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### John Locke Epistemology Paper

After learning about the various concepts of epistemology that each philosopher developed and argued for, I was more drawn to John Locke's argument for epistemology. According to John Locke's theory, humans are born with no innate knowledge. Ideas are the only things we see or experience. When I first discovered this concept, I was not sure if I completely agreed or disagreed with this claim, so I felt it was the most engaging because, while it may seem straightforward, we are able to learn about another great philosopher, Plato, who counter-argued against John Locke's concept of epistemology. Plato's argument was that we are born with knowledge, but it just needs to be recollected.

John Locke was an English philosopher, and did not believe in innate knowledge. According to Locke we are initially born in a Tabula Rosa, which is like a blank slate, so we develop knowledge throughout our experiences. As we grow older, we have more experiences that expand our understanding of life. According to Locke, knowledge is gained by experiences, which include feelings and ideas. Our five senses are some of the factors that influence our experiences, while ideas and emotions are representations of the reflections we gain from these experiences. When I was reading the Western Philosophy textbook, edited by John Cottingham. I

was hooked with a quote that states “ Here and elsewhere Locke does not deny that human beings have innate capacities, but he argues that a capacity to come to know X is not at all the same as innate knowledge of X . If it were, then one would have to say, absurdly, that we have innate knowledge of everything we learn in life.” (Cottingham 26). According to my best understanding of this quote, we can learn that the essence of Locke's epistemology is a significant distinction between knowledge and a reasonable opinion or belief. In my best understanding of this quote, I was able to recognize that through this quote we can learn that the essence of Locke's epistemology is a great difference between knowledge and a reasonable opinion or belief.

In addition, we were able to study Plato throughout the textbook, and I immediately realized that Plato's view of epistemology contradicted John Locke's argument on epistemology, because Plato, on the other hand, believes that knowledge is recollected rather than acquired. He thinks that information is contained within each human and that the individual only has to be guided in order to retrieve that knowledge. I believed it was important to bring up Plato's theory of knowledge since it is one of the few epistemological counterarguments that directly challenges John Locke's argument. While reading the Western Philosophy textbook, I came across a quote in the Plato section that especially struck me. It states, “ We have within us ‘true thoughts which only need to be awakened into knowledge by putting questions’ “ (Cottingham 3) After reading this quote, I was able to better understand Plato's argument that we are all born with instilled knowledge, but we still need to be led through questions or education in order to successfully uncover that "knowledge”.

It is difficult to argue against both epistemological theories, because while John Locke's argument makes sense, it can also be countered that we are indeed born with some sense of knowledge. For example, when a newborn is born, their first natural instinct is to breathe and fill their lungs with oxygen in order to survive, and I may argue that we are born with this knowledge of knowing when to breathe rather than learning it through experience. However, we can argue against Plato's idea of epistemology because, while we are born with some sense of knowledge, as mentioned in the newborn example, it is also possible to argue that most information is not already ingrained in us and that we must experience it to gain that knowledge, such as learning how to ride a bike.

To conclude, I feel that John Locke has the most credible and clear argument on knowledge, but I would still somewhat agree with all of the other philosophers and their arguments on knowledge theory. The major reason I wrote about John Locke and Plato's epistemological conceptions is that they directly contradict each other, therefore it was incredibly intriguing to go further into two separate propositions and compare and contrast them thoroughly.