper critically examines George Berkeley's philosophy, focusing on his rejection of materialism and development of idealistic views. The analysis delves into Berkeley's arguments against the existence of matter, his emphasis on perception, and the implications of his idealism. The text navigates through Berkeley's conceptualization of reality, highlighting the central role of the mind and the dismissal of material causes. It discusses the intricate relationship between existence, perception, and divinity in Berkeley's philosophy. Through historical and analytical lenses, the paper also critiques Berkeley's rejection of the law of causality and explores the broader implications of his idealism.

Keywords: *George Berkeley, Idealism, Materialism, Perception, Causality*

Introduction

The present-day European philosophy emerged, as is widely known, from the disintegrate of scholastic idea within the medieval European era. Scholastic thought of that generation changed into characterized with the aid of several features, which includes its endorsement of pluralism, accepting the existence of unitary entities or more than one Existents at one of a kind degrees in existence. It also took a personalistic course, acknowledging the primacy of human values over others, conceiving of life organically, and, fundamentally, embracing the centrality of God, pointing out that God is the middle of the universe. As for the method followed with the aid of scholastic philosophy, it employed a logical evaluation technique to partial problems. Modern Western philosophy, but, antagonistic all these characteristics and troubles. Its fundamental precept is a mechanistic route that excludes organic and sluggish idea of lifestyles. It additionally adopts a self-orientated route that makes humans impartial of God, focusing their attention at the self. In terms of method, current philosophy rejected intuitive reasoning and, in spite of some critical exceptions, built towering philosophical systems that did now not rely on the analytical technique. Due to this conflict between ideas and opinions, many philosophers emerged, adopting a new method, consisting of Berkeley. He converted the continued war among mechanical technology and the non secular view in favor of the latter. He identified the whole mathematical capability of physics to link herbal phenomena underneath popular laws however insisted more strongly than Newton himself on distinguishing between mechanical legal guidelines and sufficient actual reasons. Scientific laws are neither causal nor important; they do no longer specific the actual factors in nature but are mathematical descriptions of the constant additions between perceived things, thoughts, or

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static ideas. There is a normal collection of perceived activities or thoughts to another occasion or another idea. However, such events are without actual energy. Berkeley believed that understanding isn't acquired via the medical method, which, in precept, is limited to the have a look at of non-causal perceived matters. Instead, he argued that expertise is received via natural philosophical method. In this research, I delved into Berkeley's technique in analyzing several philosophical ideas. I followed a historic, analytical, and descriptive method, similarly to investigate divisions. The first phase included the concept of materialism in modern-day philosophy, such as Berkeley's perspective. The 2nd phase included the theoretical precept and the mind's idea in Berkeley's philosophy. The second segment addressed Berkeley's herbal philosophy and critiqued Berkeley's idealism (Boushanski, 1978: 24; Collins, 1973: 155).

1. Chapter One: Materialism in Modern Philosophy, Berkeley as a Model

1.1. First: The Concept of Materialism in Berkeley's Philosophy

Modern Western philosophy opposes many of the views of medieval philosophy, most notably the central idea of medieval philosophy, which is the centrality of God (meaning that God is the center of the universe). Instead, it adopted a logical analysis approach to specific problems.

Modern philosophy opposes all these characteristics and issues. Its fundamental principles lie in the dynamic direction that excludes organic and gradual conceptualization of existence. It also adopts the self-direction that makes humans independent of God and redirects their focus towards themselves. In terms of methodology, modern philosophy rejects pictorial logic, although there are important exceptions in constructing robust philosophical systems that do not rely on the analytical method (Boushanski, 1978: 24).

Berkeley denied materialism, and his denial of materialism is supported by several arguments. He sees that material things exist only because they are perceived. In response to objections claiming that, in this case, a tree, for example, would cease to exist without a perceiver, he argues that what we consider material objects will have an unstable life that suddenly jumps into existence when observed. However, trees, rocks, and stones have continuous existence, as assumed by proper perception and thanks to mechanistic perceptions.

In Berkeley's view, this argument carries weight for the existence of God. Berkeley considered God the foundation of nature, and things are not independent of the mind. However, they move among minds but do not exist independently. The existence and perception of things are one. This is the principle that refutes the existence of matter and the world's independence from the mind (Khalil, 1997: 69). In other words, it replaces the materialistic view of the world with a spiritual view of existence, which does not exist independently of perception.

Berkeley rejected the dualism of the world and believes that ideas in the mind are not the result of the impact of material things on our senses. Instead, these ideas or qualities are self-sensations and are the things themselves. Does this mean that sensation is an act of the human mind, or is there another source of sensation? According to Berkeley, sensation is not an act of the human mind because that would mean that the human mind creates its ideas. The mind cannot be effective unless the will assists it. This means that there is a connection between the effectiveness of the mind and a positive and effective will (Khalil, 1997: 69).

Berkeley conceded that it is logically possible for there to be things unperceived, as long as he concedes that there are real things, such as spiritual essences, unperceived sensorially. In other words, when you say that an event is perceived sensorially, we mean something more than it happening; hence, there is a clear distinction between events perceived sensorially and events

unperceived. The former, not the latter, can be recalled.

Recollection is one of a comprehensive set of particular effects somehow associated with phenomena that we refer to as mental. These effects are usually related to habits. For example, a burned child fears fire; the physiological world studies habit as a property of the nervous tissue and does not need to start by explaining the world of physics.

In the language of physics, we can say that an event is perceived sensorially if it has certain kinds of causes. In this sense, we can also say approximately that a watercourse is perceived sensorially if it has certain types of causes. We can also say roughly that a watercourse perceives sensorially that the rains that deepen it, and a river valley is a "memory" of previous torrential rains. Habit and memory, when expressed in physical terms, are not entirely absent in inert matter. The difference in this case between living and dead matter is only a difference in degree, not because the matter lacks these properties entirely. Therefore, if we say that an event is perceived sensorially and it has certain kinds of causes, we can also say, roughly speaking, that a watercourse is perceived sensorially if it has certain types of causes. In this sense, we can also say that a watercourse perceives sensorially that the rains that deepen it and a river valley are "memories" of previous torrential rains.

This view suggests a different perspective on the theory of knowledge. Starting with the nature of knowledge is fundamentally what Berkeley does. It is not necessary to know a sensory percept. In short, the methodology is as follows: we collect issues that we feel we know without inference and find that most of these issues are associated with particular past events. We know these events as "sensorial percepts." Sensorial percepts are those events we know without inference or, at least, events that bring them to mind, considering that events of this kind were once sensorial percepts. For example, the words "mind" or "matter"—each of us knows that the mind is what thinks of the ideal, nothing else, and matter is what thinks of nothing else but itself (Russell, 1977: 250).

1.2. Second: The Doctrine of Mind and the Perceptual Doctrine in Berkeley:

We can know reality through experience, meaning that knowledge is limited to two avenues: sensation and thought. All existents are either perceptions or ideas; thus, the mind is responsible for perceiving ideas. There is nothing in reality as material; this is a manifestation of the ideal empirical doctrine, the ideal personal doctrine, or the ideal self-doctrine. The best designation for Berkeley's doctrine is "the doctrine of the mind," although it is not a widely used term because Berkeley claims that everything real is mental, meaning minds and their contents.

Berkeley found in the perceptual principle a way to refute materialism and respond to materialists, making God the center of his doctrine of existence and knowledge. Berkeley surpasses Locke but opposes him, claiming to correct his position in an inappropriate context. Berkeley denied Locke's objectivity of secondary qualities and believed in primary qualities translated from extension and substance. Berkeley said, "What allows us the right to believe in their existence, and what is the benefit of retaining matter while admitting that we are ignorant of its nature? There is nothing but souls because idealism is the truth."

Berkeley rejected Locke's objectivity of species and genera and believed in abstract meanings. All our knowledge is partial, and all there is a particular name that applies to several particulars. The entire doctrine is reduced to two points: nominalism and non-materialism. Berkeley also insists that we do not have any ideas that are purely abstract, and the words we assume to refer

to them are only names and nothing but names (Karam, 1969: 162). There is nothing in reality that corresponds to any idea, and thinking about any idea is useless. Berkeley sees that using words that are not correlated with anything in mental experience made the thinking of previous philosophers obscure and dark because they confused purely nominal words with factual truths. Therefore, they found confusion and complained that they could not see, and Berkeley believes that the remedy is to focus on thoughts that actually inform and avoid thinking about words that are used to refer to them. "We only need to draw the curtain of words that need only the observation of the tree of knowledge, the most half-fruited, which has excellent fruits and is accessible." "No one can be mistaken by looking at his naked and manifest thoughts." Thus, Berkeley is wrong in assuming that what applies possibly to images must also apply to thoughts or meanings indicating it. The reality is that Berkeley himself acknowledges this in the case of triangles when he admits that geometric theories with general application and proof can be understood, even though they cannot be explained except through graphical representations, which must be limited. Everyone must agree with Berkeley in saying that ideas should not be mixed with the words used to refer to them, meaning attention should be focused on ideas.

Berkeley practiced what he preached, so his early published writings became, with the exception of Hobbes' philosophical writings, the clearest philosophical writings ever published in the English language (Wright, 2008: 188).

2. Chapter Two: Critique of Idealism in Berkeley's Philosophy

2.1. First: Natural Philosophy in Berkeley

There are sharp critical ideas in Berkeley's philosophy that are risky, starting with natural philosophy. Berkeley believes that the task of natural philosophy is not to uncover the causes of what happens in the universe. According to Berkeley, causes or reasons are not as Newton imagines, such as the laws of motion and gravity, which he considers causes and reasons that explain the purposes of the universe. In reality, these are mathematical assumptions or symbols. The natural causes are illusions, and there is only one cause, which is God. Similarly, concerning the concept of time and space, Berkeley believes that this leads us to a mistaken conception of the nature of God. Is time God? Is space God? Is motion God? These words have no meaning because they do not refer to anything perceived by the senses or understood by reason. Therefore, unlike Newton, Berkeley makes God the only cause and denies the existence of matter or natural causes (Khalil, 1997: 39).

Existence for Berkeley is twofold: perceived existence, which is the existence of things or ideas perceived by the senses, and there is no existence for them except insofar as they are perceived or exist in perception. The other aspect is the mind, which is the perceiver, and there is no existence for anything apart from it. Thus, the existence of things depends on how they are perceived by the mind. This is summarized by Berkeley's statement, "Existence is either perceived or perceived." Therefore, the definition of the word existence is not a distinct idea but perceived existence and perceiving existence. Abstract existence is a word without meaning. Although philosophers thought that the word existence represented an abstract idea, Berkeley argues that this is an illusion because existence is not an abstract idea; it is nothing but being perceived or perceiving. Thus, anyone claiming that the meaning of existence is an abstract idea, such as the existence of the soul or the existence of an idea, is mistaken, as the abstract idea of existence has no meaning. Berkeley believes that perceived existence is ideas, true

existence is the things perceived and felt, and, therefore, things are ideas or sensations that exist only in the mind. Hence, Berkeley says, "If the existence of our ideas is based on them being perceived and imagined in thought, and when we imagine ideas or think about them, they exist." Thus, imaginary ideas are another form of perceived existence, and according to Berkeley, it is impossible for anything to exist except that. Therefore, the word idea also refers to an imaginary existence, which Berkeley considers a subject of human knowledge. He says, "Ideas are either imprinted on the senses, or subjects perceived through emotions and mental processes, or ideas formed through memory and imagination." Thus, Berkeley takes three levels of existence: sensed existence, which is ideas imprinted on the senses; the second level is meanings referred to by Berkeley as the existence of the mind, either finite or infinite. The third level is imaginary existence, and Berkeley sees that the existence of these levels is not separate. There is a connection between the mind and perceived existence, with the content of this connection concerning the divine mind being creation and perception. However, the relationship between the finite mind and perceived existence does not go beyond the mind being receptive and perceptive (Khalil, 1997: 140).

We notice that Berkeley eliminates the difference. He attributes all secondary or primary qualities to the mind and says, "The perceived world is nothing but what we perceive with our many senses, and there is no existence beyond the ideas we perceive with the mind. There is no existence beyond the ideas that we perceive with the mind, and there is no existence for any idea or model of the idea independent of the mind." Here we find that Berkeley understands the natural position partially because if the natural position recognizes the existence of things because they are perceived in front of it, the ordinary person finds it impossible to say: the real existence of things does not occur independently of the mind, for ideas are things, and therefore they exist only in the mind, so it is the basis of existence, not matter. Therefore, Berkeley's philosophy stands in opposition to materialism, which accepts the existence of matter as the absolute foundation of nature. Thus, Berkeley's idealism does not make sense or require the existence of God, as the universe works mechanically. Thus, the materialistic view of the world is inconsistent with divinity from Berkeley's perspective. Therefore, Berkeley takes the principle of existence as perception and a means of denying the existence of matter and drawing that transparent image of existence in which ideas become things, the foundation of the mind, and the foundation of existence, not matter.

2.2. Second: Critique of Idealism in Berkeley's Philosophy

Berkeley's idealism is extreme idealism to the point of extremism. Berkeley wrote a book under the title "Immateriality," affirming a close relationship between the thinking self and the external world and rejecting the existence of a separate external world from the self. He made it clear that there is a close connection between existence and thought, emphasizing the idea of the self as a source or principal source of ideas, which, in turn, is the source of the existence of the external world. He rejected the idea of a separate external world from the self in a clear affirmation of the connection between existence and thought. Consequently, Berkeley was judged to be an idealist, whether non-material or self-material. However, the most significant criticism directed at Berkeley in his idealism is his rejection of the law of causality, as this law helped advance human knowledge by linking things and their causes existing in the universe. Berkeley criticized this law on purely theological grounds, claiming that every effect must have a cause, an erroneous idea because God is the cause of all causes and the primary and only cause. Among the criticisms of Berkeley's idealism is his transformation of meanings into things, contrary to what is prevailing among the public and private attempts to transform things

into meanings. Thus, the existence of the thing is linked to its perception and the existence of the mind as well. Therefore, Berkeley ruled that he is an idealist, not material, or that he is a self-material idealist. However, the most significant criticism directed at Berkeley's idealism is his rejection of the law of causality, as this law helped advance human knowledge by linking things and their causes existing in the universe. Berkeley criticized this law on purely theological grounds, claiming that every effect must have a cause, an erroneous idea because God is the cause of all causes and the primary and only cause (Khalil, 1997: 66). One of the criticisms of Berkeley's idealism is his transformation of meanings into things, contrary to what is prevailing among the public and private attempts to transform things into meanings. So, the existence of the thing is linked to its perception and the existence of the mind as well. Therefore, Berkeley ruled that he is an idealist, not material, or that he is a self-material idealist. However, the most significant criticism directed at Berkeley's idealism is his rejection of the law of causality, as this law helped advance human knowledge by linking things and their causes existing in the universe. Berkeley criticized this law on purely theological grounds, claiming that every effect must have a cause, an erroneous idea because God is the cause of all causes and the primary and only cause. One of the criticisms of Berkeley's idealism is his transformation of meanings into things, contrary to what is prevailing among the public and private attempts to transform things into meanings. So, the existence of the thing is linked to its perception and the existence of the mind as well. Therefore, Berkeley ruled that he is an idealist, not material, or that he is a self-material idealist (Kishaneh, 2018: 150).

Conclusion

Consideration of the idea of divinity is one of the most important philosophical concepts in Berkeley's philosophy. The primary goal of his works is to contemplate God and our duty. Therefore, it was natural for him to assume that all his works would be sterile unless they inspired his readers with the religious meaning of the existence of God. In the process of affirming this case, it was essential for him, given his idealistic inclination, to deny the existence of matter in a clear affirmation of his idealism. He took a new stance that contradicts the conclusions of empirical philosophers and people of revelation. Philosophers and religious scholars acknowledged two matters: the existence of matter and the independence of the material world from the mind. However, Berkeley saw that accepting these two in the doctrines of previous philosophers like Hobbes, Spinoza, and John Locke had created a negative decline in the state and religion. Berkeley's doctrine is based on the idea that every concept in the mind is a partial idea because, for him, the mind is incapable of forming abstract ideas or meanings for things. Therefore, Berkeley's opinion confirms that the principle of abstraction is considered by him to be one of the false principles. It is the foundation of all arguments in science since it leads scientists to search for the nature of things that they imagine to exist behind the assumptions they use to interpret the phenomena of nature and understand them.

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