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Descartes's Philosophy of Knowledge

Rene Descartes was influenced by Plato's search for eternal objects of knowledge and Aristotle's idea of true knowledge that cannot be replaced by no others. He then attempts to write his own. His entire worldview is based on a systematic process of doubt, and he uses the Archimedian misbelief to support the idea that no matter how many times he is duped, there is one uncontrollable reality. To relieve his misgivings, Descartes keeps his vague beliefs to himself. He admits that unless he comes up with his own precise solutions he will keep accepting the incorrect information of others as fact. Descartes is a very deep thinker that wishes to solve his uncertainties so he may be free from his doubts about his imagination. In his theory, we will see his principles and his beliefs.

Descartes had planned to write his own theory about knowledge after his false beliefs in other philosophers' opinions while growing up. He waited for a long time because he doubted himself. According to Descartes he, "... records his determination to sweep away all previously accepted opinions, and start afresh." His theory shows that as human beings we can only achieve this knowledge by our innate ideas and thoughts which then gain information. However, Descartes has a few doubts that he would like to share before he gives his final insight into knowledge. His first doubt is, "...as ' I am now sitting by the fire' is doubted, on the grounds that I might be dreaming..." Descartes acknowledges the fact that he is sitting by the fire; however, his mind wanders through uncertainty. He is really concerned about the things he sees

and whether they are real or not. Another doubt that Descartes also talks about is, "... the abstract propositions of mathematics, which seems to be immune from the previous doubts since their truth does not depend on whether their objects actually exist..." In his doubtless mind, he believes that mathematics can also be unreal as well and he would like to discover the truth about Mathematics and its existence.

Descartes also doubts the fact that whatever he may see from the external point of view is also occurring in his mind and it is hard to tell if it really exists or not. His first philosophy was, "I am, I exist, is certain, every time it is conceived in the mind." Based on his theory I can see where he is trying to solve his uncertainties. I agree with the fact that we exist because our minds or brains are functioning and thinking about our own existence. Even though Descartes gains knowledge from his senses, he does not quite trust them. According to Descartes, "Whatever I have up till now accepted as most true I have acquired either from the senses or through the senses. From time to time I have found that the senses deceive, and it is prudent never to trust completely those who have deceived us even once." He expounds on this belief that you should not trust those that deceive you even your senses therefore he leaves us with the question; do we or the things around us exist?

Another Philosopher of knowledge goes by the name of John Locke, decided to go against Descartes's belief in innate Ideas. Locke Describes Descartes idea about knowledge to be, "...the basis for a (controversial) proof that an infinite and perfect being, God, must really exist." Based on Locke's description of Descartes's mind I also believe that Descartes contradicts his own ideas of knowledge and how it is obtained. He is a very deep thinker who cannot necessarily gain a final truth about innate knowledge. Locke also spoke about one similar example that Descartes mentioned in his text which is, "Propositions of Mathematics."

According to Locke, “ With regards to the abstract principles of logic and mathematics (often thought to be prime candidates for innately implanted principles).” Locke continues to further his solid theory of knowledge by saying not many people stop and think about the fact that mathematics can exist as well as it may not exist. Last but not least Locke created his own account of how people gain knowledge. He states, “... the senses first ‘let in particular ideas,’ and furnish the yet empty cabinet.”

After reading Descartes' theories of knowledge I realize that he believes in innate ideas almost as if he is hallucinating in a way to promote more uncertainties in his mind. Descartes is a brilliant philosopher who thinks deeper than a normal person; however, as he continues to find truth in his philosophy he continues to believe the “ falsehood theories” of other philosophers. On the other hand, Locke had a more certain theory which also struck down Descartes' beliefs. Locke has a more solid theory that would almost persuade me to believe it. At the end of this debatable situation about knowledge, I can say I believe knowledge is something we all gain over a period of time from birth. This knowledge comes from our senses, our experiences, and the things we learn from the people around us. I believe all of us exist in a unique way, created by God and we will never stop learning.

In conclusion, Descartes lacks confidence in his own theory since he has so many unsolved problems. Descartes' innate theories are refuted by Locke, who also made a compelling case for how humans acquire knowledge. If I had to compare the two philosophers, I would say that Locke is a more straightforward thinker who clings to his convictions and rejects all alternatives, whereas Descartes is an extremely profound thinker who is still unsure of his beliefs. We can go on forever about how human beings gain knowledge but it is definitely based on a personal perspective or opinion rather; as philosophy is ultimately an opinion based on

one's beliefs, no one can be right or wrong in the situation. Possessing a philosophy is free, and both philosophers make valid arguments for their positions.