
Essay: Locke vs. Berkeley on abstract ideas

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1 DONE Ayers: Introduction to Berkeley's philosophical works

Berkeley is consistent throughout his life and seeks to expand and explain his doctrines in later writings; they do not really alter.

1.1 1. The philosophical background and the theories of Locke

Berkeley is a theologically motivated assault on the rationalism of Descartes and Locke. Locke sees the world mechanistically - very complicated, but running with intelligible order and regularity. There is one substance with extension, solidity and movement, divided into particles. Particular changes are intelligible but the relevant structural properties are beyond our ken.

- ★ **Locke on substance** Usually dualist. Locke says mental substance unknown to us unlike Descartes. Locke's typical agnosticism. For Locke, our use of 'substance' is a reflection of our inability to have any knowledge of whatever it may be that 'supports' the properties we experience and know about. Our idea of a substance is also of something unknown.
- ★ **Locke on ideas** Locke assumes we can always identify the ideas that constitute our thought. In necessary and certain knowledge we must therefore have ideas as well - we have a 'visual model for reasoning' (p. ix).

Whenever Locke talks about knowledge not extending beyond ideas he is trying to emphasise 'the epistemic gap, not between sensations and external objects, but between powers attributed on the basis of their observed exercise on the one hand and intrinsic properties on the other ...' (p. x)

1.2 2. Ideas and sensible qualities: esse is percipi

Berkeley's first claim is that it doesn't make sense to conceive of sensible qualities and objects existing as unperceived in the same way that it doesn't make sense for ideas of the imagination to do so - that is, for ideas to exist without being thought. 'There was a sound, that is to say, it was heard.' (Berkeley PHK I section 3) Two claims are tangled up here: firstly the less plausible identification of the existence of an object with the perception of an idea and secondly the sensible object only existing if it would in 'appropriate circumstances' be perceived. But for Berkeley there is an actual behind the potential - god.

- ★ **'Unperceived existence'** When I say 'my table exists' when I'm not in the room I mean that there is a hypothetical existence of a sensible thing, not a categorical existence of a potentiality. Or at least they're unperceived only by men - god again.

Berkeley claims that to think/talk of the object in the unoccupied room is to think/talk of the perception, not an object in actuality.

For Locke our idea of extension is a sensory idea that gives us access to reality independent of our senses. Berkeley lays into things like this convincingly.

1.3 3. Spiritual versus unthinking substance

Berkeley now claims that it is self-contradictory to claim that any unperceiving thing has any sensible quality because sensible qualities are ideas and so can only exist in a perceiving thing. So spirit is the only kind of substance in which all inheres. The suggestion that there is material substance is in fact self-contradictory.

- ★ **The debate about substance** Substance is ultimate reality - in order to understand the universe we must understand this ultimate reality (principle from Descartes from the Scholastics).

Berkeley ascribes two dependencies upon spirit to bodies: spirit's supporting and causing properties. Firstly we have perception: 'sensible objects inhere in the spirit that perceives them' (para. p. xvi) and secondly our acts of will/imagination are the causal function - for god this is the creative act of real bodies.

'It is important for Berkeley that percipience and agency, understanding and will, are intimately related and, in a way, inseparable aspects of Spirit, although separable to the extent that a particular spirit can perceive ideas that it does not will.' (p. xvi)

Substance == Spirit. Supporting == immediate perception. Accidents == ideas.

1.4 4. Spiritual versus material causality

- ★ **Causation parallels sensible qualities** An unthinking cause is likewise untenable for Berkeley. An idea or a sensible quality is 'inactive' yet it depends on a cause and the only cause of ideas is a substance and substance is spirit which possesses a will. Causality is volition.
- ★ **Berkeley's motives** This is all about reconciling mechanical causality with divine causality. Descartes says things need god to continue to exist but work on necessary mechanical laws *flex*. Berkeley wants to put ethics and theology are more fundamental than natural sciences. He did this by assaulting Locke's distinction between descriptive account of [something] and explanatory physical theory. (pp. xvii-iii)

Instead - science will uncover useful knowledge about the (arbitrary) order of god's universe. Real understanding will come from theology.

'Thus natural science both has the immediate object ascribed by Locke to natural history (i.e. the useful, if not logically certain, knowledge of means to ends) and also serves as a preliminary and part of a higher science, natural theology, through which we may 'enlarge our notions of the grandeur, wisdom and beneficence of the Creator', the divine substance underlying the phenomena.' (p. xviii)

- ★ **The modern interest** For Berkeley, terms like 'gravity' refer to similarities/*analogies* between perceived processes, rather than unperceived processes that we are not in a position to completely understand (Locke, Newton).

[Some comments on the relationship between Berkeley & Hume]

Objections relating to human action are ones that no phenomenalist has ever replied to successfully so don't be too hard on Berkeley.

1.5 5. Primary and secondary qualities, abstract ideas, ideas of two senses, and the coherence of Berkeley's thought

It's unclear how important it is to Berkeley's philosophy that he criticises Locke's primary/secondary qualities distinction.

- ★ **Ideas of two senses** Locke: because we get squareness from sight and touch there must be one common property that we've been able to abstract - *in fact the square object gives us square ideas which we then abstract squareness from to form yet another idea.* Berkeley deploys very powerful arguments to suggest that we have two separate concepts of squareness here.
- ★ **Polemic against abstract ideas — IMPORTANT FOR ESSAY** Berkeley's foresaw that he'd be accused of attacking abstract ideas as images but for Locke we want to 'blur any distinction between rational intuition and sensory perception.' (p. xx) An abstract idea is a "representative" and 'standard' for a class.' (p. xx) - clearly this must be an image in most cases. For things like ideas of 'unity',

★ we could call them logical concepts - Locke doesn't say very much

anyway - somehow they are before the mind and are perceived and got from experience. Nothing to suggest Berkeley has just misread Locke.

- * **Rejection of abstract ideas does not entail immaterialism — IMPORTANT FOR ESSAY** Some claim that the rejection of abstract ideas is irrelevant to his metaphysics in a logical sense and accuse Berkeley of incoherence. However, this is a narrow understanding of the debate because what Berkeley is doing is showing that we can't consider something as existing in isolation just because we can talk and reason about it in isolation - nothing follows from this deductively. It's a methodological principle rather than a substantive belief.

Every word counts with Berkeley - the fact this attack on Locke's account of abstract ideas is in the introduction shows his skill.

1.6 TODO Summary

2 DONE Berkeley: Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge - Introduction

1. Philosophy should bring us clarity and serenity but in fact the opposite is true.
2. The reason given for this is (a) our faculties are designed for comfort in life rather than understanding of essences (b) we are finite so comprehend the infinite.
3. God would not give us a desire for knowledge that is out of our reach. So it's our fault for misusing our faculties. All philosophical problems are owing to ourselves.
4. Goal is to search for the false principles that lead us into these absurdities.
5. Blah.
6. The 'opinion that the mind hath the power of framing *abstract ideas* or notions of things' is one of our biggest sources of error. All higher learning assumes their existence in the mind.
7. Qualities do not exist on their own but 'mixed' in objects. Lockeans claim that the mind frames abstract ideas by considering each quality singularly and separately from the others. Fex we frame the abstract idea of colour even though it can't exist without the property of extension.
8. These abstract ideas are that which is 'common and alike in all' that thereby correspond to every instance that has that property.
9. It does the same for compounded qualities e.g. 'man', which contains (abstract ideas of) colour, height etc. Abstracting more we get 'animal'. A property here is body, of no particular shape, fex.
10. Berkeley can compound things together in his *imagination* - building mythical creatures - but it's always particulars and he can never conceive of the abstract ideas as described above.
Berkeley can conceive things that can be separated separately but those which cannot exist apart he cannot.
11. Locke thinks that abstract ideas separate man from beast in the biggest way. They can reason but they do so with particulars, not generalities. Locke's reason for this is the fact that they don't use words.

But Berkeley thinks a word becomes general because it stands for several particular ideas, suggesting any of them indifferently when invoked. This does not make them suggest an abstract general idea. All that is implied is that 'the axiom concerning it holds equally true' for any type of motion/extension/etc.

12. An *idea* (rather than a word) becomes general when it starts standing for 'all other particular ideas of the same sort.' E.g. a geometer using a blank line on paper. A particular line that is in fact now general because it is a sign for many lines.
13. Locke says: an abstract triangle, *fex*, must be all and none of the following inconsistent properties at once: equilateral, scalene, isosceles. Given that this is a hard idea to form children aren't very good at it as a consequence. Berkeley: we can't actually do this.
14. Abstract ideas are, according to Locke, necessary for communication and known by men only through repeated use. But then how do children communicate with each other and at what point are we engaged in gaining these ideas? No-one has any memory and it's too hard for children to do.
15. Nor do we need abstract ideas for the enlargement of knowledge. Knowledge is about universal notions but this is when a particular becomes a sign for many particulars so as to render it universal.
16. Objection: how can we prove something about all triangles that we've only shown, as Berkeley claims, for a particular one? It doesn't follow.

The reply is that the particulars of the particular conceived of during the demonstration are not part of the actual proof. So in some sense he is able to abstract (by ignoring some of the properties) but he's not able to form an 'abstract general inconsistent idea . . .' the *x*, in so far as it is an *x* . . .

17. Blah.
18. The source of this prevailing notion of abstract ideas is language. Locke claims this himself (3.6.39 and elsewhere) that there would be no abstraction if there was no speech.
The claim is that words have one settled and distinct meaning - but they don't. Triangle has a precise definition but it doesn't specify the triangle's colour or size so many ideas will do. There is no one settled idea. A word stands for the same *definition* not the same *idea*.
19. Every 'significant name' does not have to stand for an idea - algebra shows us a good example of this. It does not do to jump to the conclusion that a word stands for an abstract notion because it does not mark out a particular conceivable idea.

20. While it may initially take annexed ideas to give emotional force to words they are later employed with no idea behind them, just to incite those feelings. Similarly proper names may be invoked in authority; you're not supposed to think of Aristotle, just be deferential to whatever opinion has just been put forth.
21. We have shown that abstract ideas are impossible, and no help towards the ends which their proponents (Locke) think them to be necessary for. And we've traced their source to language.

Language is great because it allows us to share knowledge but parts of knowledge have been confused and tangled up by the abuse of words. So Berkeley will endeavour to take ideas 'bare and naked', without the impositions of words because . . .

22. (a) B will avoid verbal controversies, which has got in the way of the sciences. (b) B will avoid abstract ideas. (c) Focusing on my own ideas word-free means I cannot easily be mistaken - I know my own ideas, and can see agreements and disagreements and compositions between them by observing my own mind.
23. Other thinkers are aware that words cause problems and uninteresting disputes so they tell their readers to stick to the ideas instead; but they can't possibly be doing this themselves due to abstract ideas. This increases the difficulty for B of avoiding the 'deceptions of words'.

The reason for this hypocrisy is that the thinkers can't actually conceive of the abstract ideas so they use the words instead, which they continue to see as standing for a 'determinate, abstract idea.'

24. Knowing these to be mistakes one can avoid problems from words more easily. We will not search for abstract ideas we're not going to find. We will not search for ideas when there are none because the word isn't standing for one (see 20). We do not need antiquity, the heavens or the earth for knowledge: if we draw back the curtain of words we shall have it.
25. Unless we find the first principles of knowledge free from words, we will never become any wiser from our consequences of consequences of consequences. When reading B, try to get the same train of thought to avoid being deceived by B's words; then it can be discovered whether what B says is right or wrong.

2.1 TODO Summary

3 DONE Locke: Essay Concerning Human Understanding

3.1 Book II ch. 1 - Of ideas in general, and their original

1. When thinking our mind is applied to ideas. Locke is going to look at where we get them from.
2. All our knowledge is ultimately derived from and founded by experience.
3. Senses produce perceptions which our understanding derives ideas from. This is **sensation**.
4. **Reflection** is the other source of ideas and it is 'perception of the operations of our own minds'. It's thinking/doubting/etc.
5. Nothing in our mind came from anything else though they might be 'compounded and enlarged by the understanding'.

3.2 Book II ch. 2 - Of simple ideas

1. Ideas are simple and complex. Ideas come in from the senses as simple and they are perfectly distinct even when e.g. ideas of sight and sound appear to come from the same object. 'One uniform appearance or conception in the mind, and is not distinguishable into different ideas.'
2. The mind makes complex ideas out of these simple ideas as much as it likes. But it can never make new simple ones. Can't destroy them either - just as we can't create or destroy matter.
3. We can't imagine anything outside of the five senses. There may be other beings out there with more senses but while we can believe that to be possible we cannot imagine the qualities they get through their other senses.

3.3 Book II ch. 3 - Of ideas of one sense

1. Some ideas come in only through one sense, some through more, some from reflection and some from sensation and reflection at once. The 'most considerable' of those belonging to touch are solidity and heat/cold.
2. There are far more ideas than we have names for but it's needless to enumerate them all.

3.4 CANCELLED Book II ch. 5 - NOT IN MY COPY :CANCELLED:

3.5 Book II ch. 6 - Of simple ideas of reflection

1. Ideas taken by the mind from observing itself are as good as those that come from external objects.
2. Two 'principal actions' of the mind: **Perception** or **Thinking**; **Volition** or **Willing**. These correspond to the powers/faculties of the **understanding** and the **will**. These ideas have modes e.g. knowledge, judging.

3.6 Book II ch. 7 - Of simple ideas of both sensation and reflection

1. Simple ideas that come in through both e.g. delight, pain, power, unity, existence.
2. Delight/uneasiness attach to almost every idea. Simple ideas of pleasure and pain of which all the other words are merely degrees.
3. God added 'concomitant pleasure' to our ideas because otherwise we'd just be idle and drifting all day, having nothing to recommend thoughts or actions if pleasure were entirely detached from these.
4. Pain has the same motivational effect. Pain and pleasure attached to the same things e.g. heat is nice but not too much. All god's grand design.
5. Also pleasure/pain mixed to encourage us to go and worship god and seek eternal happiness.
6. More god stuff.
7. Existence and unity suggested by 'every object without, and every idea within.' '[W]hatever we can consider as one thing . . . suggests to the understanding the idea of unity.'
8. Power from s. and r. too. We can move body parts and stuff moves other stuff.
9. Idea of succession is IRL but in mind it's unrelenting.
10. These are the (main) simple ideas. The mind makes all its other knowledge out of these. Yes, really.

3.7 Book II ch. 8 - Some further considerations concerning our simple ideas

1. Once an idea from sensation reaches the mind it is a positive ideas even if the cause of it is a privation.
2. So heat and cold are equally positive ideas. **Different enquiry to looking at the object is looking at the ideas.**
3. Blah.
4. Sensation is different degrees of movement in the nerves (and abatement produces a sensation too) which explains why an privative cause produces a positive idea.
5. Blah.
6. 'And thus one may truly be said to see darkness.' But this is common opinion; need to know if rest is more a privation than motion first.
7. Distinguish ideas in our minds from properties of matter that cause them, since they tend to be different.
8. Locke calls these powers to produce ideas **qualities**.
9. **Primary qualities** (or original qualities) are those that can't be removed from objects by any force, and they produce simple ideas in us: solidity, extension, figure, motion/rest, number.
10. **Secondary qualities** are 'nothing in the objects themselves' but they are powers to produce sensations 'by their primary qualities' - e.g. their bulk manifesting as colours, sounds etc.
There's a third sort of powers which are things like fire's ability to change other objects - different sort because it's different to idea-production. But similarity is that it's still ultimately the result of primary qualities.
11. Bodies operate only by 'impulse' so they must produce ideas in us by impulse.
12. External objects produce ideas of primary qualities in us and they may be perceived at a distance so there must be invisible particles that convey some **motion** to the brain.

13. Secondary qualities are also produced 'by the operation of insensible particles on our senses.' Our ideas are 'annexed' to particular motions of these tiny particles, by god.
14. Above goes for tastes and sounds and whatever else.
15. Ideas of primary qualities have resemblance to the objects but secondary don't. Secondary are powers manifested in certain primary qualities.
16. He who thinks secondary qualities are in the objects should consider a fire: we call it warm and yet why is warmth in the fire yet pain isn't, when it can cause both ideas dependent on distance?
17. If no-one is there to observe then the secondary qualities vanish.
18. Blah, but quite persuasive.
19. Blah.
20. Blah.
21. Blah.
22. Blah.
23. Three types of qualities:
 - (a) primary qualities - when perceived we perceive the thing in itself;
 - (b) power, 'by reason of its insensible primary qualities' to produce ideas - these are sensible qualities;
 - (c) power of a body to change another body's primary qualities (and thus its secondary qualities) - these are **powers**.
24. The third are taken as separate from the object and the second are not, by most people, yet really they're sort of the same - neither are in the object and in the second case it's the body affecting my senses in the manner of the third.
The second and the third are just the object's primary qualities affecting other objects.
25. Reason for this is because we find no primary qualities in a colour and don't see any connection (any likeness between the idea and the primary qualities in the object) but we clearly see that the Sun has no colour of tanned skin in it so when it tans someone we consider it a power.
26. When secondary qualities operate on our bodies to produce ideas these are **secondary qualities immediately perceivable** and when they instead operate on another body to make them produce different ideas these are **secondary qualities mediately perceivable** (of the first object).

3.8 Book II ch. 11 - Of discerning, and other operations of the mind

1. The mind has the faculty of discerning/distinguishing between ideas; one confused perception would not be enough for knowledge. The 'evidence and certainty' of several very important things depend on this faculty; more on this later.
2. Our notions are confused and reason/judgement get things wrong when our ideas our confused - when this faculty fails us/is used incorrectly/etc.

We may here explain why a man with great wit may not have great reason: wit is throwing things together in aesthetically pleasing ways yet judgement is separating them out as clearly as possible. Require more effort so people prefer wit.

3. The senses sometimes bring in different ideas from the same objects in different occasions e.g. when ill but in distinguishing our ideas all that actually matters is that they are 'clear and determinate' - the ideas are no less distinct in these cases.
4. Another operation of the mind is the **comparison** of ideas, on which depends that huge area of **relation**.
5. Blah about animals. More advanced powers of comparing useful in abstract reasoning which animals don't do.
6. Another operation is **composition**, a subtype of this being **enlargement** (composing the same idea with itself many times). We put units together and get numbers (maybe) and lengths etc.
7. More blah about animals. Animals don't combine ideas into complex ones, they just have several.
8. Children use words to act as 'signs' for ideas, once they have got ideas fixed in memory. They use other people's words and sometimes make up their own.
9. Words are 'outward marks of our internal ideas'. Then every particular idea would have a name and there would be endless names. So particular ideas become general and we use **abstraction**, by separating ideas from time and place and real existences.

Ideas from particular beings become representatives for all that conform to them - this is abstraction. Real existence is 'ranked into sorts' and denominated. A word is assigned. '[U]niversals, whether ideas or terms, are made.'

3.9 Book II ch. 12 - Of complex ideas

1. The mind has three powers over simple ideas:
 - * combining into a compound idea - this is how complex ideas are formed;
 - * setting two ideas next to each other - relations;
 - * separating from other ideas they normally occur with - abstraction.

Our powers in the physical world parallel what we can do in the real world - we can't create or destroy these building blocks.

We combine simple ideas to create something we call by one name.

1. The mind has great power to combine and repeat ideas but it cannot make any new materials i.e. simple ideas to do this with; it only has those that come from sensation and reflection. The mind can have no more from material things than the simple ideas it gets.

3.10 CANCELLED Book II ch. 29 - RELEVANT SECTIONS NOT IN MY COPY :CANCELLED:

3.11 Book III ch. 1 - Of words or language in general

1. Language is more than articulate sounds, as animals can produce these but have no language.
2. Also necessary that sounds signify internal conceptions. Marks for his ideas so thoughts may be shared.
3. Also need general terms.
4. We also have negations that *refer* to the absence of positive ideas.
5. Words come originally from 'common sensible ideas' and we can trace complex words for things that don't come from our senses back to simpler ideas. How Locke thinks etymology backs him, basically.

6. It is to be considered:

- (a) To what it is that names 'are immediately applied.'
- (b) What universals/generalities are and how they come about.

3.12 Book III ch. 2 - Of the signification of words

1. Words are arbitrarily made the mark of some idea - if there was some actual link we'd all be speaking the same language. '[T]he ideas they stand for are their proper and immediate signification.'
2. Words only signify the speaker's ideas to the speaker, the listener's ideas to the listener.
3. We can only use a word on a complex idea we actually have. A child uses 'gold' in a much simpler way than someone who has investigated gold's physical properties does.
4. Words in thoughts have in addition, however, 'secret reference to two other things.'
Firstly we suppose words signify (the same) ideas in the minds of others else we'd be speaking different languages; we do this implicitly.
5. Secondly we suppose words stand for the 'reality of things', not just the contents of our imaginations. This is a question of substances and it will be talked of later. Though making words stand for anything other than our own ideas is a great perversion.
6. By the frequent use of particular words as signs of particular ideas we find that the sounds and ideas become connected so when we hear the word it's almost as if the object which produces the idea normally is present.
7. We learn some words before ideas and so we 'set [our] thoughts' more on the words than on the ideas. Since we learn some words before the ideas children and some men speak some words as a parrot, merely as noise. But so far as words have use they are connected to ideas.
8. Which ideas word signify is definitely arbitrary. Common use links some together but it's still up to individuals if they want to change things up since words only signify one's own ideas.

3.13 Book III ch. 3 - Of general terms

1. Most words are general terms. There are good reasons for this; it's not just chance.
2. It's impossible for us to give every particular thing a name - every leaf that came our way? Ha.
3. It'd be useless, too - I can't talk to another about things because he'd have to know all the particular things I'd come across in order to do so.
4. It doesn't advance knowledge, either - knowledge is enlarged when particulars become subservient to general sorts. Yet we can distinguish particulars when we need to e.g. we give proper names to each other.
5. When there is occasion to mention a particular with great frequency we do give it a name - e.g. cities, or also the fact that jockeys name their horses.
6. We make an idea general (and thus a word general) by separating from it circumstances and things that link it to a particular existence. The idea then represents any individuals that conform to it in the properties that remain.
7. Blah.
8. Blah.

9. Blah.
10. The fastest but not the only way to define something is with the next most general idea. The purpose of a definition is to make another understand what ideas the term stands for. There are better ways than just going up a level of generality.
11. Universals are not of the world of particular things; they are only our own inventions (as relations).
12. General terms can't signify particulars and if they signify pluralities then "men" and "man" mean the same thing which is pointless. So they signify abstract ideas/sorts. Fitting under that sort is equivalent to having the right to the sort's general term.
13. Blah - nature makes things similar but general terms are the 'workmanship of the understanding'. We can't tell what species something is by looking at substance's real essence; we have to look at the essence of the general terms which is our abstract ideas.
14. Any two abstract ideas are completely different - we have different ideas of what is greedy, fex.
15. There are two uses of essence: real essence, and nominal essence which seems to mean the category/sort/species from scholasticism.
16. Nominal essence and names are very intimately connected.
17. Blah.
18. Blah.

3.14 CANCELLED Book IV ch. 7 - (9) - RELEVANT SECTION NOT IN MY COPY :CANCELLED:

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3.15 TODO Summary

4 DONE Craig: Berkeley's Attack on Abstract Ideas

4.1 Introduction

There are three different versions of abstract ideas that Berkeley seeks to attack; the differences between them are the properties they ascribe to the abstract ideas.

4.2 The three doctrines from Locke

- ★ **(1) The Single Property View / Type I abstract ideas** A type I abstract idea has a single property - a property that cannot actually exist independently. E.g. motion without extension. Colour without extension. This view is that type I abstract ideas exist.
- ★ **(2) The Common Properties View** The abstract idea is a collection of ideas that every instance of the concept has all of.

This obviously doesn't commit to the existence of type I abstract ideas. You're never committed not to include properties of the object, even though you don't have to include all of them.

- ★ **Berkeley and the relation of (1) to (2)** [not really relevant to my essay]

(2) is definitely not committed to the existence of type I abstract ideas as a special case because it doesn't include the requirement that there are properties that must exist with the main idea in reality that are absent from the idea - the requirement just isn't there.

- ★ **(3) The Full Representation View** 'The abstract idea contains ... ideas of all the properties of all the instances of the general term in question' (p. 429)

These are the ideas of a triangle that is both equilateral and scalene at once. This is clearly different to (2) and (1) because these ideas have particulars possessed by only some of the instances where as in the case of (2) and (1) every instance possesses the properties of the abstract idea.

Major commentators have confused (2) and (3).

4.3 Berkeley's criticisms of these doctrines

For Berkeley, ideas == mental images - an imagist theory. The arguments 'have no obvious force ... against a non-imagist approach to concepts.' (pp. 430–431)

Objections put in empirical psychological terms can without difficulty be considered in a logical mode about a priori impossibility.

- ★ **Obj. 1: I cannot abstract qualities which cannot exist separated thus** Clearly an objection to type I abstract ideas and therefore (1).
- ★ **Obj. 2: Whatever I imagine must have some particular shape/colour** An objection to (2). 'An image of something having a certain determinable characteristic, Berkeley is apparently saying, must be an image of something having a particular determinate of that determinable.' (p. 432) A common property image doesn't do this.

This is also an objection to (1) because the abstract idea we form is supposedly not of any particular motion/extension/colour/etc.
- ★ **Obj. 3: The ideas in (3) infringe the law of non-contradiction** ... and so cannot exist. The images would have to satisfy phi and not-phi at the same time. Not relevant to (1) and (2) because the objects these ideas are of are really existing objects and so are not contradictory. (see end p. 432)

4.4 Discussion

It is important to look at which of the doctrines are essential to Locke's view of abstract ideas.

- ★ **Explaining general terms** The purpose of the theory is to explain how we use general terms - how we compare objects side-by-side and call them both of the same type. If an image of an X is just what pops up in our heads when we see an X then that's not much use - there's nothing requiring it to be the same thing - e.g. an image of a strawberry appears whenever I see a book. So Locke and Berkeley both see the image as needing to be an image of the object/something very close to this.
 - ★ **'Sufficiently like'** This backs up Berkeley's objection to (1). If an image is sufficiently like something coloured in order to afford us a comparison, then it must also be sufficiently like something extended.

But we get pulled up short when we consider the criticism of (3). We need to know more about what we mean by '*sufficiently* resemble' in order to say if an image could resemble an equilateral and nonequilateral triangle at the same time. All that the theory of abstract ideas offers is that the idea is sufficiently like the object if a person can use the idea to see that the object is of a type.
- ★ **Interpretation of 'I is an image of an X'** If we interpret an image being an image of a triangle if it is actually triangular; an image of a red object if it is actually red - then clearly the objection to (3) goes through and the objection to (1) gains a great deal of force.
 - ★ **Strong and weak versions of (1), (2) & (3)** Supposing the idea has 'the defining properties of X's [sic]' gives us the stronger version, and the image be 'rather like' actually perceiving an X the weaker version.

CRAIG: Berkeley was aiming at the stronger side.

SO FAR: Berkeley takes down strong and weak for (1) and strong of (3) but weak version of (3) still stands.

- ★ **Importance of (1) & (3)** An abstract idea is required to allow its possessor to sort what does and does not fall under a universal. (2) seems sufficient for this. No need for less in (1) or more in (3). Refuting (3) is not enough to refute the theory of abstract ideas.
- ★ **Turning to (2)** Berkeley clearly takes down the strong version - there cannot be an image 'colored [sic] and of no particular color [sic] . . .' (p. 436)

But not clear he takes down the weaker form at all. All that matters an object is that if the image is like perceiving a coloured thing, there is some colour that it's more like perceiving than any other. Do it with extension and its even more persuasive.

4.5 TODO Summary

5 CANCELLED Blackburn: Spreading the Word, ch. 2 :CANCELLED: