

**Metaphysics**  
**Problem Set 3**  
September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2002.  
Due date: October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Please type and staple your answers.  
NB: Use your own words: no quotation, no paraphrase.

Choose any THREE of the following ten quotations from Berkeley's *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*. For each quotation, briefly explain in your own words what the main claim being made by Berkeley in the quotation is, and what reasons he has for making this claim. (This doesn't mean you need to trace his reasons back all the way to first principles!) Then consider one objection to the line of thought you have just described.

1. Sensible things therefore are nothing else but so many sensible qualities, or combinations of sensible qualities (63).
2. But for your farther satisfaction, take this along with you: that which at other times seems sweet, shall to a distempered palate appear bitter. And nothing can be plainer, than that divers persons perceive different tastes in the same food, since that which one man delights in, another abhors. And how could this be, if the taste was something really inherent in the food? (68)
3. It should follow then, that according to you, real sounds may possibly be *seen* or *felt*, but never *heard*. (79)
4. Philonous: How say you, Hylas, can you see a thing which is at the same time unseen? Hylas: No, that were a contradiction. P: Is it not as great a contradiction to talk of *conceiving* a thing which is *unconceived*? H: It is. (86)
5. For instance, when I hear a coach drive along the streets, immediately I perceive only the sound; but from the experience I have had that such a sound is connected with a coach, I am said to hear the coach. It is nevertheless evident, that in truth and strictness, nothing can be *heard* but *sound*: and the coach is not then properly perceived by sense, but suggested from experience. (90)
6. But how can that which is sensible be like that which is insensible? Can a real thing in itself *invisible* be like a *colour*; or a real thing which is not *audible*, be like a *sound*? In a word, can any thing be like a sensation or idea, but another sensation or idea? (92)
7. 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. (97)

8. But how can any idea or sensation exist in, or be produced by, any thing but a mind or spirit? This indeed is inconceivable; and to assert that which is inconceivable, is to talk nonsense: Is it not? (100)
9. Strictly speaking, Hylas, we do not see the same object the we feel; neither is the same object perceived by the microscope, which was by the naked eye. But in case every variation was thought sufficient to constitute a new kind or individual, the endless number or confusion of names would render language impracticable. Therefore to avoid this as well as other inconveniences which are obvious upon a little thought, men combine together several ideas, apprehended by divers senses, or by the same sense at different times, or in different circumstances, but observed however to have some connexion in Nature, either with respect to co-existence or succession; all which they refer to one name, and consider as one thing. (127)
10. All objects are eternally known by God, or which is the same thing, have an eternal existence in his mind: but when things before imperceptible to creatures, are by a decree of God, made perceptible to them; then are they said to begin a relative existence, with respect to created minds. Upon reading therefore the Mosaic account of the Creation, I understand that the several parts of the world became gradually perceivable to finite spirits, endowed with proper faculties; so that whoever such were present, they were in truth perceived by them. (133)