

Cordelia June Ellery

Prof. Jeffery Dueck

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John Locke is known to be the Father of Classical Liberalism. He was born in Wrington, England in 1632. His early adulthood was spent as a physician and intellectual assistant to the Earl of Shaftesbury. Locke's position in England was under threat and he took refuge in Holland. He continued to write, study and work in Holland. Locke asks the questions- What should I believe? What should I do? And How should we live together? The revocation of the Edict of Nantes is what brought Locke to publish his answers. He did so within one year. They became his most notable works. Essay of Human Understanding; A Letter of Toleration; Two Treatises of Government. These works are the foundation of the current political and religious freedoms we enjoy today. Locke believed that when we are born, humans are considered a *tabula rasa*, Latin for blank slate. We are nothing until we experience something. Human experience occurs through the senses. Locke breaks down reality into two components which are Primary vs. Secondary.

Unlike the Rationalist, John Locke believes there are no innate ideas because it's impossible to know what everyone knows. Locke states that children and idiots can't possibly know what we know and that our brains are set up to organize our experiences in specific ways. Which means that our brains can collect information, but unless someone teaches us what that information is or what to do with that information, we won't be able to organize it into a proper idea. He questions: Who are the people that decide which is wrong or right, better or worse, rich

or poor, sick or healthy? If those people claim to be the chosen ones that have the power to decide, they will appear to be claiming, what some may consider, to be “God”. Locke sees this way of thinking as an extreme danger to society. He claims that knowledge comes from adding primary and secondary realities. Once that happens then an experience is born. The combination of the two is the essence of human knowledge. Knowledge is dead (not active) unless it is connected with something. That connection is our sense(s).

Primary vs. Secondary Qualities of Reality. The primary quality of an object is what we perceive physically: extension, figure, motion, solidity, and number. The object exists in the physical world, external to us. However, objects also have secondary qualities. This is what we perceive through our senses: sight, sound, feel, taste, smell. Secondary qualities of an object can only exist in our minds. Meaning: The primary quality of an object will not change, as physical substances remain the same. What changes is how our mind perceives it, which is the secondary quality. So Locke is stating that reality is broken into two parts. With primary being facts vs. secondary being opinions. We can not create an opinion unless we have the facts set in place. He believes that the two parts must be combined to create a reality.

A television set, a power outlet and a power source, like a generator, are each external objects. They each have extension, figure, motion, solidity and number. When the three objects connect, something happens. How do we know what happens unless we experience it? Well, we will not know unless the external objects become connected to our senses. Once that happens, then a larger, more complex reaction occurs. That reaction is what we consider to be reality and knowledge. With the knowledge of the televisions existence, we can now determine if we are watching television or not. We can argue that it's impossible to know if something is standard or

a fact unless our minds perceive it as such. I personally believe that life is primary. Knowledge is secondary. Connecting the two is the essence of our reality.

In Genesis 3:11, God says, “How do you know you are naked? Have you eaten from the tree in which I said not too?” According to the Bible, Adam and Eve were created without sense(s). They have yet to reach a sense of knowing. They lived in a world of primary qualities. God told them that life was good. Without a secondary quality, how could Adam and Eve possibly come to a conclusion of what good means? Adam and Eve have now become the secondary qualities. They are the very objects in which we can compare “good” to. Eating from the tree has now facilitated a comparison. The story of Adam and Eve symbolizes our knowledge of the world.

My conclusion is that both Epistemology and Rationalism are synonymous. Both are saying the same thing but in very different ways. Decartes states, “I think, therefore I am”. Locke says that connecting our senses to the world around us creates an experience. From that experience we gain knowledge. I feel as though both are speaking about common sense. In Latin, *co* means joint or mutual. *Mon* means one. If common sense is what we perceive as a shared knowledge to all, then that is the epitome of an innate idea. Which is, we are born automatically trusting our senses. If not, then we end up with three separate, individual realities.” I”, “think”, and “am”. I see it to represent the mind, the body and the spirit. I can also see these three realities interpreted as faith, hope and love. I truly believe that all three must be combined in order to reach a universal understanding or truth and/or knowledge. I (Primary/External) + Think (Secondary/Internal) = Am (Third/Knowledge).

Resources

- “John Locke’s Primary and Secondary Qualities” Philosophy Vibe, *YouTube*
- “Locke’s Empiricism” James Hall, *YouTube*
- “John Locke. Theology, Ethics, & Politics” John Perry
- “Western Philosophy: An Anthology” John Cottingham, *2nd Edition*
- John Locke, *Wikipedia*
- Personal notes