Lecture Notes
February 2 - Locke and Berkeley

I. Descartes and the Resemblance Hypothesis

We have discussed Descartes's view that the world is not as it appears.
First, he argued that our senses may be misleading, either in small ways, as when we perceive an illusion, or in larger, systematic ways, if we are dreaming or deceived.
Next, he argued in the wax example that physical objects are essentially none of their sense characteristics.
The world out there is unlike the world as it appears to us.

The claim that our sensory ideas are like the world may be called the resemblance hypothesis.
Aristotle had defended the resemblance hypothesis, taking sensory qualities to be real properties of external objects.
The redness and sweetness of an apple are real properties of the apple itself.
Our senses are attuned to the external environment.
For example, color vision occurs when a person's eyes are changed to be like the color of an external object.
I see the apple as red because my eye itself is able to change to red.
The eye's changing to match the environment is perception.
On Aristotle's view, our ideas resemble their causes, and objects really have the properties that we perceive them to have.

Descartes rejects the resemblance hypothesis.
He provides an example of the sun.
The senses tell us that the sun is very small.
We reason that the sun is very large.

> Both ideas surely cannot resemble the same sun existing outside me; and reason convinces me that the idea that seems to have emanated from the sun itself from so close is the very one that least resembles the sun (Third Meditation).

Descartes's view, as we discussed, is that our knowledge of physical objects does not come from the senses.
Knowledge of objects comes from the mind alone.
Descartes claims that our most secure knowledge, like that of mathematics, is innate, built into our minds.

Descartes's view is odd.
In response, some philosophers defended the veracity of sense experience.
We will look at two such empiricists today: Locke and Berkeley.

II. Sensation and Abstraction

Locke denies Descartes's claims about innate ideas.
He claims that the mind begins as a blank slate, or *tabula rasa*.

> Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any *ideas*. How does it come to be furnished? From where does it come by that vast store which the busy and boundless fancy of man has painted on it with an almost endless variety? From where does it have all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, from *experience*; our knowledge is founded in all that, and from that it ultimately derives itself (II.I.2).

We learn particulars, first, beginning with sense experience.
We get simple ideas of sensation from individual sense experiences of particular objects.
Individual perceptions are simple.
They are so simple, in fact, that impressions of the same object under different sense modalities are independent.
The taste of the lemon is independent of its yellowness, and of its texture and odor.
Locke's claim that the sense modalities are independent explains hypothesis concerning the Molyneux problem.

Here's the Molyneux problem.

> Suppose a man born blind, and now adult, and taught by his touch to distinguish between a cube and a sphere of the same metal, and nearly of the same bigness, so as to tell, when he felt one and the other, which is the cube, which the sphere. Suppose then the cube and sphere placed on a table, and the blind man be made to see. Quaere, whether by his sight, before he touched them, he could now distinguish and tell which is the globe, which the cube (II.IX.8)?

Locke denies that the blind person could tell which was the sphere and which was the cube without touching the objects.
In other words, our sense of touch is independent of our vision.
There is experimental research supporting Locke's solution, but the question has not been resolved completely.

Once we have received simple sense impressions, we can hold the ideas they create in memory, and recall them.
Our ability to recall simple ideas is facilitated by our use of language, which primarily consists of names of our simple ideas.
We can also reflect on those simple ideas.
Using our naturally developing ability to reflect, we can go beyond the limits of particular sense experience, and memory of such experience.
We can, for example, generalize, or abstract, to find universals, like those of mathematics.

> The senses at first let in particular *ideas*, and furnish the yet empty cabinet, and the mind by degrees growing familiar with some of them, they are lodged in the memory, and names got to them. Afterwards the mind proceeding further abstracts them, and by degrees learns the use of general names (I.II.15, AW 321a).

So, for Locke, we have two distinct kinds of capacities for learning, for writing on our blank slate.
First, we have our sense experience.
Then, we have our ability to reflect on, and abstract from, that sense experience.

Still, the problems of sense experience which convinced Descartes that sensory beliefs could not be knowledge continue to hold: the dream doubt, the wax example, the sun example.

The wax argument proceeded by demonstrating a single physical object with contradictory sense properties.
Just as I can not both be in my office and not in my office, or both tall and short, the wax can not be both yellow and clear, both smell of flowers and lack odor.
Descartes's conclusion was that the wax is an extended body which can take various manifestations, hot or cold, sweet or tasteless, but is identified with none of these particular sensory qualities.
That is, physical objects are essentially things which can have sensory qualities, but which need not have any particular ones.
The same object may have many different appearances.
The appearance of an object is distinct from its real qualities.

To avoid such problems, Locke presents what has come to be known as the primary/secondary distinction.
Agreeing in part with Descartes, Locke claims that some apparent properties of physical objects are misleading; objects do not really have those properties.
Locke calls the misleading appearances of objects their secondary qualities.
In contrast, according to Locke, some apparent properties of objects are veridical.
He calls these the primary qualities.
The challenge for Locke is to distinguish the primary qualities from the secondary qualities, to distinguish the veridical appearances from the misrepresentative ones.

III. Locke's Principles

While the primary/secondary distinction pre-dates Locke by at least a century, Locke provides a comprehensive argument for the distinction.
Locke's water experiment (II.VIII.21) plays a role in his epistemology similar to the wax example for Descartes.
Consider three buckets, each containing water of a different temperature: hot, lukewarm, and cold.
Put one hand into the hot water and one into the cold water, and let them sit for a short while.
Then, take them out, and put both hands into the lukewarm water.
The lukewarm water will feel hot to one hand, and cold to the other.
The water, like the wax, displays incompatible sense properties.

Note that Locke's example is even more compelling than Descartes's.
In the water experiment, the same object displays incompatible properties at the same time.

> No one subject can have two smells or two colors at the same time. To this perhaps will be said, has not an opal, or the infusion of *lignum nephriticum*, two colors at the same time? To which I answer that these bodies, to eyes differently placed, it is different parts of the object that reflect the particles of light. And therefore it is not the same part of the object, and so not the very same subject, which at the same time appears both yellow and azure. For it is as impossible that the very same particle of any body should at the same time differently modify or reflect the rays of light, as that it should have two different figures and textures at the same time (IV.III.15).

Locke tacitly presumes two principles to distinguish veridical ideas from misrepresentative ones.

The first principle is destructive, yielding misrepresentative properties.

> LP1: If one perceives an object as having two (or more) incompatible ideas, then those ideas do not represent real properties of the object.

Besides hot and cold, other sense ideas are not veridical, according to LP1.
The example of porphyry in the dark (II.VIII.19) shows that color is a secondary quality.
Taste and odor are shown secondary by LP1, because an almond changes taste and odor when mashed (II.VIII.20).
Applying LP1 to Descartes's wax example, we can see that we have ideas of secondary qualities in all five sense modalities.

Consider tasting orange juice before and after brushing your teeth.
What tasted sweet before, tastes sour (for want of a better word) after.
Thus, the sweetness and sourness are not real qualities of the orange juice.
The orange juice example leads to a corollary to the first principle:

> LP1C1: Even if a change in us entails the change in the perceived quality, the ideas which change can not be veridical.

Now, consider the color impressions of a normal-sighted person and a color-blind person.
The differences show, once again, that color is not a real quality of an object.
We can infer a second corollary:

> LP1C2: Qualities that appear different to different observers are not veridical.

The above principle and its corollaries support Locke's primary/secondary distinction by allowing Locke to account for sense error.
Locke's second principle is constructive, yielding veridical properties.

> LP2: If an idea of an object is the same under all conditions, that idea is veridical.

LP1 and LP2 allow us to distinguish among our sense experiences.
Some sense experience is veridical, and can be trusted.
Some sense experience is misrepresentative, and can not be trusted.

> We may understand how it is possible that the same water may, at the same time, produce the sensations of heat in one hand and cold in the other; which yet figure never does, that, never producing the *idea* of a square by one hand, which has produced the *idea* of a globe by another (II.VIII.21).

The second principle also has a corollary.

> LP2C: If every observer receives the same idea from an object, then that idea is veridical.

IV. The Apple Exercise

Using LP1, LP2, and their corollaries, rank each quality of an apple from 1 (veridical) to 5 (misrepresentative).
Then, draw a line between the properties that you think are not really qualities of an apple and those which really are qualities of the apple.

Red	Misrepresentative
Round	Real
Cool to the touch	Misrepresentative
Sweet, though a bit sour	Misrepresentative
Shiny	Misrepresentative
Smooth	Misrepresentative
Sits still on the table	Real
Crunchy	Misrepresentative (But maybe real, if we consider its brittle texture)
Weighs 4 oz.	Misrepresentative
Has a mass of 120 grams	Real
Is one apple	Real
Is being considered by you	Misrepresentative
Smells like an apple	Misrepresentative

V. The Primary/Secondary Distinction

We have arrived at the primary/secondary distinction via argument.

> These I call *original* or *primary qualities* of body, which I think we may observe to produce simple *ideas* in us, namely, solidity, extension, figure, motion or rest, and number. *Secondly*, such *qualities* which in truth are nothing in the objects themselves but powers to produce various sensations in us by their *primary qualities*...these I call *secondary qualities* (II.VIII.9-10).

Primary Qualities	Secondary Qualities
Solidity	Color
Extension	Odor
Figure	Hot/ Cold
Motion/ Rest	Sound
Number	Texture
	Taste

VI. The Primary/Secondary Distinction, the Resemblance Hypothesis, and Empiricism

Locke presents the primary/secondary distinction in defense of his claim that we can justify our beliefs without appeal to innate ideas.
Descartes's strongest argument against the veridicality of sense experience relied on his examples of the wax and the sun in support of his rejection of the Resemblance Hypothesis.
The primary/secondary distinction allows Locke to defend a weakened version of the Resemblance

Hypothesis, for primary qualities only.

> The *ideas of primary qualities* of bodies *are resemblances* of them and their patterns do really exist in the bodies themselves, but the *ideas produced* in us *by* these *secondary qualities have no resemblance* of them at all. There is nothing like our *ideas* existing in the bodies themselves (II.VIII.15).

Our ideas of extension resemble extension in the world.
For example, I have an idea that this piece of paper is 11 inches long.
So, the paper really is 11 inches long.
My idea of the motion of a car resembles the real motion of that car.
The car really is moving.
My ideas of secondary qualities do not resemble anything in an object.

On the basis of my ideas of primary qualities, then, I can justify knowledge of the world without appealing to innate ideas.
The metaphysical upshot of the primary/secondary distinction, then, is that the world is nothing but particles in motion, and that the sense qualities of objects are not really in the world.
Lemons are not really yellow, or sour.
They are made of particles (atoms or corpuscles) that appear yellow or sour to normal human senses.
These minute particles unite in varying ways.
Depending on how they unite, they affect us in different ways.
Their arrangement determines how we experience an object.
The lemon can take on other appearances, in other circumstances, to other observers, who will all agree on the size and shape of the lemon.
We might say that the lemon has a 'dispositional property' which makes us see it as yellow.
But the dispositional property is not yellowness, which is, properly speaking, a property only of my experience.
We have ideas which arise from the interaction between our senses and the material world.
The material world exists independently of us, and has its primary qualities truly, but depends on us for sensory (secondary) properties.

Here's Galileo on the primary/secondary distinction:

> ...that external bodies, to excite in us these tastes, these odours, and these sounds, demand other than size, figure, number, and slow or rapid motion, I do not believe, and I judge that, if the ears, the tongue, and the nostrils were taken away, the figure, the numbers, and the motions would indeed remain, but not the odours, nor the tastes, nor the sounds, which, without the living animal, I do not believe are anything else than names (*Opere* IV, 336).

Compare Galileo's formulation to Locke's:

> Take away the sensation of them; let the eyes not see light, or colors, nor the ears hear sounds; let the palate not taste, nor the nose smell; and all colors, tastes, odors, and sounds as they are such particular *ideas* vanish and cease, and are reduced to their causes, i.e., bulk, figure, and motion of parts (II.VIII.17).

Descartes held a restrictive version of the primary/secondary distinction, believing that the only real property of physical objects was their extension.

> The only principles which I accept, or require, in physics are those of geometry and pure mathematics; these principles explain all natural phenomena, and enable us to provide quite certain demonstrations regarding them (Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy* II.64, AT VIIIA.78)

Further, he argued that mathematical claims are not derived from sense evidence, since our imagination is not capable of representing true extension.
We think of extension mathematically, using pure thought.

Descartes's view that extension is the only essential property of physical objects was not standard.
Most philosophers of the modern era held views closer to that of Locke and Galileo, believing that physical objects really had primary qualities of size, shape, mass, motion, and number.
The expansion of the list of real properties from Descartes's extension to the other qualities, though, does not indicate any difference in principle.

Given Locke's primary/secondary distinction, the question remains why lemons, for example, appear to be yellow and bitter.
For both the moderns and contemporary neuroscientists, we lack an explanation of the connection between my conscious experience of objects and their causes.
Why is it that such and such motions in the air cause me to hear a symphony?
Why is it that certain wavelengths of light cause me to see blue?

> That the size, figure, and motion of one body should cause a change in the size, figure, and motion of another body is not beyond our conception. The separation of the parts of one body upon the intrusion of another and the change from rest to motion upon impulse, these and the like seem to have some *connection* one with another. And if we knew these primary qualities of bodies, we might have reason to hope we might be able to know a great deal more of these operations of them one upon another. But our minds not being able to discover any *connection* between these primary qualities of bodies and the sensations that are produced in us by them, we can never be able to establish certain and undoubted rules of the consequence or *coexistence* of any secondary qualities, though we could discover the size, figure, or motion of those invisible parts which immediately produce them. We are so far from knowing what figure, size, or motion of parts produce a yellow color, a sweet taste, ro a sharp sound that we can by no means conceive how any *size, figure*, or *motion* of any particles can possibly produce in us the *idea* of any *color*, *taste*, or *sound* whatsoever; there is no conceivable *connection* between the one and the other (IV.III.13).

If your parents are giving you a hard time about studying philosophy, since it never makes any progress, you might want to keep them away from that quote.
It's the kind of thing that gives people like me nightmares.
We really haven't made any progress in the last three centuries of trying to answer that question.
That question is essentially what David Chalmers calls the hard problem of consciousness.
The easy problem is to map the brain, and to know all its functions.
Once we have done that, though, we still won't be any closer to an answer to why certain neural firings correspond to certain conscious experiences.
Berkeley rejects the primary/secondary distinction for reasons similar to these worries.

VII. An Empiricist's Problem

The empiricist claims that all knowledge comes from experience.
But we experience our sensations, not the causes of our sensations.
So, we have no knowledge of what causes our sensations, i.e. objects in the supposedly material world.
That is, we seem only to know our experiences, and not an external world.

> So long as men thought that real things subsisted without the mind, and that their knowledge was only so far forth real as it was conformable to real things, it follows they could not be certain they had any real knowledge at all. For how can it be known that the things which are perceived are conformable to those which are not perceived, or exist without the mind? (*Principles*, §86).

Descartes argues that we can judge that there is an external world, and what it is like, with our minds.
Such a judgment extends beyond experience, and so is unavailable to an empiricist.
Locke says that our ideas of primary qualities of objects resemble real qualities of those objects.
So we have some knowledge of the external world in that way.
But, as Berkeley observes, to assert that there is a resemblance between two things, we have to be able to perceive both of them, and compare those perceptions.
We are stuck with only our sensations, our perceptions, and not their causes.

In contrast to both Descartes and Locke, Berkeley argues that there are no material objects.
He starts with a commitment to empiricist principles, and notices their limits.

> It is indeed an opinion strangely prevailing among men that houses, mountains, rivers, and, in a word, sensible objects have an existence, natural or real, distinct from their being perceived by the understanding... What are the aforementioned objects but the things we perceive by sense? And what do we perceive besides our own ideas or sensations? (*Principles*, §4)

And, he concludes that only ideas, and their perceivers, exist.

> By matter...we are to understand an inert, senseless substance, in which extension, figure, and motion do actually subsist. But it is evident from what we have already shown that extension, figure, and motion are only ideas existing in the mind, and that an idea can be like nothing but another idea, and that consequently neither they nor their archetypes can exist in an unperceiving substance. Hence it is plain that the very notion of what is called matter, or corporeal substance, involves a contradiction in it (*Principles*, §9).

VIII. Three Arguments for Idealism

Descartes, Locke, and Berkeley all agree that secondary properties, like color, exist only in the mind.
Berkeley extends the point, arguing that even the primary qualities are only in the mind.
Berkeley wants to show that they too are only perceptions, that they are essentially mental.
Berkeley's idealism is often summarized, as he writes in §3, that for objects, their *esse* is *percipi*.
'*Esse* is *percipi*' means 'being is being perceived'.
In fact, for Berkeley, there are perceptions, and perceivers.
But, we perceive only our perceptions, not what is behind them, under them, or causing them.
Since we can have no knowledge of any material world, Berkeley concludes, there can be none.
There is no extra-mental reality.

Berkeley provides three arguments to show that primary qualities are in the mind:

1. From the sensibility of objects
2. From the relativity of perceptions
3. A reductive argument

IX. The Argument from the Sensibility of Objects

Berkeley's argument for idealism from the sensibility of objects is an argument from the definition of what it means to be a sensible object.

> The table I write on, I say, exists; that is, I see it and feel it; and if I were out of my study I should say it existed - meaning by that that if I was in my study I might perceive it, or that some other spirit actually does perceive it. There was an odor; that is, it was smelled; there was a sound, that is to say, it was heard; a color or figure, and it was perceived by sight or touch. This is all that I can understand by these and the like expressions. For as to what is said of the absolute existence of unthinking things without any relation to their being perceived that seems perfectly unintelligible. Their *esse* is *percipi*, nor is it possible that they should have any existence out of the minds or thinking things which perceive them (*Principles* §3).

I take Berkeley's argument to be as follows:

D1. Objects are sensible things.
D2. Sensible things are things with none other than sensible qualities.
D3. The sensible qualities are the secondary qualities.
D4. Those secondary qualities are strictly mental properties.
DC. So, objects are strictly mental, i.e. there is no physical world.

Remember, the empiricist's claim is that all we know must originally come in through the senses.
Berkeley's claim is that to impute further qualities to the sensible objects, qualities beyond their sense properties, is to extend beyond anything knowable by sense, to make an unjustifiable inference.

X. Berkeley's Arguments from the Relativity of Perceptions

Locke's principles showed that the secondary qualities were not real.
Berkeley extends the use of these principles against the primary qualities.

> Why may we not as well argue that figure and extension are not patterns or resemblances of qualities existing in matter, because to the same eye at different stations, or eyes of a different texture at the same station, they appear various and cannot, therefore, be the images of anything settled and determinate without the mind? (*Principles* §14).

Each of Berkeley's arguments against the primary qualities show that LP2 and LP2C are not fulfilled.
There are no properties that do not vary with the perceiver.
He proceeds by example, for all the primary properties: number, extension, shape, motion, solidity

For the argument for the relativity of number, consider what number we might give to a deck of cards.
It is 52 cards, 4 suits, 13 ranks, 1 deck.

> The same thing bears a different denomination of number as the mind views it with different respects. Thus, the same extension is one, or three, or thirty-six, according as the mind considers it with reference to a yard, a foot, or an inch. Number is so visibly relative and dependent on men's understanding that it is strange to think how anyone should give it an absolute existence without the mind (*Principles* §12).

The number correctly applied to the object varies as we think of the object in different ways.
It may be a property of a concept, rather than of an object.

To show that extension is relative to the perceiver, consider the mite (a tiny insect) and a giant.
What appears large to the mite can appear tiny to us, and minuscule to the giant.
The size of an object is relative to perceiver, just as the color or taste is.
I appear large to the mite, but to a giant, I appear small.
Thus extension is a secondary property, too.
This example is of utmost importance, since extension is the most plausible primary quality.
Indeed, Descartes concluded that it is the only essential characteristic of physical objects.

To show that shape is relative to a perceiver, consider what we see under a microscope.
Edges that appear straight to the naked eye will appear jagged when magnified.
Also, consider our perception of a rectangular object, like a table.
If we were to stand over the table, we would receive a roughly rectangular image in our field of vision.
But, ordinarily, we are not placed in such a way as to receive a rectangular image, even if we perceive the table as rectangular.
Everyone in a room may perceive the desk at the front as rectangular, even though we are receiving different images of the shape of the desk.
The shape is never really seen as a rectangle, although we all infer that it is that shape.
What we really get from the senses about the shape is relative to the perceiver.

The argument for the relativity of our perceptions of motion relies on an argument for the relativity of our perceptions of time, since motion is change in place over time.
Our perception of time varies with the succession of our ideas.
If our ideas proceed more quickly, a motion will appear more slow.
Note that just as we can not rely on an external measurement of extension, since we have to agree on a standard unit measure, we can not rely on an external measurement of time.

Berkeley's argument for the relativity of solidity to the perceiver takes solidity to be resistance to touch.
A strong person will find something soft that a weaker person will find hard.
This is even more plausible if we consider giants and mites again.

Berkeley thus has considered all of Locke's primary qualities as we experience them.
He has shown that these perceptions vary in the same way that perceptions of the secondary qualities do.
All qualities are secondary qualities.
We have no veridical primary qualities, representing a material world.

XI. Berkeley's Reductive Argument Against the Primary Qualities

Berkeley provides a last, direct, argument that the primary qualities reduce to secondary properties.

> If it is certain that those original [primary] qualities are inseparably united with the other sensible qualities and not, even in thought, capable of being abstracted from them, it plainly follows that they exist only in the mind. But I desire anyone to reflect and try whether he can, by any abstraction of thought, conceive the extension and motion of a body without all other sensible qualities. For my own part, I see evidently that it is not in my power to frame an idea of a body extended and moved, but I must in addition give it some color or other sensible quality which is acknowledged to exist only in the mind. In short, extension, figure, and motion, abstracted from all other qualities, are inconceivable. Where, therefore, the other sensible qualities are, these must be also, namely, in the mind and nowhere else (*Principles* §10).

Here is a version of Berkeley's reductive argument:

> R1. You can not have an idea of a primary quality without secondary qualities.
> R2. So, wherever the secondary qualities are, the primary are.
> R3. Secondary qualities are only in the mind.
> RC. So, the primary qualities are mental, too.

To repeat, Berkeley considers as objects those things that we see, hear, smell, touch, and taste.
The *esse* of such objects is to be perceived.
There is no reason to posit anything beyond such objects, aside from their cause, i.e. God.
Locke thinks that our ideas of primary qualities resemble properties of material objects.
The inference to an intermediate cause of our ideas (i.e. physical objects) is, for Berkeley, illegitimate.
There is no primary/secondary distinction, since all qualities are, strictly speaking, secondary.

For Berkeley, only God can be taken as the true cause of my ideas.
An all-powerful God could have no use for an intermediate instrument.

> Though we do the utmost we can to secure the belief of *matter*, though, when reason forsakes us, we endeavor to support our opinion on the bare possibility of the thing, and though we indulge ourselves in the full scope of an imagination not regulated by reason to make out that poor *possibility*, yet the upshot of all is that there are certain *unknown ideas* in the mind of God; for this, if anything, is all that I conceive to be meant by *occasion* with regard to God. And this at the bottom is no longer contending for the *thing*, but for the *name*. Whether therefore there are such ideas in the mind of God, and whether they may be called by the name *matter*, I shall not dispute. But, if you stick to the notion of an unthinking substance or support of extension, motion, and other sensible qualities, then to me it is most evidently impossible there should be any such thing, since it is a plain repugnancy that those qualities should exist in or be supported by an unperceiving substance (*Principles*, §§75-6).

XII. The Inference to Matter

Locke and Berkeley agree that all knowledge comes from experience.
They disagree over whether we can know of a material world by experience.
Berkeley shows that the claim that material objects exist must be an inference, not a perception.

Locke's description of our experiences of primary and secondary qualities makes explicit the danger of relying on such an inference.

> The *ideas of primary qualities* of bodies *are resemblances* of them and their patterns do really exist in the bodies themselves, but the *ideas produced* in us *by* these *secondary qualities have no resemblance* of them at all. There is nothing like our *ideas* existing in the bodies themselves. They are, in the bodies we denominate from them, only a power to produce those sensations in us. And what is sweet, blue, or warm in *idea* is but the certain bulk, figure, and motion of the *insensible parts in the bodies themselves* which we call so (II.VIII.15, emphasis in last line added).

Berkeley is taking advantage of the apparent contradiction between saying, on the one hand, that all knowledge comes from sense experience and, on the other, that we have knowledge of insensible objects.
If we are empiricists, says Berkeley, we can have no experience, no sensation, of insensible parts, of the material world.
Since all knowledge comes from experience, our knowledge must be of an immaterial world.

XIII. Berkeley on the Resemblance Hypothesis

Consider two different refinements of the resemblance hypothesis.

> RH1. My ideas resemble material objects.
> RH2. My ideas resemble their causes.

Berkeley rejects RH1, but accepts RH2.
Ideas can only resemble other ideas.

> But, you say, though the ideas themselves do not exist without the mind, yet there may be things like them of which they are copies or resemblances, which things exist without the mind in an unthinking substance. I answer, an idea can be like nothing but an idea; a color or figure can be like nothing but another color or figure (*Principles*, §8, AW 448b).

So, my ideas resemble, we presume, the ideas in the minds of other persons.
And, they resemble their causes, which are ideas in the mind of God.
Indeed, it is from the need to infer a cause of my ideas that we can infer the existence of God.

> When in broad daylight I open my eyes, it is not in my power to choose whether I shall see or not, or to determine what particular objects shall present themselves to my view; and so likewise as to the hearing and other senses- the ideas imprinted on them are not creatures of my will. There is, therefore, some other will or spirit that produces them (*Principles* §29, AW 453a).

Our ability to infer affords us knowledge of the existence of God, yet, according to Berkeley, it cannot yield knowledge of a material world.
If Berkeley's denial of the existence of a material world were based solely, as he sometimes implies, on our inability to know about such a world, his idealism would be ill motivated.
But, Berkeley's idealism is more forcefully motivated by his objections to a particular kind of inference used by Locke to generate his materialism: the ability to abstract.

> If we thoroughly examine this tenet [materialism] it will, perhaps, be found at bottom to depend on the doctrine of *abstract ideas*. For can there be a nicer strain of abstraction than to distinguish the existence of sensible objects from their being perceived, so as to conceive them existing unperceived? Light and colors, heat and cold, extension and figures - in a word, the things we see and feel - what are they but so many sensations, notions, ideas, or impressions on the sense? And is it possible to separate, even in thought, any of these from perception? For my part, I might as easily divide a thing from itself... In truth, the object and the sensation are the same thing and cannot therefore be abstracted from each other (*Principles* §5).

XIV. Berkeley's World

According to Berkeley, we have a bundle of sensations which form an experience which we call a red chair, say, or apple.
We use the term 'apple' to refer to this collection of (strictly speaking distinct) sensory ideas.
'Apple', or even 'this apple', does not correspond to any abstract idea of apple, or of red, or of sweet, etc.
The names 'apple' and 'chair' and 'red' are just convenient labels, and should not indicate any existence of the apple or chair or color beyond my current experience of it.
If 'chair' actually referred to a thing, it would have to refer to red chairs and blue chairs and tall chairs and short chairs.
We can give a name to commonalities among particular sensations, but this is just a name.
Berkeley is a thus a nominalist about everything except particular experiences.
We have no positive idea of man, or triangle, or matter, as all are abstractions.

Locke and Descartes posit matter as the cause of our ideas.
This matter really has only the primary qualities as properties.
But on this picture, there is no yellow, no sweetness: all secondary properties are just names.
Berkeley tries making the terms refer to my sensory states.
The lemon is yellow, since I really have a yellow sensory experience.
Berkeley's account solves the problem of error for our beliefs based on the senses, like the water experiment.
This is the problem that led both Descartes and Locke to reject the resemblance hypothesis for ideas of secondary qualities.
But Berkeley has a new set of problems.

One of Berkeley's new problems is the problem of intersubjectivity.
How do we account for different people having similar experiences?
Similarly, how do we account for the fact that objects do not seem to go in and out of existence, that they seem to persist?
Berkeley posits God, to ensure both intersubjectivity and persistence.
On a metaphoric level, our experiences are like peering into the mind of God.

What happens to ideas when we are not perceiving them?
They may subsist in the mind of other spirits.
But what if no person is perceiving them?
Sensible things have to be perceived.
But it does not follow that they are frequently created and annihilated.

Consider the limerick:

> There was a young man who said God
> Must think it exceedingly odd
> When he finds that this tree
> Continues to be
> When there's no one about in the quad
>
> Dear sir, your confusion is odd
> I am always about in the quad
> and that's why this tree
> will continue to be
> Since observed by, yours faithfully, God.

Berkeley gets to retain colors, sounds, and smells.
The apple is just how I experience it.
He thinks there is a real world.
It is just not a material world.
The drawback is that we are left with only our mental states.
Berkeley's world is purely psychological.