



Epistemology and the Bounds of Human Comprehension

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Abstract. The paper examines the nature of knowledge and the boundaries of human comprehension in John Locke's theory of knowledge. Within the study of epistemology, the nature of knowledge and the issue of justification hold key roles. Locke rejects the rationalist assumption that the human intellect possesses a unique access to reality. The paper argues that the limits of the concept of human comprehension has sparked debate ever since the release of *the Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Locke strives to identify the boundaries of human comprehension and aims to pave the way for future advancements by presenting a theory of knowledge that aligns with the examination of human nature. The paper points out that the question of how we can understand the existence and characteristics of the external world is among the most ancient and challenging topics in philosophy. John Locke's definition of knowledge through concepts renders an understanding of the real world unachievable. Recognizing concepts does not appear to be the type of activity that can provide us with understanding of an object. Examining an object section by section cannot yield comprehensive understanding, however, if the human mind does not directly perceive the physical object, how can we assert that physical objects exist? we can merely assert that ideas are present.

Keywords: John Locke, Knowledge, Comprehension, Basic Concepts, Ideas

1. Introduction

Philosophers have deeply contemplated the essence, worth and purpose of knowledge. John Locke believed that human comprehension and concepts originate from experience. The first of these is sensation, which we derive from the tangible world. The second is reflection, which is gained through mental operations. John Locke's epistemological contributions are among

the most significant justifications for contemporary empiricism. He endeavors to identify the boundaries of human comprehension and aims to establish a foundation for upcoming advancements by offering a theory of knowledge that aligns with the examination of human nature. The boundaries of human comprehension, according to Locke, are defined by the constraints of perception and our cognitive abilities. However, in his book, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* Locke's main focus is on the fundamental issue of knowledge, that is the origin of insight and comprehension, he presents ideas as the purpose of comprehension when a person reflects, where thought is often employed to encompass all mental activities. He writes: Every individual is aware of himself, recognizing that he thinks, and the subjects his mind focuses on during this thought process are the concepts present in that moment. There is no doubt that men hold various concepts in their thoughts, such as are those conveyed through the terms, whiteness, hardness, sweetness, thinking, motion, man, elephant, army, drunkenness, and others. (1959:121).

For John Locke, thought and thinking are synonymous; he views ideas as the components of thought, as the elements that the mind, in a manner of speaking, processes. within thinking. The paper evaluates closely John Locke's concept of thoughts and their roots in experience and contemplation. This leads us to John Locke's assertion that individuals are born unaware of all things. Our examination of John Locke's theory of knowledge and the boundaries of human comprehension will connect the idea theory with his theory of understanding. The paper contends that his framework of ideas holds significant importance for our comprehension of the outside environment and the manner in which our minds interpret the world around and us. Our examination depicts him as a balanced skeptic, as he recognizes and accommodates the constraints of human perception, which paves the way for the impartial scientific

method. This subsequently offers extra philosophical instruments for Cartesian skeptical examination. This implies that the most effective approach to start seeking truth is within the boundaries of our sensory capacities.

2. The Nature of Epistemology

What can we know? How do we come to know? These inquiries are fundamentally important to philosophy. Epistemology is the technical terminology for the theory of knowledge. As a division of philosophy, it examines the origins, characteristics, and legitimacy of knowledge. The ensuing issues or inquiries that emerge in this area of Philosophy include: what are the origins of knowledge? This relates to how we obtain authentic understanding. How do we ascertain the essence of knowledge? Is our understanding reliable? Here, we seek to determine if we can differentiate between truth and falsehood. In fact, different philosophers at some point or another have offered responses to these inquiries. A person is an aware entity. This awareness is perpetually present within him, even if he is unaware of it. It is essential for us to seek the assurance of what we assert we understand. We are all aware of the questioning skepticism; uncertainties regarding our assertions of knowledge are inherent in our interactions with others. The skeptics reject the validity of our knowledge claims. If the skeptic's challenge is proven incorrect, our exploration of that challenge allows us to better define our conception of understanding and validation. The skeptics emphasize that it is feasible to be mistaken about the majority of things we typically assert to know regarding the world.

John Locke, an empiricist, holds the view that all the content of our understanding comes from sensory experience and self-reflection. He contends that we ought to present all opinions and convictions to the judgment of reason (Copleston, 1964:79). Locke maintains that ideas are the subject of human comprehension. For him, it is clear that the mind does understand things instantaneously, but solely through the influence of their concepts regarding them. Thus, our understanding is genuine only to the extent that there is alignment between concepts and the actual state of affairs (Locke, 1959:228). If Locke is correct, how can we possess knowledge of the outside world? Are we not confined within our own thoughts? What John Locke seeks to accomplish here is to understand the origin of ideas and thus to delineate the limits of human comprehension.

Locke's concept of knowledge is based on the dualistic distinction between the one who knows and

the thing known, between tangible items in the universe and perceptions and concepts in our consciousness. However, we are uncertain if those concepts accurately represent the world to us. The skeptics question our right to claim that we possess knowledge or justified belief, (Ajayi, 2016:16). Perception cannot be taken as a source of knowledge, as it is always feasible that our perceptual beliefs may be erroneous. The important inquiries then are: should we accept the skeptic's perspective on our cognitive situation? If not simply counter the questioning challenge. The skeptics insist that we understand our approaches to be suitable for the task without employing the method in discussion. Nevertheless, the Cartesian skeptic will not allow us to utilize perceptual convictions to defend the sufficiency of perception. It is crucial to note that the skeptical outcome appears unavoidable.

When we contemplate the essence of knowledge and the world we are striving to comprehend, we discover that it is more intricate and perplexing than we realize, for example when we observe an object, it seems to possess color, but what is color? If I wear blue lenses, everything around appears blue. In this case, color seems to be somewhat influenced by the state of our visual organs. (Ajayi, 2016:16). Epistemology examines the essence, circumstances, and worth of knowledge without pre-determining what the outcomes and implications will be (Steenberghet, 1949)). The power of reflection provides epistemological analysis using a device (Steenberghet, 1949:27). The essential inquiries are: what does this reflection actually entail? What significance does it hold? We can only uncover answers to these inquiries in epistemology, since for epistemology to exist, we must have the capacity to comprehend knowledge, even if we perceive knowledge as an obscure enigma or something of an internal and secret existence. Epistemology, as a field of philosophy, addresses questions like: how can we differentiate between what we have justification to believe and what we do not have justification to believe? How can we determine if we have a valid reason to trust one idea over another idea? All these inquiries pertain to us. We can label it as a Socratic inquiry. When we contemplate these questions, we have the ability to rectify and enhance our own knowledge context. (Ajayi, 2016:18). Our capacity to inquire about what we can understand and what we are warranted in believing indicates that we possess the ideas of knowledge and epistemic justification. The word justify, when related to a belief, is an epistemic concept appraisal e.g. to say that F is more warranted for B than A it is incorrect to assert that A is at minimum warranted for B as F. St. Augustine contends that there could be reasons to

doubt the trustworthiness of the senses; however, we are typically more justified in trusting them than in believing we cannot depend on them (Chisholm,1989:8).

If knowledge is justified belief, we occasionally recognize that we know, which implies that we sometimes understand that we are warranted in our beliefs. Russell in his expressions argues that the level of trust we assign to a statement can, at times, be considered a piece of information itself. (Russell, 1948:381). While we frequently possess knowledge, for instance, I am aware that we are located at Olabisi Onabanjo University; I have this understanding without needing to engage in any deep exploration of epistemology or theories of epistemic justification. A proposition is classified as evident when it has justification. (Ajayi, 2016:18). Additionally, there exist justified propositions that do not qualify as evident, for example, it might be clear to me that I will have a meal tomorrow and what I consumed yesterday and the day prior, I might have valid reasons to believe that I will eat tomorrow and the following day; this could be reinforced by induction, yet it is not clear to me or anyone else that I will eat tomorrow. That remains beyond a reasonable doubt; for me, there is nothing today that can demonstrate to me that I will eat tomorrow.

Perry believes that knowledge provides the light and direction for all aware actions. (Perry, 1968:6). When Socrates states that to "know thyself" goes beyond just being aware of our emotions, motivations, etc. The ultimate aim of understanding oneself is to embrace and dedicate oneself to a particular lifestyle; thus, knowledge of oneself cannot exist without recognizing one's connection to others. When I express that I understand my feelings, it indicates that I can only grasp others' emotions in a lesser and indirect manner, meaning we comprehend other people's psychological states by comparing them to our own. Strawson support this when he asserts that the fundamental requirement for attributing mental states to oneself is the readiness to attribute them to others (Strawson, 1959:99). Empiricism is a theory of knowledge that prompts us to gather sensory proof for our beliefs and warns us against speculating on the evidence provided by our experiences. This group is exemplified by John Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.

3. The Essence and Source of Concepts

The word ideas are from two Greek verb *'ideiv'*, meaning 'to see', 'to be aware' and closely derived from the noun signifying 'that which is observed' 'to create', 'mold', 'outline', (Hamilton and Cains,

1987:15). When used properly, the term 'idea' has taken on two definitions: (1) An understanding or depiction that is recognized, and (2) A framework or design by which something is created. In the realms of psychology and philosophy, it signifies the thought about, or deliberate mention of, something that is not currently present but possesses its unique qualities. For psychologists, an idea is viewed as a cognitive occurrence that a character of its own. For the philosopher an idea serves as a way to understand, and it is examined through the objects that it brings to our attention. When we refer to Plato's philosophy, we find that the concept carries a Platonic nuance. It is a significant element of Plato's philosophy.

Plato sought to provide a counterpoint to the philosophies of Heraclitus and Socrates. Heraclitus highlighted that the universe is constantly changing, while Socrates maintained that the philosopher's aim was to achieve unchanging and eternal truths. The term idea in Plato's examination carries two distinct interpretations: (a) what the mind comprehends and (b) the model according to which objects are formed. Conversely Plato also refers to ideas as (a) the model that things endeavor to replicate. Conversely Plato likewise refers to (a) the entities of intellect, as opposed to the entities of sensory experience. (b) realities that genuinely exist, in contrast to transformations, meaning the objects of perception that are in a condition of becoming (c) eternal in contrast with the transient realm of transformation. Aristotle, a student of Plato, strongly contested the concept of a world of forms. He deemed it as inconsistent; instead, he utilized the term form when referring to ideas.

John Locke in his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* stated that ideas is the object of thinking: Every individual is aware of his own existence, recognizing that he thinks and focusing his thoughts on various matters. While contemplating the concepts that exist. There is no doubt that individuals possess numerous thoughts in their minds, like those conveyed by the terms, whiteness, hardness, sweetness, thought, movement, man, elephant, army, intoxication, and others. (1959:121). Thought and thinking for John Locke, likewise, ideas serve as the substance of thought; they are the items with which the mind engages during the process of thinking. In other words, they are the essential components that a mind needs in order to think effectively. (Stroud, 1991:17). David Hume, another empiricist, refers to the object of the mind perception, he further divides into impressions and concepts. John Locke regards ideas as the components of thought that originate from experience. What John Locke refers to as ideas, Hume

refers to as perception, and according to Hume, every perception is classified as either an impression or an idea (Stroud, 1991:19). Hume believes that all perceptions of the human mind can be categorized into two separate types known as impressions and ideas, with those perceptions that come in with intensity and potency being termed impressions. By ideas, he signifies the dim representations of these in contemplation and logic. For example, consider all the sensations stimulated by the current discussion, anticipating solely those that originate from sight and touch and excluding the direct joy or discomfort it may cause (Hume, 1978:1).

For Locke our knowledge and comprehension will be unattainable without concepts, as every actuality originates in and depend on ideas. In Book II of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke divides ideas into straightforward and intricate. Straightforward concepts are further broken down divided into four categories based on their origins in experience (a) simple ideas from a single sense (b) simple idea from multiple senses (c) simple ideas derived from reflection (d) simple ideas resulting from both sensation and reflection (Locke, 1959:48). For Locke, no ideas exist that fall outside these categories. Complex concepts can be clarified through their basic components; no ideas are exclusively simple or complex. Although sensory perception involves the emergence of straightforward sensory ideas, perception through reflection is the occurrence of simple ideas of reflection. In John Locke's analysis of the operations of the mind on its ideas terms like 'recalling', 'observing', 'conceptualizing', 'synthesizing', represent concepts and not merely as labels for the processes by which our ideas are generated.

Locke believes that ideas in the mind cannot exist without being perceived. However, how do we account for those who assert they are oblivious to numerous straightforward reflective ideas present in their experiences? Locke contends in his examination of the well-known Molyneux dilemma that an individual who is born blind and later gains sight would not solely through vision be able to differentiate a cube from a sphere. "Suppose a man who was born without sight, now grown up, has learned through touch to differentiate between a cube and a sphere made of the same metal, and nightly of the same bigness, so as to tell, when he felt one and the other, which is the cube, which the sphere. Assume then the cube and sphere positioned on a table, and the blind man is granted sight: whether through his vision, prior to touching them, he could now differentiate and tell which the globe is, which the cube? To which the acute

and judicious proposer answers, "Not" (Locke, 1959:187). While he has the experience of a globe and a cube and the way they affect his touch, he is yet to grab the experience that what influences his tactile senses also impacts his vision. John Locke believes that it is essential to comprehend concepts such as "judgment", "gathering", "allows it to proceed", "structures", as they all represent the functioning of the mind, the modification of the appearances into their causes arise when we fail to pay attention to them. In many instances, it is due to an established routine; activities we encounter often are executed so routinely and swiftly that we interpret them as a direct reflection of our sensations, which are ideas that are formed so consistently and rapidly that we consider them as the perception of our sensations, which is an idea created by our judgment (Locke, 1959:189).

Locke contends that ideas are clear or distinct based on the mind's capability to perceive, remember, and distinguish the subtlest of which it possesses concepts. In Book II, chapter II, 22 of: *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, he contends that complex ideas fall into categories of modes, substances, or relations (Locke, 1959:215). Complex ideas arise from the mental processes that combine simple ideas derived from experience. Knowledge is attributed to the diverse methods in which intricate concepts of modes can be classified into two categories: (1) simple modes and (2) mixed modes. Simple modes consist of various combinations of the identical simple idea without any mixture e.g. a dozen of score, whereas mixed modes consist of the straightforward concept of various types combined to form a singular complex notion, for instance, beauty, figure, theft. Complex ideas of substances are amalgamations of simple ideas as they are utilized to depict distinct individual entities existing independently, such as the simple idea of a specific dull whitish hue, along with certain levels of weight, hardness, ductility, and fusibility we have the idea of lead. A combination of ideas of a certain sort of figure, with the powers of motion thought and reasoning, linked to substance, create the common conception of a person. The notions of substance can be individual or collective.

Locke contends that we recognize external objects through the perception of their representations: ideas, from which we deduce the existence and characteristics of these external objects by perceiving their ideas, the essence of which we understand directly and that there is no separation between external entities and concepts, and therefore when we observe ideas, we are observing external objects. however, in this context, Locke would require to off provide an account of what is remarkable about ideas

that allows us to be directly cognizant of what they denote whenever we encounter one. (Ajayi, 2016:31). If this responsibility can be fulfilled, then we can assert that we are cognizant of external entities. According to Locke, the concepts of yellow, white, heat, cold, soft, bitter, and sweet arise from sensation. The concepts of perceiving, contemplating, questioning, trusting, understanding, reasoning, and choosing arise from reflection. Occasionally, the ideas that we get directly from the experience of sensation and reflection merging together, we subsequently obtain intricate ones. For Locke, the mind possesses the ability to merge multiple simple concepts into a complex one; he views the mind as an agent, an operator working on ideas. This perspective sets him apart from Lodge, who perceives physical objects as embodiments of ideas.

We are unable to comprehend a meaningful object unless we are there to receive it, and we cannot envision it without incorporating the consideration of the observer. Many would agree that envisioning a form in its absence resembles observing it, and contemplating a melody in a silent space can sometimes be akin to listening to it. Locke dedicates the initial book of his *An Essay About Human Knowledge* to a critique of inherent concepts. He offers a compelling argument against innate ideas. Numerous academics, particularly in theology, philosophy, and psychology, have contended that such ideas exist. Runes define innate concepts as: concepts that emerge into awareness when specific conditions are fulfilled that are available to the mind as a inclination or predisposition to consider things in a specific manner. (2001:12). Locke is of the opinion that knowledge can refute any natural perceptions and that individuals can achieve the understanding they possess their inherent abilities without any foundational concepts or principles

4. The Boundaries of Human Comprehension: Concepts Arise from Experience

John Locke differs from those who label their confidence and faith in inherent understanding. Locke's essay demonstrates that knowledge, agreement, or any mental or verbal statements about concepts are only possible if the concepts themselves are present, leading to the conclusion that principles cannot be deemed inherent unless the concepts can be seen as such. It would be highly challenging for individuals who subscribe to innatism to formulate or accept statements where the terms lack significance. To John Locke innate propositions are not in harmony with true understanding and awareness, which is a

crucial element of concepts. Locke contends against the notion of innate knowledge (1) he claims that specific knowledge abilities and universal, we realized later when we understood the challenging nature of abstraction, yet since all the alleged inherent principles are universal, they are far from being initial, as they should be if they were indeed inherent. (2) the concepts derived from these principles are not found in the consciousness of every individual and to be universal they must adhere to the fact that there exists knowledge in a mind which contains the specifics that are initially evident to us; this indicates that such knowledge cannot be inherent. (3) we cannot comprehend the concept that knowledge resides in a mind that has never encountered it, as any idea that the mind has not previously encountered, for Locke, was never present in the mind.

Whenever an idea exists in the mind, it is either a current perception or one that was once perceived and is now recalled by memory. If tangible things turn out to be innate, Locke's thesis will be inconstitence because he contends that all knowledge is obtained from rational understanding, whether explicitly in the instance of external sensation or indirectly in the instance of internal contemplation. Considering Locke's submission on substance, it is not a separate positive concept and it does not originate from sensation or contemplation, it is a comparative notion, an assumption of he knows not what foundation (Locke, 1959:391). He ascribes the source of this idea to an internal drive to think that prevents us from supposing ideas can exist without a topic or foundation for them. This resembles Descartes' essence as an inherent cognitive that is inherently present in the thought process of the mind. Substance represents a unique concept; Descartes views substance as the notion of the thing itself, regarded without regard to its characteristics. A positive idea examined from the perspective of self-sufficiency as contrasted with the concept of its form, or hue, material comprehended in this manner cannot be simplified to any perceptions or visualizations of sensation.

Locke's argument is directed to the observable occurrence regarding the condition and development of knowledge within us, yet overlooks the nature of that knowledge. This contrasts with Descartes, who claims that the substance of our knowledge is such that it cannot be fully explained in solely empirical terms. It is essential to emphasize that there is no conflict between the inherent ideas of these two prominent philosophers; instead, their discussions ultimately pertain to concepts that possess a dual nature of existence: first unconsciously, whether they are recognized or not, and secondly, consciously when

they are. This suggests that 'existing in the mind' does not equate to 'being recognized' as John Locke argues (Ajayi, 2016:41). Additionally, there is a difference between unconscious knowledge that has not been learnt but is not being reflected on, and the other that is supposed to be possessed unconsciously but has never yet been learnt. The former can be brought to mind at will, while the latter cannot. This is in line with Plato in his argument when he says that the soul had acquired knowledge prior to birth but had lost it upon entering the world. Thus, learning now essentially becomes a form of recollection. This recollection differs from the usual interpretation; it resonates when we talk about the cognitive process of recalling matters we have previously understood in this existence.

The conflict between John Locke's empiricism and Descartes' rationalism is not primarily concerned with the source of thought but rather its essence. It is noteworthy to emphasize that the distinction between them lies not in the origin of knowledge from, empiricism or the inherent capabilities of the mind? but rather what is the essence of thought—is it, or is it not fundamentally different from sensation and imagination? Descartes asserts that: thoughts are fundamentally separate from sensations or images; hence, they cannot originate from them but must be intrinsic. In contrast, Locke argues that: no knowledge is inherent but instead stems from sensory experience. The two philosophers share a similar premise underlying their arguments based on sensory reasoning. Descartes contends that the distinction between thought and sensation implies that the former cannot originate from the latter, as he assumes the supplementary premise that if thought is derived from sensory experience, then it cannot be the case that it is solely based on the latter, because he takes for granted the additional premise that if thought is sense-derived it must ultimately be equivalent to sensation. Locke, conversely, argues that the acquisition of knowledge through sensory experience indicates that it must entirely consist of sensible knowledge, it is also due to the assumes that if all understanding comes from sensory experience, it must ultimately align with sensation. Thus, if knowledge reaches the mind via the senses, it should be knowledge that can be perceived or simplified to such knowledge. It is evident that while Locke embraces the former approach, Descartes opts for the latter.

The scope of our understanding revolves entirely around comparison, Locke claims that our understanding reaches only as far as our concepts allow, lacking ideas there would be no chance for connection and identity, which then hinders

comprehension. For him, knowledge is limited to the extent that we can observe their consensus or dissent; we can recognize the integration of the theory of ideas and the theory of knowledge as Locke's objective. Nevertheless, analysts have identified this integration as conflicting with one another. As O'Connor aptly notes: Book IV is widely regarded as the least effective and least significant section of the Essay. This is partly due to a severe inconsistency between Locke's account of understanding in the initial three volumes and the information provided in the concluding one. The discrepancy between the first three volumes of the Essay and the last is found in this: Books I, II, and III present an empiricist explanation of knowledge where the origins and confines of our understanding are confined to the data offered by sensation and reflection. Book IV provides a rationalist perspective on how these fundamental materials are integrated and connected within the mind (O'Connor, 1960:217), which then prevents comprehension. For him, knowledge cannot extend beyond what we can observe. Their Locke's explanation of knowledge in the initial three books does not align with the fourth book in the essay, due to his concept of ideas is intended to offer an empirical explanation of how knowledge is acquired. However, it does not succeed in this regard because his empirical approach to ideas does not adequately justify or clarify the primary types of knowledge discussed in Book IV. (Ajayi, 2016:43). Contrary to this view Russell is of the opinion that such discord symbolizes Locke's practical opposition to anxieties regarding paradox. Gibson perceives Locke's concepts of ideas and knowledge as a means to address the apprehensions surrounding innate principles without referencing the theory of ideas (Gibson, 1917:33). In accordance with O'Connor's depiction of the conflicting inclinations within Locke's theory of ideas and theory of knowledge, Jolley notes: It is frequently claimed that in Book 4 of the Essay, Locke resembles a rationalist the most.

There is more than a hint of truth in this assertion, that is, even though he believes that all our concepts are either derived from experience or formed from the information provided by experience, he does not assert that all our assertions of knowledge can be validated by experience. Furthermore, it is accurate that, similar to the rationalists, Locke works with a robust idea of knowledge such that its typical instances are a priori truths. (1999:169). The aim of Locke's historical straightforward approach is to keep the theory of knowledge aligned with the theory of ideas. When we look into the significance of reflection in Locke's compositionist view of relations, we notice that the initial relations he explores are those of cause and effect. In the Essay, he subsequently addressed

proportional, natural, institutional, and moral relations. *Book IV* of the essays opens with a declaration of the meaning of knowledge as the awareness of the connexion of an agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our concepts (Locke, 1959:167). He provided (1) identity or variety, (2) relation (3) co-existence or essential link (4) actual presence as the four categories of accord or discord that form knowledge.

While establishing this agreement or disagreement as the four types of knowledge he similarly differentiates knowledge of identity from knowledge of relation, and subsequently recognizes that identity and co-existence is essentially just relations, but they represent such unusual forms of accord, or divergence of our thoughts, that they merit careful consideration as separate heads, and not under relation in general, as they represent such distinct bases of affirmation and negation, which will become clear to anyone who simply contemplates what is expressed in various sections of this essay. (Locke, 1959:171). Whether Locke's concept of ideas was flawed or contingent upon the type of theory he intended to present. In this context, Locke is not focused on the principle that nothing should be included in our description of the world unless it has been or can be a matter of experience, but instead he aims to illustrate where the understanding gathers all its concepts, which is through experience where all our knowledge is rooted and from which it ultimately originates, and that sensation and reflection combined furnish our understandings with all the elements necessary for thought. This suggests that the understanding can engage with these elements.

5. Understanding the Consensus and Dissent among Concepts

In his examination of knowledge as the understanding of the concurrence and divergence of two concepts, Locke argues regarding the constraints of human understanding, both concerning the concepts recognized and the comprehension of those concepts. He differentiates between recognizing two ideas independently and understanding the relationship between them. In the scenario where a relation between two ideas is recognized, we can gain knowledge. Recognizing two ideas individually involves two separate perceptions. The act of relating two ideas involves comparison. Here we clarify the perception of agreement and disagreement regarding relationships. The understanding of agreement or disagreement represents a multifaceted concept. The reflective simple functions in the mind to generate complex ideas. Both the perception of agreement and

disagreement between two ideas comprise reflective simples attached to other ideas, whether simple or likewise complex.

Rationalism is the conviction that the intellect can acquire truth or knowledge independently of sensory experience. Prior to Locke, various scientists and philosophers asserted that there was certainly a boundary to human comprehension, for instance Chillingworth, yet Locke also seeks to pinpoint precisely what these boundaries are. To clarify the range of our knowledge, he revisits the source of our thinking, which fundamentally comprises ideas derived from experiences and memories that reside in the brain. From this reality, Locke deduces that understanding arises from experiences; we need to have experiences to gain knowledge. For Locke, our recognition of the alignment and divergence of ideas can produce three distinct levels of knowledge are recognized: intuitive, demonstrative, and sensitive knowledge. Intuitive knowledge consists of understanding two concepts without any intervening ideas influencing that perception.

Demonstrative occurs when we recognize two concepts through the lens of a third concept acting as a mediator for the perception. Any consensus or dissent not recognized in these three manners goes unnoticed and is unknown. Each of the two can be acknowledged independently, whereas any agreement or disagreement between them remains unrecognized. Judgment occurs when consensus and dissent are not recognized but are instead assumed. Level of likelihood and basis of assent and belief all belong to the realm of judgement instead of knowledge. What set apart knowledge from judgement lies either in the arrangement of the intricate concept created by the cognitive processes involved in recognizing and assuming alignment or discord, or in the configuration of the concepts observed and believed to align or not, or in both. The distinction between perceiving and presuming boils down to various configurations of reflective simples and their associations with other concepts.

The distinction between knowledge and judgment highlights the importance of basic concepts of reflection in Locke's explanation of knowledge. Evaluating two ideas results in either a recognition of their agreement or a recognition of their disagreement. Intuition acts as the source of utmost assurance. In his examination, Locke clarifies the unique significance of intuitive understanding of identity and diversity for our understanding, he simplifies the concept of identity to the theory of ideas, regarded as fundamental instances of thought, on which all other thoughts rely.

The awareness of the concordance or discordance of identity is based on the mind possessing clear ideas as Locke's puts: for starters, the instant recognition of the conformity or divergence of identity, rooted in the mind possessing separate concepts, provides us with as many self-evident statements as we have separate concepts (Locke, 1959:269). Locke additionally establishes another criterion for knowledge that presents a unique situation, as he differentiates between knowledge in itself and genuine knowledge. Knowledge in itself merely necessitates the awareness of a connection between ideas, whereas genuine knowledge requires, in addition, that the ideas align with the reality they are representing: our knowledge is thus considered genuine only to the extent that there is an additional alignment between our ideas and the actual state of affairs (Locke, 1959:28). Locke believes that true understanding can only be attained if our concepts are genuine concepts. No matter what concepts we possess, the consensus we discover they share with others will still constitute knowledge; however, in order to render it substantial regarding substances, the concepts must originate from the actual existence of objects. In knowledge itself, the mind understands an agreement through perception. (Locke, 1959:237).

Commentators have contended that Locke broadened the scope of knowledge beyond mere external reality, as sensitive knowledge cannot include both the awareness of a consensus between ideas, since Locke's characterization of knowledge is confined to the consensus among ideas. However, the reality is that sensitive knowledge is regarded as genuine knowledge. Locke addresses sensitive knowledge through the lens of necessary connections, indicating that it aligns with the broader view of knowable agreements understood a priori, which corresponds to the comprehension of knowable arguments as idea-containments, where these containments encompass truths about specific instances. In Locke's concept the notion of substance holds significance in Locke's philosophy comparable to that of an idea. Locke's idea of substance plays a crucial role in establishing the objective toward which the overarching theory of ideas and knowledge serves as a tool or a precursor, outlining the range and boundaries of human comprehension.

6. Conclusion

Locke disavows innate ideas and opposes rationalism, which refers to knowledge acquired through principles

that provide the mind insight without the need for experience. Furthermore, he dismisses moral and political principles that could not be said to arise out of sense experience. To him, we gathered understanding through the collection of sensations and the formation of concepts rooted in this experience, the mind at birth is a *tabula rasa* before impression from outside fell upon it: idea is the most significant word in Locke's essay. Idea in the essay signifies that specific object is directly recognized in the process of comprehension. Removing all concepts would render knowledge unattainable, as there would be nothing left for us to understand.

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