A History of Philosophy
45 Berkeley Replies to Objections
By Dr. Arthur Holmes of Wheaton College

Okay, turning back to George Berkeley, I would hope that after last time, the philosophical position that he develops comes into focus rather readily, along with his argument for it. You may have thought initially that the thing he was trying to establish was pretty implausible, but by the time you see how he does it, I think the plausibility rating improves almost 100%. That is to say, if he can support those three basic philosophical positions that are involved, then his denial of the existence of matter, substratum, independently of any mind, seems to be sustainable.

Insofar as the concept of matter is an abstract idea rather than an empirical notion, and as a nominalist, he maintains that we just don't have abstract ideas; the word matter has no reference, you see. So, when you're talking about the reality of matter, you have no idea what people are talking about. Locke himself had said matter is something I know not what, you see.

Now similarly with his mentalism, because if it is the case that all we know about material objects derives from our ideas of primary and secondary qualities, and if it is the case that we never have primary quality ideas independently of secondary qualities, or vice versa, and that both primary and secondary qualities are relative to all sorts of observation conditions, then it seems to follow that both primary and secondary quality are in the same condition, namely they're subjective, they're simply qualities of our ideas, and we've no evidence for any unchanging qualities, or if not unchanging qualities, at least objective qualities, in hearing in material substrata out there. So his conclusion there seems to be that, as far as the empirical evidence is concerned, all that we know is minds and their ideas, and our ideas of material objects are just that, ideas compounded out of primary and secondary qualities with no notion of matter. So mentalism, well, of course, if he stopped there, there would be an immediate objection.

How do you account for the ordered uniformity of nature, particularly in the Newtonian age, where nature was understood in such an ordered fashion, fixed laws, fixed forces, so forth, this perfect machine? How do you account for that? In addition to the question, how do you account for the ideas you have if they're not caused by external material things? Well, his line of thought here is, I think, very simple. His starting point is essentially that of Descartes. I think, and what I think is ideas, ideas are the objects of thought, what we think about.

I think, and I think ideas, but then he goes this way, among our ideas, we have to distinguish between active and passive ideas. If you like, voluntary and involuntary ideas. Because there are some ideas that I have that I choose to have.

My idea of a fairy giraffe with butterfly wings is a voluntary idea because I thought it up, and I put it together. On the other hand, there are other ideas that are involuntary, namely most of the sense impressions which come to us simply register uninvited on the consciousness. Involuntary ideas.

And while it's plain enough that I can be the cause of active ideas, voluntary ideas, it's not at all evident that I could be the cause of passive ideas, because oftentimes I get such ideas not only uninvited but unwanted. Ideas of pain, for instance. So there must be some other cause than my mind for these involuntary or passive ideas.

Now, ideas are mental things; they must have mental causes. So this other cause must be some other mind. Now, he doesn't entertain the idea of mental telepathy, particularly that you would be giving me all sorts of ideas.

No, the next step in his thinking, though, is to take note of the uniformities of nature. That is to say, the uniformities of our experience. The fact that there are predictabilities within the experience that we have made up of our ideas.

The fact that everybody in this room is hearing roughly the same things at this juncture. The fact that we live in a world of common-sense experience. Common order, common predictability, public evidence, so forth.

So there must be, as the cause of this sort of uniformity, there must be some greater mind, some supreme intelligence, some infinite spirit, God. So that God is the other mind that's needed in the case of passive ideas. God not only causes our passive ideas, but he also gives us an ordered world of experience with all of its predictabilities.

He is not only the creator of our finite minds, but he is also the one who informs our finite minds. So that our sensations are a kind of divine language. God's language to us by which we grasp the order of things to which we have to adjust, into which we have to fit.

And in this way, we participate in God's ideas. It's sort of an empiricist's equivalent of saying that the human logos participates in the divine logos. The human mind participates in the divine mind.

Inasmuch as our experience is the ordered world of ideas which God has and gives to us. So God then, it turns out, is the sufficient cause, not only the necessary cause, but the sufficient cause of not only all that is, but of all ideas that occur passively to minds that exist. So God then is, in that very real sense, creator of the world of nature.

Ex nihilo, as well as the creator of finite minds. Well, that's clear enough, I take it. And it's in the light of that that you hopefully have read that little poem that Kaufman, a poem, if it can be graced with that, that Kaufman inserts on 237, just before the selection begins.

Did you read that? There was a young man who said, God must think it exceedingly odd if he finds that this tree continues to be when there's no one around on the quad. There's the tree that falls in the forest when there's nobody around to hear it. Does it make a noise? There's the tree that's on the quad when there's nobody around to see it.

God must think it exceedingly odd if he finds that this tree continues to be when there's no one around on the quad. Dear sir, your astonishment's odd. I'm always in the quad.

And that's why the tree will continue to be, since observed by, yours faithfully, God. So it's not that the world pops in and out of existence. No.

It exists endlessly in God's mind from the moment he first thought it up. Okay. Now, doubtless, you've thought of all sorts of objections.

Kaufman gives us some. But let's pick yours up first. I was kind of curious.

What would you say about a person who is suffering from hallucinations? Is God basically playing with him? Or when you see optical illusions. Not optical illusions, but somebody who is actually hallucinating. Yeah.

Seeing things, the rest of it. Yeah, and you want to say, really, hallucinations are things we cause. But they're not voluntary.

Is that an exception to his way of distinguishing the voluntary and the involuntary? And I think he'd have to say yes. I don't know that he discusses it. I think he'd have to say yes.

There is some mental malfunction by virtue of which we, if you like, imagine ideas. Like a person who has an overly active imagination that is haunted by... You could say, like dreams. Unless he would explain dreams as all given by God, which he might.

Yeah. Yeah, I think most objections you come up with, you can always see immediately how he would respond. I just wondered, maybe to take that step further, how you can see that God is the sufficient and necessary cause of evil in the world? Yeah, he deals with the problem of evil at some length.

And unfortunately, Kaufman didn't include that material. But I think it's towards the end of this work on the principles of natural knowledge that he deals with it as follows. Incidentally, that's a very pertinent question.

Because I think one of the major problems for metaphysical idealism is the problem of evil. At least from a theistic standpoint. For the obvious reason that if there is no real materiality, no real physical forces, then all of the things that are part of the problem of evil, physical pain, cancers, tornadoes, and all the rest of it, including death, don't have the kind of explanation that has traditionally been given.

Namely, that they are caused by physical processes, which are part of the physical environment in which God is put. If we run afoul of its processes, we break our necks. Well, if you don't have physical causes to explain physical evils, you've got a problem.

And inasmuch as those things come to us as passive experiences, you have to say God causes them directly. So, idealism often has a problem with that. And so there are idealists who try to handle it by affirming a finite God.

That while he has all the power there is, it's not infinite power. That there is a limit to what is conceivable in terms of a world without evil. So that even God could not come up with that sort of an idea to share with us, granted what he was after in finite human beings.

Other idealists will argue that physical evils are illusory, where you get closer to the hallucination sort of thing. And somewhere in that ballgame, you'll find the attitudes of Christian Science. Which is an idealist metaphysic.

In fact, some years ago, I had a student who had come from a Christian Science background. And when we were talking about Berkeley, he said something like, you know, that's the way I was brought up, I think. Berkeley.

Now, how does Berkeley himself handle it? Well, his emphasis, of course, is going to be that the world of nature is, as Newton has depicted it, a world with a fixed order. That isn't arbitrarily interrupted by God. It's a fixed order.

This general order of nature. He maintains that this general order of nature is essential for the guidance of ordinary life. The environment has to be predictable.

It's essential if we're going to be able to understand nature's processes. And you could add, do science. Use nature's resources.

It must be orderly and predictable. In other words, it's essential for all human planning, all human purposes, all mental activities. And these advantages outweigh what he calls particular inconveniences.

So that he's using what historically was known as the greater good argument. Evils are permitted for a greater good. They are built into the orderedness of things for a greater good.

Now, the term particular inconveniences seems to underrate the problem. But he wants to say that problems of this sort, natural evils, are necessary in bringing out the contrast, accenting beauty, shading the picture so that we can really see what's good and pursue it. In other words, the fact that there is pleasure and pain involved in human experience serves as God's pedagogue, schoolmaster, in teaching us how he wants us to live, teaching us how to behave.

Which, of course, is one of the things that John Locke said in talking about ethics. That pleasure and pain provide a sort of reward and punishment, providing a kind of built-in discipline in learning what's right and wrong. So, in that sense, pain and fear are necessary to our well-being when seen in a larger perspective.

So this is a greater good kind of argument. Which, of course, is essentially the same as Christian theists have used throughout the centuries for natural evils. The greater good argument.

So that while you might say that this is particularly a problem for an idealist, all right, if an idealist can use a greater good argument, he's in no worse case than anybody else. Now, when it comes to human sin, he's very explicit. This is our active ideas, you see.

And the consequences of that on other people. Well, God orders their experience consistently with the effects of your intentions towards those other people. So, a combination of the free will argument and the greater good argument takes care of it.

You wouldn't say then that the natural evils would be a part of the natural process, even if sin had never occurred? Yeah, he seems to, yes. So is there for man mortal by nature? That wouldn't necessarily follow. It could be that the experience of death is something which God gave subsequent to the fall.

Now, I don't think he discusses that particular question. At least, I don't recall it. Oh, yes, yes.

But, you see, whatever you say about the question you raise is natural evil due to the fall. The fact is that any finite physical being is very contingent for existence and what

happens in the environment. Adam could have fallen out of a legitimate tree and broken his stupid neck.

You know? I'm not inclined to buy the notion that natural evil began with the fall. I think it's pretty obvious, unless the floor of the garden was sterile, that bugs were squashed every time people walked around in it. And if animal death is part of the problem of natural evil, then, you see.

All right, David, now think. How do you suppose, get some active ideas going, how do you suppose Berkeley would respond to the incarnation? I'll start with an easier one first. How do you suppose he would react to the question? Well, you mean that God didn't create the heavens and the earth? Well, what would Berkeley say? Well, I think that's why it's so hard to find an heir in Berkeley, because as much as it seems he does, he does very little.

All he does is he takes out the middle thing. In a sense, I mean, okay, God could either actually give us physical bodies and give us all this physical stuff and then place us in here, and then we'd have all these perceptions. Or he could just have us a spirit being and just automatically shove all these perceptions into our being.

I mean, who cares? Either way, it's going to turn out the same way. God did it, and it's on to us. Yeah, you see, God created the heavens and the earth.

Now, how would you translate that into Berkeley-ese, you see? It may be easier to say Berkeley-ese. How would you translate it? Well, it would be something like this: at a certain time, God brought into being finite minds and began giving them an ordered experience of the natural world. Well, all right, what would he say about the incarnation, the incarnation? Namely, that Christ appeared among us, God in the flesh.

Now, what is flesh? Flesh in Berkeley-ese, you see, is certain ideas, certain experiences passively received. You see? So that Christ was as fully human in that regard as anyone else. Born of a woman? Yes, as rarely as you are.

You see? Because he's not denying anything that is experienced. All that he's doing is making us think twice about the ultimate reality underlying what is experienced. I was going to ask then, but soon she said that we get passive ideas because God uses them.

Does that mean when Jesus received passive ideas as well? Yes. Yes, this would be part of his humanness in the incarnation. If he is fully human as well as fully divine, this is the way we've always understood the incarnation.

You see, in the history of the church. If he's fully human, he will experience things as we experience them. Yes.

So you don't have to adjust your thinking about Christ's earthly experience any more than you have to adjust your thinking about your experience. You still experience just the same thing as you do, and so did he. You see? Yes.

This isn't an objection. Okay. I can't quite work out in my mind how getting to know other people in their essence works.

If God's obviously not causing you into me, you have to in some way be causing you into me. Are you talking about a knowledge of other minds? Yeah. How do we affect each other? Okay.

Descartes, Locke, and Berkeley have a roughly similar view of how we know other persons. Okay. Now, go back to Descartes because there it's the obvious one.

What you have in Descartes is a combination of mind and body. Right? And so with the other person, you have a combination of mind and body. Now, in Descartes, what occurs is that physical change in the appearance or action of body two has a causal influence, produces changed physical states, brain states, and sensory stimuli in body one.

Which, because of mind-body interaction, produces mental states. Okay. So I have ideas about body two, which are analogous to my own experience of body one.

So by analogy, I come to think that mind two has mental states correlated with bodily states, analogous to the way in which my mental states are correlated with my bodily states. Okay. So it's an argument by analogy.

As M1 is to body one, so M2 is to body two. Now, I know this by immediate experience. I know this likewise.

I know this likewise. And so by analogy I can infer that. Okay.

Now, John Locke is the same. John Locke, as I've said, is not as definite about a mind substance or substance as Descartes was. But in any case, in terms of the empirical, it's the same.

Now, when Berkeley comes along, why should it be any different? You'll see. If I have experience of body two, thanks to God, and if God gives me experience of, quote, body two, and experience of body one, then, insofar as there are analogies, I can have some idea of what's going on in mind two. You see? Now, particularly since some of the bodily activities are sign-making or word-sounding, so that when I hear

you say, I'm puzzled by, you see, if I recognize those words as words that I use, then I know by analogy what's going on in your mind.

Not just language, but other bodily behaviors as well. Yeah, that's standard. Wherever you have this representational theory of knowledge, that's the way it's going to be.

After all, it is sort of a tough one at first glance. How do I get inside you and understand what's going on inside you? The thing that I have problems with in this particular way of putting it is that we, according to this, would only know what's going on in somebody else's mind if we're able to argue by analogy. You see? It seems to me that most of our recognition of what other people are thinking is not the result of an argument.

It's an immediate recognition. It is that the bodily appearance evokes recognition rather than providing a premise for an inference. You see? So I think it's more an analogical recognition rather than an analogical inference that's involved.

But even that is not enough for some in the more continental tradition coming out of the 19th century, that we'll begin to get at as we get into Hegel, you see, who wants to say that I don't even have self-awareness except in some sort of a dialectic with another self, my alter ego. You see? So that the master knows himself as master only in the face of the slave. And the slave knows himself as a slave only in the face of the master.

You see? And so for all kinds of human self-understanding. So that the initial experience, the basic basis in experience, is in that case not Descartes' I think. It's not the first person singular.

Which is prior to the experience of I. You see? Now that's the way it develops in the 19th century, and out of that comes Martin Buber's I-Thou. You see? I thou, he says, is the primitive basic word. Not I, not thou.

I thought. We. And what they're doing is breaking with the individualism of the 18th century that made us all atoms.

Social atoms. Brian, again. Just quickly.

I guess more so, where's the control aspect? I mean, I can understand how your mind can affect my mind. Yeah. But are you just one of those many ideas like trees and all this other stuff, you know, that God's pushing into me, or do I actually affect you too? No, I am a mind.

You're a real mind. I'm a real mind. My mind is not just an idea.

My mind is real. All that exists is minds and ideas. He's not saying all that exists is ideas.

Minds. So does God control... See, I'm trying to... Does God control your mind, my mind? Yeah, exactly. Does God control what you put into me, or do you decide what you put into me? No.

The answer is yes. That is to say, insofar as I voluntarily am trying to communicate something to you, I am voluntarily doing it. I do it.

But insofar as your hearing sounds, you see, is God's doing, God doesn't. You see, that's like that occasionalism we were talking about. My wanting to utter words is the occasion on which God causes you to hear.

Not just wanting to, but choosing to, acting to. Now, immaterial entity. Mind, soul, and Descartes are synonymous terms.

Mind, soul is an immaterial entity. Now, that's not true necessarily for the medievals or the ancients, because the word soul had a much wider use in the Greeks and the medievals for life. But what in the medievals and ancients was called rational soul, that's capable of independent existence, by Descartes got labelled simply mind.

And that's the way it's used in Locke. That's the way it's used in Berkeley. Not the way it's used in contemporary psychology, where it simply refers to consciousness.

Not a conscious thing, but consciousness. One question about sin. If all our ideas are inert and not active... No, not all of them are.

Is there a spirit or a will? Is that what makes the ideas that are active? You see, active ideas are ideas that I initiate. You see? Now, whether you say the I is mind, spirit, soul, will... Okay, I, that's I. I do it. Yeah.

Yeah. Mind, yeah, this emphasizes the conscious rational being. Spirit, it's an undefined word, really.

About all it means in this sort of context is something that isn't material. It has no positive meaning. Actually, for some that we met first semester, you remember, for that matter, for people like Hobbes, all it means is some rarefied, physical, gaseous being.

Soul, in the ancients, meant life. Here it's equivalent with rational soul, mind, that immaterial part. And will, of course, is one of the faculties of the mind.

Will, intellect, faculties of the mind. The will can cause sin. Well, will is simply acting voluntarily.

Yeah. So will is the active agent. So that if I were to do something to one of you, I'm really going to get my own back.

Christine here, I'm going to. I'm going to give her an F on the first examination. You see, if I do something malicious, malicious of that sort, well, that's an act of will is involved there.

It's not just entertaining the idea, but it's willing it. So they're all different variations of mind. They're just different ways of saying it.

No, not the same. Different emphases. Mind is the classic term in talking of the mind-body problem, Descartes' dualism, or whatever.

Spirit is a word that was introduced much more in the 19th century because it implies something more dynamic, used occasionally here for just an immaterial being. Soul, yeah, used in this period synonymously with mind. The emphasis is on immortality.

And will is a functional term. It's a faculty term, not an entity term. These three are entities, entity terms.

The immaterial part of you. Got it. Esther? Well, there are several lines of thought.

Number one, going back to nominalism, the word matter doesn't refer to anything. It has no empirical meaning. How can we say it exists if we don't know what it is? You see, why does he say it doesn't refer to anything? Well, matter is an abstraction.

There's redness, there's squareness, there's smoothness, there's roundness, there's noisiness. But what's the matter? What's it look like? Well, Locke would say that we abstract the idea of matter in general from all of these other physical things, physical experiences. What do you abstract? You know, if it's not red and it's not blue, if it's not square and it's not round, if it's not noisy and it's not quiet, it's not anything.

Well, sure, he's not claiming infinite knowledge, but I think that if you affirm matter, he would say you're claiming something you don't know. You're trespassing on unknown ground much more than a person who denies it. Come again? Oh, he thinks that it's possible to demonstrate the existence of God.

But you can't demonstrate the existence of matter. Remember the setup. You see, from Descartes on, this is the setup.

The mind, which we know directly, has ideas, ideas purportedly of matter in the material world, of other minds, and God. And according to Descartes, we have to prove all three of those exist. Well, you see, Descartes thought we could prove all three.

All that Berkeley is saying is no, we can't prove that. We can still prove the rest. Got it? Now, you wanted to know what his argument is? One, about abstract ideas.

Second, about primary and secondary qualities. Yes, ma'am. Which possibility? How would he respond to that? I think I'm trying to answer this in the context of his time.

I think he would say that the orderedness of nature, its abundant provision for human need, etc., etc., is plenty of evidence that the creator is wise, powerful, good. Yes, ma'am. Yes.

Yes, that's the standard line of argument there. What does the causal argument for the existence of God suggest about God? Now, keep in mind that the concept of God as good also has a history that goes back through the Middle Ages to Plato. God is the good.

What is the good? Well, the good in that sense is the ideal that all nature yearns for. Yes, ma'am. Yes.

And so I suppose you'd say that Berkeley might well be saying God is good if that, by definition, is what the term God entails. The whole concept of God is of the good. To speak of a malevolent God is not to speak of God.

You see, it's to speak of a non-God. The reason I ask that is that some of this kind of reminds me, and I don't know much about this because we haven't got there yet, I guess, but in intro class we talked about that brains in the back thing and how it's a possibility of that, and that's kind of what it sounds like. Yeah, except it's not brains in a vat, it's minds in a vacuum.

Yeah. Yeah, you just have difficulty getting out of your customary way of thinking. Okay.

I have a question about the concept of matter in itself. As I understand it today, I guess my concept is that things are made up of tiny particles with electrons and protons and a nucleus. So when I think of matter, I think it's denied that there's any change.

Good. It makes up a solid thing. Yeah.

Do we have a concept now that matter is something that's physically real, like little particles? Like when a little bit of water rinses in a glass of water, the grains of sand. Well, I think there's something in the grains of sand that are so small, but when they're all taken together, you get something. Yeah.

Sometimes the history of scientific thought through the 19th century into the 20th is captioned like this: the dematerialization of matter. The dematerialization of matter. And you can see the change that's gone on, because back in the 18th century, matter was composed of atoms, atoms are little pellets of matter, of indivisible stuff, you see.

Well, that changed as we began to talk about the structure of the atom, as we began to see that E equals MC squared, that matter is not an ultimate in that sense. The principle of the conservation of matter, that it cannot be created and cannot be destroyed, Newtonian physics, gave way to the principle of the conservation of energy, you see. So I think it's fair to say that contemporary physics does not have the concept of matter that they had in the 18th century, you see.

Having said that, a lot may hinge on how you handle the theory of sub-molecular particles, you see. Are they solid, indivisible pellets? Or are they spurts of energy that have pellet-like behaviors? So no, I think this, and this is another side of the thing that Berkel is doing, that I think is much more far-reaching than anything he's said. I think the question is whether the Newtonian conception of matter has any empirical basis, any scientific basis.

Now, we've been concentrating on what he says about matter, but in his reply to objections that you've been reading, you may notice he speaks not only about matter, but about force and space and time. Now, if all four of these key Newtonian concepts are without empirical basis, what happens to Newton's claim to be doing empirical science? Is there any empirical basis for Newtonian science? Berkeley says no. David Hume says no.

Immanuel Kant says no. Which means when post-Newtonian science began to develop, the ground was ready for it. Now, there's another, I was going to say quirk, but that's too near a quirk to use at this juncture.

There's another little titbit that comes into this, which is the question of whether matter itself is conceived of as being passive, inert, or having some power, some potentiality that's in process, whether it's active or passive. You see. And it seems pretty plain that in Berkeley, the emphasis is on passive.

Yeah. Very passive. In some of the continental thinkers, it became more active.

And, of course, in Leibniz, the activity is such that matter is not the basic force. But that conception of matter as passive, devoid of any potency that has the capacity to do something, is alien to earlier conceptions of matter in the Platonic Aristotelian tradition. Yes, sir.

Oh, you find it in Democritus, the Greek atomist. And Sarah Miles in History of Science was saying yesterday afternoon that by the time you get to Lucretius, who is the Roman equivalent of Democritus, in Lucretius, matter is active. Okay.

But for Plato and Aristotle and the medievals in that tradition, matter is potency. Now drop the Y off the end, and matter is potent. Yes, sir.

It has natural potentialities. There is inherent teleology in matter itself. An inherent talos.

So the loss of the teleological view of nature that came with the scientific revolution, introducing mechanistic science, has changed the conception of matter to something bare, passive, and a substratum. And Berkeley is seeing the problems in that. Okay.

Okay. Anything more about problems? Resurrection of the dead? Well, he addresses that. Yeah.

Easy enough. You know, if you saw someone resurrected from the dead, what would you see? Well, Berkeley says, yes, that's what God provides. What's the difference? If you were resurrected from the dead, what would you experience? Well, that's what God provides.

What's the difference? You see, so matter changes nothing empirically. In other words, what Berkeley is trying to do is to maintain a position that confines itself to what is supportable by empirical evidence. Remember Locke's evidentialism? That we should proportion our beliefs to the evidence.

And Berkeley is taking his advice. Proportioning belief to the evidence. Well, okay.

I hope you read carefully the reply to the objections that he has from 255 onwards. You've got about 20 pages of it. And if you want the reply to theological objections that he faces, go look up the full edition of his Principles of Natural Knowledge.

They're all there. Any theological problem you have, at least you have with his view, Berkeley responds. Okay.

Now, a few minutes. Let me make some introductory comments about David Hume so that you can get off to a running start in that regard. Now, of course, the three great British empiricists are Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.

And it might help to try to identify quickly what distinguishes them. Locke seems to be a metaphysical dualist. That is to say, mind and body both.

Though not as definite about that as Descartes. Berkeley is a mentalist. Not mind and body both, but only mind and its ideas.

Hume is a skeptic about all metaphysical knowledge. So he does not argue for any metaphysical position. He does not argue for mind-body dualism.

He does not argue for materialism. He does not argue for idealism. He maintains that we know no matters of fact.

That is to say, nothing about reality as it is. No matters of fact beyond present experience. In other words, if the model is that the mind has its ideas, its experience, which represent to us external things, you see.

Now, Hume, who says we know no matters of fact beyond experience, is going to say we know nothing about external things. And further, that we know nothing about the mind, which would be a reality beyond our experience. So all we know is experience.

He's skeptical about knowing that. He's skeptical about knowing that. Or he may have certain beliefs, but not knowledge.

So by virtue of the fact that all we know is experience, Hume also, as we indicated before, is a phenomenalist. That is to say, all we know is the phenomena, appearances, but not reality. Now, having said that and put it in this framework of the representational theory, you can anticipate what his argument is going to be.

Namely, it's going to be very, very much like Berkeley. Hume follows Berkeley's argument about our knowledge of matter and our knowledge of causal power. Yeah.

And he has an analogous argument about our knowledge of the mind and our knowledge of God. Namely, that the causal inferences that are involved are inadequate. They don't prove it.

Now that has further implications because the ethic which Locke developed, as you recall, was a kind of ethic which he thought was demonstrable from our knowledge of the nature of the human self. From human nature. Now if we don't have knowledge of human nature, what can we do with that? So John Locke's kind of natural law ethic is also ruled out by Hume.

And insofar as he still wants to be an empiricist, what is he going to turn to? Not empirically derived knowledge of human nature, metaphysically speaking, but only experience of our moral sentiments, moral feelings. So in ethics, he becomes what we call an ethical subjectivist. That is to say, the basis for our moral judgments is in our moral feelings.

Yeah. When I say something's unjust, I mean when I see the similarity between you and me and see the way you're being treated, I feel pain. Because I know it would hurt me.

And so I cry, unjust! What that means is, ouch, it hurts. Ethical subjectivist. Because in the development of a phenomenalism that makes no metaphysical judgments, you have no metaphysical basis for an ethic.

So ethics has got to find a new direction. And there are strains in Hobbes and Locke that are picked up. You notice how they both refer to pleasure and pain that have some role in our moral knowledge.

And so those empirical ingredients of moral experience are picked up and made, in effect, the total basis for an ethic in somebody like Hume. So think of this in reading Hume. The fact that he claims not to know, a skeptic is one who says, I don't know and I don't know how to find out.

He's not one who denies something, says we don't know. The fact that he doesn't know still allows him to believe certain things for other reasons. He believes in the existence of matter.

Berkeley didn't. He believes in the existence of matter. He doesn't believe that minds and souls exist, at least he doesn't see any reality to that, it seems.

And he's sort of ambivalent on God, depending on how you understand his writings, how you interpret them. But on what basis does one believe? Belief is the result not of logical process or empirical evidence but of psychological process. And he turns our attention to the psychology of belief instead of the logic of evidence.

So, as you read Hume in the first chapter, you'll find he says, be a philosopher, but amidst all your philosophy, be still a man, a woman. Well, he doesn't say woman, I add that. He says, " Be still, a man, woman.

In other words, there's something about human nature that doesn't let us go away without believing. Even though there's something about philosophy that reminds you they don't have logical proof. So he tries to balance these two.

Well, okay, we'll start talking more specifically about David on Monday.