
UNIT 1 MIRRORING MIND (DESCARTES, LOCKE, HUME)

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this unit is to examine the importance of the mind in acquiring knowledge. Any knowledge presupposes a mind which may be interpreted as a mirror that reflects reality. According to rationalists like Plato and Descartes mind mirrors reality as innate ideas. According to empiricists like Locke and Hume mind mirrors reality through ideas formed by use of sensation and reflection. For both rationalists and empiricists mind is a mirror which provides the representation of reality.

Thus at the end of this unit you will be able:

- to understand the function of the human mind in knowledge;
- to see how subject and object are linked by means of ideas;
- to understand the difference between rationalist and empiricist theory of knowledge;
- to know the inadequacies of rationalist and empiricist theories of knowledge.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Is there a link between thought and reality? Or, can the subject know the object? If there is such a link how does it work? Or, can we know something about how the subject knows the object? Occasionally we discover that what we thought certain is later proved dubious or false. For example, a friend tells me that some news in a particular newspaper is false. In fact, I had believed that it was true.

Consequently, now I begin to distrust my friend, the news paper or even myself. And I ask myself: “How can I ever claim that I really know something?”

There is no knowledge without a knowing subject. The subject possesses a mind which functions as the processor of ideas. Some philosophers hold that the nature of its functioning resembles a mirror. A mirror reflects images of objects in front of it or provides their representation. The question is: what does the mirroring mind represent? Are they copies of the Forms or Ideas in another world or copies of the things in this world? According to rationalists the mind mirrors innate ideas. According to empiricism the mind mirrors reality by constructing ideas from the data provided by sensation or reflection. Rationalists and empiricists agree that mind is the knowledge hub and the functioning of the mind resembles mirroring. But they differ as regards the mode of mirroring. According to rationalists like Descartes all the basic ideas are already in the mirroring mind before our birth. According to empiricists like Locke and Hume the mirroring mind is empty at birth; it gathers ideas after our birth.

1.2 THE PROBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE

The problem of the theory of knowledge concerns the nature of knowledge in general and conditions under which it is appropriate to speak of knowledge; the scope of knowledge whether it is possible to have knowledge without reference to perception and whether *a priori* knowledge independent of experience is possible.

All the problems of the theory of knowledge arise against the point of view that knowledge is impossible, or at least that we can never be sure that we have attained it. It is based on the belief that knowledge implies certainty and that certainty is impossible and hence knowledge is also impossible. This thesis is known as philosophical scepticism. Much of the discussion within the theory of knowledge is set against the possibility of scepticism. Both rationalists and empiricists attempted to refute scepticism. Rationalists tended to look to mathematics for their model, so treating the indubitable truths or axioms from which other truths can be derived deductively as theorems. Empiricists adopted the experimental method, treating the indubitable truths as sense data on which a body of theory can be constructed.

1.3 THE MIRRORING MIND

The notion that there is a problem about mind and body originated in the 17th century's attempt to make the mind a self-contained sphere of inquiry. Philosophy tries to understand the foundations of knowledge and finds these foundations in a study of the mental processes or the activity of representation which makes knowledge possible. To know is to represent accurately what is outside the mind. To understand the possibility and nature of knowledge is to understand the way in which the mind is able to receive or construct such representations. If knowledge is not a matter of accuracy of representations, then we need no inner mirror and there is thus no mystery concerning the relation of that mirror to our body.

The idea of a theory of knowledge grew up around the problem of knowing whether our inner representations were correct. The idea of a discipline devoted to the nature, origin and limits of human knowledge required a field of study called

the human mind. We owe the notion of the mind as a separate entity in which processes occur to Descartes. We owe the notion of a theory of knowledge based on an understanding of mental processes to Locke. Descartes invention of the mind and Locke's coalescence of beliefs and sensations into ideas gave philosophers new field within which certainty, as opposed to mere opinion, was possible. Though Locke had retained the newly invented Cartesian mind he was unable to hold onto Cartesian certainty.

1.4 RENE DESCARTES

The great French philosopher Rene Descartes (1596-1650) introduced the problem of knowledge in a very striking form. He set out to study the world in an entirely new way. After extended investigation he came to suspect all accepted views that claimed authority merely because they were ancient and honoured. Most of those who searched for knowledge experienced failure in finding certainty and turned to scepticism. Descartes did not surrender to scepticism. He had an intense desire to be certain, to be so certain that no discovery could ever shake his beliefs again. By inspecting one truth – I think therefore I am – he discovered a rule or criterion about all other truths.

Cartesian Doubt

Descartes wanted to refute the sceptic's thesis that certain knowledge is impossible. He used the sceptic's own method to prove that absolute certainty is possible. He agreed with sceptics that we should doubt our senses and the contents of our mind because they may deceive us. But he insisted that one couldn't doubt the existence of his/her own self as a thinking being. The fact that I doubt or think is beyond doubt. It is possible to doubt that I have a body, but it is impossible to doubt that I am a mind that doubts. The crucial point about 'Cartesian doubt' is that it is essentially a means to an end; it is a method for the production of first principles. According to Descartes only by pushing doubt to its limits can we discover what is incapable of being doubted; and by discovering what survives even the most extreme and exaggerated doubts, we can establish foundations for philosophy that are unshakably firm. He writes: "I realized that it was necessary, once in the course of my lifetime, to demolish everything completely and start again right from the foundations if I wanted to establish anything at all in the sciences that are stable and likely to last."

Cartesian Mind

Descartes introduced a division between mind and body in order to refute scepticism. He analysed the content of his mind and discovered it contained certain innate ideas such as self, God, and substance. Descartes perceived a complete separation between extension and thought. He found in himself certain faculties and activities, such as the power of locomotion, which clearly imply the existence of corporeal substances. In the clear and distinct perception of such activities extension is in some way included, whereas thinking is not. The faculty of sense perception does not presuppose thought, and it must exist in some substance other than thinker who is an essentially unextended thing.

However, thinking is to be identified not merely with understanding, willing and imagining, but also with sensory awareness. If I say "I am seeing, therefore I exist" and take this as applying not to bodily activities but to the actual sense of

awareness of seeing, then the conclusion is quite certain because it relates to the mind, which alone has the sensation or thought that it is seeing. For Descartes mind has evident awareness of all its actions. This he calls the perfect transparency of the mind. A thought in the wide sense is defined as that of which I am immediately aware.

Clear and Distinct Ideas

Descartes claimed that one cannot derive the idea of substance from observation precisely because perception can only generate qualities. Hence he had to posit the idea of substance as an innate idea. "When I examine my ideas I discover that most of them are either unclear or indistinct which come from experience or imagination. But there is another type of ideas called innate ideas which can neither come from experience nor be imagined which are really clear and distinct." Such ideas are called innate which must be implanted in us before our birth.

Clarity and distinctness must be the marks of truth, the distinguishing characteristics by which we can tell the true from the false. Hence whatever is clearly and distinctly conceived is true. "I call that clear which is present and apparent to an attentive mind, just as we say that we see objects clearly, when being present to the perceiving eye, they operate on it with sufficient strength. But the distinct is that which is so precise and different from everything else that it contains nothing within itself but what is clear." An experience or thought is clear and distinct if it is so forceful that we cannot avoid being aware of it.

As regards unclear and indistinct ideas we have no guarantee that what we believe is true. The faculty of judgement functions reliably in relation to the clear and distinct ideas that God has implanted in us. We make mistakes when we misuse our faculties. But we cannot make mistakes when we use them as God intends us to do. The human mind can achieve systematic and certain knowledge by starting with the cognition of what is self-evident. He wanted us to direct our thoughts in an orderly manner, beginning with the simplest and most easily known objects and ascend little by little, step by step, to knowledge of the most complex.

Cogito Ergo Sum

Descartes held that I can be absolutely certain only of me as a mental substance that thinks. I have clear and distinct idea about it. He wrote:

Considering that the very thoughts we have while awake may also occur while we sleep without any of them being at that time true, I resolved to pretend that all the things that had ever entered my mind were no more true than the illusions of my dreams. But immediately I noticed that while I was trying thus to think everything false, it was necessary that I, who was thinking this, was something. And observing that this truth 'I am thinking, therefore I exist' was so firm and sure that all the most extravagant suppositions of the sceptics were incapable of shaking it. I decided that I could accept it without scruple as the first principle of the philosophy I was seeking.

Descartes finally concluded that the proposition, I am/I exist is necessarily true whenever it is put forward by me or conceived in my mind. I am certain about this because I can clearly and distinctly see or understand what is being said.

Existence of God and World

One of the innate ideas we have is of a perfect being, God. We are merely finite, temporal creatures, and yet we have the idea of a substance that is infinite, eternal, immutable, omniscient and almighty. Descartes concluded that this idea can only be caused by something that possesses these perfections. Hence there must be a God who is perfect has implanted in me the idea of the perfect being.

Now Descartes is certain of two truths: that he exists and God exists. He continued to search for further certainties and realized that if God is a perfect being, then He won't deceive human beings because fraud and deception are imperfections and hence cannot be characteristics of a perfect being. If God is not a deceiver, then a great deal of the information that had earlier been considered suspect can now be considered reliable. All that is needed is to find out what God wants us to believe as true. Since he cannot deceive us we can place complete faith in the knowledge He gives us.

God has given us clear and distinct mathematical ideas like two plus two make four. Since God has forced this belief upon us, and since He cannot be a deceiver it must be true. We have divine guarantee here. "Every clear and distinct conception is certainly something, and therefore cannot come from nothing, but must necessarily come from God who is supremely perfect and cannot be the cause of any error." Thus he concludes that the entire realm of mathematical knowledge is true.

But mathematical knowledge only gives me truths about concepts in my mind. Is it possible that I can also be certain that there is an external world? We cannot rely on their existence through our senses for they deceive us. However, in general it is quite clear and distinct to us and we have a strong inclination to believe that there is an external world of material bodies. Since the belief in the external world is a natural one, God would be deceiving us unless it is true. As God is not a deceiver there must be an external physical world. The properties that we can safely attribute it are the primary qualities which are clear and distinct; but we cannot know with certainty the indistinct or unclear features of the world, namely secondary qualities.

Critical Appraisal

Descartes' picture of the world is hopelessly divided into substances that were defined in ways that mutually exclude each other. How could the mental world – a non-spatial, purely spiritual sphere – have any effect on the physical world of crass matter, and vice versa, in this radically dualistic scheme of things? He assigned all perceivable qualities to the mind and left only mathematically measurable quantities to the external world. Descartes replaced the commonsense view of the direct relation between self and the world with a most circuitous route of relating to the world through the mind.

Check Your Progress I

- Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) How did Descartes prove the existence of the self?

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2) How can we know for certain about God and the external world?

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1.5 JOHN LOCKE

Descartes claimed that he solved the problem of scepticism by his method of clear and distinct ideas. But the problem of the external world – the problem of knowing whether our inner representations were accurate - continued to haunt philosophers. John Locke (1632-1704) tried to work out an explanation of our knowledge in terms of sense experience. He argued that our knowledge comes to us through our senses and that we have no innate ideas. He attempted to show how various concepts or ideas come from or are built up on experience.

Lockean Mind

According to Locke mind at birth is a *tabula rasa* (clean slate) and all the characters of knowledge are acquired through experience. Experience is found in two forms of sensation and reflection. By sensation the mind receives data about the determinations of the external world and by reflection it acquires information about the operations of its own processes. A sensation arises by the affection of the body by external material things. This bodily affection is conveyed to the mind. As a realist he maintained that a sensation always represents something in the real world. As sensation tells us about the external world, so likewise reflection tells us about the internal world. The mind becomes aware of its own action.

Locke built from this theory an epistemology with a pair of distinctions: one between simple and complex ideas and another between primary and secondary qualities. Primary qualities are characteristics which inhere in them like extension, size and location. Secondary qualities are characteristics like colour, sound and taste which actually exist only in the mind but are caused by real features of external objects and attributed to them. This view of mind has come to be known as representative realism. According to it, the mind represents the external world, but does not duplicate it. The mind is something like a photograph with features that very accurately represent the world. Locke assumed that knowledge is purely receptive and representative. The copy-theory of knowledge is responsible for his rejection of the theory of an active mind. Thus he likens the mind to a mirror. Locke held the passivity of mind to save knowledge from becoming arbitrary and fictitious.

Locke's Ideas

Locke rejected the innate ideas of the rationalists though he was not against innate

powers. But the denial of the innate ideas did not mean the denial of the truths of science, morals and religion. Locke wanted to give them a basis sounder than that of the mystical belief in innate ideas. He claimed that much universal knowledge can be explained by his thesis of empiricism. Knowledge like $2+2=4$ is not innate but gained by having clear and distinct ideas through experience. The knowledge of the world around comes from actual observation of it and not from any introspective analysis of the furniture of the mind.

All ideas are acquired. But how are they acquired? Locke believed that real knowledge is composed of propositions; these propositions are composed of ideas. Hence we should find the origin of ideas which are the real materials of knowledge. A simple idea is an unanalyzable simple datum of knowledge like extension or duration. The mind is passive in the reception of simple ideas and active in making complex ideas. For example, we at once know the color and heat through sensation. The simple ideas enter the mind one by one, though the qualities to which they refer are found together. For instance, we get the ideas of color, smell, taste, touch of the apple one by one.

Locke's Knowledge

Knowledge, according to Locke, consists in "perception of the connection and agreement or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our ideas." First, knowledge depends on the mental power to perceive or apprehend ideas and not in the mere receptivity of ideas. Secondly, knowledge is rational for it consists in seeing the agreement or disagreement between ideas. Further, he confined knowledge to ideas alone without reference to real things.

There are three degrees of knowledge: intuitive, demonstrative and sensitive. Locke writes: "Sometimes the mind perceives the agreement or disagreement of two ideas immediately by themselves, without the intervention of any other and this, I think, we may call intuitive knowledge." Here we see the agreement or disagreement as directly as we see the light with our eyes. This knowledge is the most clear and certain and is the highest kind of knowledge which human faculty is capable of achieving. Locke was willing to admit only one case that we can be intuitively certain of, namely, our own existence.

In demonstrative knowledge we perceive the agreement or disagreement between two ideas by the mediation or intervention of other ideas. For example, we see that A and B are equal to one another because each is equal to C. We express the reasoning like this: $A=C$, $C=B$, and therefore $A=B$. The separate steps in the reasoning should be immediately clear. This demonstrative knowledge consists in a series or chain of intuitions. The knowledge gained by demonstrative method is certain but indirect. It is not clear for it passes through different stages. It also requires memory of the previous steps or intuitions. Thus demonstrative knowledge is inferior to intuitive knowledge in the degree of certainty. We can have demonstrative knowledge of God's existence.

Our sensitive knowledge extends to the objects that are present to our senses. Hence any science that man can develop about the world must always fall short of complete certainty. According to Locke anything that comes to acquire the certainty of intuitive or demonstrative knowledge is real knowledge and everything else is mere opinion. Though he did not find the element of certainty in sensitive knowledge, he could not deny the name of knowledge to it.

Critical Appraisal

A basic difficulty that Locke ran into and which has plagued empiricism is that of showing which of our ideas are real or which information conforms to real things. We have great many ideas in our minds that do not relate to anything in the actual world, such as mermaids, unicorns and the like. Secondly, if all our knowledge comes from experience then a good deal of the knowledge that rationalists like Descartes claimed that we have is to be considered illusory and invalid. The claims of innate ideas could not be justified in terms of our experiences and hence they have to be discarded. Thirdly, if knowledge is about the agreement and disagreement of ideas we can never tell that our knowledge is actually about something outside of us?

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What is the role of ideas in the theory of knowledge of Locke?

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2) Write a short note on the kinds of knowledge according to Locke.

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1.6 DAVID HUME

David Hume (1711-1776) had a deep interest in scepticism with an extreme doubt that philosophers were capable of discovering truth about any matter whatsoever. He was convinced that in order to uncover knowledge we should make an inquiry into human psychology. This science would examine the processes by which we think and try to find out how people form their views and come to believe what they do about the nature of events.

Humean Mind

Hume's greatest philosophical work, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, claims to be the application of the scientific method, that Isaac Newton had successfully employed in solving physical problems, to the mental world. What is to be examined is the mental nature of human beings, their psychology, in order to see the actual processes by which our alleged knowledge develops. By understanding what human beings are like we may find out something important about the nature of the knowledge that human beings possess. He held that we may not be able to discover the ultimate original qualities of human nature, but by examining our

experiences, we may be able to find some general hypothesis about human nature that could be of greatest value. Hume inherits the psychological method employed by Locke and Berkeley. According to Hume there are two kinds of contents of the mind, namely, impressions and their ideas. These are the only perceptions which compose the human mind.

Hume's Impressions and Ideas

According to Hume impressions and ideas are divided into simple and complex. Simple ideas or impressions are those which admit of no separation or distinction, like the sensation of red or cold or smell. Complex ideas or impressions are those which are composed of simple parts like the idea of an apple, having the parts of colour taste, smell etc. Ideas may appear either in the form of memory or imagination. In imagination we are freer to produce complex ideas, but memory is tied down to their corresponding impressions. And since ideas derive from impressions, it is clear that Hume thinks that there are no innate ideas which precede corresponding impressions.

Simple impressions are the originals of which the simple ideas are the copies. Thus impressions are prior and the ideas are posterior. There can be no simple ideas without their corresponding original impressions. Complex ideas may be compounded in fancy, but their elements do correspond to the impressions. For example, we may fancy a Tajmahal whose pavements are made of gold and whose walls are built of rubies. However, the elements of pavement, gold, wall, and ruby are all derived from simple impressions.

In determining the simple elements of which the mind is composed, Hume takes the help of his famous dogma 'what is distinguishable is separable.' All impressions are distinct and separate with no logical connection between them. This is known as Humean atomism. But knowledge is a unified whole and a connected system. Hence Hume supplements his atomism with the principles of union and cohesion amongst the separate impressions. He points out that there is a gentle force which attracts the separate impressions into union. This gentle force is nothing but the law of association, the principle which binds the separate ideas.

Hume's Scepticism

Hume analysed the furniture of the mind in terms of fleeting impressions. Taking impressions as his touchstone he called in question the validity of the concepts of substance, causality etc. We are left with passing impressions only; there is no necessary connection between the impressions. His science of man (psychology) was the main cause of his scepticism. But he was not a total sceptic because total scepticism is self-contradictory. He was a 'moderate' sceptic. His display of sceptical arguments purports to show that truth lies in the custom, habit, or imagination and not in reason. True thinking is really sensitive and not cogitative in nature. Hume used scepticism as a powerful weapon of attack against rationalism.

According to Hume we have no reason to believe that there is a material world beyond our perceptions. However, he admits that we have a natural inclination to believe that there are material objects in the world and that those objects cause our perceptions. In the *Enquiry* he argues that there is no evidence that this is the case, and indeed that no evidence could ever be acquired. The belief that material objects cause our perceptions may be instinctive, yet it is not a scientific

one. It is mere speculation. Thus, if knowledge is thought of as requiring certainty, then we have real knowledge of very little indeed.

Critical Appraisal

Hume is one of the greatest philosophers of the modern period. He gave importance to experience, habit, custom and social culture. Yet there are some problems with Hume's claim that all ideas are copies of impressions. One is that even if ideas are derived from impression, not all ideas seem to be literally copies of the corresponding impressions. When you remember an event, for example, it is not like rerunning a movie in your mind. Or when you remember a person, your memory need not be like a photograph of him. It is not at all clear that the idea you have when you remember something differs from the original impression by only a degree of vivacity.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) How does Hume describe his theory of knowledge?

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2) Why did Hume embrace scepticism?

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1.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have been trying to examine the role of the mind in acquiring knowledge in the opinion of rationalists and empiricists. We have been trying to make a short survey of the theory of knowledge of Descartes, Locke and Hume. All of them base their theory on a picture of mind that works like a mirror in representing the world and itself. According to Descartes mind mirrors the innate ideas of self, God, mathematical and logical concepts and primary qualities of objects in the external world. All ideas are innate; no new ideas are received even though new ideas may be composed using the already present innate ideas. Reality is reflected in the mind. According to Locke and Hume mind is empty at birth and hence all ideas are received into the mind and then composed by it. The mind mirror pictures the world through the senses. For Hume mind forms ideas by copying the sense impression or by memory or imagination. The mind mirror roughly constructs a picture of the world using fleeting impressions from the world under the influence of custom and imagination.

1.8 KEY WORDS

Innate ideas	: Ideas in the mind prior to and independent of sense experience.
Impression	: Mark made upon the mind by objects of experience through the senses.
Sense data	: Sense datum is that which is perceived immediately by any one of the senses, prior to interpretation by the mind.
Copy theory	: The theory that the mind copies the image of the objects by which we can compare the copy of the object in the mind and the real object outside.
Representation	: The mind does not have direct acquaintance with its objects but it apprehends them through the medium of ideas that are supposed to those objects.

1.9 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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1.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. To discover a firm foundation of absolute certainty upon which to build his objective system of knowledge, Descartes chose a method of radical doubt. He began with doubting everything that could be doubted beginning with senses until he could discover a proposition that was logically indubitable. He found that in the very act of doubting his essence was manifest. He could not extend the application of doubt to his own existence. Doubt is a kind of thinking. So he arrived at an indubitable truth to found his philosophy: "I think, therefore I exist". Anybody is certain about this because he/she can clearly and distinctly see or understand what is being said.

2. When we look into our mind we find the innate idea of a perfect being. Though we are finite, temporal creatures, we have the idea of a substance that is infinite, eternal, immutable, omniscient and almighty. For Descartes this idea can only be caused by something that possesses such perfections. Hence there must be a God who is perfect. Is it possible that I can also be certain that there is an external world? We cannot rely on their existence through our senses for they deceive us. However, it is quite clear and distinct to us and we have a strong inclination to believe that there is an external world of material bodies. Since the belief in the external world is a natural one, God would be deceiving us unless it is true. As God is not a deceiver there must be an external physical world.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

1. Locke denied the existence of innate ideas. The knowledge of the world around is gained through ideas formed from sense data. According to Locke real knowledge is composed of propositions; these propositions are composed of ideas. Hence we should find the origin of ideas which are the real materials of knowledge. A simple idea is an unanalyzable simple datum of knowledge. The mind is passive in the reception of simple ideas and active in making complex ideas. For example, we at once know the color and heat through sensation. The simple ideas enter the mind one by one, though the qualities to which they refer are found together. For instance, we get the ideas of color, smell, taste, touch of the apple one by one.
2. Knowledge, according to Locke, consists in “perception of the connection and agreement or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our ideas.” There are three degrees of knowledge: intuitive, demonstrative and sensitive. Intuitive knowledge is a direct intellectual perception. It is the most clear, certain and highest kind of knowledge. We get intuitively certain knowledge of our own existence. In demonstrative knowledge we perceive the agreement or disagreement between two ideas by the mediation or intervention of other ideas. For example, we see that A and B are equal to one another because each is equal to C. We express the reasoning like this: $A=C$, $C=B$, and therefore $A=B$. Demonstrative knowledge is inferior to intuitive knowledge in the degree of certainty. We can have demonstrative knowledge of God’s existence. Our sensitive knowledge extends to the objects that are present to our senses. Any science about the world lacks complete certainty; it is mere opinion, though we can call it by the name knowledge.

Answers to Check Your Progress III

1. According to Hume by understanding the nature of human beings we may understand the nature of human knowledge. Knowledge is gained through impressions and ideas. Simple ideas or impressions are those which admit of no separation or distinction, like the sensation of red or cold or smell. Complex ideas or impressions are composed of simple parts of an apple like colour, taste, smell etc. Knowledge is a unified whole and a connected system. So Hume introduces the principles of union and cohesion amongst the separate impressions. There is a gentle force which attracts the impressions into union. It is the law of association, the principle which binds the separate ideas. Ideas may appear either in the form of memory or imagination. In

imagination we are freer to produce complex ideas, but memory is tied down to their corresponding impressions.

2. Hume analysed the furniture of the mind in terms of fleeting impressions. There is no necessary connection between the impressions. His display of sceptical arguments purports to show that truth lies in the custom, habit, or imagination and not in reason. True thinking is really sensitive and not cogitative in nature. Hume used scepticism as a powerful weapon of attack against rationalism. According to him we have no reason to believe that there is a material world beyond our perceptions. In the *Enquiry* he argues that no scientific evidence could ever be acquired to prove our belief in material objects; it is mere speculation. Thus, if knowledge requires certainty, then we have very little real knowledge indeed.