CHAPTER- II

JOHN LOCKE'S CAUSAL THEORY OF PERCEPTION

In this chapter we propose to discuss John Locke’s causal theory of perception. Causal theory of perception means that our perceptions are caused by something. They do not arise in a vacuum. It always has a cause, or in other words it is caused by something. In the context of Locke we find that our perceptions are caused by external material substances through their primary qualities. In other words perception takes place when material objects, in terms of their primary qualities, act upon us. Primary and secondary qualities form an important part of Locke’s ontological framework. The abode of the primary qualities is substance. Substance which even though exists for Locke is something which he holds ‘I know not’, in other words unknown and unknowable.

The above mentioned aspects involve Locke’s ontology and epistemology. Thus it implies that Locke’s causal theory of perception cannot be properly understood without a reference to his ontology and epistemology. While discussing Locke’s ontology and epistemology, which we will do later, we find that he accepts certain Cartesian assumptions.
So, in this chapter we propose to discuss Locke’s causal theory of perception and in doing so, we will analyze and examine his ontology and epistemology and bring out its relation to that of Descartes. Our concern is to trace the origin of Lockean theory in the light of preceding philosophers. We will also try to show that Locke was greatly influenced by the scientific and technological developments of his age. The theories of Newton and Robert Boyle made a great impact on his philosophical position. We propose to say that Locke tried to validate the scientific and technological development of his age. “The ‘Elements of Natural Philosophy’ which he wrote shortly after the Essay appeared, shows that he believed the contemporary scientific theories to be a true description of the world.”

Rogers says “Boyle had considerable influence on Locke’s thinking, and especially on Locke’s theory of knowledge as presented in the Essay Concerning Human Understanding.” We find that Locke attempts to validate scientific knowledge by acknowledging two main prerequisites—material substance and necessary causal connections. During seventeenth century modern English society and a modern state began to take shape and England’s position in the world was transformed. In the early seventeenth century England was a second class power but by the end

---

of it was the greatest world power. The East India Company (Locke was also associated with it) which was formed in 1601 was now the most powerful corporation in the country. There was a considerable industrial expansion. Its basis was a rapid development of coal production. High timber prices created the demand and England's excellent water communication provided the means of transport. By 1640 England produced three times as much coal as the rest of Europe put together. Iron production increased five times in the century after the Reformation. Ship building expanded with internal and external trade. Rising population led to pressure on the means of subsistence which could only have been met by an industrial production and of the cultivated area. And all this needed scientific and technological development which could only be met by providing an ideological support to matter.

We will attempt to show that to a large extent Locke's ontological position is almost similar to that of Descartes. Even though Descartes was a rationalist and Locke criticizes many aspects of Cartesian philosophy, yet, in certain important respects he accepts some of the basic premises of Descartes. In this chapter we will discuss the ontology and epistemology of John Locke who was the pioneer of British empiricism and shall show that he takes for granted both sides of Cartesian dualism, where there is separation of mind and matter and mind is prior to matter.
Like Descartes, Locke is also a dualist. He accepts both sides of his dualism. Hume and Ayer accept only the mental side which we will discuss in another chapter. But unlike rationalist Descartes, Locke in his epistemology, holds that experience is the only source of knowledge. Here it is important to mention that though Locke rejects rationalism, he assigns a safer place to Cartesian dualism by giving an independent status to the material substance. We will attempt to show that this acceptance of Cartesian dualism as well as empiricism, results in various contradictions in Locke's philosophy and material substance remains unknown and unknowable. In this connection Prof. Suman Gupta says: “Though Locke rejected the rationalism of Descartes, he accepted Cartesian dualism. Like Descartes, Locke also regards mind and matter to be two causally independent substances, mind having the attribute of thinking and matter having the attribute of extension, solidity etc.”

Locke is regarded as the founder of British empiricism which emerged in opposition to rationalism. In the beginning we have already discussed our methodology that we are adopting in this thesis i.e. the distinction between what a philosopher claims to be doing and what he actually does. We, here, will state that even though at no place Locke

---

accepts Cartesian dualism, yet, while giving our exposition of Locke's philosophy, we will attempt to show that he takes for granted Cartesian dualism with some of its implications. Even though Locke, while giving an exposition of his empiricist position claims that perception is the only source of knowledge, yet, we will, while giving his position on substance, primary and secondary qualities, and intuitive and demonstrative knowledge etc., attempt to show that he, in his ontology goes beyond sense perception and accepts what he calls 'operations of the mind'. Operations of the mind through which complex ideas are formed can not be considered as a result of knowledge through experience but is certainly a rational source of knowledge.

Descartes says that at the time of our birth we have certain innate ideas in our mind which are self proved. They are basically intellectual. Traditionally these ideas have been called innate ideas but the theory of innate ideas in seventeenth century England is throughout bound up with theological interests. "Its formulation by Lord Herbert and its development by Cambridge Platonists were due to its bearing upon religious doctrines. Lord Herbert had hoped that the theory would help the deistic movement; for it provided what seemed to him a firm basis for 'natural religion', a basis so unassailable that by comparison therewith the alleged truths of revealed religion and the official dogmas of the orthodox appeared both
unfounded and contemptible. The Cambridge Platonists turned the theory in order to promote the cause of the liberal wing of the Church of England. They stood for a comprehensive churchmanship, wishing men of diverse opinions on many disputed (and to them minor) points to worship together in peace, and trusting thereby to smooth over the quarrels of the troubled revolutionary days. They thought of the innate ideas as a kind of glorified reason, a more-than-human and a more-than-personal reason, the 'candle of the Lord' which burned with less flickering in the minds of men than any lesser form of merely human reason. They believed that the appeal to this semi-divine reason would displace the capricious and heated assertions of the rival authorities of church, council, bishop, creed, or special revelation. The insight of the reason was to supplant the noisy warfare of sectarian dogma." 4

Locke criticizes these innate ideas and in order to do so he interprets innate ideas as certain principles which are 'stamped upon the mind of man, which the soul receives in its very first being and brings into the world with it'. Here Locke rejects Descartes' concept of innate ideas. And with a view to clearing the ground for laying the empiricist foundations of knowledge, he forwards following argument to refute them:

“It is an established opinion amongst some men that there are in the understanding certain innate principles, some primary notions, character as it were, stamped upon the mind which the soul receives in its very first being and brings into the world with it. It would be sufficient to convince the unprejudiced readers of the falseness of this supposition if I should only show (as I hope I shall in the following part of discourse) how men, barely by the use of their natural faculties, may attain to all the knowledge they have, without the help of any innate impressions and may arrive at certainty without any such original notions and principles.”

Against this theory Locke argues in the first place that even if it were true that all men agree about certain principles this would not prove that these principles are innate. He says that the argument which is brought in favour of the theory of innate ideas is worthless. For there is no universal consent about the truth of any principle. Children and idiots have minds but they have no knowledge of the principle that it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be. Yet if this principle were really innate, it must be known.

Locke argues that no knowledge can be attained independent of experience. He maintains that all our knowledge is derived from sense experience i.e. through sensation and reflection and prior to sense experience, mind, in his view, is like a blank sheet of paper or tabula rasa. In this context he writes: “Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any idea. How comes it to be furnished? Whence comes it by that vast store which the busy and boundless fancy of man has painted on it with an almost endless variety? Whence has it all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, from experience; in that all our knowledge is founded and from that it ultimately derives itself. Our observation employed either about external sensible objects, or about the internal operations of our minds, perceived and reflected on by ourselves, is that which supplies our understanding with all the materials of thinking. These two are the fountains of knowledge from whence all the ideas we have, or can have, naturally do spring.”

Thus, according to Locke our knowledge is derived through ideas. But what is idea for Locke? “The doctrine in question may be briefly stated in the proposition that perception of surrounding bodies (and

---

ultimately of our own bodies) takes place by means of certain representative images or phantasms which are some times called ideas."

Here it may be made clear that Locke sometimes speaks of our ideas of sensible qualities while at other times the sensible qualities are spoken of as ideas. The idea for him is at once the apprehension of a content and the content apprehended. Further, he uses the term idea not only for sense-data but also for concepts and universal ideas. Idea, for Locke, is ‘the object of understanding’ constituting the ‘materials of knowledge. At the same time he equates idea with perception saying ‘having ideas and perception is the same thing’. Ideas are incapable of change as well as confusion. In the course of our exposition of Locke’s philosophy, we will try to show that this careless use of the term ‘idea’ does not serve the cause of clarity. This view has been supported by M.R. Annand also when he says “...almost all the difficulties of Locke’s theory of knowledge centre round his ambiguous use of the term idea.”

Thus experience, Locke claims, constitutes the source of knowledge. Though he claims that experience is the only source of knowledge yet he accepts the ‘operations of the mind’ also through which mind comes to

---

know a reality which is not given in experience such as substance, relation and modes. Locke says that through experience we can know only our own ideas i.e. simple ideas, not the external material objects. In this connection Suman Gupta writes: “Locke maintains that the mind through sense experience can not know the external material objects themselves. It can only know its own ideas which are produced in the mind through the actions of the external material objects.”9

This is called Locke’s causal theory of perception. Locke thus seems to make a distinction between the internal and external- the ideas in the mind being internal and the material objects being external. Therefore it follows that Locke accepts the dualism of the mind and body as stated by Descartes. This views is supported by Suman Gupta when she writes: “The distinction between the external and internal is based upon dualism of mind and body because contents of mind can be regarded internal only when we do not regard the mind as dependent upon the body.”10

But when asked about the nature of this body of the material world, Locke says that it is unknown and unknowable. This position results in contradiction. On the one hand he maintains that ideas are caused by the

10 Ibid., p. 39.
material objects and on the other hand he holds that material objects are unknown and unknowable. To say that it has primary qualities is to say that it is known and knowable. Locke has been criticized for this inconsistency in his philosophy. In this regard Maurice Cornforth writes: "...he could be criticized in that having said that our ideas are the products of the action of external objects and are copies of such objects, he nevertheless maintained that knowledge is limited to the relations between ideas, and that the substance of objective things is unknowable."

In fact Locke gave a distorted view of the various categories of knowledge such as the subject of knowledge, the object of knowledge, the material substance etc., and in the process of his analysis committed a number of inconsistencies and contradictions." But before we discuss the causal theory of perception further, we will, here give a brief account of Locke's position on the two sources of knowledge, i.e. sensation and reflection.

Locke holds that there are two sources of knowledge, namely, sensation and reflection. Through sensation mind gets the idea of sensible qualities. He writes: "First our senses conversant about particular sensible qualities."
objects, do *convey into the mind* several distinct *perceptions* of things; according to those various ways wherein those objects do affect them. And thus we come by those *ideas* we have of *yellow, white, heat, cold, soft, hard, bitter, sweet*, and all those which we call sensible qualities; which when I say the senses convey into the mind, I mean, they from external objects convey into the mind what produces there those *perceptions*. This great source of most of the *ideas* we have, depending wholly upon our senses, and derived by them to the understanding, I call SENSATION.”

On the other hand, reflection, according to Locke conveys to the mind ideas of its own inner experiences such as perception, thinking, believing etc. He writes: “....the other fountain from which experience furnishth the understanding with *ideas* is the *perception of the operations of our own minds* within us, as it is employed about the *ideas* it has got; which operations, when the soul comes to reflect on and consider, do furnish the understanding with another set of *ideas*, which could not be had from things without. And such are *perception, thinking, doubting, believing, reasoning, knowing, willing*, and all the different actings of our own minds; which we, being conscious of and observing in ourselves, do from these

---

receive into our understandings as distinct ideas as we do from bodies affecting our senses. I call this REFLECTION.\textsuperscript{14}

It may be mentioned here that Locke uses 'operations of the mind' in two different senses, depending upon the context. One sense is, where by operations of the mind he means the inner experience of man which are not derived from outside and in the second sense he uses the term in the context of the formations of complex ideas.

Reverting back to Locke's exposition of sensation and reflection as the sources of knowledge, through sensation we get the ideas of sensible qualities such as yellow, white, heat, cold, etc. and through reflection we receive the ideas of perception, thinking, believing, reasoning etc. Sensation arises when material things act on us. This is the place where we find Locke's causal theory of perception which basically means that perception is caused by material things. Our sensation arises when material things in terms of their primary and secondary qualities affect on us. Primary and secondary qualities are the causes of our perception of things.

Now let's discuss Locke's exposition of primary and secondary qualities. But before we discuss qualities, we will give an exposition of

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., Book II, Chapter I, Section 4, p. 78.
Locke’s complex idea of substance. This is necessary to deal with the qualities because, according to Locke, substance is the abode of primary qualities. It is the substance where they inhere. So any discussion of qualities logically implies that we should discuss the idea of substance first. Therefore we will discuss substance first and then will come to qualities. According to Locke substance is a complex idea. Apart from substance, there are two other complex ideas i.e. modes and relation which we will discuss while dealing with complex ideas. Here we propose to discuss the complex idea of substance.

Now we will discuss Locke’s complex idea of substance but before discussing it let us see what is substance as it has been understood by various philosophers. Here, we will trace the concept of substance in Locke’s philosophy from the philosophies of Aristotle, Descartes and Spinoza.

The concept of substance has its origin in the Greek philosophy, particularly in the Aristotelian philosophy. He uses the term ‘Quasia’ for substance which means property in the legal sense of the word. The Latin term ‘Substatia’ from which the English term is derived is a literal translation of the Greek word ‘Hypostasis’ (standing under). The third
term ‘Hypokaimenon’, meaning that which underlies something is used by both Plato and Aristotle.

Aristotle defines substance as “substance in truest and primary and most definite sense of the word is, that which is neither predicatable of a subject nor present in a subject. For instance the individual man or the horse”.\textsuperscript{15} It means that the substance in the most basic sense of the word is the concrete individual thing. However, he mentions second sense of the word also: “Those things are called substance within which, as species, the primary substances are individual; also those which, as genera, include the species. For instance the individual man is included in the species ‘Man’ and the genera to which species belong is ‘Animal’; these therefore - the species ‘Man’ and the genera ‘Animal’ are termed secondary substances. These secondary substances are predicatable of a substance for an instance man is predicatable of all the individual men.”\textsuperscript{16}

Here it seems to us that he has the idea that essences are nature or substance and the more qualities they comprise, the more substantial they are. This notion of essences as substance is treated at length by Aristotle in his \textit{Metaphysics} and seems to be his preferred sense of the term. It seems

\textsuperscript{15} Categories, 2A, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 2A, p. 21-22.
to us that what he means, although he does not express himself clearly, is
that what is capable of individual existence is the concrete individual thing,
a substance with its qualities and its network of relations to other
substances. But once we introduce the notion of relation involving other
substances, we put a restriction on independent existence.

Another criterion of the substance is that "while remaining
numerically one and the same it is incapable of admitting contrary
qualities"17 which he calls the most distinctive mark of the substance. This
notion is developed more by later philosophers than by Aristotle himself
into the conception of a centre of change and so of a substratum that
underlies and supports its qualities.

Finally Aristotle emphasizes the notion of substance as a logical
substance "that which is not asserted of a subject but of which every thing
is asserted."18 This notion has been highly criticized. It is based on the
assumption that the subject-predicate sentences are the standard mode of
expression which is not the case that the sentences in all the languages fall
into a subject predicate form. In fact all these notions of substance are
never thoroughly worked out and reconciled in Aristotle. He appears to

17 Ibid., 4A, p. 10.
18 Metaphysics, 1029, A8.
emphasize now one and now another mark of substance. His discussion of
the concept of the substance in Metaphysics is tentative and not finally
conclusive. But it can be said that for Aristotle, substance is concrete
individual and he holds the view that there is a plurality of individual
substances. In fact from the above discussion it becomes clear that
Aristotle’s description of substance involves dualism. For Aristotle
substance is that which is always a subject and that which is not predicable
to any thing. Thus the predicate is dependent on substance. Thus Aristotle
accepts dualism of substance i.e. one which is always a subject and the
other which is always a predicate.

Further, a thorough study of Aristotle reveals that although he
begins with individuals as primary substances, he is gradually led to
consider ‘universals’ or ‘essences’ as the true substances. We may refer to
John Warrington’s interpretation of Aristotle when he writes: “He finally
concludes that essence is substance i.e. the principle of structure whose
presence in a collection of materials renders them no more aggregate but an
organised whole”19

While discussing Locke, we will find that he accepts substance in
the Aristotelian senses of universal, and essence, and substratum. But
compared to Aristotle's period, science in Locke's time had made considerable progress; and keeping the scientific ideas of that period in view, Locke introduces some new concepts in his doctrine of material substance such as the distinction between primary and secondary qualities, real essence and nominal essence etc. which are not there in Aristotelian theory.

In modern period, same Aristotelian concept of substance has been taken up by Descartes who defines substance as: "Everything in which there resides immediately, as in a subject, or by means of which there exists anything that we perceive i.e. any property, quality or attribute of which we have a real idea is called a substance; neither do we have any other idea of substance itself, precisely taken, than that it is a thing in which this something that we perceive or which is present objectively in some of our ideas exist formally or eminently. For by means of our natural light we know that a real attribute can not be an attribute of nothing."\(^{20}\) In other context he defines substance as: "Really the notion of the substance is just this-that which can exist by itself, without the aid of any other substance."\(^{21}\)

---

\(^{21}\) Ibid., p. 101.
On the basis of this definition Descartes assumes three type of substances- material bodies, minds and God. The former two being relative substances, though independent of one another, are dependent on God. Thus in Descartes also we find the dualism of substance which is mind and matter.

Descartes second definition has been taken up by Spinoza in his ‘Ethics’. He defines substance which exists by itself and is conceived through itself. Now let us see what is Locke’s position of substance. Though Locke never says that he is a dualist but like Descartes he also accepts two substances.

Every material thing has been defined by Locke as a substance but there is a material substance which comprises individual substances. He defines material substance as: "the ideas of substances are such combinations of simple ideas as are taken to represent distinct particular things subsisting by themselves, in which the supposed or confused idea of substance, such as it is, is always the first and chief."22

---

This is particular substance for Locke. These are: "nothing but several combinations of simple ideas, co-existing in such, though unknown, cause of their union as makes the whole subsist of itself. It is by such combinations of simple ideas that we represent particular sorts of substances to ourselves."23 For example, we have a number of simple ideas which go together in experience and we call the combination of them by one name 'rose'. But he accepts a general substance also and writes: "not imagining how these simple ideas can subsist by themselves, we accustom ourselves to suppose some substratum wherein they do subsist, and from which they do result; which therefore we call substance."24 This is the idea of substance in general, namely, "a supposition of he knows not what support of such qualities, which are capable of producing simple ideas in us; which qualities are commonly called accidents."25

The simple ideas which we unite to form the complex idea of substance are obtained through sensation and reflection. Thus, our idea of spiritual substance of the soul is obtained by combining together several ideas of thinking, doubting and so on. Our distinct ideas of corporal substances are made up of the ideas of primary qualities and secondary qualities.

23 Ibid., Book II, Chapter XII, Section 6, p. 247.
24 Ibid., Book II, Chapter XXIII, Section 1, p. 245.
25 Ibid., Book II, Chapter XXIII, Section 2, p. 245.
Locke says that the mind supplies the idea of a substratum, or support in which the primary qualities inhere and which has the power of producing in us, by means of the primary qualities, simple ideas of secondary qualities. Ayers says that in Locke "the concept of substance, substratum, or thing is ... a concept by means of which we refer to what is unobserved and unknown". Bolt is of the opinion that "In the account of substance, it is the notion of the substratum that predominates; in contrast to ideas of all other sorts."

The general idea of substance is "...nothing but the supposed, but unknown, support of those qualities we find existing, which we imagine can not subsist sine re substance, without something to support them, we call that support substantia; which, according to the true import of the word, is, in plain English, standing under or upholding."

Here it is important to note that Locke is talking about the origin of our idea of substance, not its existence. In Locke's view the inference to substance is justified. We do not perceive substance; we infer substance as

28 Ibid., Book II, Chapter XXIII, Section 2, p. 245.
the support of 'accidents', qualities or modes because the later can not be
conceived as subsisting by themselves. It is the idea of a substratum in
which primary qualities inhere and which possess the power of causing
simple ideas in us.

The general idea of substance, which is not clear and distinct, must
be distinguished from our ideas of particular substances. We come to have
the ideas of particular sorts of substances by collecting such combinations
of simple ideas as we notice to exist together and suppose these to flow
from some internal constitution unknown to us. Thus the essence of each
species or sort is merely what Locke calls an abstract idea. That is, the
species of things is only "...the ranking them under distinct names,
according to the complex idea in us..."29 Thus "it appears Locke denies the
reality of natural species."30

Thus, Locke distinguishes between particular substances, such as
lead or gold, and substance-in-general which is: "what would be left-if all
the qualities that distinguish particular substances from one another could
be stripped away, that is a qualityless substratum for the qualities."31 The
former are obtained by combining several simple ideas but the later is not.
Locke tells us that the general idea of substance is obtained through

29 Ibid., Book III, Chapter XXXI, p. 60.
30 Bolton, Martha Brandt, 'Substance, Substrata, and Names of Substances in Locke's Essay',
'abstraction'. Here we may recall that all dependable simple ideas must be either of sensation or reflection; yet the idea of substance is an idea neither of sensation or reflection, but is only a supposed or confused idea. By the word we signify "...only an uncertain supposition of we know not what, i.e. of something whereof we have no particular distinct positive idea, which we take to be the substratum, or support, of those ideas we do know."32

Our faculties, Locke says, carry us no farther toward the knowledge of substance than a collection of those sensible ideas which we observe in them; and of the substantial forms we have scarce so much as an obscure or confused conception in general. Our experience, he remarks, shows that we have clear ideas of nothing beyond certain simple ideas coexistent together. Yet, since we are unable to understand how these simple ideas may subsist alone, we "...suppose them existing in and supported by some common subject; which support we denote by the name substance...."33

What we do or can truly know of substance, then, must be merely some collection of simple ideas, compounded into what Locke calls a complex idea. Thus the most nearly perfect idea of any kind of substance is that which gathers together most of "those simple ideas which do exist in it"34 Locke says: "The more, indeed, of these coexisting qualities we unite

---

32 Ibid., Book II, Chapter III, Section 19, p. 43.
33 Ibid., Book II, Chapter XXIII, Section 4, p. 246.
34 Ibid., Book II, Chapter XXIII, Section 7, p. 248.
into one complex idea, under one name, the more precise and determinate we make the signification of that word.”

Yet, finally it appears that this collection is never complete, so that our knowledge of material substance is never perfect. One of the chief reasons for this imperfection and incompleteness is the nature of the secondary qualities which we are about to discuss in coming paragraphs. Locke conceives that: “The ideas that our complex ones of substances are made up of, and about which our knowledge concerning substances is most employed, are those of their secondary qualities.”

As we will see later, secondary qualities do not belong to the material substances itself, but are only produced in us by its primary qualities. Thus, for us to know the secondary qualities is never to know anything about the substance. Still, if one has some clues as to which primary qualities and powers produce the secondary qualities in us, this might constitute some real knowledge of material substance. But this possibility has already been ruled out in Locke’s description of matter since he holds that these secondary qualities of substance depend “...upon the primary qualities of their minute and insensible parts; or if not upon them,

---

35 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter VI, Section 10, p. 185.
36 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter III, Section 11, p. 150.
upon something yet more remote from our comprehension.... we do not
know the root they spring from....”37

This is a brief survey of substance. It constitutes the most important
aspect of Locke’s causal theory of perception and this issue we will be
taking up again and again in our thesis.

After giving a brief account of substance, which according to Locke,
is the support of primary qualities, we are now in a position to discuss his
exposition of primary and secondary qualities. We propose to say that
qualities are the prime component of Locke’s causal theory of perception.
While supporting this view J.W. Yolton says “One of Locke’s interest
with primary qualities was with the way they play causal role in
perception”38

Locke defines qualities as: “....the power to produce any idea in our
mind I call quality of the subject wherein that power is.”39 Taking the
example of a snowball, he explains that the snowball’s powers of
producing in us the ideas of white, cold and round are ‘qualities’. A further
distinction must be made now. Some qualities are inseparable from a body,

37 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter III, Section 11, p. 150.
38 Yolton J.W., ‘Locke and the Compass of Human Understanding’, Cambridge, Cambridge
39 Ibid., Book II, Chapter VIII, Section 8, p. 104.
whatever changes it undergoes. A grain of wheat has solidity, extension, figure and mobility. If it is divided, each part retains these qualities. These are 'primary qualities'. He defines primary qualities as: "First, such as are utterly inseparable from the body, in what state soever it be; such as in all the alterations and changes it suffers, all the force can be used upon it, it constantly keeps; and such as sense constantly finds in every particle of matter, which has bulk enough to be perceived; and the mind finds inseparable from every particle of matter though less than to make itself singly be perceived by our senses....These I call original or primary qualities of body; which I think we may observe to produce simple ideas in us, viz. solidity, extension, figure, motion or rest, and number." 40

Besides these primary qualities, there are also secondary qualities. They are 'nothing in the objects themselves but powers to produce various sensations in us by their primary qualities. Such are colours, sounds, tastes etc. In the words of Locke, 'secondary qualities' have been defined as: "Secondly, such qualities which in truth are nothing in the objects themselves but powers to produce various sensations in us by their primary qualities i.e. by the bulk, figure, texture, and motion of their insensible parts, as colours, sounds, taste etc. These I call secondary qualities." 41

40 Ibid., Book II, Chapter VIII, Section 9, p. 104.
41 Ibid., Book II, Chapter VIII, Section 10, pp. 104-105.
Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities consists in "That the ideas of primary qualities of bodies are resemblances of them and their patterns do really exist in the bodies themselves, but the ideas produced in us by these secondary qualities have no resemblance of them at all. There is nothing like our ideas existing in the bodies themselves. They are, in the bodies we denominate from them, only a power to produce those sensations in us."\(^{42}\)

This point has been further elaborated by him when he says: "The particular \textit{bulk, number, figure and motion of the parts of fire or snow} are \textit{really in them}, whether any one's senses perceive them or no; and therefore they may be called \textit{real qualities}, because they really exist in those bodies. But \textit{light, heat, whiteness, coldness are no more really in them than sickness or pain is in manna}. Take away the sensation of them, let not the eye see light or colours, not the ears hear sounds; let the palate not taste, nor the nose smell; and all colours, tastes, odours, and sounds as they are such particular \textit{ideas}, vanish and cease, and are reduced to their causes, i.e. bulk, figure, and motion of parts."\(^{43}\)

\(^{42}\) Ibid., Book II, Chapter VIII, Section 17, pp. 106-107.

\(^{43}\) Ibid., Book II, Chapter VIII, Section 17, pp. 106-107.
Locke holds that, unlike primary qualities, it is not possible for the secondary qualities to be in the objects themselves. It is so because "It would by most men be judged very extravagant if one should say otherwise. And yet he that will consider that the same fire that at one distance produces in us the sensation of warmth, docs, at a nearer approach, produce in us a far different sensation of pain, ought to bethink himself what reason he has to say that his idea of warmth, which was produced in him by the fire, is actually in the fire; and his idea of pain, which the same fire produced in him the same way, is not in the fire. Why are whiteness and coldness in snow and pain not, when it produces the one and the other idea in us; and can do neither, but by the bulk, figure, number, and motion of its solid parts?"\(^{44}\)

Regarding Locke's description of primary and secondary qualities Prof. Suman Gupta writes: "The real explanation of Locke's distinction between the primary and secondary qualities lies in the fact that Locke tried to retain as objective those material elements which constitute the basis of mechanical materialism viz. solidity, figure, motion, volume etc. And all other properties that could not be explained by means of mechanics were

\(^{44}\) Ibid., Book II, Chapter VIII, Section 16, p. 106.
declared to be secondary, definable only by subject's mental state having no objective existence."\(^{45}\)

We may here mention that Locke's distinction between the primary and secondary qualities is deeply influenced by the 17th century scientific conception of the world. The pioneer physicists like Newton and Galileo held that the various natural phenomena of the world, ultimately, can be interpreted wholly in terms of laws of physics. They conceived the physical world in terms of particles which are only quantitative properties like extension and all those. In other words they separated the matter from motion. The motion was introduced into matter from outside. The conception of inseparability of matter and motion, which is the basic feature of mechanical materialism, was not discovered by the scientists. It is this Newtonian world-view which is embodied in Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities. Primary qualities of Locke are the properties of the physical world as conceived by the 17th century scientists Newton and Galileo. This point we have discussed earlier while discussing Descartes concept of qualities.

So, Locke says that ideas of primary qualities really resemble things and ideas of secondary qualities do not resemble. Locke’s this position has been criticised on the ground that if what we know immediately are ideas, how can we ever know whether these ideas do or do not resemble things? For if, as Locke claims, we know immediately only ideas, we are in no position to compare ideas with things and ascertain whether the ideas resemble the things or not. Thus critics hold that Locke has no means to establish this distinction.

On another ground Locke’s position has been defended by John Dewey when he writes: “The usual statement of Locke’s position concerning primary and secondary qualities fails to convey it in Locke’s own terms. The Lockean terms are concerned with distinction of qualities in respect to substances, not in respect to being physical and mental, or objective and subjective.”

As for as Locke’s distinction between primary and secondary qualities is concerned Dewey says: “....the distinction between qualities is made by Locke in terms of the distinction between essence which is

intrinsically constitutive and power which involves the action of essence of things upon other things.47

This position of Locke has been criticized by Berkeley also. In fact while discussing qualities Locke adopts two criteria. The first is the criteria of 'inseparability' which he applies to primary qualities. The second is the criteria of 'contradiction' which he applies to secondary qualities. It is this second criteria which has been applied by Berkeley to primary qualities as well and the outcome is that Berkeley says that then so called primary qualities also become the ideas in our minds. Berkeley says that if this position is adopted, no distinction can be made between primary and secondary qualities. Berkeley maintains that Locke's arguments to show that colour, taste, smell etc. are ideas in our minds and not real qualities of objects, could just as well be employed to show that the so called primary qualities are ideas in our minds and not real qualities of objects.

Locke holds that out of primary qualities of the substance, our sensations are aroused and the ideas of secondary qualities are produced in the mind. It may be indicated here that in the reception of sensibility, mind is passive. Only material things in terms of their primary and secondary qualities are active but when reflection becomes operative, mind becomes

active. In receiving the sensations mind is just a mirror. With sensation and reflection, simple ideas are formed. When they are compared and compounded they give rise to complex ideas. As we have stated in preceding paragraphs, he uses the word idea in a sense different from its ordinary connotation. While defining idea he writes: “Whatsoever the mind perceives in itself, or is the immediate object of perception, thought, or understanding, that I call idea.”48

According to Locke, these ideas which the mind receives in the first instance through sensation and reflection, are simple ideas. They constitute the stuff of all our knowledge. He defines simple idea as: “which, being each in itself uncompounded, contains in it nothing but one uniform appearance or conception in the mind, and is not distinguishable into different ideas.”49

As example of simple ideas Locke first gives the coldness and hardness of a piece of ice, the scent and whiteness of a lily etc. These simple ideas come to us through one sense only but there are ideas which we receive by more than one sense. Such are: “space or extension, figure, rest, and motion. For these make perceivable impressions, both on the eyes

49 Ibid., Book II, Chapter II, Section 1, p. 90.
and touch; and we can receive and convey into our minds the ideas of the extension, figure, motion, and rest of bodies, both by seeing and feeling.\textsuperscript{50}

These classes of simple ideas are ideas of sensation. But there are also simple ideas of reflection, the two principle ones being the ideas of 'perception or thinking and volition or willing'. Further there are other simple ideas "which convey themselves into the mind by all the ways of sensation and reflection, viz.: Pleasure or Delight, and its opposite. Pain or Uneasiness; Power. Existence. Unity."\textsuperscript{51} Thus we have four classes of ideas. The common characteristics of all these ideas is that they are passively received. "For the objects of our senses do, many of them, obtrude their particular ideas upon our minds whether we will or no; and the operations of our minds will not let us be without, at least, some obscure notions of them. No man can be wholly ignorant of what he does when he thinks."\textsuperscript{52}

Once the mind has these simple ideas, it can not alter or destroy them or substitute new ones at will. Locke writes: "It is not in the power of the most exalted wit or enlarged understanding, by any quickness or variety of thought, to invent or frame one new simple idea in the mind, not taken in

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., Book II, Chapter V, p. 97. \\
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., Book II, Chapter VII, Section 1, p. 98. \\
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., Book II, Chapter I, Section 25, p. 89.
\end{flushright}
by the ways before mentioned; nor can any force of understanding destroy those that are there.”

On the other hand mind can actively frame complex ideas, using simple ideas as its material. Here Locke talks about three faculties of mind, namely compounding, comparing and abstraction. A man can combine two or more simple ideas into one complex idea. Regarding complex ideas his view is: “Combining several simple ideas into one compound one; and thus all complex ideas are made... Ideas thus made up of several simple ones put together I call complex, such as are beauty, gratitude, a man, an army, the universe.”

As for as comparison is concerned, Locke says that it consists in “bringing two ideas, whether simple or complex, together, and setting them by one another, so as to take a view of them at once, without uniting them into one; by which way it gets all its ideas of relations.”

But apart from these two operations, Locke claims that most important operation of the mind is ‘abstraction’. In the context of abstraction he writes: “The third is separating them from all other ideas that

---

53 Ibid., Book II, Chapter II, Section 2, pp. 90-91.
54 Ibid., Book II, Chapter XII, Section 1, p. 130.
55 Ibid., Book II, Chapter XII, Section 1, p. 130.
accompany them in their real existence: this is called abstraction; and thus all its general ideas are made.”

With regard to the theory of abstraction, Richard I. Aaron charges Locke with ambiguity. In his words “It is possible to distinguish at least three strands in Locke’s argument, which he himself never wholly disentangles.”

Aaron’s charge is that from Locke’s exposition of the process of abstraction, it does not become clear whether the general idea is a particular idea representing other particulars, or a part of the particular idea whose differentiating elements (in relation to others) have been eliminated, or a universal which stands for the common elements of a number of particulars. Hence, the status of Locke’s general idea is ambiguous in Aaron’s view.

In defense of Locke J.L. Mackie argues that what Aaron mentions as three different strands are not “really distinguishable” All these three aspects together constitute Locke’s position. Locke’s point is that what he means by abstraction is only partial consideration of some of the features of

56 Ibid., Book II, Chapter XII, Section 1, p. 130.
a complex whole, and not their literal separation. According to him a partial consideration is not separation. A man considers light in the sun without its heat or mobility in body without its extension, without thinking of their separation.

From Locke's account of abstraction it follows that abstract general idea which signifies only the partial considered (or selectively attended) features of a particular object, has no real existence. Locke conceives them as workmanship of the mind, and not referred to the real existence of the things.

He claims that all our scientific knowledge is based on abstract general ideas which are the outcome of mental abstraction. He holds that in forming the abstract general ideas, the mind first takes the content to be generalized apart from its original setting and then take this content so abstracted to represent all the particulars of the same sort.

It follows on the basis of the formation of these ideas that although the mind is initially passive in its reception of the simple ideas, it becomes active while forming the complex ideas. He writes: "As the mind is wholly passive in the reception of all its simple ideas, so it excerts several acts of
its own where by out of its simple ideas, as the materials and foundations of the rest, the others are framed. 59

Thus, according to Locke, complex ideas are the general ideas. Therefore it follows that the generality of complex ideas is a contribution of the mind and these are not given in our sensation and reflection. Locke divides the complex ideas under three heads, namely, modes, substance and relation which we are going to discuss. On the basis of the formation of the complex ideas it appears that even though Locke rejects any kind of innateness in the mind, he seems to acknowledge these powers of the mind by which it performs the various activities in order to give rise to complex ideas.

Thus on the basis of above analysis it follows that the mind consists of both the simple and complex ideas. Therefore, they constitute the materials of knowledge for Locke. As a result he defines knowledge as the perception of these ideas. Locke thus departs from the sensationalistic account of knowledge in spite of his claims that there is nothing in the intellect which was not previously given in the senses. But being an empiricist he holds that knowledge in order to be real must confirm to

things which are really existing. He writes: "It is evident the mind knows not things immediately, but only by the intervention of the ideas it has of them. Our knowledge, therefore, is real only so far as there is a conformity between our ideas and reality of things."\(^{60}\)

From the above account it follows that ideas represent things external to us but these are simple and complex ideas and we have seen the preceding paragraphs while discussing the complex ideas that they are essentially produced by the operations of the mind. As a result only the simple ideas appear to be real i.e. such as have a foundation in confirming with the real things. In this regard he writes: "...simple ideas represent what ever it is in reality which regularly cause it in sense experience."\(^{61}\)

But here a question arises and that is- what causes these ideas. Locke says that these ideas are caused by the external objective reality through its qualities.

Locke maintains that simple ideas give rise to complex ideas of mode, substance and relation through the various operations of the mind such as compounding, comparing and abstracting. In the original draft of the Essay he divided complex ideas into ideas of substances (for example,

---

\(^{60}\) Ibid., Book IV, Chapter IV, Section 3, p. 167.

\(^{61}\) Ibid., Book IV, Chapter IV, Section 3, p. 167.
the idea of a man or of a rose), of collective substances (for example, of an army), of modes (for example, of figure) and of relations (the considering of one idea with relation to other). This classification reappears in the published Essay but reduced to three heads of modes, substances and relations. In the Essay chapters he discusses modes first, then substances and afterwards relations. Since we have already given a brief account of substance before giving an exposition of qualities, here we will attempt to show what is Locke's position on the complex ideas of modes and relations.

Now let us see what is Locke's position on ideas of modes and relation. For Locke modes are the dependencies or affections of substance. Locke here basically develops the concept of space, time number, infinity and motion. He writes: "Modes, I call such complex ideas which, however compounded, contain not in them the supposition of not subsisting by themselves, but are considered as the dependences on, or affections of substances; such are the ideas signified by the words triangle, gratitude, murder etc..... Of these modes there are two sorts which deserve distinct consideration: First, there are some which are only variations, or different combinations of the same simple idea, without the mixture of any other, as a dozen or score; which are nothing but the ideas of so many distinct units added together; and these I call simple modes as being contained within the
bounds of one simple idea. Secondly, there are others compounded of simple ideas of several kinds, put together to make one complex one: v.g. beauty, consisting of a certain composition of colour and figure, causing delight in the beholder..... and these I call mixed modes.62

There are three ways in which we come to have complex idea of mixed modes. First, ‘by experience and observation of things themselves: thus, by seeing two men wrestle or fence, we get the idea of wrestling or fencing’.63 Secondly, “By invention, or, voluntarily putting together of several simple ideas in our own minds: so he that first invented printing, or etching, had an idea of it in his mind, before it ever existed”.64 Thirdly, “which is the most usual way, by explaining the names of actions we never saw, or motions we can not see; and by enumerating, and thereby, as it were, setting before our imagination all those ideas which go to the making them up, and are the constituent parts of them.”65

In the complex idea of relation Locke discusses the relation between cause and effect, space and time and identity and diversity. He says: “The last sort of complex idea is that we call relation, which consists in the

62 Ibid., Book II, Chapter XII, Sections 4-5, p. 131.
61 Ibid., Book II, Chapter XXII, Section 9, p. 241.
64 Ibid., Book II, Chapter XXII, Section 9, p. 241.
65 Ibid., Book II, Chapter XXII, Section 9, p. 241-242.
consideration and comparing one idea with another.\textsuperscript{66} Locke says that any idea, whether simple or complex, can be compared with another idea and thus give rise to the idea of relation. But all our ideas of relations can, in long run, be reduced into simple ideas.

According to Locke, our ideas of relations and mixed modes do not owe their validity to an empirical origin. They are the creations of the mind having no reality outside the mind. Ideas of mixed modes are not intended to confirm to an external reality. Ideas of mixed modes and relations are themselves archetypes which are real and adequate ideas just because they confirm to themselves.

In fact, here, while discussing mixed modes, again Locke falls into ambiguity. This view has been supported by Perry also when he writes: "An awkward feature of Locke's discussion of mixed modes is the careless manner in which he vacillates between writing of mixed modes as complex ideas and writing of them not as ideas, but as objects of which we have ideas\textsuperscript{67} Locke identifies them with complex ideas of a certain sort, and in discussing their reality, he considers them a kind of idea.\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{66} Ibld., Book II, Chapter XIII, Section 7, p132.
While Locke concedes that we may sometimes be led to have the idea of a certain mixed mode through passively experiencing the component simple ideas in combination, it seems to be his position that an idea of a mixed mode owes its unity to the mind’s ability to consider the combination as one idea. Although Locke never wavers in his basic position that the simple ideas of which we form complex ideas of modes have an empirical origin (sensation or reflection), and although he admits that ideas of mixed modes may be prompted by observation, he insists that the particular combinations found in ideas of mixed modes often are not given in experience. Further, he appears to hold that their unity is always the product of a mental activity that is ‘quite different’ from both sensation and reflection, which are passive. A partially nonempirical origin is thus attributed to ideas of mixed modes, for although their component simple ideas are empirically derived from sensation or reflection, the unity essential to such ideas is not originally perceived by either sensation or reflection, this unity is made.

---

69 Ibid., Book II, Chapter II, Section XXII, pp. 238-239.
72 Ibid., Book II, Chapter XXII, Section 1, p. 238-239.
As in the case of mixed modes, Locke writes indiscriminately of relations and ideas of relations. Locke emphasizes the active role of the mind in forming ideas of relations to the extent that he sometimes identifies ideas of relations with the activity of comparing ideas. He writes “the last sort of complex idea....with one another.” But at the same time he says elsewhere “For as I said, relation is a way of comparing or considering two things together....”73 Here it becomes clear that he regards ideas of relations as products of mental comparison as well as acts of comparison. While emphasizing the activity of comparing that enters into ideas of relations, Locke stands firm in the view that “All relation terminate in, and is ultimately founded on, those simple ideas we have got from sensation or reflection.”74 In what way do ideas of relations ‘terminate in’ simple ideas? Here Perry’s objection is that: “Ideas of relation can not, under Locke’s account, be considered merely compounds of simple ideas, for this interpretation would neglect the comparing involved in forming ideas of relations and eliminate any distinction between ideas of relations and ideas of modes. An act of comparison either is an integral aspect of every relational idea or at least is a factor in the production of every such idea”75

73 Ibid., Book II, Chapter XXV, Section 7, p. 268.
74 Ibid., Book II, Chapter XXVIII, Section 18, pp. 303-304.
Locke says that each idea of a mixed mode or relation is positively real and adequate in relation to the pattern or archetype it is designed to represent, namely, itself. In Accordance with Locke's causal theory of perception, the crucial feature of any idea is its conformity to that which it is supposed to copy, its archetype. Ideas are real or adequate to the extent that they "represent those archetypes which the mind supposes them taken from, which it intends them to stand for, and to which it refers them." And so he argues that "mixed modes and relations, being archetypes without patterns, and so having nothing to represent but themselves, can not but be adequate, everything being so to itself." 

In this connection Pery says: "If we accept Locke's account of the ways in which ideas of mixed modes are supposed to serve as archetypes for things, we must conclude that they do not function as archetypes at all. Where the relationship of archetype to ectype holds, any lack of conformity between one and the other constitutes a defect in the ectype. For example, if the lithographic reproductions of a painting do not conform to the original, the reproductions are defective."

---

77 Ibid., Book II, Chapter XXXI, Section 3, p. 319.
But in Locke’s account, discrepancies between ideas of mixed modes and actual events, or conditions do not constitute deficiencies in the later. "Also an archetype influences the production of its ectypes, but under Locke’s view, ideas of mixed modes do not necessarily play any role in molding things, events or conditions. Here Locke is no more justified in implying ideas of mixed modes to be archetypes of realities than in claiming such ideas to be archetypes of themselves. Locke’s account does assign ideas of mixed modes an influential and normative role, but not in relation to nature." 79

Locke’s conception of the ontological status of mixed modes and relations is by no means clear. He writes of mixed modes and relations as ‘having no other reality but what they have in the minds of men’. In connection with mixed modes he writes ‘When we speak of justice, or gratitude, we frame to ourselves no imagination of anything existing’. Yet, Locke says that there can be such combinations of qualities in nature. Of ideas of mixed modes he writes ‘I do not deny but several of them might be taken from observation, and the existence of several simple ideas so combined, as they are put together in the understanding’.

79 Ibid., p. 224.
From the above account of Locke, we find that "there is simply a contradiction between Locke's denial of the external reality of mixed modes and his admission that some mixed modes have real existence... But from the proposition that the unity of the ideas of mixed modes is a product of the mind, it does not follow that there are no actual mixed modes or that our ideas of mixed modes never reflect real events, states or complex qualities. On the other hand Locke's discussion of ideas of mixed modes usually presupposes the real existence of mixed modes."\textsuperscript{80}

As for as his exposition of relation is concerned "The crucial difficulties in Locke's view of relations come perhaps most pointedly to the surface when we proceed to inquire as to the way in which he deals with two distinct kinds of relations what require to be distinguished,-namely, relations between truths and relations between existent things or their characteristics."\textsuperscript{81}

Locke speaks of relation as "not contained in the real existence of things, but something extraneous and superinduced."\textsuperscript{82} Here the import of the phrase 'extraneous and superinduced' is not clear. As for as its possible

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., p. 225.
import is concerned Perry says: "Here Locke may be asserting the externality of relations, claiming that relations do not belong to the internal natures of the objects related, but are nonessential aspects that are 'superinduced', i.e. made possible, by the existence of more than one object. Or he may actually be claiming that relations are not real features of the world but are ways of viewing or conceiving the world that are 'superinduced', i.e. imposed by our thought processes.\(^8^3\) In either case Locke means that mixed modes and relations have no "no other reality but what they have in the minds of men."\(^8^4\) These statements hint that Locke sometimes treats relations as subjective creations having no objective reality. In this connection Gibson argues that Locke's denial of the reality of relations stems from his acceptance of the scholastic position according to which relations must be ideal because they can not be comprehended under either or the jointly exhaustive ontological categories of substance and quality.\(^8^5\)

In spite of Locke's denials of the reality of relations, there is evidence that he often felt relations have at least a foundation in things. Locke says that certain knowledge consists in the perception of relations

---


among ideas and knowledge is real only to the extent that there is conformity between the ideas and the reality of things. It follows that for certain and real knowledge, relations among ideas must be perceived rather than generated and that there must be at least the possibility of relations holding among 'real things'.

After exposing and analysing Locke's views on simple and complex ideas, modes and relation, now let us see what is his position on the concept of knowledge, in order to understand his causal theory of perception.

Knowledge has been defined by Locke in terms of "the perception of the connexion and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy, of any of our ideas." Agreement or disagreement may be apprehended directly or through the mediation of intermediate ideas. The former procedure is intuition, the later is demonstration. Intuition is the more basic act being involved at each step of any demonstration. There are four kinds of agreement or disagreement for Locke which are interconnected and interdependent. They are:

1. Identity or diversity

---

2. Relation
3. Co-existence or necessary connection
4. Real existence

Locke in the context of classification of two kind of ideas i.e. identity and diversity, defines the first kind as: "It is the first act of the mind, when it has any sentiments or ideas at all, to perceive its ideas, and so far as it perceives them, to know each what it is, and thereby also to perceive their difference and that one is not another. This is so absolutely necessary that without it there could be no knowledge, no reasoning, no imagination, no distinct thoughts at all." He says this is the 'first agreement or disagreement which the mind perceives in its ideas, which it always perceives at first sight'.

What Locke means is that while understanding the common characteristics in the object, we at the same time also understand how these particular objects belong to a particular class or different from all other objects of different class. Thus for instance to understand that this particular object belongs to the class of paper also implies at the same time that it is different from the class of the objects to the class of chairs. Here it

---

must be noted that Locke is not talking about the identity of concrete individual but the identity of the content of an idea and its distinction from that of every other idea. But although this ability to identify and discriminate the contents of our ideas is 'the foundation of all our knowledge' it does not of itself afford us any 'positive knowledge' at all. For the identical propositions which result from this identification of an idea with itself are only examples of those 'trifling' propositions which are incapable of conveying any real knowledge. Hence Locke says that this form of agreement or disagreement of ideas constitutes a necessary presupposition, rather than a kind of knowledge. In fact, it may be regarded as the point of transition from the operations of the understanding which consists in the mere 'perceptions of ideas in our minds' to the further form of knowledge.

Locke says that identity and coexistence are actually relations but defends their separate placement on the ground that "they are such peculiar ways of agreement or disagreement of our ideas, that they deserve well to be considered as distinct heads and not under relation in general."89

The second kind of agreement or disagreement of ideas is relation. John Dewey calls it significant and original in Locke and writes "What is

89 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter I, Section 7, p. 135.
significant and original in Locke is his insistence that knowledge consists in the perception of a relation. It is true that he defines this as a relation between ideas. Locke defines relation as: "The next sort of agreement or disagreement the mind perceives in any of the ideas may, I think, be called relation, and is nothing but the perception of the relation between any two ideas, of what kind soever, whether substances, modes, or any other." This is the perception of the relation between their contents. Locke says "Since all distinct ideas must eternly be known not to be the same, and so be universally and constantly denied one of another, there could be no room for any positive knowledge at all, if we could not perceive any relation between our ideas, and find out the agreement and disagreement they have one with another, in several ways the mind takes of comparing them." The knowledge which Locke includes under this division is that which consists of a perception of relations between our abstract ideas, or between the content of one idea and that of another. When abstractions has been made from the conditions of concrete existence, the contents thus conceived are not merely self identical and isolated units, but are found to be definitely connected with each other by relations, which can be apprehended by our thought when it considers them.

92 Ibid., Book IV. Chapter 1, Section 5, p. 134.
From the knowledge which consists in perceiving relations between our ideas, Locke distinguishes the knowledge of 'co-existence and necessary connection'. He defines it as: "to be found in our ideas, which the perception of the mind is employed about, is co-existence or non-existence in the same subject; and this belongs particularly to substances."\(^93\)

It is basically a distinction between the relations which our thought discovers between the contents of our ideas, when abstraction is made from the conditions of actual existence.

Locke speaks about our knowledge of coexistence as a knowledge of necessary connections. When this necessity is not fulfilled, we are 'utterly incapable of universal and certain knowledge' and the general requirements of our ideal of knowledge are not fully met. Locke says that our senses 'inform us' of the coexistence of various qualities in the same subject. But such knowledge is confined to particular instances, which are incapable of furnishing the basis of a knowledge which is universal. The connection as given in experience is merely one of fact and any extension to cases which have not been actually experienced is a matter of probability and not of knowledge. Thus, he says, "we can not with certainty affirm that all men sleep at intervals, that no man can be nourished by wood or stones,\(^93\)

that all men will be poisoned by hemlock." Therefore, 'co-existence can be no further known than it is perceived' and where it can not be perceived 'in general, by the necessary connection of the ideas themselves', it can only be known 'in particular subjects by the observation of our senses.'

So, the majority of our propositions concerning coexistence are propositions which merely assert the coexistence of certain qualities in a particular substance, on the ground of experience and generalisations of such statements which can not claim to possess more than probability. But such propositions are in reality existential propositions, affirming the existence at some particular time of a substance possessing at once these particular qualities. In this regard Locke says: "all particular affirmations or negations that would not be certain if they were made general are only concerning existence; they declaring only the accidental union or separation of ideas in things existing, which in their abstract natures have no known necessary union or repugnancy."  

Finally, there is knowledge of the actual existence of things. Here Locke's position can be summarized in following words: "We have an

---

94 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter VI, Section 15, p. 191.
95 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter III, Section 14, p. 152.
96 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter III, Section 14, p. 152.
97 Ibid., Book II, Chapter III, Section 14, p. 152.
intuitive knowledge of our own existence' a demonstrative knowledge of the existence of a God; of the existence of any thing else we have no other but a sensitive knowledge, which extends not beyond the objects present to our senses." As for knowledge of our own existence: "We perceive it so plainly and so certainly that it neither needs nor is capable of any proof. For nothing can be more evident to us than our own existence. I think, I reason, I feel pleasure and pain: can any of these be more evident to me than my own existence? If I doubt of all other things, that very doubt makes me perceive my own existence and will not suffer me to doubt of that. For if I know I feel pain, it is evident I have as certain perception of my own existence as of the existence of the pain I feel; or, if I know I doubt, I have as certain perception of the existence of the thing doubting, as of that thought which I call doubt. Experience then convinces us that we have an intuitive knowledge of our existence, and an internal infallible perception that we are. In every act of sensation, reasoning, or thinking, we are conscious to ourselves of our own being and, in this matter, come not short of the highest degree of certainty."

We may mention here that the above position of Locke is very similar to that of Descartes. We find that there is an opposition between

---

98 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter III, Section 21, pp. 157-158.
99 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter IX, Section 3, p. 217.
the idea and real existence in Locke. Not only the two are distinct but there is no means by which a direct transition can be made from the one to the other. Locke writes: "Having the idea of anything in our mind no more proves the existence of that thing, than the picture of a man evidences his being in the world, or the visions of a dream make thereby a true history." But at the same time he says that ideas are essentially signs which point beyond themselves to a realm of real being distinct from them. He takes it to be granted that the contents of our ideas of primary qualities of matter are qualifications of a reality which exists beyond and independently of mind. But such existence can not be guaranteed by the content of our ideas of material things or deduced from the existence of the thinking self. Such an assurance, according to Locke, is to be found in the peculiar characteristics of sense-perception.

Here, in Locke's classification of knowledge, two things are immediately evident. In the first place knowledge of identity and knowledge of co-existence are both relational. Locke also accepts it when he says "Identity and co-existence are truly nothing but relations yet they are so peculiar ways of agreement or disagreement of our ideas that they deserve well to be considered as distinct heads and not under relation in

100 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter XI, Section 1, p. 228.
general.”101 But he does not explain what these peculiar features are. In the second place the knowledge of real existence also creates difficulty. Locke defines idea as ‘whatever is the immediate object of understanding’. If this definition is taken into consideration, how we can know that our ideas correspond to real existence. We can say that knowledge consists for Locke either in perceiving the agreement or disagreement between ideas, or in perceiving the agreement or disagreement of ideas with things which are not themselves ideas.

Locke considers the degrees of knowledge also which, we will attempt to show, gives a rationalistic turn to the mind. He says that there are three degrees of knowledge, namely, intuitive, demonstrative and sensitive. Here he departs from his empiricist claim that all our knowledge is ultimately derived from experience, namely, sensation and reflection. He, like Descartes, takes mathematical knowledge as the paradigm of knowledge and defines intuitive knowledge as: “If we will reflect on our own ways of thinking, we shall find that 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.”102 Thus the mind perceives immediately by intuition that

101 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter I, Section 7, p. 135.
102 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter II, Section 1, p. 138.
white is not black and three are more than two.\textsuperscript{103} This is the clearest and most certain knowledge which the human mind can have. There is no room for doubt and 'it is on this intuition that depends all the certainty and evidence of all our knowledge'.\textsuperscript{104}

The second degree of knowledge is demonstrative knowledge where the mind does not perceive immediately the agreement or disagreement of the ideas but needs intervening ideas to be able to do so. This is so because "those ideas, concerning whose agreement or disagreement the inquiry is made, can not by the mind be so put together as to show it."\textsuperscript{105} Here Locke basically takes mathematical reasoning where a proposition is proved or demonstrated. He says that we do not have intuitive knowledge that three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. Here we need intervening ideas by the help of which the agreement is proved. But at the same time each step in demonstration has intuitive certainty. In this connection he says "...in every step reason makes in demonstrative knowledge, there is an intuitive knowledge of that agreement or disagreement it seeks with the next intermediate idea which it uses as a proof."\textsuperscript{106}

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., Book IV, Chapter II, Section 1, p. 138.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., Book IV, Chapter II, Section 1, p. 138.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., Book IV, Chapter II, Section 2, p. 139.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., Book IV, Chapter II, Section 7, p. 140.
Locke says that what ever comes short of intuitive or demonstrative knowledge is not knowledge "but faith or opinion, ....at least in all general truths". However there is sensitive knowledge of particular existence.

These are the three degrees of knowledge according to Locke. As for as the extent of our knowledge is concerned, he says that 'we can have knowledge no further than we have ideas'. But, according to Locke, 'the extent of our knowledge comes not only short of the reality of things, but even of the extent of our own ideas'. To make this point clear let us see what Locke means by it. In the first place our knowledge of 'identity and diversity' extends as far as our ideas extend. To make this point clear, we can say that we can not have an idea without intuitively perceiving that what it is and that it is different from other ideas.

But this is not the case with regard to our knowledge of 'co-existence'. Locke says "In this our knowledge is very short, though in this consists the greatest and most material part of our knowledge concerning substances." Our idea of a particular kind of substance is a collection of simple ideas co-existing together. But what we perceive is a factual coexistence, we do not perceive any necessary connection between them.

107 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter II, Section 14, p. 143.
108 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter III, Section 1, p. 145.
109 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter III, Section 6, p. 146.
110 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter III, Section 9, p. 150.
In this regard he says "...the simple ideas whereof our complex ideas of substances are made up are, far the most part, such as carry with them, in their own nature, no visible necessary connexion or inconsistency with any other simple ideas, whose co-existence with them we would inform ourselves about." Further his view is that our complex ideas of substances are made up of ideas of their secondary qualities and these depend upon 'the primary qualities of their minute and sensible parts or, if not upon them, upon something yet more remote from our comprehension'. And if we do not know the root from which they spring, we can not know what qualities result from them or, 'are incompatible with the same constitution of the insensible parts' of substance. Hence we can not know what secondary qualities must always co-exist with the complex idea we have of the substance or what qualities are incompatible with this complex idea. Not only this 'there is no discoverable connexion between any secondary quality and those primary qualities that it depends on'. Again we can not know any necessary connection between the powers of a substance to effect sensible changes in other bodies and any of those ideas which together form our notion of substance in question. In this connection he writes "...our minds not being

111 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter III, Section 10, p. 150.
112 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter III, Section 11, p. 150.
113 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter III, Section 11, p. 150.
114 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter III, Section 12, p. 151.
able to discover any *connexion* betwixt these primary qualities of bodies and the sensations that are produced in us by them, we can never able to establish certain and undoubted rules of the consequence or *co-existence* of any secondary qualities.

This position of Locke has been summed up by John Dewey in following words “All physical knowledge is to him knowledge of coexistence or conjunction, and that our physical knowledge does not go beyond probability just because necessary connection is the sole ground for assertion of universal coexistence. And necessary connection we can not arrive at because of our inability to penetrate the inner constitution or essence of substances.”

So, Locke comes to the conclusion that our knowledge in all these inquiries reaches very little further than our experience. To quote Locke: “Since we neither know the real constitution of the minute parts on which their qualities do depend; nor, did we know them, could we discover any necessary *connexion* between them and any of the *secondary qualities*; which is necessary to be done before we can certainly know their *necessary co-existence*. So that, let our complex *idea* of any species of substance be what it will, we can hardly, from the simple *ideas* contained in it, certainly determine the *necessary co-existence* of any other quality whatsoever. Our

---

115 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter III, Section 13, p. 151.
knowledge in all these inquiries reaches very little further than our experience.”117 Locke’s these considerations have a necessary bearing on his theory of knowledge. Here the views of John Dewey are worth mentioning. He writes “The traditional and current theory is that the difficulty with which Locke labors is the epistemological dilemma: things which we immediately know are mental and we know physical or ‘objective’ things only by intervention of these mental things, while these mental things are themselves the effect of physical things. Given these premises there is certainly an epistemological problem distinct from any metaphysical or cosmological problem. But Locke’s own theory is that we know essences of substances only through their powers, and powers only through their effects; and as we are not able to trace any necessary connection between the effects and their operative efficacious causes, we have no certain knowledge of the connection of the effects with one another. That is we can know in general that the essence of things is the bulk, contexture, figure and number of particles which have the power of communicating motion, but we can not know the particular properties which produce in any particular case the particular effect of quality which is immediately present or with which we are in contact. The difficulty is not that primary qualities are physical while secondary are mental, but that

we can not ascertain the necessary connection which physically exists between causative powers and their effects."\textsuperscript{118} In this context Dewey suggests that "If Locke had held that the limits and uncertainty of our propositions about physical things were due to the fact that we know by means of ideas which are different in kind from the things, it would have been the easiest thing in the world for him to say. But that to which he actually assigns the limitations of our physical knowledge is that 'the connection between most simple ideas is unknown'."\textsuperscript{119} And "Unless existences are in some aspect or phase connected instead of disconnected, and that unless the connectedness of things (or things in their connectedness) is the proper object of knowledge, there is an unbridgeable gap between things and any knowledge which operates, as Locke's does, in terms of the perception of connections."\textsuperscript{120}

As far as the third kind of knowledge i.e. relational knowledge is concerned, it is difficult to say how far it is capable of extending because "the advances that are made in this part of knowledge depending on our sagacity in finding intermediate ideas that may show the relations and habitudes of ideas whose co-existence is not considered, it is a hard matter


\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., p.62.

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., pp. 63-64.
to tell when we are at an end of such discoveries.”

John Dewey writes “If knowledge is perception of relations, and if knowledge is to have to do with real natural things, then Locke should have concluded that existence, as the subject-matter of knowledge, is inherently relational. But Locke did not have the perspicacity of his convictions; he did not see what they implied. He retained the old notion of separate, independent substances, each of which has its own inner constitution or essence.”

Finally there is knowledge of the real existence of things. In this context Locke says “We have an intuitive knowledge of our own existence, a demonstrative knowledge of the existence of a God; of the existence of anything else, we have no other but a sensitive knowledge, which extends not beyond the objects present to our senses.” As for knowledge of our own existence, we perceive it so plainly and with such certainty that it neither needs nor is capable of proof. Locke writes “If I doubt all other things, that very doubt makes me perceive my own existence, and will not

---

suffer me to doubt of that."\textsuperscript{124} It can be seen here that this position of Locke is similar to that of Descartes.

This is what Locke says about the knowledge of personal identity and of God but what about the knowledge of other things and how far they are real? This question Locke treats under the heading ‘the reality of our knowledge’ and says “Wherever we perceive the agreement or disagreement of any of our ideas, there is certain knowledge; and wherever we are sure those ideas agree with the reality of things, there is certain real knowledge.”\textsuperscript{125}

We know that things exist and that we can know something about them. But the question is that, according to Locke, the immediate object of knowledge is idea; so how can we have the knowledge of the things. To quote Locke “It is evident that the mind not knows things immediately, but only by the intervention of the ideas it has of them. Our knowledge, therefore is real only so far as there is a conformity between our ideas and the reality of things. But what shall be here the criterion? How shall the mind, when it perceives nothing but its own ideas, know that they agree with things themselves?”\textsuperscript{126} Here Locke says that mathematics and moral

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., Book IV, Chapter IX, Section 3, p. 217.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., Book IV, Chapter IV, Section 18, p. 176.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., Book IV, Chapter IV, Section 3, p. 167.
knowledge give us certain knowledge. Mathematical knowledge is 'only of our own ideas' which is formal. Same is true about moral knowledge too. But in the case of simple ideas the situation is different. They are not fabricated by the mind. They must be the product of things operating on the mind. Not only this they must have conformity with things. Here Locke's answer is "Simple ideas which, since the mind....can by no means make to itself, 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 adopted to. From whence it follows that simple ideas are not fictions of our fancies, but the natural and regular productions of things without us, really operating upon us, and so carry with them all the conformity which is intended or which our state requires; ... Thus the idea of whiteness or bitterness, as it is in the mind, exactly answering that power which is in any body to produce it there, has all the real conformity it can or ought to have with things without us. And this conformity between our simple ideas and the existence of things is sufficient for real knowledge".

Thus, simple ideas are said to have a conformity with external objects. But what about complex ideas which concerns our idea of substance. Here Locke's position is that as for as the complex ideas are

127 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter IV, Section 4, p. 167-168.
'archetypes of the mind's own making, not intended to be the copies of any thing', the problem of their conformity is not so pressing. They can give us real knowledge as in mathematics, even if nothing corresponds to them outside the mind. In this connection he writes "All our complex ideas, except those of substances, being archetypes of the mind's own making, not intended to be the copies of anything nor referred to the existence of anything as to their originals, can not want any conformity necessary to real knowledge." But the ideas of substance are referred to archetypes outside us. They are thought to correspond to the external reality. They are formed of simple ideas.

In fact on the basis of the distinction between the primary and secondary qualities, it appears to us that Locke assigns an objective existence to primary qualities. This is because, as Suman Gupta states: "Locke felt the necessity of accommodating materialism in his ontological frame work. He accepted materialism to the extent it was necessary."

The objective nature of the primary qualities shows the mechanical materialist tendency of Locke. Secondary qualities which are the confused ideas of Descartes on the basis of clear and distinct ideas, are relative and

128 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter IV, Section 5, p. 168.
hence subjective. Therefore Locke claims that these qualities can not exist in the objects themselves because ‘this will lead to contradiction’.

The impossibility of knowing the necessary connection between secondary and primary qualities has bearing upon the knowledge of substance in another aspect as well. As Locke observes, the chief part of knowledge of substance is not merely of these several simple ideas nor of their relation, but is the necessary connection and coexistence of these several ideas in the same subject “Yet it is this necessary connection that seems to be lacking among our ideas.” As Locke writes “...the simple ideas whereof our complex ideas of substance are made up are, for the most part, such as carry with them, in their own nature, no visible connexion or inconsistency with any other simple ideas...”

We have seen that for Locke our idea of any material substance is merely collection of qualities which appear to us and as for as the relations or connections of these qualities with one another and with their causes are concerned, they are seldom discoverable. To be sure, Locke says “....he has the perfectest idea of any of the particular sorts of substances, who has gathered, and put together, most of those simple ideas which do exist in

---

Still we have observed how most of such qualities, being secondary, are not in the substance at all and can not be traced by us to the primary qualities which produce them. Moreover he has earlier stated that those qualities and powers of substance, where of we make their complex ideas, are “so many and various” and that no one’s complex idea can contain them all. Hence it can not be known.

It was apparently because of the above problems in the knowledge of material substance that Locke was led to make his famous distinction between real essences and nominal essences. The real essence he conceives to be the very “being of anything, whereby it is what it is” and the “real internal ... constitution of things, where upon their discoverable qualities depend” And this for the reasons mentioned above, can not be known precisely as it exists. The nominal essence, on the other hand, is what we can know because it is the abstract idea which we construct for ourselves out of simple ideas which we observe or suppose to be existing constantly together. From this discussion it becomes clear that the nominal essence which we know is never adequate to the real essence of the thing. The reason lies in the difference between primary and secondary qualities. Locke remarks that even if we had in our complex ideas the exact

132 Ibid., Book II, Chapter XXIII, Section 7, p. 248.
133 Ibid., Book II, Chapter XXXI, Section 7, p. 322.
134 Ibid., Book III, Chapter III, Section 15, p. 22.
collection of all the proper secondary qualities or powers of the substance, we should not have the real essence of the thing. For, after all, the secondary qualities are not the real essence but only depend on it and flow from it.

In this connection John Dewey writes “The extent to which Locke retained the formal conceptions of substance and essence while assigning them a concrete content which negated the traditional meanings, is clear enough in his treatment of substance. Nominally he reduces it to an unknown substrate, which is a step toward eliminating it in its classic sense. But he retains the conception that things have essential natures. Thus while he holds empirical (or ‘nominal’) essences to be abstract ideas employed for the purpose of sorting (classifying) and discriminating, he never questions the existence of real essences.”

We thus find that although Locke denies the knowledge of material substance and the material objects in the external world, yet, he claims that ideas in the mind are produced by the material objects having primary qualities. In this connection Suman Gupta writes: “Locke maintained that the mind through sense experience can not know the external material

---

objects themselves, it can know only its own ideas which are produced in the mind through the actions of external material objects."\(^{136}\)

Locke's this theory is known as causal theory of perception which says that our sensations are caused by the external material reality. "But Locke's above position leads to a contradiction. On the one hand he says that we can not know the material substance but on the other hand he claims that our ideas are caused by material objects having primary qualities."\(^{137}\)

Further Locke says that primary qualities are inseparable from their bodies. Here he overlooks the fact that in the process of knowing these qualities, we eventually know the material objects. As a result of this contradiction we find the material substance both knowable and unknowable.

Thus Locke's philosophy suffers from internal contradictions and it is because, as we have stated earlier, he accepts Cartesian dualism in spite of advocating empiricism. It has been stated very clearly by Suman Gupta when she writes: "Though Locke rejected the rationalism of Descartes, he


\(^{137}\) Ibid., p. 40.
accepted Cartesian dualism. Like Descartes Locke also regards mind and matter to be two causally independent substances; mind having the attribute of thinking and matter having the attribute of extension, solidity etc. But whereas, according to Descartes the nature of these substances is known, Locke added mysticism by declaring them to be unknown and unknowable 138.

Thus we find that Locke too is a dualist like Descartes but there is a difference. Whereas Descartes accepts that knowledge of the external world is possible through clear and distinct ideas, Locke described the substance as ‘I know not’.

As a matter of fact, “in the history of philosophy, due to various objective conditions, philosophers have attempted to make a compromise between materialism and idealism. And .... Locke was one such philosopher.” 139 Locke’s An Essay Concerning Human Understanding had been written at a period when in England transition from feudalism to capitalism had almost been completed by the revolution of 1688. “He happily accepted 1688 as the revolution to end revolutions. He and Newton were the backroom boys of the Whig Junto. Locke associated with the

---

138 Ibid., p. 38.
139 Gupta, Suman., ‘The Relation of Political, Ethical, Epistemological and Material Doctrines in the Philosophy of Locke, Berkeley and Hume’, A paper presented at an All India Seminar organised by the Department of Philosophy, Andhra University (Waltair), April 1981, p. 3.
scientists and attempted, in his Essay Concerning Human Understanding, to establish a materialist psychology that would reconcile science and Christianity."  

This period saw decisive changes in political thinking. Filmer’s divine right kingship had been exposed as irrelevant. In his *First Treatise of Civil Government* (not published till 1990 but written long before), Locke performed the easy task of demolishing it.

In these situations Locke emerged as an advocate of the new ideology. This point has been supported by Cristopher Hill when he writes: “Locke talked ambiguously of government deriving from and responsible to ‘the people’ but it was perfectly clear that by ‘the people’ he meant the propertied class. Their control of society had been established against monarchical absolutism by the abolition of the prerogative courts and confirmed by the expulsion of James II”  

He writes again that “Locke established not only that they did rule but that the men of property ought to rule, that the sovereignty of the parliament was the sovereignty of the people, that the right of revolt exercised in 1688 need in future never be used again.”  

This point becomes clearer when we take into consideration Christopher Hill’s remarks regarding the revolution of 1688, which Locke considered as an ‘end to all revolutions’. Hill writes: “The

---

141 Ibid., p. 255.
142 Ibid., p. 261.
struggle for freedom, in the seventeenth century was a more complex story than the books some times suggest. The men of property won freedom—freedom from arbitrary arrest and arbitrary taxation, freedom from religious persecution, freedom to controle the destinies of their country through their elected representatives, freedom to buy and sell...They also won freedom to tyrannize over their villages, to hire unprotected labour in the open market. The 'unfree' had always been press ganged into army or navy whenever their betters decided to have a war. And all this at a time when “Three out of every four English men could not afford medical treatment....Three of every four babies died almost immediately” Thus the Revolution of 1688 was a restoration of power to the traditional class as well as the change of sovereigns. Borough charters were restored. The militia was returned to safe hands and was used henceforth chiefly against any threat from the lower classes. The Revolution demonstrated the ultimate solidarity of the propertied class.

Locke, being an ideologue of capitalists, in his writing tried to ‘to challenge and denounce the philosophical basis of feudalism on the one hand and to find theoretical basis for the justification of the new socio-political structure.... to provide, through materialism and empiricism, the

\[143\] Ibid., p. 265.
\[144\] Ibid., p. 265.
philosophical foundations for the development of experimental sciences and to accommodate religion within his ontological framework." As it is explained by Suman Gupta "The development of capitalist economy depended upon the advancement of science and technology. As opposed to the philosophy of feudal era this philosophy had to be such that it could generate a greater interest in the material world. Thus Locke felt the necessity of accommodating materialism in his ontological framework. He accepted materialism to the extent it was necessary and at the same time made room for religion."

To conclude, according to Locke, what we 'directly know are ideas which obviously are mental, as opposed to material objects. The material substance is not known. It implies the accommodation of mysticism in his epistemology. Though he is an empiricist, he places intuitive and demonstrative knowledge higher than sensitive knowledge. For Locke, science is an activity concerned with the sensible world. His insistence of the view that the object of knowledge consists of our own ideas limits the sphere of possible knowledge and denies that scientific knowledge could penetrate to the substance of things. Hence, for Locke, science deals with the agreement or disagreement of our ideas. But, as Suman Gupta says

146 Ibid., p. 38.
"Scientific knowledge does not deal with externally related isolated discrete ideas as Locke assumed but it embodies internally related laws of development of nature and social reality. It is the influence of dynamic laws of objective reality—natural and social—through a conceptual apparatus; in human consciousness that constitutes knowledge. The basic fallacy of Locke’s epistemology lies in taking sensation in abstraction as the only source of knowledge. Knowledge is not simply a theoretical reality but both its source and criterion of truth depends upon the practical activity of social man."\(^{147}\)