

Caner ÇİÇEKDAĞI\*

## ***Esse Est Percipi* in Berkeley's Book "Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous"**

### **Absrtact**

This paper will try to remind Berkeley's thought on his book "Dialogues". The three names, John Locke, George Berkeley and David Hume are clearly mentioned by British empiricism. Among these major names we're going to keep your attention to Berkeley. That's because his empiricism differs from the others with the simple and highly radical point of view. The empiricist tradition always uses the word "idea" in a general meaning. "Idea" represents anything in our minds as thoughts, perceptions, feelings, imaginations, memories, etc., anything not belong to physical body. Things exist as long as they are being perceived. Material substance isn't exist because we can't perceive such a thing but ideas, like thoughts, imagines, sensations etc.

### **Key Terms**

Matter, Mind, Object, Perceive, Sense, Skepticism, Substance.

## **Berkeley'in "Hylas İle Philonous Arasında Üç Konuşma" Adlı Kitabında *Esse Est Percipi***

### **Özet**

Bu çalışmayla Berkeley'in düşünceleri onun "Diyaloglar" adlı kitabı aracılığıyla hatırlatılmaya çalışılacaktır. İngiliz Empirizmi denilince aklımıza gelen isimler John Locke, George Berkeley ve David Hume'dur. Bu üç isim arasından Berkeley ele alınacaktır. Çünkü empirizm bu filozofta hem basit hem de köklü bir biçimde radikal bakış açısına sahiptir. Empirist gelenek "idea" kavramını genel anlamıyla kullanmıştır. Buna göre idea zihnimizdeki fiziki bir bedene-cisime ait olmayan düşünceleri, algıları, duyguları, hayalleri, hatıraları vb. temsil eder. Şeyler algılandıkları sürece vardır. Maddi töz diye bir şey yoktur, çünkü düşünceler, hayaller, duyular vb idelerin dışında böylesine bir şey algılayamamaktayız.

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### Anahtar Terimler

Algı, Duyu, Objeye, Madde, Şüphencilik, Töz, Zihin.

We'll try to remind Berkeley's thought on his book "Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous." As you know modern philosophy has two main currents on epistemological problems: rationalism and empiricism. Initially we can say that Cartesian rationalism grew in philosophy after Descartes. Hobbes and Pascal were first known to object to Descartes. Spinoza and Leibniz, by their axiomatic methods, also joined Cartesianism. Philosophy in Britain became more empiricist. Interest on senses, observations and perceptions increased due to thriving sciences of nature. So, philosophy inevitably interested in such sciences and subjects as well.

The three names, John Locke, George Berkeley and David Hume are clearly mentioned by British empiricism. Among these major names we're going to keep your attention to Berkeley. That's because his empiricism differs from the others with the simple and highly radical point of view. However, the first step to understand Berkeley is a good understanding of Locke. It's known that Locke takes some views from Descartes without having any change. As an example of this direct borrowing, we can give the distinction between two different concepts: mind and matter. Considering, feeling and perceiving are the main works of mind. No doubt that they are unextended and immaterial. Whereas mind can think, feel and perceive, matter never does. The most important feature of the matter is an absolute physical extension. A perception is not the production of our physical bodies but an activity of our minds. Likewise, the empiricist tradition always uses the word "idea" in a general meaning. "Idea" represents anything in our minds as thoughts, perceptions, feelings, imaginations, memories, etc., anything not belong to physical body.

Locke claims that a set of ideas in mind is the result of an external material object. The image of the object is really similar to the object itself, only. The traditional view accepts that the most or all qualities of the object are itself by no doubt. This comment was refused by Locke and his contemporaries. The qualities, like shape, size, texture, color, etc. are called secondary qualities. Locke suggests that many of attributes our ideas do not correspond at all to anything "out there", for example color is secondary quality. He named the qualities, like color, sound, taste, smell and softness/roughness as secondary qualities. According to him extension (or size), figure (or shape), motion/rest, solidity, number are primary qualities.

Berkeley accepted Locke's arguments that secondary qualities are ideas in the mind but he extended that argument and said that none of the qualities of our ideas correspond to qualities of an object. Just right here some questions can be asked. If ideas can not resemble things outside the mind, how should we explain that a feeling of touch resembles something intangible? If our perceptions are not due to an external object, how can something inert and material be a reason for an idea in an active, immaterial mind or in our souls? What makes us believe in material substances' existence? The external objects are supposed to be matter and it's certain that physical substances can't think, feel or perceive. On the other hand, they are also supposed to have primary qualities that are ideas. The flow of those thoughts is not coherent. How

can a substance have ideas? Here immaterialism and idealism may help us. Mind, soul and ideas are the only things that exist in real. If so, should we ignore the real objects like a flower? Berkeley had an answer to this incoherent question. He thinks that the flower exists but it's just collection of ideas and perceptions. As he says, "esse est percipi", "to be is to be perceived". For objects of sense, their being is their being perceived by us.

In Berkeley's *The Three Dialogues*, we meet two dramatical characters; one is Philonous that is Berkeley's spokesperson and the other is Hylas that's probably Locke himself. Philonous comes from Greek and it means love of mind or lover of spirit. Hylas is a Greek word for matter.

That Philonous denied the existence of material substance is a surprising situation for Hylas. The position is naturally skeptical to him. Although Philonous agrees to be an immaterialist, he denies that immaterialism is a form of skepticism. In fact, Hylas' belief in matter causes a position leads to skepticism. After a time for discussion, they met at a point that a skeptic is someone who denies or claims ignorance of the reality of sensible things. We know that sensible things can be easily and immediately perceived by our senses. As we mentioned before, objects have sensible qualities. Except these sensible qualities, there will be nothing to perceive. Being hot or cold is a secondary quality and it doesn't exist out of mind. Here Berkeley almost totally agrees with Locke, but he thinks also the primary qualities do not exist out of mind. He gives a great importance to the perceptual relativity.

PHILONOUS: Well then, are you content to admit that opinion for true, which upon examination shall appear most agreeable to common sense, and remote from scepticism?

HYLAS: With all my heart. Since you are for raising disputes about the plainest things in Nature, I am content for once to hear what you have to say.

PHILONOUS: Pray, Hylas, what do you mean by a *sceptic*?

HYLAS: I mean what all men mean, one that doubts of everything.

PHILONOUS: He then who entertains no doubt concerning some particular point, with regard to that point cannot be thought a *sceptic*.

HYLAS: I agree with you.

PHILONOUS: Whether doth doubting consist in embracing the affirmative or negative side of a question?

HYLAS: In neither; for whoever understands English, cannot but know that *doubting* signifies a suspense between both.

PHILONOUS: He then that denieth any point, can no more be said to doubt of it, than he who affirmeth it with the same degree of assurance.

HYLAS: True.

PHILONOUS: And consequently, for such his denial is no more to be esteemed a *sceptic* than the other.

HYLAS: I acknowledge it.

PHILONOUS: How cometh it to pass then, Hylas, that you pronounce me a *sceptic*, because I deny what you affirm, to wit, the existence of matter? Since, for ought you can tell, I am as peremptory in my denial, as you in your affirmation.\*

HYLAS: Hold, Philonous, I have been a little out in my definition; but every false step a man makes in discourse is not to be insisted on. I said indeed, that a *sceptic* was one who doubted of everything; but I should have added, or who denies the reality and truth of things. (Berkeley 1996: 108,109)

After making a decision about the definition of skeptic, Hylas makes a certain distinction between the sensation and the object of sense. Hylas claims that sensation is an act of mind. Despite its active, it can not exist out of mind.

PHILONOUS: Tell me now, whether *seeing* consists in perceiving light and colours, or in opening and turning the eyes?

HYLAS: Without doubt, in the former.

PHILONOUS: Since therefore you are in the very perception of light and colours altogether passive, what is become of that action you were speaking of, as an ingredient in every sensation? And doth it not follow from your own concessions that the perception of light and colours, including no action in it, may exist in an unperceiving substance? And is not this a plain contradiction?

HYLAS: I know not what to think of it.

PHILONOUS: Besides, since you distinguish the *active* and passive in every perception, you must do it in that of pain. But how is it possible that pain, be it as little active as you please, should exist in an unperceiving substance? In short, do but consider the point, and then confess ingenuously, whether light and colours, tastes, sounds, &c. are not all equally passions or sensations in the soul. You may indeed call them *external objects*, and give them in words what subsistence you please. But examine your own thoughts, and then tell me whether it be not as I say?

HYLAS: I acknowledge, Philonous, that upon a fair observation of what passes in my mind, I can discover nothing else, but that I am a thinking being, affected with variety of sensations; neither is it possible to conceive how a sensation should exist in an unperceiving substance. But then on the other hand, when I look on sensible things in a different view, considering them as so many modes and qualities, I find it necessary to suppose a material *substratum*, without which they cannot be conceived to exist.

PHILONOUS: *Material substratum* call you it? Pray, by which of your senses came you acquainted with that being?

HYLAS: It is not itself sensible; its modes and qualities only being perceived by the senses.

PHILONOUS: I presume then, it was by reflexion and reason you obtained the idea of it.

HYLAS: I do not pretend to any proper positive idea of it. However I conclude it exists, because qualities cannot be conceived to exist without a support.

PHILONOUS: It seems then you have only a relative notion of it, or that you conceive it not otherwise than by conceiving the relation it bears to sensible qualities.

HYLAS: Right. (ibid., 134 -136)

What about the object? It's not active and it can exist out of the mind. It's perceived. Philonous disagrees and he says perception is not active, but mind works actively. When we look at an object, we perceive only the sensible qualities. In spite of Hylas' insistence on that the material substance is a necessary substratum for all the sensible qualities, Philonous reacts to this suggestion confidently and responds it: the sensible qualities are ideas and it's clear that ideas don't exist in material substance. It must be supported that ideas are in the mind.

HYLAS: Is it not sufficiently expressed in the term *substratum*, or *substance*?

PHILONOUS: If so, the word *substratum* should import, that it is spread under the sensible qualities or accidents.

HYLAS: True.

PHILONOUS: And consequently under extension.

HYLAS: I own it.

PHILONOUS: It is therefore somewhat in its own nature entirely distinct from extension.

HYLAS: I tell you, extension is only a mode, and matter is something that supports modes. And is it not evident the thing supported is different from the thing supporting?

PHILONOUS: So that something distinct from, and exclusive of extension, is supposed to be the *substratum* of extension.

HYLAS: Just so.

PHILONOUS: Answer me, Hylas. Can a thing be spread without extension? Or is not the idea of extension necessarily included in *spreading*?

HYLAS: It is.

PHILONOUS: Whatsoever therefore you suppose spread under anything, must have in itself an extension distinct from the extension of that thing under which it is spread.

HYLAS: It must.

PHILONOUS: Consequently every corporeal substance being the *substratum* of extension, must have in itself another extension by which it is qualified to be a *substratum*: and so on to infinity. And I ask whether this be not absurd in itself, and repugnant to what you granted just now, to

wit, that the *substratum* was something distinct from, and exclusive of extension.

HYLAS: Ay but, Philonous, you take me wrong. I do not mean that matter is *spread* in a gross literal sense under extension. The word *substratum* is used only to express in general the same thing with *substance*.

PHILONOUS: Well then, let us examine the relation implied in the term *substance*. Is it not that it stands under accidents?

HYLAS: The very same.

PHILONOUS: But that one thing may stand under or support another, must it not be extended?

HYLAS: It must.

PHILONOUS: Is not therefore this supposition liable to the same absurdity with the former?

HYLAS: You still take things in a strict literal sense: that is not fair, Philonous.

PHILONOUS: I am not for imposing any sense on your words: you are at liberty to explain them as you please. Only I beseech you, make me understand something by them. You tell me, matter supports or stands under accidents. How! Is it as your legs support your body?

HYLAS: No; that is the literal sense.

PHILONOUS: Pray let me know any sense, literal or not literal, that you understand it in. How long must I wait for an answer, Hylas?

HYLAS: I declare I know not what to say. I once thought I understood well enough what was meant by matter's supporting accidents. But now the more I think on it, the less can I comprehend it; in short, I find that I know nothing of it. (ibid. , 137, 138)

According to Cartesian and Lockean point of view, brain takes a start of activity by an external physical thing and the motion in the brain causes a series of ideas in the mind. On the other hand, brain itself is a sensible thing. Some sensible qualities that are called ideas can exist only in the mind. The reason for that only one image can cause all the others is really difficult to answer or in some way undetectable. I want to remind Philonous' position in many ways solves the problem of mind-body interaction that Descartes faced. Philonous suggests that there is no causal relation between "a motion in the nerves and the sensations of sound or color in the mind". They always go together but this doesn't prove that one causes the other.

HYLAS: It is supposed the soul makes her residence in some part of the brain, from which the nerves take their rise, and are thence extended to all parts of the body: and that out-ward objects by the different impressions they make on the organs of sense, communicate certain vibrative motions to the nerves; and these being filled with spirits, propagate them to the brain or seat of the soul, which according to the various impressions or traces thereby made in the brain, is various affected with ideas.

PHILONOUS: And call you this an explication of the manner whereby we are affected with ideas?

HYLAS: Why not, Philonous, have you anything to object against to it?

PHILONOUS: I would first know whether I rightly understand your hypothesis. You make certain traces in the brain to be the causes or occasions of our ideas. Pray tell me, whether by the *brain* you mean any sensible thing?

HYLAS: What else think you I could mean?

PHILONOUS: Sensible things are all immediately perceivable; and those things which are immediately perceivable are ideas; and these exist only in the mind. Thus much you have, if I mistake not, long since agreed to.

HYLAS: I do not deny it.

PHILONOUS: The brain therefore you speak of, being a sensible thing, exists only in the mind. Now, I would fain know whether you think it reasonable to suppose, that one idea or thing existing in the mind, occasions all other ideas. And if you think so, pray how do you account for the origin of that primary idea or brain itself?

HYLAS: I do not explain the origin of our ideas by that brain which is perceivable to sense, this being itself only a combination of sensible ideas, but by another which I imagine.

PHILONOUS: But are not things imagined as truly in the mind as things perceived?

HYLAS: I must confess they are.

PHILONOUS: It comes therefore to the same thing; and you have been all this while accounting for ideas, by certain motions or impressions in the brain, that is, by some alterations in an idea, whether sensible or imaginable it matters not.

HYLAS: I begin to suspect my hypothesis.

PHILONOUS: Beside spirits, all that we know or conceive are our own ideas. When therefore you say, all ideas are occasioned by impressions in the brain, do you conceive this brain or no? If you do, then you talk of ideas imprinted in an idea, causing that same idea, which is absurd. If you do not conceive it, you talk unintelligibly, instead of forming a reasonable hypothesis.

HYLAS: I now clearly see it was a mere dream. There is nothing in it.

PHILONOUS: You need not be much concerned at it: for after all, this way of explaining things, as you called it, could never have satisfied any reasonable man. What connexion is there between a motion in the nerves, and the sensations of sound or colour in the mind? Or how is it possible these should be the effect of that?

HYLAS: But I could never think it had so little in it, as now it seems to have.

PHILONOUS: Well then, are you at length satisfied that no sensible things have a real existence; and that you are in truth an arrant *sceptic*?

HYLAS: It is too plain to be denied. (ibid., 148 – 150)

So, what causes our ideas? Berkeley's argument may help us. The existence of God completes the missing parts. Ideas are not due to matter. So, what causes to have ideas? Philonous thinks that is not because of us.

PHILONOUS: Look! Are not the fields covered with a delightful verdure? Is there not something in the woods and groves, in the rivers and clear springs that soothes, that delights, that transports the soul? At the prospect of the wide and deep ocean, or some huge mountain whose top is lost in the clouds, or of an old gloomy forest, are not our minds filled with a pleasing horror? Even in rocks and deserts, is there not an agreeable wildness? How sincere a pleasure is it to behold the natural beauties of the earth! To preserve and renew our relish for them, is not the veil of night alternately drawn over her face, and doth she not change her dress with the seasons? How aptly are the elements disposed? What variety and use in the meanest productions of Nature? What delicacy, what beauty, what contrivance in animal and vegetable bodies? How exquisitely are all things suited, as well to their particular ends, as to constitute apposite parts of the whole! And while they mutually aid and support, do they not also set off and illustrate each other? Raise now your thoughts from this ball of earth, to all those glorious luminaries that adorn the high arch of heaven. The motion and situation of the planets, are they not admirable for use and order? Were those (miscalled *erratic*) globes ever known to stray, in their repeated journeys through the pathless void? Do they not measure areas round the sun ever proportioned to the times? So fixed, so immutable are the laws by which the unseen Author of Nature actuates the universe. How vivid and radiant is the lustre of the fixed stars! How magnificent and rich that negligent profusion, with which they appear to be scattered throughout the whole azure vault! Yet if you take the telescope, it brings into your sight a new host of stars that escape the naked eye. Here they seem contiguous and minute, but to a nearer view immense orbs of light at various distances, far sunk in the abyss of space. Now you must call imagination to your aid. The feeble narrow sense cannot descry innumerable worlds revolving round the central fires; and in those worlds the energy of an all-perfect mind displayed in endless forms. But neither sense nor imagination are big enough to comprehend the boundless extent with all its glittering furniture. Though the labouring mind exert and strain each power to its utmost reach, there still stands out ungrasped a surplusage immeasurable. Yet all the vast bodies that compose this mighty frame, how distant and remote soever, are by some secret mechanism, some divine art and force linked in a mutual dependence and intercourse with each other, even with this earth, which was almost slipt from my thoughts, and lost in the crowd of worlds. Is not the whole system immense, beautiful, glorious beyond expression and beyond thought! What treatment then do those philosophers deserve, who



would deprive these noble and delightful scenes of all reality? How should those principles be entertained, that lead us to think all the visible beauty of the creation a false imaginary glare? To be plain, can you expect this scepticism of yours will not be thought extravagantly absurd by all men of sense?

HYLAS: Other men may think as they please: but for your part you have nothing to reproach me with. My comfort is, you are as much a *sceptic* as I am.

PHILONOUS: There, Hylas, I must beg leave to differ from you.

HYLAS: What! Have you all along agreed to the premises, and do you now deny the conclusion, and leave me to maintain those paradoxes by myself which you led me into? This surely is not fair.

PHILONOUS: I deny that I agreed with you in those notions that led to scepticism. You indeed said, the reality of sensible things consisted in an *absolute existence* out of the minds of spirits, or distinct from their being perceived. And pursuant to this notion of reality, you are obliged to deny sensible things any real existence: that is, according to your own definition, you profess yourself a *sceptic*. But I neither said nor thought the reality of sensible things was to be defined after that manner. To me it is evident, for the reasons you allow of, that sensible things cannot exist otherwise than in a mind or spirit. Whence I conclude, not that they have no real existence, but that seeing they depend not on my thought, and have an existence distinct from being perceived by me, *there must be some other mind wherein they exist*. As sure therefore as the sensible world really exists, so sure is there an infinite omnipresent spirit who contains and supports it.

HYLAS: What! This is no more than I and all Christians hold; nay, and all others too who believe there is a God, and that he knows and comprehends all things.

PHILONOUS: Ay, but here lies the difference. Men commonly believe that all things are known or perceived by God, because they believe the being of a God, whereas I on the other side, immediately and necessarily conclude the being of a God, because all sensible things must be perceived by him. (ibid., 150 – 152)

Not we cause the ideas but the God is the real cause of our ideas. As regards Descartes, Berkeley tries to prove God by using the nature of his perceptions. This makes a partial difference between empiricism and rationalism.

HYLAS: I think I understand you very clearly; and own the proof you give of a Deity seems no less evident, than it is surprising. But allowing that God is the Supreme and Universal Cause of all things, yet may not there be still a third nature besides spirits and ideas? May we not admit a subordinate and limited cause of our ideas? In a word, may there not for all that be *matter*?

PHILONOUS: How often must I inculcate the same thing? You allow the things immediately perceived by sense to exist nowhere without the mind:

but there is nothing perceived by sense, which is not perceived immediately: therefore there is nothing sensible that exists without the mind. The matter therefore which you still insist on, is something intelligible, I suppose; something that may be discovered by reason, and not by sense.

HYLAS: You are in the right.

PHILONOUS: Pray let me know what reasoning your belief of matter is grounded on; and what this matter is in your present sense of it.

HYLAS: I find myself affected with various ideas, whereof I know I am not the cause; neither are they the cause of themselves, or of one another, or capable of subsisting by themselves, as being altogether inactive, fleeting, dependent beings. They have therefore some cause distinct from me and them: of which I pretend to know no more, than that it is *the cause of my ideas*. And this thing, whatever it be, I call matter.

PHILONOUS: Tell me, Hylas, hath everyone a liberty to change the current proper signification annexed to a common name in any language? For example, suppose a traveler should tell you, that in a certain country men might pass unhurt through the fire; and, upon explaining himself, you found he meant by the word *fire* that which others call water: or if he should assert there are trees which walk upon two legs, meaning men by the term *trees*. Would you think this reasonable?

HYLAS: No; I should think it very absurd. Common custom is the standard of propriety in language. And for any man to affect speaking improperly, is to pervert the use of speech, and can never serve to a better purpose, than to protract and multiply disputes where there is no difference in opinion.

PHILONOUS: And doth not *matter*, in the common current acceptation of the word, signify an extended, solid, moveable, unthinking, inactive substance?

HYLAS: It cloth.

PHILONOUS: And hath it not been made evident, that no such substance can possibly exist? And though it should be allowed to exist, yet how can that which is *inactive* be a *cause*; or that which is *unthinking* be a *cause of thought*? You may indeed, if you please, annex to the word matter a contrary meaning to what is vulgarly received; and tell me you understand by it an unextended, thinking, active being, which is the cause of our ideas. But what else is this, than to play with words, and run into that very fault you just now condemned with so much reason? I do by no means find fault with your reasoning in that you collect a cause from the phenomena; but I deny that the cause deducible by reason can properly be termed *matter*.

HYLAS: There is indeed something in what you say. But I am afraid you do not thoroughly comprehend my meaning. I would by no means be thought to deny that God or an Infinite Spirit is the supreme cause of all

things. All I contend for, is, that subordinate to the supreme agent there is a cause of a limited and inferior nature, which concurs in the production of our ideas, not by any act of will or spiritual efficiency, but by that kind of action which belongs to matter, *viz. motion*.

PHILONOUS: I find, you are at every turn relapsing into your old exploded conceit, of a moveable and consequently an extended substance existing without the mind. What! Have you already forgot you were convinced, or are you willing I should repeat what has been said on that head? In truth this is not fair dealing in you, still to suppose the being of that which you have so often acknowledged to have no being. But not to insist farther on what has been so largely handled, I ask whether all your ideas are not perfectly passive and inert, including nothing of action in them?

HYLAS: They are.

PHILONOUS: And are sensible qualities anything else but ideas?

HYLAS: How often have I acknowledged that they are not?

PHILONOUS: But is not motion a sensible quality?

HYLAS: It is.

PHILONOUS: Consequently it is no action.

HYLAS: I agree with you. And indeed it is very plain, that when I stir my finger, it remains passive; but my will which produced the motion, is active.

PHILONOUS: Now I desire to know in the first place, whether motion being allowed to be no action, you can conceive any action besides volition: and in the second place, whether to say something and conceive nothing be not to talk nonsense: and lastly, whether having considered the premises, you do not perceive that to suppose any efficient or active cause of our ideas, other than *spirit*, is highly absurd and unreasonable?

HYLAS: I give up the point entirely. But though matter may not be a cause, yet what hinders its being an *instrument* subservient to the supreme agent in the production of our ideas?

PHILONOUS: An instrument, say you; pray what may be the figure, springs, wheels, and motions of that instrument?

HYLAS: Those I pretend to determine nothing of, both the substance and its qualities being entirely unknown to me.

PHILONOUS: What? You are then of opinion, it is made up of unknown parts, that it hath unknown motions, and an unknown shape.

HYLAS: I do not believe it hath any figure or motion at all, being already convinced, that no sensible qualities can exist in an unperceiving substance. (*ibid.* , 156 – 158)

Now, we can understand how Hylas' position causes skepticism. He says sense can't create knowledge of material substances. Knowledge is not the knowledge of matter yet. Senses give us only the knowledge of ideas. Hylas admits that all of his

experience is consistent with there being no matter at all. Hylas can't even imagine what the matter is and what features it has. His conception is not clear about this affair. Philonous accuses Hylas of being irrational. Despite the fact that he seems so confused with the meaning of matter, he accepts skepticism easily. He probably wants to keep himself away from some possible questions; if sensible things are real, why don't they exist out of mind? Of course, a simple person is not interested whether the objects exist or not. Normally, we have an immediate perception and knowledge about the objects around us. Persons like Descartes and Hylas were skeptical and they wonder what is real; the matter or the senses. For Philonous, the being of something is mainly depend on its being perceived by the others. The idea of something in our mind represents the objects itself. We can have a piece of knowledge when we sense an object immediately, because we have an immediate knowledge of our own ideas.

PHILONOUS: I do not pretend to be a setter-up of *new notions*. My endeavours tend only to unite and place in a clearer light that truth, which was before shared between the vulgar and the philosophers: the former being of opinion, that *those things they immediately perceive are the real things; and the latter, that the things immediately perceived, are ideas which exist only in the mind*. Which two notions put together, do in effect constitute the substance of what I advance.

HYLAS: I have been a long time distrusting my senses; me thought I saw things by a dim light, and through false glasses. Now the glasses are removed, and a new light breaks in upon my understanding. I am clearly convinced that I see things in their native forms; and am no longer in pain about their unknown natures or absolute existence. This is the state I find myself in at present: though indeed the course that brought me to it, I do not yet thoroughly comprehend. You set out upon the same principles that Academics, Cartesians, and the like sects, usually do; and for a long time it looked as if you were advancing their philosophical *scepticism*; but in the end your conclusions are directly opposite to theirs.

PHILONOUS: You see, Hylas, the water of yonder fountain, how it is forced upwards, in a round column, to a certain height; at which it breaks and falls back into the basin from whence it rose: its ascent as well as descent, proceeding from the same uniform law or principle of *gravitation*. Just so, the same principles which at first view lead to *scepticism*, pursued to a certain point, bring men back to common sense. (ibid., 208)

Berkeley's thoughts seem to be the simplest but the most radical opposing against the traditional arguments for skepticism. What we perceive is the reality and it exists to be perceived.

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