

Answer the following questions :

1. Discuss Locke's refutation of Innate Ideas.

Ans: Locke was not refuting any particular author in his polemic against the doctrine of innate ideas. He refuted a doctrine of a innate ideas only to make his own position clear by contrast. By innate ideas Locke understood the ideas which the mind finds in itself. They were supposed to be directly imprinted on the mind by God. The doctrine of innate ideas tended to make an appeal to authority instead of making an appeal to reason. In his refutation of innate ideas Locke relied on the assumption that true knowledge is found by the active employment of human faculties in the consideration of things. Locke says the laws of contradiction and identity and the like are supposed to be innate but no such ideas are found in the mind of idiots and children. It might be held that the idea of God must be innate. But idea is just as relative, various and conflicting as others. Thus, Locke concludes that no ideas are innate as none are universal. But again from the universality of any idea we cannot prove its innateness. Ideas may be universal without being innate.

(a) (According to Locke, the supporters of the theory) (of innate ideas) (make

an appeal to authority) (instead of making an appeal to reason.) (Hence, the doctrine of innate ideas) (according to Locke, poses a hindrance) (in the path of free enquiry.)

(b) Locke says that the supporters of the innate ideas have not given a list of innate ideas.) (It is only said that universality is the mark of innateness.) (Locke says that the universality of the innate ideas cannot be proved) (and secondly, universality can be explained in other ways also besides innateness.)

(c) (According to Locke, no principles are found to be present in the mind of man from birth.) (The law of contradiction and identity and the like are supposed to be innate) (but no such ideas are found in the mind of the insane, Idiots and children.) (Instead of being present from the very beginning, they are the last fruit of knowledge.)

(d) (Extending criticism of innate ideas to the field of morality and religion. Locke further says that there is no single moral principle which is universally admitted by all nations.) (Examples are plenty showing that while a particular moral act is regarded as an esteemed duty in a particular society, it is recognised as a sin in other human society. Even the idea of God is no more universal than other ideas.)

like other moral ideas, this idea is also relative, various and conflicting. Furthermore there are certain tribes without the idea of God.

(e) According to Locke, no ideas are universal and as such none are innate. Again from the universality of any idea we cannot prove its innateness. Ideas may be universal without being innate. For example; everybody has the idea of Sun, Fire and Heat and yet nobody regards them to be innate.

Locke believes in the universality of knowledge develops through the clear ideas acquired by experience. Finally he says that knowledge about the world around us can be obtained through empirical observations and not by any mental, introspective analysis.

2. Discuss Critical or Scientific Realism or Representationalism as advocated by John Locke.

Ans: John Locke, Father of Modern Empiricism is the advocate of Scientific or Critical Realism. For him all objects are real but all its qualities are not real. His theory is based on reflection on naïve realism. For him mind never perceive anything directly. It perceives only through ideas. Ideas represents the images of external things. Ideas and Representations are copies of the

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qualities of the object which are external to the mind. We can perceive these ideas and not the real thing. Thus, we know the external things through the representation of these ideas. Our knowledge is true in so far as our ideas corresponds to its objects. This epistemological theory of Locke is known as Representational or Copy Theory. Thus, for Locke we know the external object, the ideas and these ideas are the objects. Locke made an important distinction between primary and secondary qualities. Primary qualities are objective qualities which belong to the external things and are indirect, independent of the mind. Primary qualities are real qualities. They are unchangeable, permanent qualities. Qualities like extension, motion, shape, size etc are primary qualities. On the other hand, Secondary qualities are subjective qualities dependent on the knowing mind. They do not belong to the external things. They exist only in the consciousness of the object and sensations and ideas. Such variable and temporary qualities like colour, taste, smell, sound, temperature etc are secondary qualities. Thus, for Locke ideas of the qualities are the only source of our knowledge. However, for Locke there must be a substance as the support or substratum of the qualities. This substance is unknown and unknowable. For Locke, (there are 3 types of substances: Matter, Mind and God.)

Locke's theory though consistent of with the Scientific thought of his time suffers from the following drawbacks:

(i) For Locke our knowledge is true so far as it corresponds to its objects. At the same time he says that the objects are external to the mind and cannot be known directly. (If this is so how can we compare our ideas to the objects, because, whenever we try to do this we have ideas and ideas alone.)

(ii) Representationalism is the doctrine of Epistemological Dualism because it believes in two worlds (the world of mind) (with ideas) (and the world of external substances possessing qualities.)

(iii) Locke's theory is half realism and half idealism. (Realism in respect of primary qualities and idealism in respect of secondary qualities.) Berkeley observed these difficulties in Locke's theory and drew a logical consequence of Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities and developed his theory of Idealism.

3. Explain Subjective Idealism according to Berkeley.

Ans: Berkeley is the founder of Idealism in Modern Western Philosophy. His Idealism arises as a logical consequence of the Unpsychological distinction of qualities into primary and Secondary made by Locke. According to Locke, Substance is a hypothetical Seat of qualities some of which are primary in the sense that they exist in things and are independent our condition of them and other Secondary in the sense that they are not in things but in our mind which make and unmake them. Berkeley here pointed out that if Secondary Qualities are what they are by means of perception or idea, the primary qualities are no less depending on the same perception which determines them. A quality whether primary or Secondary to be regarded as such must be cognised as such, so that things which are composed of qualities both primary and Secondary must be regarded as such only when they are perceived as such. In other words the existence of things must be determined by the idea "Esse - Est - Percipii" it means that to be or to exist is to be perceived or known. Formulated in the above term, Berkeley's Idealism may be termed as Subjective Idealism because the world of things as clusters of qualities are ideas and hence the existence of things consist in the idea of mind. Now, if theory is right as things cannot exist unless it is perceived or known, then the continued existence

of one Subject is denied by his theory. But Berkeley repudiates this objection. His answer to the objection is that all the objects of the world which are really ideas, endure continuously in the mind of God whether we perceive them or not.

Berkeley's Subjective Idealism has been criticised by different schools of realists of the present day by saying that being does not consist in its being perceived as Berkeley supposed.

Subjective Idealism reduces the world to the mental states of an individual mind and this is Solipsism. But Solipsism makes social life and inter subjective interaction impossible and cannot account for a compound world of objects for all of us.

30/10/22

4. Was Hume a Sceptic?

Ans: Hume analysed the furniture of the mind in terms of fleeting impressions. Taking impression as his touchstone he called in question the validity of the concepts of substance, causality etc; which make up knowledge proper. He after a careful analysis of the main categories of thought came to the conclusion that there is no substance, neither matter nor self.

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- (2) Hume of his

It may be held that Hume could not be regarded as a sceptic for he allowed the possibility of mathematical knowledge. Hume rejected the demonstrations of geometry because they are based on the absurd principle of infinite divisibility of extension. The doubting of everything leads also to the doubt of that theory which doubts everything, i.e.; Scepticism itself becomes doubtful. Hume himself was aware of this and points out, "Whoever has taken the pains to refute the cavils of this total Scepticism, has really, disputed without an antagonist."

Hume was moderate in his Scepticism for he maintained that reason apart from imagination cannot solve our doubts but then there could be, he hoped and partly advanced, a system of thought based on our natural propensities. Hume had a constructive empirical philosophy but due to the following reasons he has been interpreted as a sceptic.

- (i) First, Hume makes a full display of the Sceptical arguments. Thus critical and negative element is so widespread throughout the discussion that one gets the impression that he is merely negative and destructive.
- (ii) Hume makes Scepticism the background of his own philosophy. It provides him

with a convenient weapon of attack against rationalism and dogmatism.

- (iii) From the rationalistic point of view (which prevailed for a long time in the universities) his philosophy is really sceptical for he maintains that reason is not capable of making our knowledge intelligible. He gives us almost a counsel of despair, "Carelessness and inattention" alone can afford us any remedy. He maintains that reason is really sensitive and no rationalist can ever accept this thesis.

- (iv) Lastly, his own constructive philosophy is weak and powerless to deal adequately with the doubts which he himself had raised.

The impressions must be admitted even by the Sceptics and so Hume regards them to be the basic touchstone of knowledge. The law of association explains the mental world, according to him, as the law of gravitation explains the phenomena of the physical world.

Thus Hume's Philosophy is sceptical with regard to dogmatism and rationalism but not so in relation to Scepticism itself. Of course, the reply which he supplied to

Scepticism then remains

Sceptical doubts were unsatisfactory but then it shows that he could not remain in Scepticism.

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