

## Locke Attacks Innate Ideas:

### 1. What are Innate Ideas?

(a.) truths which all mankind agree are imprinted upon the soul at birth

Example: What is, is. It is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be”

(b.) Locke: But not everyone knows these truths - children and fools

Reply: Well, the truths are there, it's just that some people are incapable of understanding these truths. Some people are ignorant of these truths.

Locke's Reply: (i) If they are ignorant of the truth, then how can we say it is imprinted on the mind? (ii) what is stopping us from saying the same thing of all truths? That we are ignorant of them until they are discovered. So all truths are innate.

(c.) Reply: Well, men only know of innate truths when they develop reason.

Locke: Reason is nothing else but the faculty of deducing unknown truths from principles or propositions that are already known. So if we need reason to discover it, it isn't innate (unless all truths are just innate).

(d.) Reply: As soon as reason is developed, some truths become known innately, it is like flipping on a light switch:

Locke: But there are people who use the faculty of reason (like children and fools) but do not understand innate truths like “What is, is”. These type of truths may develop by using reason, but that doesn't mean they are innate.

Locke: Even if this were true, that these truths were known as soon as reason developed. It wouldn't make them innate. Pg 15 Section 14.

(e.) pg 16 bottom of section 17 - Reply: when certain ideas are presented to people, they immediately know they are innate.

Locke: This doesn't work either. It just leads us back to (b.)

### 2. Ideas are just acquired by abstracting from the senses. Ideas pre-date being able to *use* reason.

(a.) Locke: People have ideas of things before they can signify words for these things.

Locke: People can have contradicting ideas of two things long before they have the use of words.

(b.) Locke: ALL IDEAS COME FROM SENSATION AND REFLECTION

Locke: Knowledge comes from experience. Knowledge is derivative of sense experience.

(c.) Sensation - operation of our senses: Roughly, all the ideas which are taken in by the 5 senses.

(i). Yellow, white, heat, cold, soft, hard, bitter, sweet

(ii.) objects of sensation: external material things

(d.) Reflection - Operation of our mind

(i.) perception (again we see that perception occurs in the mind)

(ii.) thinking, doubting, believing, reasoning, knowing, willing.

(iii.) objects of reflection: operations of our mind

(e.) page 18 bottom of sec 5

(f) section 8 - ideas can float in the mind for quite some time before we reflect upon them. We may go our entire lives without understanding certain ideas.

(g) perception of ideas is to the soul as motion is to the body

3. Personhood

(a.) Claim - a person is always thinking

Locke Reply: This isn't the case. Sometimes I'm not thinking. (i.) especially when I am asleep I am not thinking.

(b.) Locke: If I am thinking while sleeping but not aware of it, then the sleep thinker and awake thinker are two different people.

(c.) Locke: Conscious memory is what allows me to consist as a single person. Not matter or substance or soul particles.