Lauren Janson

Dr. Janae Sholtz

PHI 105/C/04H

1 December 2022

The Epistemological Debate of The Origin of Knowledge

Where does knowledge come from? This question has been of long debate in Western philosophy, dating as far back as the ancient Greeks, with this area of inquiry eventually becoming known as epistemology.[1] Since then, many philosophers have tried to pose solutions to this question, yet all have come to varying conclusions given their different approaches. Some of the most prominent figures in this subject area have been John Locke, Rene Descartes, and Immanuel Kant. Locke is considered the father of modern empiricism (Sproul 94). Empiricism is a branch of epistemology that argues all human knowledge is derived from sensory experience (Hossain 225). Locke's argument is built on the idea of tabula rasa, meaning the mind at birth is a blank slate on which experience writes itself. Therefore, Locke believes that all knowledge is a posteriori, knowledge comes after experience. He claims that knowledge begins with simple ideas which can come from sensation or reflection, and this knowledge comes in varying degrees: intuitive, demonstrative, or sensitive. Rene Descartes is the father of modern rationalism. Rationalism is the epistemological view that regards reason as the primary source of knowledge. Descartes uses the phrase "I think, therefore I am" to express the direct, immediate, certain knowledge of one's own existence. He believes in clear and distinct innate ideas, and he rejects the reliance on sense perception to guarantee existence. Descartes argues that intuition

[1] Epistemology is the theory of knowledge. It is the branch of philosophy concerning the origin, nature, scope, and limits of knowledge.

and deduction are the means to attain knowledge. Kant is recognized as a revolutionary philosopher for his synthesis of empiricism and rationalism. He uses the transcendental method in his philosophy to convey that knowledge goes beyond the consideration of sensory evidence and requires an understanding of the mind's innate modes of cognition. Kant agrees with empiricists that all knowledge begins with experience, but he asserts that not all knowledge arises out of experience. He believes there is a priori knowledge, or knowledge that comes before experience, deduced from logic. Kant claims knowledge is limited to empirical evidence, which he explains by distinguishing the phenomenal and noumenal worlds (Sproul 85, 94-99, 120). This paper will explore each of these philosophers—Locke, Descartes, and Kant—to provide a clear picture of the way that the problem has been addressed throughout history, as well as to provide clarification as to how Kant resolves the debate between empiricism and rationalism and transforms the epistemological issue altogether.

To form a conclusion about the origin of knowledge, one must first consider the meaning of knowledge from the different philosophical views of epistemology. Beginning with the empirical definition, in Book IV of Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* he writes, "Knowledge then seems to me to be nothing but the perception of the connexion of and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our ideas" (167). Locke claims that knowledge can only exist if one can perceive the agreement or disagreement between two ideas. He uses the example of color, presenting that one is aware something white is not black because he can recognize the difference or disagreement between the ideas of color. Locke furthers his argument by identifying four sorts of agreement or disagreement: identity or diversity, relation, co-existence or necessary connexion, and real existence. Identity or diversity in ideas are perceived at first sight and are always found about the names and not the ideas themselves. It perceives each idea to agree with itself and to be what it is, and it recognizes all distinct ideas to

disagree and that one is not another; this is done through the acts of perception and distinction. The second sort of agreement or disagreement is the perception of the relation between two ideas. Locke asserts that because all distinct ideas are known to be different, positive knowledge, which is affirmed through empirical evidence and thus proven to be true and genuine knowledge, cannot exist. Co-existence or necessary connexion involves the perception of ideas in the same subject which belongs to a particular substance. One can perceive the fixed qualities of an object and construct a complex idea of such based on its identifiable characteristics. The fourth sort is that of real existence agreeing to any idea. This sort can only be accepted if the other three sorts of agreement or disagreement of ideas are perceived. Locke explores the definition of knowledge in more depth by addressing two ways in which the mind possesses truth: through actual and habitual knowledge. Actual knowledge occurs when one perceives the agreement or disagreement of ideas at present. Habitual knowledge is having once perceived the agreement or disagreement of ideas in the past and then storing it in the memory to be called upon when needed (Locke 167-176). From this knowledge, Locke identifies three varying degrees which will be explored later in this paper.

Descartes defines knowledge using a rationalist approach in his *Meditations on First Philosophy.* To understand the meaning of knowledge, which holds something to be true, he first thought it important to examine what it means to be in error. Descartes concludes that to be in error means to have doubt in one's judgment. This sounds a bit unreasonable, but Descartes' thinking suggests that doubt is the only path to uncovering certainty. He does not mean to doubt everything one comes across, but rather to question the extent of its validity. Descartes argues that such doubting is justified by the deception of the senses, being awake and dreaming, and one's inability to properly reason (Descartes and Heffernan 89-93). Now one must ask, is there anything man cannot doubt? Descartes affirms that to doubt means to think. Thinking cannot

occur without something performing the act of thinking; therefore, Descartes concludes that he must be a thinking thing whereby he says, “I am, I exist” (Descartes and Heffernan 101). This justification asserts a true belief, which is how Descartes defines knowledge in his Fourth Meditation:

> For whenever I so contain the will in the judgments to be rendered that it were to extend itself only to the things that are clearly and distinctly exhibited to it by the intellect, it cannot happen at all that I would err, because every clear and distinct perception is without doubt something, and therefore it cannot be from nothing. (Descartes and Heffernan 167)

Descartes asserts that knowledge is genuine in that it is the perception of clear and distinct ideas. These specific ideas are innate and true, and thus, function as an indubitable principle for knowledge (Sproul 86).

Combining ideas from Locke's and Descartes's approaches, Kant provides his own unique definition of knowledge. In Andrea Kern’s and Daniel Symth’s article “Spontaneity and Receptivity in Kant’s Theory of Knowledge,” they define knowledge from Kant’s point of view: “Knowledge …. consists in the determinate relation of given representations to an object” (147). The connection between representations of objects is their objective validity, which is the concept of truth independent from individual subjectivity. For a representation to be objectively valid it must agree with the object itself. To have such representations requires that an object be given or that it becomes the content of a conscious representation (Kern and Smyth 147). To build on this argument, in her own book *Sources of Knowledge,* Kern states that knowledge springs from an act of rational capacity of knowledge. Rational capacity refers to a potentially infinite series of states or actions that is true at any moment in time; therefore, knowledge must

be internally true. While knowledge can be applied in several different subject areas, the elements which sustain that capacity remain unchanged. Kant argues that if humans are capable of any sort of knowledge, they are only capable of finite knowledge. Finite knowledge is described as understanding the relationship between the knowing subject and the known content where the possibility of error can be perceived. Having finite knowledge allows one to determine the truth or falsity of one's beliefs, which in turn, can lead to the discovery of objective knowledge (Kern 8, 17, 136-138). Having provided the definition of knowledge in accordance with the three philosopher's approaches to epistemology, the rest of this paper will examine how Locke, Descartes, and Kant believe knowledge can be attained.

As a theory of knowledge, empiricism supports the belief that all knowledge is derived solely from experience. Experience is all the data and process of consciousness (Hossain 226 & 228). Locke argues that humans are not born with innate ideas, rather they learn and acquire new information through experiences. Therefore, all knowledge is a posteriori (Sproul 95). Locke maintains that knowledge is perceived through the agreement or disagreement of ideas, and this knowledge is real when the ideas it represents are in actual existence and stand in some relation to the agreement or disagreement perceived (Marušić 214). He claims that knowledge must be real because of two sorts of ideas: simple and complex, but this paper will only focus on simple ideas because those which are complex are only a compound of several simple ideas. Locke claims:

> The first [sort] are simple *Ideas*, which since the Mind … can by no means make to it self, must necessarily be the Product of Things operating on the Mind in a natural way, and producing therein those Perceptions which by the Wisdom and Will of our Maker they are ordained and adapted to. From whence it follows, that *simple* Ideas *are not functions* of our Fancies, but the natural and regular production of Things without us,

> really operating upon us; and so carry with them all the conformity which is intended on which our state requires. (Marušić 214)

Locke argues that because simple ideas are not fabricated but based on fact, any knowledge attained through simple ideas must be genuine. Simple ideas are derived from either sensation or reflection. Sensation, being the most prominent source, involves use of visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, and taste by the sensory organs. Through the five senses, one can perceive empirical reality. Reflection involves activities of the mind such as awareness, thinking, doubting, and reasoning, from which ideas can be produced (Sproul 95-96). Given that knowledge consists in the ideas of the mind by which there must be a perceived agreement or disagreement, Locke identifies three varying degrees of knowledge.

The first degree, intuitive knowledge, is such that the mind perceives the agreement or disagreement between two ideas immediately by themselves. Intuitive knowledge assures that something which cannot exist is unable to produce real being (Sproul 99). For instance, the mind can recognize that white is not black, a square is not a triangle, and five is more than three; these are examples of truths. The mind requires little cognitive effort in the perception of the two ideas ascertaining one's usage of their intuition. Intuition, as meant by Locke, is unconditional certainty in mental propositions. Thus, intuitive knowledge is the clearest and most certain which humans are capable of (Locke 176-177). In Book IV of Locke's *Essay,* he imagines intuitive knowledge to be like stepping out from a dark cave into the light of the sun by which "...the mind is presently filled with the clear light of it [the perceived agreement or disagreement which gives knowledge]" (177). Locke recognizes intuitive knowledge as the immediate manifestation of truth to intelligence with the employment of a posteriori critical analysis. Intuitions are accepted as general facts of consciousness and are necessary for all relations of ideas to attain knowledge and certainty.

The second degree, demonstrative knowledge, is where the mind perceives the agreement or disagreement between ideas but not immediately. While certain knowledge remains a constant in the perceived relation between ideas, the mind may not be able to easily discern an agreement or disagreement. The reason for this is that the mind cannot bring its ideas together through immediate comparison to perceive any relationship. Consequently, Locke claims that the mind will devise a solution "*... by the intervention of other ideas* (one or more, as it happens) to discover the agreement or disagreement which it searches; and this is that which we call *reasoning*" (178). To demonstrate Locke's view, I will provide two statements that require reasoning to answer the third statement: Given that A is greater than B and B is greater than C, determine the relationship, if any, between A and C. While there is no immediate or obvious answer, one can know demonstratively that A is greater than C. The intervening ideas which show the relationship between ideas are called proofs and the resulting perception is called demonstration. Thus, demonstration depends on clearly perceived proofs. Although this knowledge, by intervening proofs, is certain, it is not as clear as intuitive knowledge (Locke 179).

The third degree, sensitive knowledge, is where the mind perceives an agreement between an idea and actual real existence, rather than perceiving a relation strictly between two ideas (Marušić 206). Sensitive knowledge does not go beyond the existence of things present to the senses (Locke 191). Locke distinguishes between primary and secondary qualities to describe how to get in touch with reality. Primary qualities exist essentially in the objects themselves. Perceiving an object's primary qualities puts one in touch with the object itself and thus leads to the perception of its objective reality. For instance, when someone throws a ball, it looks like it is moving because it is moving. Conversely, secondary qualities of an object provide it with the ability to create something in the observer. They are things such as color, sound, taste, and odor.

To illustrate, imagine there is snow on the ground and a child goes outside to make a snowball. The child will think the snowball is cold, however, the quality of coldness does not actually exist in the snowball. Rather, the snowball feels cold relative to the child's body temperature (Sproul 98). Locke claims that there must be a cause of sensations, which brings back the discussion of simple ideas through sensation.

In Book II of Locke's *Essay*, he maintains that simple ideas are real, adequate, and true. Simple ideas are fixed in their function as representations. This guarantees the perceived agreement among ideas that show the actual existence of an object and its qualities; hence why it is possible to have knowledge about real existence through sensation. Locke uses the example of color, stating that the idea of white disagrees with the idea of black because the two ideas are recognizably different in nature. He holds that the perceived relation between ideas only provides knowledge of necessary or analytic propositions, not real knowledge. Thus, only an agreement between an idea and something else, something that actually exists and is distinct from one's ideas could give knowledge of real existence. Locke furthers his argument by suggesting that sensations are nothing more than effects produced by objects, and simple ideas could not be produced if they did respond to the object's effects (Marušić 208-216). He writes, "For if Sugar produce in us the *Ideas*, which we call Whiteness, and Sweetness, we are sure there is a power in Sugar to produce those *Ideas* in our Minds, or *else they could not have been produced by it*" (Marušić 216). Therefore, knowledge of this degree is real because simple ideas never fail to respond to the sensations that bring them about. Furthering this thought, Locke holds:

> (1) a simple idea of sensation answers a power of bodies in virtue of being caused by something with that power and that (2) a simple idea of sensation cannot be caused by something that lacks the power to cause that very idea …. and (3) sensations of some

> type are constantly produced by powers to produce sensations of that type. (Marušić 217 & 219)

In short, Locke believes sensations are the effects caused by some power in an object by which simple ideas must respond to the object. These powers are unique in their effects so that a sensation of particular a thing, like sweetness, can be produced only by a power to produce ideas of sweetness (Marušić 220). Given that simple ideas of sensation are secure in virtue of what they represent, thus allowing one to distinguish objects and their qualities, explains how sensitive knowledge can yield knowledge of real existence.[2]

Contrary to Locke, Descartes holds a rationalist view of epistemology whereby he argues for reasoning in the attainment of knowledge rather than a reliance on belief or emotional response. In Descartes *Meditations on First Philosophy,* he claims that sense perception is unreliable. In the First Meditation he writes, "Yet I have found that these senses sometimes deceive me, and it is a matter of prudence never to confide completely in those who have deceived us even once" (Descartes and Heffernan 89). Descartes acknowledges that there are some things which the senses perceive that cannot be doubted, such as that at this very moment I am typing these words with my fingers on a keyboard. However, who is to say I am not dreaming that I am typing these words? While I certainly intuit my words on the computer screen with waking eyes, and I can extend my fingers and feel sensations, I may be quick to assert that such distinct actions could not happen during sleep. Yet, Descartes' argument stems from the idea that I could have a dream about this same experience. But then how am I to determine what is true or false? Descartes says that dreams are merely pictures of images that have qualities

[2] Simple ideas are the foundation for forming complex ideas. Locke explains that one can form concepts or a complex understanding of the world built up from the simple impressions that issues in simple ideas. However, Locke's development of complex ideas through methods of association are beyond the scope of this paper.

similar to those things in real existence. For instance, a child may close their eyes and see a mermaid swimming in the water. The mermaid is constituted of a whole body with eyes, a head, and hands, which are general qualities of a human being. The fictitious elements of the mermaid, those which are not commonly seen in everyday life, are not deemed universally true. However, the constituents of the mermaid's body such as her eyes, head, and hands are truths found in cogitation. Yet because qualities of truth or falsity can be perceived by the senses, Descartes maintains that certain knowledge cannot be attained through sense perception (Descartes and Heffernan 91-93).

Descartes's thinking is greatly influenced by mathematical concepts. In math the mind seeks truth clearly and directly. Descartes believes that through mathematics one can determine the certainties of the world. The two pillars of the mathematical model which Descartes emphasizes are deduction and intuition. Deductive reasoning moves from the universal to the particular, while inductive reasoning moves from the particular to the universal. However, Descartes suggests that deductive and inductive reasoning could never achieve absolute certainty. The only thing to achieve such certainty is formal truth which pertains to form or essence (Sproul 83-85). Descartes argues that there are four rules to be followed when seeking the truth:

> (1) Never accept as true anything that is not known to be true without doubt; 2) divide each difficulty under examination into as many parts as possible and necessary to solve it; 3) conduct thinking by commencing with objects that are the simplest and easiest to know, then ascend little by little to the more complex; 4) in every case make enumerations so complete and reviews so general that you might be assured you have omitted or overlooked nothing. (Sproul 85)

Descartes emphasizes that self-doubt is necessary to determine what it is or is not certain. Just as he finds sense perception to be unreliable, Descartes doubts his own existence. However, in doing so, he discovers that he is cogitating thing. In his most famous line, “I think, therefore, I am” (Sproul 86), Descartes comes to realize that he exists through reasoning: To doubt the truth requires thinking. To think requires something to do the thinking. Since Descartes is the thinker then he must exist. Descartes' statement reveals the law of noncontradiction and the law of causality. The first law states that one cannot think and not think at the same time and in the same relationship. The second law maintains that thinking requires a thinker (Sproul 87). For Descartes, these two laws are innate and universal truths.

In his *Meditations on First Philosophy,* Descartes holds that whatever he perceives with clarity and distinctness must be true. All ideas are representations of things which are distinct from themselves, and thus, he claims that all clear and distinct ideas are true. But what does it mean for something to be clear and distinct? Descartes writes:

> I call a perception “clear” when it is present and accessible to the attentive mind—just as we say that we see something clearly when it is present to the eye’s gaze and stimulates it with a sufficient degree of strength and accessibility. I call a perception “distinct” if, as well as being clear, it is so sharply separated from all other perceptions that it contains within itself only what is clear. (Flage 97)

Hence, a perception can be clear without being distinct, but not distinct without being clear. Descartes returns to his mathematical approach by claiming the most clear and distinct ideas are the objects of geometry, specifically Euclidean geometry. If Euclidean objects are not taken to represent anything, they cannot be deemed materially false. Materially false ideas represent non-things as things which Descartes identifies as obscure and confused ideas; thus, materially false

ideas cannot be clear and distinct. Descartes maintains that clear and distinct ideas must be representative, specifically of possibilities. To be considered materially true, these ideas must be capable of representing an actual object. A clear and distinct idea needs to demonstrate the possibility for the existence of an object which corresponds to the idea. Descartes asserts that clear and distinct ideas must be consistent in their representations, thus maintaining certainty and formal truth, which is the correct representation of something. Since clear and distinct ideas are formally true, they represent the fixed nature or the actual essence of a thing. To illustrate, one can know that the interior angles of a triangle equal 180 degrees because this is a determinant property of any triangle, and therefore, is part of its essence. Since it is possible to form clear and distinct ideas which possess truth and certainty, one can ultimately attain knowledge of such ideas that produce representations of an existing object (Flage 95-106).

Kant is considered to have resolved the aporia between empiricism and rationalism by synthesizing the ideas of both movements in his new Critical philosophy called transcendental idealism (Vanzo 53). His view of epistemology follows that all knowledge requires a compound between receptivity and spontaneity. He says, "'There can be no doubt that all our knowledge begins with experience …. But though all our knowledge begins with experience, it does not follow that it all arises out of experience'" (Aquila 2). Kern and Smyth expand Kant's statement by writing, "Although every act of knowledge begins with a receptive act, no act of knowledge *exhausts* itself in an act of receptivity" (Kern and Smyth 145). Kant holds that knowledge is composed of what one receives through impressions and of what one's own faculty of knowledge supplies from itself, which is considered an act of spontaneity. To understand receptivity and spontaneity in relation to the attainment of knowledge, Kant first explores the general idea of knowledge. He determines that knowledge is only possible when one has a conscious representation of an object, or in other words, when the object is given. When this

occurs and the object's existence can be proven, one can immediately perceive the relationship to the object by either original or sensible intuition. Original intuition is distinguished by own's ability to recognize the existence of an object upon immediate perception. Sensible intuition depends on the presence of the object such that it causes a sensation in the subject. These intuitions yield understanding which can produce self-conscious knowledge. This specific type of knowledge is only possible through a combination of representations. Kant states that the two fundamental sources of knowledge stem from sensibility and understanding, and the underlying sources of the mind are receptivity and spontaneity (Kern and Smyth 147-154). Taking from this thought, Kern and Smyth further the discussion on how these capacities lead to knowledge:

> In the first step, an object actualizes the subject's faculty of sensibility: the subject has a sensible representation, which does not yet belong to the unity of self-consciousness. In the second step, the subject produces a spontaneous representation by which it brings the sensible representation inside the unity of self-consciousness. After this second step, the subject has a sensible representation that can *guide it* in judging. (154)

Following this step, the receptivity faculty can deliver object-dependent representations while the spontaneous faculty, simultaneously, makes a judgment. Judgments allow one to determine truth or falsity, which establishes certain knowledge. Using sensible intuition following the perception of an object, one can make a proper and informed judgment. Thus, a combination of acts of receptivity and spontaneity yield sensible representations which ground one's knowledge (Kern and Smyth 154-159).

In Kant's transcendental idealism, he attempts to transcend certain problems of epistemology, namely, asking questions about the conditions which make knowledge possible. He holds that experience begins with both a priori and a posteriori knowledge, yet only a

posteriori knowledge arises out of experience. A priori knowledge, as Hossain defines it, "occurs through a perception of the nature of the thing about which the statement is made" (227). For Kant, knowledge is a collaborative process between the senses and the mind. He believes in pure intuitions of time and space, meaning one cannot exactly perceive time and space even though every perception is done so in time and space. Without a priori intuitions, such as this about time and space, one can never have a distinct perception. Sproul uses the example that "if I look out my window at this moment, I see trees, a pond, a waterfall, bushes, grass, and flowers, as well as blue sky and white, puffy clouds. I do not see a treespondwaterfallbushesgrassflowersskycloud" (121). Therefore, without pure intuitions of time and space, one would not be able to separate the words used to convey an experience and would thus have to untangle a chaotic blurb of nonsense. Given that this process is completed by the subject, knowledge is said to be ordered by the self. However, the self cannot be perceived rather it is apperceived, meaning that one is simply aware of its presence in what Kant calls the transcendental unity of apperception (Sproul 121). Therefore, for Kant, knowledge is reliant on one's ability to understand and interpret experiences.

Kant recognizes that there are limits to knowledge, namely in the realm of empirical evidence. He holds that data supplied to the mind through sensation is the building block of knowledge. Through sense perception, one can only experience the phenomenal realm which is the world of appearances (Sproul 122). Aquila explores Kant's theory of phenomenalism using a sense datum approach by which he says:

> To say that an (empirically real) object is appearing in sense perception is to say that it is presenting itself via an entity that *is* the "appearance" of it. It presents itself, that is, via a sense datum (or a complex of such entities). So on the view in question the entities that

> are presented as the immediate objects of sense perception are not entities that are identifiable as those to which we ordinarily attach empirical predicates. (Aquila 95)

In this theory, Aquila attempts to clarify that the idea of a thing appears in certain ways, specifically by appealing to the relation between the thing and the sense data through which the thing appears. Thus, appearances are simply objects to which one applies empirical evidence (Aquila 95) derived from the a priori categories of thought. Kant holds that one's own sense perceptions provide the material of appearances from which he devises a correlation between appearance and the sensation in the object of intuition. Kant recognizes that the objective world is perceived by a thinking subject, therefore, revealing that the phenomenal realm is real and provides a means to attain knowledge. He also identifies the existence of a world that is beyond the reach of one's senses called the noumenal realm. Within this realm exists the Ding an sich, which is the object or thing-in-itself. However, one cannot know the object or thing itself, rather one's knowledge of the object is limited to the senses perceived in conjunction with the categories of the mind. For example, the self belongs to the noumenal realm because one can know the self exists without perceiving it directly. Therefore, to have knowledge Kant believes one is first limited to the phenomenal world and then the noumenal realm which the mind must attempt to organize and make sense of the experience data (Sproul 122-123).

In an attempt to solve the epistemological debate regarding the origin of knowledge, empirical and rationalist accounts from Locke, Descartes, and Kant were provided to synthesize the most accepted answers. Locke, who took an empiricist approach, believed that all knowledge is a posteriori, or comes after experience. He held that simple ideas marked the beginning of knowledge by which there are three varying degrees: intuitive, demonstrative, and sensitive knowledge. Descartes, as a rationalist, maintained that sense perception is unreliable, and that reason is the only means to attain knowledge. He believed that ideas are innate and only those

which are clear and distinct can yield knowledge. Kant combined both philosophical approaches, agreeing with empiricists that all knowledge begins with experience, but arguing that not all knowledge arises out of experience. He believed in both a priori and a posteriori knowledge, applying his transcendental idealism to emphasize the significance of a priori knowledge, and he identified two limits of knowledge: the phenomenal world and the noumenal world. While all three philosophical approaches hold some truth and scrutiny, one may benefit from Kant's view because it combines ideas from both Locke and Descartes theories. Hence, the origin of knowledge does not seem to have a single answer and may never be classified under one philosophical view.

Annotated Bibliography

Aquila, Richard E. *Representational Mind: A Study of Kant's Theory of Knowledge.* Indiana University Press, 1983.

This book details Kant's point of view on epistemology. Kant believes that all knowledge begins with experience. Objects that affect the senses produce representations, which arouse our understanding and are then combined or separated to form knowledge of objects. Kant, however, believes that not all knowledge arises out of experience, rather knowledge can be received through impressions and of what our own faculty of knowledge supplies from itself. Kant saw two different approaches to mental representations: sense perception and intellection. He defines sensation as the effect of an object upon the faculty of representation. Kant concluded that we are capable of intuition a priori with respect to time and space. This conclusion was part of his transcendental idealism that space and time necessarily pertain to appearances, or to the way things appear to us but they do not pertain to things different from the way they appear to us. Aquila also draws on Kant's theory of phenomenal and noumenal worlds. He says the phenomenal world is that which exists, and we have some comprehension of, whereas the noumenal world is something believe in yet lack the evidence of its existence.

This source will be very helpful in the section of my research that discusses Kant's theory of knowledge. I can incorporate Kant's view about how knowledge begins in my paragraph about his transcendental method. I will also include his point about a priori knowledge, or knowledge prior to experience, in the above-mentioned paragraph. This book contained a lot of information that extended far beyond what I intended to discuss so I may include another background paragraph about Kant's theories which discuss intuition and different mental representations. I will incorporate the discussion about phenomenal and noumenal worlds in my paragraph about those two worlds. I intend to show a distinction between Locke and Descartes ideas which Kant drew upon.

Descartes, Rene. *Meditations on First Philosophy*, edited by Heffernan, George, University of Notre Dame Press, 1990.

This book contains an introduction to *Meditations on First Philosophy* and the actual text written by Descartes himself. The introduction contains an overview of Descartes' life. He was born into an old and well-established family on March 31, 1596, near Tours, France. Descartes suffered from poor health as a child and doctors predicted that he would not live long enough to reach adulthood. Descartes attended the Jesuit "College Royal" at La Fleche in Anjou from 1606 to 1614 where he became proficient in Latin. However, Descartes blamed the school for teaching that philosophy was about speaking truly of all things and letting oneself be admired by those who were less wise. Descartes concluded his formal education by receiving his bachelorette and a license in law at the University of Poitiers. He was challenged to find clear and certain knowledge, so he traveled to Holland where he focused on mathematics, as well as scientific and philosophical concepts. After his return to France, Descartes applied his newly learned knowledge in *Meditations on First Philosophy,* which contains six Meditations. In the first Meditation, Descartes claims that the senses are deceiving, and nothing should be believed that has deceived us even once. Although our body experiences and recognizes other things through our senses, we should not trust in the certainty of their existence. In the second Meditation, Descartes argues that bodies are perceived by the intellect only;

images are formed by cogitation and then explored by the senses. The third Meditation seeks to prove the existence of God by claiming that he is an infinite substance of perfection by which he cannot be deemed materially false. In the fourth Meditation, Descartes proves that all things we clearly and distinctly perceive are true. Error or falsity is a defect in our faculty of judgment. The fifth Meditation shows that the certainty of mathematics, specifically of geometry, is dependent on the cognition of God. The sixth Mediation distinguishes intellection from imagination. When the mind understands something, it turns itself to itself and regards one of the ideas that are in it itself. However, when the mind imagines, it turns itself to the body and intuits something in it by use of the senses.

I will include a substantial amount of information from the six Meditations in my paper. The first Meditation will be useful in my paragraph about how sense perception is unreliable. The second and sixth Meditations can be included in my paragraph about reasoning because Descartes believes intellect is the source of knowledge. I may or may not use the third Meditation because in some sense it pertains to my topic, and I do have accounts from both Locke and Kant about their beliefs on the existence of God. However, it is less relevant, but if I need more information in my paper then I will consider adding a few extra paragraphs about the existence of God. The fourth and fifth Meditations can be used in my paragraph about the attainment of knowledge that is certain through clear and distinct ideas.

Flage, Daniel E. "Descartes and The Real Distinction Between Mind and Body." *The Review of Metaphysics,* vol. 68, no. 1, Sept. 2014, pp. 93-106. *JSTOR*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24636543.

This article explores Descartes's *Meditations on First Philosophy,* specifically Mediations Three through Five. Flage begins with Mediation Three and presents the notion that all ideas are representations of things distinct from themselves. Formal truth and falsity pertain to judgments that form correct representations. Conversely, material falsity occurs in ideas that represent non-things as things and pertain to obscure and confused ideas. Descartes describes that sensations as representative ideas and of individual extensions are materially false because they could be a source of false judgment or error. Flage discusses clarity and distinctness noting that an idea, limited to sense perceptions, can be clear but not distinct, yet an idea cannot be distinct without being clear. Descartes claims that clear and distinct ideas must be consistent like the system of Euclidean geometry. In Meditation Six, Descartes asserts that clear and distinct ideas represent possibilities. Furthermore, a clear and distinct idea is materially true if and only if it is consistent, and therefore, able to represent an actual object. Meditation Four focuses on truth and falsity, arguing that clear and distinct ideas are formally true if there is something that they represent. In Mediation Five, Descartes defines this representation as true and fixed natures which are ideas of the essences of things. Flage progresses this thought by stating that even if an object does not exist in the material world, one can have knowledge of the object's actual essence if there is a clear and distinct idea of the object's true and permanent nature. He closes the article with a summation of how the mind and body are distinct; the mind is simply a thinking thing while the body is an extended, non-thinking thing.

This article will be more difficult to extract information from because the idea of where knowledge comes from is not as explicitly stated as with my other sources. However, the

relevance of this article to my research paper is in Descartes's notion that sense perception is unreliable. When Flage discusses clarity and distinctness in an object, he is talking about the development of a representation through the senses, which could result in false judgment. In addition, I can use the author's comment about applying the clear and distinct ideas of an object's nature to the development of knowledge about the object's essence in my paragraph regarding Descartes's theory of the attainment of knowledge. This article is a reliable source because it was found in a scholarly journal that publishes material solely related to metaphysics. Also, this article contains relatively new information because it was published less than ten years ago.

Hossain, F. M. Anayet. "A Critical Analysis of Empiricism." *Open Journal of Philosophy,* vol 4, no. 3, August 2014, pp. 225-230. *EBSCOhost,* *https://eds.s.ebscohost.com/eds/detail/detail?vid=1&sid=962cc845-7a75-42c8-92d2-4b4c33d083c4%40redis&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2l0ZQ%3d%#AN=PHL2306849&db=phl.*

In this article, Hossain argues that there are limitations to the traditional empiricist point of view which makes it unreliable in the field of epistemology. Empiricism is a philosophical theory that claims the origin of knowledge is derived from sensory experience. Hossain provides accounts from both David Hume and John Locke which present their beliefs about the attainment of knowledge through the five senses. In contrast, the author mentions Immanuel Kant and his theory of knowledge which attempts to synthesize empiricism and rationalism. Kant believed that some knowledge is derived from experience, but reason is also a means to attain knowledge. Hossain progresses the article with a critical examination of the differences between the empiricists and rationalists' views. She notes that empiricists believe all apriori statements are analytic, and all synthetic statements are a posteriori; rationalists believe the opposite of these statements. Hossain further addresses the limitations of empiricism by stating that it denies the existence of objective reality and ignores the relationship between subjective and objective contents of knowledge.

This article presents relevant information regarding my research paper topic "where does knowledge come from." The key points that Hossain expresses about empiricism and its relation to knowledge through the five senses may be incorporated into my paragraph about Locke's theory of sensitive knowledge. I can also use the idea that experiences provide us with knowledge in that same paragraph. Hossain's note of Kant's attempt to synthesize empiricism and rationalism may be used in my comparison between Locke's and Descartes's theories of knowledge. I will specifically use the information about apriori and a posteriori knowledge in my discussion about Kant's transcendental method. This is a reliable source because it was found in a scholarly journal that solely publishes material related to philosophy. In addition, the article was published less than ten years ago. The author avoided biases by presenting both arguments about the validity of empiricism which is beneficial to my research about both Locke's and Kant's empirical points of view.

Kern, Andrea, and Smyth, Daniel. "Spontaneity and Receptivity in Kant's Theory of Knowledge." *Philosophical Topics,* vol. 34, no. 1/2, 2006, pp. 145-162. *JSTOR,* https://www.jstor.org/stable/43155413.

This article focuses on Kant's theory of knowledge, which states that all knowledge requires unity between receptive and spontaneous representations. Kern and Smyth attempt to answer how it is possible to have such representations. They note that knowledge is only possible when the object is given, meaning that the object becomes part of a conscious representation. When an object is given, then the object is in existence, therefore, one can intuit the object; this intuition can be original or sensible. The authors further discuss the different types of representations, namely sensible and spontaneous, then note the types of understandings—original and discursive—that arise from a spontaneous faculty of representation. Kern and Smyth use Kant's theory of knowledge to explain that knowledge stems from two capacities: sensibility and understanding. The end of the article places heavy emphasis on the idea that sensibility and understanding are one faculty, and knowledge is possible through a faculty from which sensible representations and judgments arise.

A great deal of information is presented in this article which will be useful in my research paper. The ideas about receptive and spontaneous representations can be incorporated as a subtopic in the section of my paper that discusses Kant's theory of knowledge. I will be able to provide definitions of receptivity and spontaneity, as well as provide in-depth details of how these representations can lead to intuition and further understanding of an object to produce knowledge. The key point at the end of the article about the faculty of knowledge can be used to explain how knowledge is possible through the two capacities of sensibility and understanding. This is an appropriate source for my research paper because it was found in a reputable philosophy journal. Since the article was published over ten years ago, the information is relevant and applicable to my topic. The authors avoided biases by highlighting the strengths and critiquing the flaws of Kant's argument.

Kern, Andrea. *Sources of Knowledge.* Harvard University Press, 2017.

This book consists of four parts; knowledge and reason, the primacy of knowledge, the nature of knowledge, and the teleology of knowledge. Part One develops a preliminary account of our concept of knowledge. Kern describes finite knowledge as understanding the relationship between the knowing subject and the known content where the possibility of error can be perceived. She argues that if humans are capable of any sort of knowledge, they are only capable of finite knowledge because it allows for the possibility of error. Having finite knowledge means that we must understand something that is capable of judgment. Judgment is a spontaneous act whose defining feature is that it can be true or false. Knowing something cannot be determined in degrees of certainty, but rather it must demonstrate a relationship between a subject and a fact. Truth-guaranteeing is an essential component of our concept of knowledge. Part Two primarily discusses the skepticism associated with Kant's theory of knowledge. Skeptics typically argue that the guarantee of truth is impossible. Kern retorts that a ground for belief is a ground that cannot be found without forming a true belief on its basis, or without having knowledge. The ground must put the subject in a position to know something, therefore, the case of a ground for belief is a ground for knowledge. Part Three describes how the human mind and human knowledge work together to develop understanding. Kern defines knowledge as an act that springs from a rational capacity for knowledge. A rational capacity is represented as having the capacity to do something; it is always true and can be described through general and timeless statements. Part Four recognizes that rational capacities

have a teleological structure, meaning that creatures who possess a rational capacity stand in a twofold relation to knowledge: knowledge is an actuality and knowledge is an ideal. Kant argues that the only way to account for the capacity of knowledge, specifically experiential knowledge, is to recognize itself by a priori knowledge.

This book contains a lot of information that is difficult to digest. However, the information in this text is relevant to my research and can be applied to several areas in my paper. I will use the information in part one of this book that describes judgment as an act of spontaneity in my paragraph about receptive and spontaneous representations. I can include the author's discussion of a priori knowledge in my paragraph about Kant's transcendental method. As for the other parts of the book, I thought they were very interesting and contained a lot of great information so I may include another background paragraph in my section about Kant. In this background paragraph I may discuss humans as having finite knowledge, truth and grounds of knowledge, and rational capacity.

Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, edited by Fraser, Alexander C., *Dover Publications, 1959.*

For the purpose of my research, I will only be using Book IV: *Of Knowledge and Probability.* Locke claims human knowledge is attained through simple ideas generated in the senses and in reflection. He says that knowledge is an agreement or disagreement between these ideas, and he identifies four sorts of agreement of disagreement: identity or diversity, relation, co-existence, and real existence. Locke presents two types of knowledge: actual and habitual, which comes in varying degrees. He distinguishes between intuitive, demonstrative, and sensitive knowledge, which are all degrees of knowledge that depend on how we perceive the agreement or disagreement of two ideas. We have knowledge of our own being by intuition. The existence of a God is given to us by reason. The knowledge of the existence of other things is provided by sensation. It is important to note that Locke believes we can knowledge no further than we can have ideas, or perception of that agreement or disagreement by intuition, reason, or sensation. Our knowledge is only real if there is conformity between our ideas and the reality of things. Locke also discusses the meaning of truth, defining it as the joining or separating of propositions. Knowing is synonymous with being certain of the truth of any proposition. Locke remarks that our knowledge is the consequence of the existence of things, producing ideas in our mind by our senses, and knowledge is the consequence of the ideas in our minds, producing general certain propositions.

This book will be extremely useful in my paragraphs about Locke's view on epistemology, and it will most likely be considered my primary text. Chapter I of Book IV can easily be incorporated into by paragraph about the background of knowledge. In this paragraph I will discuss how knowledge is an agreement or disagreement between ideas, the four sorts of agreement or disagreement, and how simple ideas apply to the origin of knowledge. Chapter II talks about the degrees of knowledge. I will have a separate paragraph dedicated to each degree of knowledge, and I will incorporate the information from subsequent chapters, when they apply, into these paragraphs.

Marušić, Jennifer Smalligan. "Locke's Simple Account of Sensitive Account." *The Philosophical Review,* vol. 125, no. 2, April 2016, pp. 205-239. *JSTOR,* https://www.jstor.org/stable/26783712.

This article serves as an analysis of Locke's theory of sensitive knowledge. Locke defines knowledge as a perception of the agreement or disagreement between ideas. He distinguishes four sorts of agreement or disagreement: identity or diversity, relation, necessary connection or coexistence, and real existence, and he recognizes three ways of perceiving these sorts: by intuition, demonstration, or sensation. Locke maintains that knowledge is certain, and this certainty comes in degrees. Given that knowledge is certain, then it can be said that knowledge guarantees truth. In the article, Marušić argues that Locke's view that simple ideas of sensation are all guaranteed to be real, adequate, and true, and thus, that the senses are a source of genuine knowledge. Locke describes the fourth agreement, which is real existence, as holding between an idea and something other than an idea. He holds his belief strong in the opinion that we have genuine knowledge of real existence through sensation, and it is only through sensation that one can learn about the qualities of objects. Locke claims that knowledge must be real because simple ideas are secure in virtue of what and how they represent. Marušić adds that simple ideas of sensation must conform to the power of bodies that produce them, the simple ideas cannot be caused by something that lacks the power to cause that very idea, and sensations of some type are constantly produced by powers to produce sensations of that type. Knowledge through sensation provides evidence that helps in distinguishing objects and their individual qualities and making use of the objects in various environments.

This article contains a great deal of information that can be incorporated into my research paper. Given that this article specifically discusses Locke's theory of knowledge through sensation, I will use the relevant information in my paragraph about sensitive knowledge. The definition of sensitive knowledge can be used as a topic sentence in the paragraph to give an overview of what I will be discussing. I will also use the three characteristics of simple ideas of sensation—simple ideas of sensation must conform to the power of bodies that produce them, the simple ideas cannot be caused by something that lacks the power to cause that very idea, and sensations of some type are constantly produced by powers to produce sensations of that type—as means of describing how genuine knowledge can be attained through the senses. This is a scholarly source because it was published in a reputable journal only six years ago. Also, the author avoids bias by presenting Locke's original ideas and several other philosophers' arguments in response to Locke's theory.

Sproul, R. C. *The Consequences of Ideas.* Crossway Books, 2000.

For the purpose of finding relevant information for my research paper, I will only use Chapters 6, 7, and 9 of this book which pertain to the three philosophical figures I will be examining: John Locke, Rene Descartes, and Immanuel Kant. Chapter 6 is *Rene Descartes: Father of Modern Rationalism,* which discusses Descartes's chief discipline—mathematics—and how it applies to his theory of knowledge. Mathematics is an extension of logic. The two pillars of the mathematical model are deductions and intuition. Deductive reasoning moves from the universal to the particular, while inductive reasoning moves from the particular to the universal. Intuition provides such clarity and distinctness that it leaves no doubt in the mind, only truth and certainty. Descartes notes that the only certainty can be found in formal truths. He uses the phrase "I think, therefore I am," which embraces the law of noncontradiction and the law of causality. Chapter 7 is *John Locke: Father of Modern Empiricism.* Locke argues that the mind at birth is a blank slate upon which

experiences write. Infants do not know about the laws of noncontradiction and causality, therefore, they must be learned. This knowledge that comes from experience is called a posteriori knowledge. Rationalists such as Descartes believe in a priori knowledge, or knowledge that comes before experience. Locke claims that all knowledge comes from simple ideas which evolve from sensation or reflection, and we get in touch with reality using our senses to perceive the qualities of objects. Chapter 9 is *Immanuel Kant: Revolutionary Philosopher*. In this section, the author notes that Kant synthesized rationalism and empiricism. Kant was well known for his transcendental method which implies that knowledge is both needful and possible. He agreed with empiricists that knowledge begins with experience, but he also recognized that not all knowledge arises out of experience; therefore, he believed in a priori knowledge. For Kant, knowledge begins with the sense manifold, which states that we attain knowledge through sensations and impressions. Kant did recognize that there are limits to knowledge in his discussion about the phenomenal and noumenal world.

This book serves as preliminary research for my paper because it provides a nice overview of the topics that I will be discussing, but it does not go into enough detail for me to solely rely on this source. In Chapter 6, the author talks a lot about how mathematics influenced Descartes' thinking. I was not planning on incorporating this into my paper, but it seems like math played a significant part in his life, so I may consider adding it to the paragraph about Descartes's background. There is also information that talks about logic or reason and how knowledge is attained, so I can use this in my supplemental paragraphs about Descartes. In Chapter 7, the author presents Locke's empirical view that knowledge is attained through the senses which I can incorporate in my paragraph about sensitive knowledge, and there is also mention of Locke's intuitive knowledge which will be useful in that particular section of my paper. Chapter 9 provides a quick summary of Kant's theories but enough that I can extrapolate some of the information to include in my paragraphs about the transcendental method and the limits of knowledge.

Vanzo, Alberto. "Kant on Empiricism and Rationalism." *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, vol. 30, no. 1, Jan. 2013, pp. 53-74. *JSTOR*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/43488058.

The purpose of this article is to correct the misconceptions concerning Kant's role in the development of the standard narrative of early modern philosophy. Vanzo addresses the three biases of the rationalism-empiricism distinction for which Kant is often blamed: the epistemological bias, the Kantian bias, and the classificatory bias. The author first begins by clarifying that Kant believed himself to be neither an empiricist nor a rationalist, yet he combined ideas of both movements in his own philosophy. Empiricists held the belief that humans derive knowledge from experience, while rationalists believed that humans could have a priori knowledge, a priori knowledge of the physical world, or a priori metaphysical knowledge. Kant's works examined three types of empiricism: immodest, modest, and history. Immodest empiricism is the denial that nonsensible objects exist. Modest empiricism is the denial that humans can experience certain objects, whether they exist or not. History-empiricism is the denial that humans can justify synthetic judgments a priori. Kant used the term rationalism to designate noologism, which stated that some concepts are not formed a posteriori and some synthetic judgments are justified a priori. The author argues that there is no evidence in Kant's texts where he classifies most or all early modern philosophers as empiricists or rationalists, he does not deem his philosophy

as superior to others, and he combines aspects of both empiricism and rationalism in his movement; therefore, Kant did not have the three biases.

This article contains quite a bit of information that will be helpful in the construction of my research paper. I can use details about the distinctions between empiricism and rationalism and the point that Kant does not distinguish himself as one or the other in my paragraph about the background of the philosopher. I can also incorporate ideas about a priori and a posteriori knowledge in my paragraph about the transcendental method. Overall, this article serves as a starting point to understand Kant and his philosophy. This article is a reliable source because it was published by a distinguished university in a reputable journal. In addition, the article is less than ten years old, and the author avoids bias by not only presenting his arguments but also common misconceptions.