

Izabel Goveia

Professor Louis Sanchez

PHI 101: Introduction to Philosophy

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Locke, "Qualities and Ideas"

1. Explain in your own words what Locke means by a "quality" of matter.

Quality of matter is the distinction between what is physically present and what is experienced psychologically.

2. Give three examples of Locke's Primary Qualities, and three examples of Secondary Qualities. How does Locke explain the key differences between Primary and Secondary Qualities?

The three primary qualities of matter are solidity, figure or shape and mobility. Three examples of Secondary Qualities are colors, sounds, tastes. The difference between them is that the Primary Qualities are related to the physical reality and the Secondaries are related to the subjective or psychological experiences.

3. Present an example from Locke's writing that describes a material object in terms of its fundamental primary qualities versus its secondary qualities, and how Locke's distinction makes sense of the reality of that object.

The example of the red and with colors in porphyry. The presence or not of the light changes the perception of the material, but these changes or variations happen subjectively, not in the actual

object. The shape and solidity of the porphyry are the same, whether it has light or not, but the experience we have with its color, varies.

Berkeley, “Nothing Outside the Mind”

4. Explain Berkeley's criteria for "existence" - what does he think we mean when we say something is "real" or that it "exists"?

Berkeley stated that “nothing at all could be said to exist outside the mind”. He believed that the existence of things consists in them being perceived. So, if I say something is real or exists, it means that I can perceive it.

5. Based on his definition of existence, why does Berkeley think we should not believe in the existence of independent Primary Qualities? What does this mean about the existence of matter?

Berkeley argued that the ordinary things are a collection of ideas, mind-dependent, therefore there are no such thing as material substances. So, the same principle applied to the Secondary Qualities, should also be applied to the Primary ones, therefore, all experiences are subjective or psychological.

6. As a result of his critique of materialism, explain what Berkeley has to say about the ultimate source of all the sensory experiences we receive.

He believed that all the experiences we have regarding our senses, come from God that owns the concept of all objects. When we experience the sensation of something, we're experiencing an idea from God's mind.