

Locke and human understanding

Business



Locke argues that there are two sources where the mind gets: sensation and reflection. Sensation is derived from external objects while reflection is from inner sense. Native ideas are the ideas stamped upon the minds in their very first being. Children derive their ideas from the objects and bodies that affect them. These ideas are imprinted on them for a long time.

Kasper Hauser spent his early life in a dungeon, on water and bread. When he got out and placed in a normal setting, he could not eat anything else for a long time, he was comfortable at night and able to see in dark (Mysterious People). These objects had been imprinted on him. Yes, his experience confirms Locke's view of native ideas. Plato's thesis fails in Kasper's case which supports Locke's view.

From his account; he simply had no prior ideas, only those from the dungeon. Yes you would be impoverished. Your case will be similar to that of Kasper. He never knew the difference between women and men, living and non living things and he thought trees had feelings. His communication was poor. This is because had never experienced these objects before hence his native ideas were poor.

People lack ideas due to a poor upbringing and surrounding. Good sense is not imprinted on them. Sensation is derived from external objects while reflection comes from internal sense. Attention comes from observation of external objects and keenly reflecting on them. Locke believes that the operation of our minds is within the body while Descartes suggests that the mind of a man is different from the body (IEP). When Locke writes "...the

operation of our own mind within us..." he basically disapproves Descartes opinion that the body is separated from the mind (pg 4).

Since he believes that mind is separate from body, Descartes will exist even if he stops thinking. The phrase suggests that when a person is awake, both his soul and mind are thinking. When he is asleep it's only his soul that thinks. What the soul thinks may be irrational as compared to the man when he is awake, hence creating two personalities. Passive understanding arises when the mind receives simple ideas while active understanding comes when the mind will combine the ideas to form complex ideas.

Understanding will 'act' if it starts to reflect upon the ideas. A mind invents ideas when it reflects on the ideas it receives from objects. The mind is within the body, so when the body sleeps, the mind doesn't think. This is also true when the humans are still in the womb. Memory functions most mostly when the man is awake.

This is because most people won't remember what they dreamt about.

Lastly, Locke argues that the soul cannot be separated from the body. Body and soul begin to exist at the same time.