

BETWEEN REALISM AND IDEALISM IN PHILOSOPHY: A CRITIQUE

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Abstract

Perception is the process by which we become aware of the world around us, including our bodies. When discussing perception, two theories readily come to mind; externalism and internalism, which are parent theories of realism and idealism. While the former holds that what can be known about an object exists independently of one's mind, such that whether a man perceives it or not, he continues to observe the law of physics. The latter on the other hand holds that the property of an object exists solely in the mind, and so to be perceived means to exist. This, therefore, means that what is not perceived does not exist. This work, therefore, looks at these theories and concludes that neither of them stands sufficient as it concerns the act of perception, and therefore states that matter exists independent of the mind but needs the mind to perceive them for their existence to be relevant to man, and since the senses are fallible (realist), the rational mind is needed to decipher these matter (anti-realist). This work adopts the analytic method.

Keywords: Externalism, Idealism, Internalism, Perception, Realism, Sense Data.

Introduction

In this work, we shall be looking at perception as it concerns realism and idealism. "Perception is the process by which we become aware of the world around us, including our own body."² Our perceptual knowledge is understood from two perspectives; externalism and internalism, of which realism and idealism are theories within. Realism is a philosophical position, a subcategory of objectivism, which holds that what can be known about an object, exist independently of the mind, but the idealist holds the contrary.

² Anselm K., Jimoh, *Certitude And Doubt: A Study Guide in Epistemology*, 2nd ed., (Benin City: Floreat Systems Publications, 20 17), 99.

Sense Data

Sense data are the alleged mind-dependent objects that we are directly aware of in perception, and that they have exactly the properties they appear to have. Sense data have three defining characteristics; they are the kind of things we are directly aware of in perception, they are dependent on the mind, and lastly, they have the properties that perceptually appear to us. There are arguments against sense-data, in that some scholars reject it either because they either believe that perception gives us direct awareness of *physical* phenomena, rather than mere mental images, or they reject it because, they believe that the mental phenomena involved in perception, do not *have* the properties that appear to us. However, defenders of sense data have argued that sense data are required to explain such phenomena as perspectival variation, illusion, and hallucination.³

For some scholars, the most immediate objects of perception are mental objects, i.e. objects in the mind. So within the mind, there are two different items; there is a mental object, which may represent things outside the mind and something that makes up awareness, such as the process of perception or the phenomenon of an inner sense. For example, according to this view, when I see the President on TV, the very first thing I perceive is an image of the President in my mind. This image represents the moving picture on the television screen, and the moving picture on the television screen in turn represents the President himself. Besides sense data, these alleged immediate mental objects of perception have been called different names, for David Hume, they are impressions, while Berkeley sees them as ideas.⁴

What is Perception?

Perception from the Latin word; *perceptio*, *percipio* means the organization, identification, and interpretation of sensory information, to represent and understand the environment. All perception involves signals in the nervous system, which in turn result from physical stimulation of the sense organs. For example, vision involves light striking the retinas of the eyes, smell is mediated by odour molecules and hearing involves pressure waves. Perception is not the passive receipt of these signals but can be shaped by learning, memory, and expectation. And so perception according to Anselm Jimoh is “the process by

³Standard Encyclopedia of Philosophy, “Sense Data,” Accessed May 24th, 2021, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sense-data/>.

⁴Shen J., Reingold, E. M, & Pomplun, M, “Distractor Ratio Influences Patterns Of Eye Movements During Visual Search”. *Perception* 29 (2000): 241-250.

which we become aware of the world around us, including our own body”⁵ Our perceptual knowledge is understood from two perspectives; the externalist and the internalist perspectives. Usually, we talk about the objects of perception because there are two aspects of the act of perceiving; the objects perceived and the perceiving of them. If for instance, I see a mouse, the mouse is the thing I see, so it is an object of perception. On the other hand, my seeing it is an experience different from the object itself.⁶ Now other than the objects of perception, we can talk about at least four elements in perception, which entail the perceiver, the object perceived, the sensory experience of perception and the relation between the object and the subject of perception. Some accounts of perception add to the four items on this list; others subtract from it.⁷

When we talk about perception, two theories readily come to mind; internalism and externalism from which we have the realist and the idealist (anti-realist) theories of perception.

Internalism

Internalism is the view that a thinker’s epistemic status depends wholly on matters which are internal to the thinker, rather than on matters which are external to him or her, such as his or her relations to the environment.⁸ Within the purview of this discussion is realism, and while looking at realism, we shall also look at naïve realism and representative realism.

Realism

Realism is a philosophical position, a subcategory of objectivism, which holds that what can be known about an object, exists independently of one's mind. Realism is related directly to the correspondence theory of truth, which claims that the world exists independently and innately to our perceptions of it. Our sensory data, then reflect or correspond to the innate world. In the simplest sense, realism is the idea that observable characteristics exist in the observed object, independent of the

⁵Jimoh, Certitude And Doubt:A Study Guide in Epistemology, 99.

⁶Jimoh, Certitude And Doubt:A Study Guide in Epistemology, 99.

⁷ Robert Audi, *Epistemology A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*, 3rd ed., (New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group), 2003.

⁸ Sanford C. Goldberg (ed), *Internalism And Externalism In Semantics And Epistemology*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 13.

observer.⁹ Furthermore, realism also called objectivism is dominated by two schools of thought, Platonic objectivism (otherwise known as the Theory of Forms) and Aristotelian objectivism (of which Ayn Rand's objectivism is a modern adaptation). Platonic objectivism assumes that the highest form of reality is that of the Forms, which cannot be accessed through our senses, but only through reason and rational thought. Thus objective reality is grounded in our rational thoughts. This way of thinking (or the objections to it) has dominated Western Philosophy and has been the basis of the philosophical systems of St. Augustine, Descartes, Kant and many more philosophers. It was this dominance that prompted Alfred North Whitehead to say that European philosophy is characterized by a series of footnotes to Plato. Aristotelian realism on the other hand holds that the senses have primacy in determining the objectivity of reality, with our rational thoughts being subject to our experience.¹⁰

Naïve Realism

Naïve realism also called direct realism is the direct or common-sense view of how perception works. It is the general view people have until they give further thought to the problem of perception. It is the position of common sense; hence it is referred to as naive, which is rather unfair because this view can be supported with sophisticated philosophical arguments. Naive realism is the view that the world is as it appears to our senses, that we see, hear and smell things directly as they are. The argument is that “physical objects have an existence in space and they follow the laws of physics and so possess certain properties ranging from size and shape through to colour, smell, and texture. Humans under appropriate conditions can perceive them along with all these properties. Our sense organs can detect these properties of objects in the world, and we all perceive them with their properties as they are. Those who hold on to this view argue that objects continue to observe the laws of physics and retain their properties whether we are aware of them or not. Thus the theory affirms the real existence of the object of perception which exists outside of the perceiver’s mind, even while being unperceived. In other words, this view maintains that the oceans and rocks continue to exist even

⁹Jared Greenwald, “Everyday Philosophy: Epistemological Realism vs. Epistemological Idealism,” accessed May 20th, 2021, <http://theeternaluniverse.blogspot.com/2011/02/everyday-philosophy-epistemological.html#:~:text=In%20the%20simplest%20sense%20epistemological,observer%20independent%20of%20the%20object.>

¹⁰ Jared Greenwald, “Everyday Philosophy: Epistemological Realism vs. Epistemological Idealism.”

if we are not around to perceive them, and they continue to exist even after a given perception of them has come to an end.¹¹

Direct realism is thought therefore to give the perceiver direct and immediate access to the objects of perception themselves. The theory holds that our perception of the world is caused by events and objects outside of our minds. For example, the reason I perceived a sharp pain in my toe this afternoon is that a sharp object pierced my toe. In this case, the perception is caused by an object in the external world that acted on me and my senses. This also amounts to why this theory is sometimes referred to as a causal theory of perceptions. This theory seems to be based on a strong basis of commonsense thinking about our perceptions. It does seem that what we see is really what there is, and more often than not, we tend to base our judgment on them. Take, for instance, if I am driving around the Benin Auchu expressway, and I see another car in the opposing lane swerve into my lane at breakneck speed, I would be a fool not to hit my brakes or swerve out of the way. If I do not swerve or hit my brakes, I will probably collide with the approaching car and I could lose my life. In this case, my visual perceptions gave me real and true information about what is happening. As a result of these perceptions, I was able to make a reliable judgment about my course of action.¹²

Representative Realism

Representative theory of perception, also known as indirect realism, epistemological dualism, and the veil of perception, is a philosophical concept, which states that we do not and cannot perceive the external world directly; instead, we know only our ideas or interpretations of objects in the world. Thus, a barrier or a veil of perception prevents first-hand knowledge of anything beyond it. The "veil" exists between the mind and the existing world. Aristotle was the first to provide an in-depth description of indirect realism. In his work *On the Soul*, he describes how the eye must be affected by changes in an intervening medium rather than by objects themselves. He then speculates on how these sense impressions can form our experience of seeing and reason, that an endless regress would occur unless the sense itself were self-aware. He concludes by proposing that the mind is the things it thinks. He calls the images in the mind "ideas".

¹¹ James K. Jr. Dew and Mark W. Foreman, *How Do We Know? An Introduction to Epistemology*, (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2014), 83.

¹² James K. Jr. Dew and Mark W. Foreman, *How Do We Know?* 84.

Representative realism presents us with two worlds; the world of our senses, i.e. the world as we perceive it, the world of our sensations and the world of reality i.e. the world as it is. Representative realism is the “claim that physical objects impact upon our senses organs, causing us to experience sensations, which represents the objects that cause them.”¹³ This implies that we do not perceive the world directly, but indirectly through our sensations. As a theory of perception, it agrees with naive realism that, there exist material objects with independent properties, but disagrees with naive realism in that, we perceive these properties directly as they are. It makes a distinction between sensations and images of the objects as they are. Some aspects of our sensations are accurate, but others are not. Among our accurate sensations are the primary qualities of size, shape, position, motion, etc., while our experience of colour, sound, taste, and smell, constitute secondary qualities. Therefore, they are imperfect representations produced in us by the secondary qualities of objects. Thus, representative realism is the idea that our perceptions are directly caused by the intrinsic qualities of objects, and based on these perceptions we can infer things about these objects.

Externalism

Externalism is the view that a thinker’s epistemic status does not depend wholly on matters which are internal to the thinker, but rather, that it depends on matters which are external to him, such as his or her relations to the environment.¹⁴ In this section, we shall look at idealism and phenomenalism as anti-realist theories.

Idealism

“Idealism refers to the theory which states that everything must be understood as intrinsically dependent on some sort of mental or spiritual reality,”¹⁵ Furthermore, it is the view which states that reality or reality as we can know it, is fundamentally mental, mentally constructed, or otherwise immaterial. It holds that nothing exists, except minds and ideas in minds. Thus, idealism is a paradigm form of anti-realism. Platonic idealism is the theory that the substantive reality around us is only a reflection of a higher truth. That truth, Plato argued, is the abstraction. He believed that ideas were more real than things. He developed a vision of two worlds: a world of unchanging ideas and a world of changing physical objects. Subjective idealism, on the other hand, describes the relationship between the

¹³ Cardinal Hayward, and J. Jones, G., *Epistemology: The Theory Of Knowledge*, (London: John Murray Publishers Ltd, 2004), 56.

¹⁴ Goldberg (ed), *Internalism And Externalism In Semantics And Epistemology*, 13.

¹⁵ William F. Lawhead, *The Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*, 4th ed. (Stamford: Cengage Advantage Books, 2007), 379.

human experience of the external world, and the world itself, in which objects are nothing more than collections of sense data in those who perceive them.

There are two sorts of idealism; subjective idealism and absolute idealism. According to subjective idealism, human minds directly perceive nothing but themselves and their ideas. The existence of other minds is inferred from one's perceptual ideas. According to absolute idealism, everything, including one's mind is a part of a greater mind: the mind of God. Idealism is sometimes thought to be akin to scepticism, but it is a radical form of anti-scepticism.¹⁶

George Berkeley

George Berkeley was born in Ireland in 1685 and he propounded the theory of *immaterialism* in the 18th century, which holds that there are no material objects, only minds and ideas in those minds, and its opposite is eliminative materialism.¹⁷ He is considered the father of subjective idealism, which denies the existence of matter. As an empiricist, he holds the view that man obtains knowledge from sense perception. This means we can only know those things that we can perceive, and consequently what we cannot perceive does not exist. For Berkeley, what we directly perceive are the qualities of objects such as colours, size, height, etc., and these qualities are ideas that exist only in the mind. Thus matter does not exist. While Berkeley rejects the existence of matter, he holds that spiritual substances or minds exist. For him, the whole object of perception is ideas, the perceiver is the mind. For if there is perception, there must be a perceiver. He calls the perceiver's mind, spirit or "myself". He, therefore, conceives of the mind as a spiritual substance, and only spiritual substance exists. For him, our knowledge of the existence of our mind is by intuition, whereas the knowledge we have of the existence of other minds is by inference. This is because we notice the activities of other people that are similar to ours; it is on this ground that we conclude that these activities must be coming from a mind like ours.¹⁸

From the foregoing, it is clear that Berkeley holds the view that there are no innate ideas, and that all knowledge comes from sense perception. Whatever we know to exist, we know it only because we can perceive, and so for Berkeley, to exist means to be perceived; *Esse est percipi* (To be is to be perceived). Therefore, since whatever is perceptible to the sense is an idea in the mind, it follows that there are no

¹⁶ Stuart Brock and Edwin Mares, *Realism and Anti-Realism*, (Durham: acumen, 2007), 48.

¹⁷ Samuel Enoch Stumpf and James Fieser, *Philosophy: A Historical Survey with Essential Readings*, 9th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2012), 259.

¹⁸ Joseph Omoregebe, *Philosophy of Mind*, (Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited, 2001), 6.

material objects, matter does not exist. Everything, therefore, is an idea in the mind of the perceiver and it exists only in so far as it is perceived. The question one will likely ask is; what happens to an object that is far removed from our ability to perceive? Berkeley says that such an object is still not independent of perception, for he says that it is perceived by God, hence it continues to exist. From this, therefore, Berkeley holds that things are ideas in the mind. He thus agrees with John Locke that the objects of our knowledge are ideas and not material things themselves. But he differs from Locke in that Locke says that; ideas are separate from the object which they represent. But Berkeley says that they do not separate from things; they are things. Ideas are things and things are ideas in the mind. ¹⁹

Phenomenalism

Phenomenalism is a philosophical theory of perception and the external world. Its essential tenet is that propositions about material objects are reducible to propositions about actual and possible sensations, sense data, or appearances. According to the phenomenologists, a material object is not a mysterious something “behind” the appearances that people experience in sensation. If it were, the material world would be unknowable; indeed, the term matter itself would be unintelligible unless it somehow could be defined by reference to sense experiences. ²⁰ Thus Phenomenalism is the view that objects are logical constructions out of perceptual properties. On this view, to say there is a ball on the field when there is no one in the field to perceive it is to say that if there were someone in the field, then that person would perceive the ball. It is not the actual perception that counts, but the conditional possibility of perceiving. It is important to state here that phenomenism is not the same thing as the bundle theory of perception and vice-versa. For according to the bundle theory of perception, objects are made up of sets, or bundles of ideas or perceptions. To say that the mango before me exists is simply to say that certain properties (yellowishness, hardness, etc.) are being perceived at this moment. When these characteristics are no longer perceived or experienced by anyone, then the object (the mango, in this case) no longer exists.

This theory offers an alternative view to idealism on why objects persist even when no mind is there to perceive them. As an anti-realist theory of perception, it is

¹⁹ Joseph Omoregeb, *Epistemology (Theory of Knowledge); A systematic and Historical Study*, (Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited, 1998), 88.

²⁰The Editors of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* “Phenomenalism philosophy,” accessed May 29th, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/phenomenalism>.

distinct from idealism in its view that physical objects are not just collections of actual sense data but also of potential sense data. Therefore, it argues that physical objects continue to exist in the potency of being perceived before their being perceived. It implies that physical objects are permanent possibilities of sensation and that all talk about them can be reduced to actual and potential sense data.²¹ Phenomenalism is an improved form of idealism, but aims at offering a better explanation for the occurrence of sense data and their regularity. They then argue that objects are a collection of both actual and potential sense data. The actual sense data they refer to as *phenomena*, which mean appearances, things as they appear to us, as against *noumena* which are things as they are in themselves. Thus, they argue that to be is not just to be perceived, but also to be perceivable. If objects can be perceived even if they are not now perceived, they remain in existence. Hence, when a hen runs out of sight, it remains in the potency of its being perceived as soon as it returns within sight.²² The benefit of phenomenalism is that; its anti-realist position makes it resistant to scepticism because it closes the gap between our experience and the world, which we find in realism.

Going Beyond the Argument of Realism and Anti-Realism.

The Double Aspect Approach

The double aspect approach holds that spirit and matter are two aspects of the same substance, which is in itself neither spirit nor matter, but which expresses itself through these two aspects. There are various theories about this, for example, David Hume does not accept the concept of substance, whether it is a material substance or a spiritual substance. While David Hume rejects both material and spiritual substance on the ground that they are not perceptible, John Locke favours material substance, whereas, Berkeley favours spiritual substance. For Hume, all that we know to exist are impressions. Such that when we look at physical objects, all we perceive are impressions, but we do not see any substance in them. He goes further to say that when we enter into ourselves, all we perceive are impressions. We do not perceive any soul, or mind behind them or underlying them. Hence spirit and matter or mind and body are nothing other than impressions.²³

²¹Jimoh, *Certitude and Doubt*, 115.

²²Jimoh, *Certitude and Doubt*, 116.

²³Omeregbe, *Philosophy of Mind*, 18.

Hegel

Hegel born in Stuttgart in southern Germany in 1770 is an anti-dualist,²⁴ In the phenomenology of Mind, he argues that in our pre-reflective awareness of ourselves, we see ourselves as part of nature, one with nature. This is the feeling we have as children, but as time goes on, we begin to introduce bifurcation, a dichotomy, between ourselves and the physical world. We began to do this when we begin to reflect. Thus he argues that the spirit-matter, mind-body dualism is the product of reflection, therefore it is not real. This has led to conceptually creating a problem where no problem exists. The problem of how the mind and body—a spiritual substance and a material substance casually interact, having been conceptually created becomes insoluble. The question thus posed is unanswerable. Hegel argues that even the attempt to conceptually dichotomies reality into spirit and matter and to separate one of these from the other presupposes their unity. He says that the separation of the material and the immaterial can be explained only on the bases of the original unity of both.²⁵ Spirit and matter are not separate entities. On the contrary, the matter is an expression of the spirit. The body is an expression of the mind and therefore the mind cannot be separated from its expression of the body.

Bertrand Russell

Bertrand Russell was born May 18th, 1872 and died February 2, 1970. Russell rejects idealism, materialism and dualism and proposes his theory of neutral monism. Neutral monism has a theory which holds that the world is not made up of spirit or matter but of events. Events for Russell are the ultimate constitutive elements of the world. Some of these events describe for the sake of convenience describe as mental or spiritual while others are described as materials, but they are not mental or material. Everything in this world, including is composed of events. Matter for him does not exist, and what has been regarded as matter up till now is in fact event. Again he conceives matter as a mental construction, a postulate made to explain events.²⁶

Evaluation

The argument between realism and idealism is quite an interesting one, especially when one looks at the various arguments put forth in defence of either of these points. A general problem we can say about realism and anti-realism is that they

²⁴Lawhead, *The Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*, 391.

²⁵Omorgeb, *Philosophy of Mind*, 6.

²⁶Omorgebe, *Philosophy of Mind*, 19.

are both subjective. The realist wants us to believe that the material world exists independent of man perceiving it. Whether this is the case or not, the fact that the act of perception entails the senses makes it fallible. This fallibility is tied to the fact that the senses are not reliable means of attaining knowledge. This is because the senses often present us with a reality that is changing, and sometimes the senses misinform us about this reality (bent stick in water, mirage, etc.), and again, they present us with facts that cannot always be said to be certain. For example, a teacup may be warm to one person and hot to another person, this naturally presents some difficulty. The senses are fallible, and if they are fallible, so it's the knowledge that they give us, so then how do we base our knowledge claim on fallibility.

On the other hand, the anti-realist puts forth the idea, that the world does not exist independent of the human mind, this is certainly an overstatement, an exaggeration. Before the discovery of crude oil, for example, crude has always been in existence. Man only came to discover this crude, and at the same time discover his ignorance (for not knowing what has long been in existence). Again, if we are to base our conception of the existence of the world on the mind, what mind then should we use. The individual mind or is there "the mind." We must pay attention to this because, man perceives things differently, even as we have shown against the naïve argument. These two variables; the sense and the mind (individual mind) are subjective. What happens when I hear a sound and you do not hear the sound? When I say; "I heard a sound", and you say; "I did not hear any sound", and then you conclude that there was no sound, whereas I conclude that there was a sound. What then is the true state of nature? Was there sound or not? This is the problem of subjectivity, such that a thing may have been perceived by me and judged to be in existence, but yet it has not been perceived by you, even though we were in the same place. Do we then say that the thing is in existence or not?

For the realist the world exists independent of the mind, that is to say, that things are there, whether we are there to perceive them or not. This seems very plausible, especially when we consider the fact that a fruit that is in a good condition today if left unpreserved or consumed after a reasonable period, will go bad. This can only be possible because the fruit exists, though it is not being perceived by anyone.

The Naïve perspective of realism has its shortcomings. Naïve realism holds that the world is just as our sense presents them to us. But the world is more complicated and baffling than just that. Hume in his essay "concerning human understanding" claims that if we engage in the slightest philosophy, we will be

forced to give up naïve realism. He built his criticism on the sense of sight, arguing that objects appear smaller to us as we move away from them. But this is not the case. Berkeley also criticized naïve realism from the sense of feeling, he argues that if we were to put a cold hand into lukewarm water, the water will appear warm, and if a hot hand is put into the same water, the water will be cold. Yet the same water cannot be cold and hot at the same time, that will be contradictory. Thus, heat and cold are not real properties, but effects that the objects have on the observers. Furthermore, direct realism does not tell the whole story.

In truth, it sometimes seems as though our perceptions are not as straightforward as this theory would suggest. Naïve realism does not seem to account for the various ways that our perceptions can be tainted by other factors. Specifically, this theory does not take into account the many physical and contextual factors that affect our perceptions. In order to illustrate this point, let us take for example a case of two water bowls, one lukewarm and the other cold and a hand soaked in cold water (right hand) and the other hand soaked in hot water (left hand). The lukewarm water will feel hot to the right hand because that hand has been soaking in cold water. And it will feel ice cold to the left hand because that hand has been soaked in hot water. Again, orange juice will taste odd to a person with a lingering taste of toothpaste. What this means is that, while direct realism gives us a partial account of the real world, it does not tell the whole story. Because this theory assumes that things are exactly the way they appear to us in our perceptions.²⁷

Another problem with this argument is that it is circular, naïve realists argue that objects have various properties like colour, smell, taste etc. which we can perceive because they are there. If they are not there, we will not be able to perceive them. Their argument that we know that physical objects are because we perceive them, is based on the claim that we can perceive things as they are. The claim that we can perceive things as they are in themselves presupposes that we already know what things are like, so, the argument of naïve realism is in a kind of circle.

However, the naïve realist will want to keep their argument by appealing to a third party. Such that we can know things based on the testimony of another. But they forget that this “another” is also subject to the distorted nature of the senses, and again when people perceive things, their particular situation also affects how they perceive things. For example, a person with colour blindness cannot be a judge as far as colour is concerned²⁸.

²⁷James K. Jr. Dew and Mark W. Foreman, *How Do We Know?* 85.

²⁸Jimoh, *Certitude and Doubt*, 106.

The anti-realist argues on the other hand that the physical world does not exist independent of the mind, which goes to show that unless an object is perceived, it does not exist. It is important at this junction to ask the question, is it the only man who can perceive? Do animals, not perceive? Take the forest far removed from man, for example, the lions control the forest, in that they are the chief predators. They perceive their prey with the various sense organs, they attack an animal, kill it and feed on it. Do they not exist? Today we walk down a road and notice a tree, later on, we go through that same road and see that the tree has fallen, so what happened? If Berkeley is correct in saying that to exist means to be perceived, then how did the tree grow in the first place, and even fall when there was no one to perceive it? Or the scenario of a mango fruit that falls and gets rotten, how did it do that if its existence is tied to its being perceived by a perceiver? This goes to show that the anti-realist position is not well-founded. Berkeley, knowing this resorted to God to be a perceiver, whose act of perception keeps things that are far from man in existence.

The question one will readily put forth is that, has Berkeley perceived God? With what sense organ did he perceive him? The five senses are empirically tailored i.e. they cannot perceive abstract things, things that are beyond the physical. Berkeley then moves into an assumption to support his point. Furthermore, in Berkeley's rejection of matter and reduction of objects to sense perception, he confused the act of perception which takes place in the mind, with the objects of perception which exist before and are independent of our sense perception. There are two different things involved in the act of perception; the perceiver and the object of perception. The consciousness of an object is one thing, the object itself is another thing. As Omoregbe puts it, "the act of perception presupposes an object separate from it".²⁹

Conclusion

Both the realist and the antirealist need to realize the subjective nature of their argument and then lower their banner. However, it seems more plausible to argue along with the realist, that matter exists independent of the mind. For my laptop was charging while I was in the Chapel, because I had plugged it, such that immediately light came, it began to charge. It is in line with this, that this paper also holds that, I exist even when I am asleep and no longer conscious of my existence, let alone the room where I am sleeping. This paper also debunks the "God" in Berkeley's argument as a warranty for existence, because for this God to

²⁹Joseph Omoregbe, *Philosophy of Mind*, 7.

exist, the senses need to be able to perceive it, and this being of God is not within the purview of the senses.

This paper, however, embraces the realist and anti-realist views to propose a “Recent” view. “Recent” here is a combination of some of the elements of the realist argument and the anti-realist argument. This is because this paper has argued for and against the “full accuracy” of these views independently. As a way of conclusion, the paper holds that matter exists independent of the mind, but needs the mind to perceive it, for its existence to be relevant to the human person, and since the senses are fallible (realist), the rational mind is needed to decipher these matter (anti-realist).

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