THE DEVELOPMENT OF EPISTEMOLOGICAL VIEWS IN MODERN WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

Erniyozov O‘razboy Kuklanovich
Lecturer of the Department of Social Sciences
Tashkent State Transport University

Rahimberdieva T.
Student of Tashkent State Transport University

Abstract. This article analyzes the formation and development of the theory of knowledge in Modern Western philosophy. The views of such thinkers as René Descartes, Francis Bacon, John Locke, Benedict Spinoza, and Gottfried Leibniz on human cognition, experience, reason, and truth are highlighted. In addition, the differences and significance of the philosophical trends of rationalism and empiricism are examined.

Keywords: theory of knowledge, rationalism, empiricism, intuition, experience, reason, Modern Western philosophy.

INTRODUCTION. Modern Western philosophy emerged as a spiritual and scientific stage that brought about a radical transformation in the development of human thought. The socio-political, economic, and cultural changes that took place in Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries enriched humanity’s attitude toward existence, nature, and the process of cognition with entirely new meanings. In particular, the rapid development of the natural sciences and the discoveries made in mechanics, mathematics, astronomy, and physics placed the problem of knowledge at the center of philosophical inquiry. Philosophy was no longer regarded merely as a collection of abstract reflections or religious-theological doctrines; rather, it began to take shape as a theoretical system devoted to investigating humanity’s capacity to

understand the world, the source of knowledge, the criteria of truth, and the laws of thinking. In this sense, Modern philosophy is primarily characterized by confidence in the power of human reason, as well as the predominance of experience and logical analysis.

The ideas concerning the theory of knowledge advanced by Western thinkers of this period served as a solid theoretical foundation for the later development of the European Enlightenment, classical German philosophy, and the methodology of modern science. In particular, philosophers such as Francis Bacon, René Descartes, Benedict Spinoza, John Locke, and Gottfried Leibniz created distinct yet interconnected conceptions regarding the sources and possibilities of human cognition. Their philosophical and scientific legacy is especially significant in that it sought to determine the rational and empirical foundations of knowledge, as well as to define the limits and capacities of human thought.

Modern philosophy emerged as an intellectual movement opposing the absolute dominance of medieval scholasticism. While scholastic thought regarded divine revelation and religious dogmas as the primary source of truth, the thinkers of the Modern period interpreted human reason as an independent instrument of cognition. This liberated humanity's understanding of nature and society from religious restrictions and opened broad possibilities for the development of scientific thought. In particular, Francis Bacon substantiated the practical significance of science in human life through his famous statement, "Knowledge is power" ("Scientia potentia est"). According to Bacon, genuine knowledge can only be attained through experience and observation. As he wrote: "Nature, to be commanded, must be obeyed" (Bacon, *Novum Organum*) [1, p. 42]. This idea became one of the theoretical foundations of Modern empiricism.

René Descartes, the founder of rationalism, recognized the absolute importance of reason in the process of cognition. His principle of methodological

doubt encouraged individuals to reject all preconceived doctrines and seek truth through independent thinking. Descartes' famous conclusion, "Cogito, ergo sum" — "I think, therefore I am," became one of the highest expressions in the history of philosophy of interpreting human consciousness and thought as primary reality. In his work *Discourse on the Method*, Descartes emphasized: "Good sense is the best distributed thing in the world" [2, p. 117]. This idea reflects the universality of human reason and its decisive role in the process of knowledge.

The development of epistemology in Modern philosophy was not limited solely to rationalism or empiricism. Benedict Spinoza divided human cognition into sensory, rational, and intuitive stages, emphasizing that the highest form of understanding truth is intellectual intuition. In his view, "Freedom is the recognition of necessity" [3, p. 146]. This concept demonstrates humanity's ability to comprehend the essence of existence through intellectual perfection. Gottfried Leibniz, in turn, argued for the existence of innate ideas in the human mind and connected the process of cognition with logical analysis and rational activity. His statement, "Nothing is in the intellect that was not first in the senses, except the intellect itself," expresses the dialectical unity of experience and reason in human cognition [1, p. 318].

John Locke further developed empiricism by describing the human mind as a "tabula rasa" — a "blank slate." According to his view, all human knowledge is formed through experience. In his work *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke wrote: "All knowledge comes from experience" [2, p. 184]. This conception later exerted a profound influence on the formation of the philosophies of sensualism and positivism.

The formation of epistemological views in Modern Western philosophy, on the one hand, strengthened confidence in the limitless capacities of human thought, while on the other hand, it theoretically substantiated the decisive role of science in the development of society. The thinkers of this era interpreted the

problem of knowledge not only as a philosophical issue, but also as a crucial factor of socio-cultural progress. Therefore, the theory of knowledge developed during the Modern period should be regarded not merely as the product of a particular historical stage, but also as a universal intellectual heritage that constitutes the foundation of modern civilization.

In the sources of the history of philosophy, the concept of “intuition” has been interpreted in various ways. It has often been considered as the basis of intellectual cognition or understanding and distinguished as the sphere of “intellectual intuition.” The immediate grasp of the essence of phenomena through reason is referred to as intellectual intuition. Philosophy explains the world not on the basis of belief and emotions, but through reason and knowledge. Reason stands above emotion; it critically and actively approaches the knowledge acquired through the senses.

During the Modern period, René Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz developed doctrines concerning intellectual intuition. In Descartes’ philosophy, the basis and criterion of true knowledge are simplicity, clarity, and distinctness. This demonstrates that, according to Descartes, genuine knowledge belongs exclusively to the intellect, that is, to direct rational insight. The initial stage of scientific inquiry consists of self-evident principles, comparable to geometrical axioms. Descartes maintained that merely possessing a good mind is insufficient; what matters is the ability to use it correctly. By intuition, Descartes did not mean trust in the unreliable testimony of the senses or the deceptive judgments of chaotic imagination, but rather the operation of a profound and discerning intellect.

René Descartes also argued that intuition may possess sensory confirmation, yet at times it arises from an attentive intellect, appearing as the natural light of reason and understanding.

Spinoza considered intuition to be the most reliable form of knowledge, capable of grasping the essence of things directly. In his understanding, intuition

is the human capacity to comprehend truth immediately, without the mediation of logical proofs. Such cognition is always regarded as the result of profound intellectual and spiritual activity carried out through the unity of the human mind and soul. In this sense, only gifted, diligent, and persistent individuals are capable of attaining intuitive knowledge.

Higher intuitive cognition, according to Spinoza, opens entirely new possibilities for human beings. Through such knowledge, passive emotions and passions that dominate an individual are transformed into active affects governed by reason. These active affects reflect the activity of a person who relies solely upon the power of intellect. Whereas passive affects reveal those aspects of human nature that are entangled in various desires and passions, active affects demonstrate the superiority of human nature embodied in reason. Rational and intuitive cognition of substance — nature itself — enables wise individuals to gain mastery over their passions and emotions.

According to John Locke, the mind is merely a mirror that continuously records the genuine results of sensory activity. These aspects of cognition cannot be denied: as soon as reason directs its attention toward something, it perceives it immediately, just as the bright rays of the sun illuminate objects directly. In such a process there remains no place for doubt, hesitation, or prolonged investigation; the mind is instantly filled with clarity and does not require proof or further inquiry, because truth is grasped directly through attentive awareness itself.

German classical philosophy also made a significant contribution to the study of intuition. Immanuel Kant denied the possibility of intellectual intuition and instead introduced the idea of pure apperception. However, Johann Gottlieb Fichte later argued that Kant’s concept of pure apperception was, in essence, a form of intellectual intuition itself. Fichte demonstrated that, unlike Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz — who understood intellectual intuition as the capacity to know actually existing things — Kant regarded intuition as directed toward the

cognition of activity itself. Fichte, in turn, interpreted intellectual intuition not as knowledge of existing objects, but as cognition of the activity of the Absolute.

Friedrich Schelling further developed the Kantian-Fichtean tradition by complementing transcendental idealism with his philosophy of nature, emphasizing aesthetic intuition as a primary means of grasping substance. Unlike earlier rationalists, Schelling sought the source of intuition not in sensory perception, but in the creative activity of reason itself.

Edmund Husserl, within his concept of "pure consciousness," investigated consciousness as a process and explored its inner essential laws. He examined consciousness as a non-historical phenomenon existing beyond space and time. To study consciousness in its pure state meant, for Husserl, revealing those essences that belong exclusively to consciousness itself and examining them independently of empirical knowledge. He developed this understanding into a philosophical method.

Husserl described pure consciousness as a "stream of thought." The elements within this stream he called "phenomena," which possess integrity and must be studied as parts of a unified structure. According to Husserl, the phenomenological scholar must investigate consciousness from within the flow of thought itself. Thoughts are not to be examined separately, but as an integrated and dynamic process.

By separating consciousness from objective existence, Husserl transformed his concept of pure consciousness into a phenomenological doctrine that was non-empirical and non-reflective in nature. Such pure consciousness, in his view, can only be explored by the phenomenological researcher through intellectual intuition. This intuition grants the ability to synthesize and unify thoughts into a coherent whole. Here Husserl introduces the notion of rational intuition, distinguishing it from mystical or divine feeling; for him, intuition is a supra-empirical and essential process generated by reason itself.

Instead of relying solely on analytical methods, Husserl introduced into phenomenology the method of studying thought as an integrated stream. However, while scientific concepts reflect material reality, phenomenological "phenomena" or thoughts reveal only the being of consciousness itself and uncover solely its internal laws.

Husserl refers to the essence of pure consciousness as "transcendental," yet this concept has no connection with the divinization of consciousness or with a divine, worldly mind. In Husserl's philosophy, what is actually meant is the pure essence of human consciousness itself. This consciousness is entirely unrelated to the consciousness of God or to any metaphysical worldly intellect. Therefore, intuition in Husserl's understanding is not a divine feeling or the "voice of the soul," but rather the "voice of reason."

According to Henri Bergson, the intellect is merely an instrument for interpreting "dead things." Intuition, by contrast, stands in opposition to material and spatial objects. Science, in Bergson's view, pursues only practical utility. Through intellect, human beings perceive not living reality itself, but only its ready-made and static products. Knowledge obtained through intellect is therefore relative in character. Only intuition, Bergson argues, can fulfill the true mission of philosophy, since absolute truth is attainable solely through intuition. Intuition penetrates into the essence of an object and unites with it directly. The essential characteristic of living existence is duration — continuous creativity and becoming.

Bergson further maintains that all life develops under the influence of a vital force or "élan vital." Although science primarily values intellectual and rational knowledge, the world itself exists through the interaction of intuitive and intellectual cognition. In order for human beings to discover laws and truths, they must possess creative freedom. Speaking of vital energy and creative dynamism, Bergson gives greater significance to intuitive knowledge, emphasizing that the power of science alone is insufficient for intuitive

cognition. Intuition exists within every individual and accompanies human life itself; it is the spirit of creativity. According to Bergson, all people possess intuition, yet many fail to reveal or actualize it fully. Importantly, Bergson does not place intuition and intellect in direct opposition to one another. On the contrary, he insists that intellectual knowledge should serve intuition. He also argues that thoughts come to humanity from the realm of thinking itself: if a person is spiritually pure, noble thoughts arise within them; if morally corrupted, impure thoughts dominate their consciousness.

Thus, intellectual intuition may be understood as a cognitive process that simultaneously reflects the unity and integrity of rational and irrational modes of thought.

The development of independent Uzbekistan is directed toward the highest goals. Our society seeks to advance science and technology, high innovations, spiritual culture, and genuine market relations while integrating into the global community. At the same time, all necessary conditions are being created for human perfection and freedom, including opportunities for the development of intellectual potential. The achievement of these noble aims ultimately depends upon profound reason and the effective realization of intellectual intuition.

REFERENCES

1. Винделъбанд В. История философии.Киев 1997.
2. История философии.М.,1997.
3. Kuklanovich, E. U. (2022). PROBLEMS OF INTUITION IN SUFISM. Thematics Journal of Applied Sciences, 6(1).
4. Ў. К. Эрниёзов (2022). МИСТИК ОНГ ТАРАҚҚИЁТИДА ИНТУИТИВ ПАРАДИГМАЛАР. Academic research in educational sciences, 3 (TSTU Conference 1), 682-685.

5. Эрниёзов, Ў. К. (2022). ИНТЕЛЛЕКТУАЛ САЛОҲИЯТНИ ЎРГАНИШ КОНЦЕПЦИЯЛАРИ ВА ЁНДАШУВЛАРИ. World scientific research journal, 8(1), 20-26.

6. Ramatov, J.S. va Xasanov, MN (2022). Ta'lim amaliyotida innovatsiyalarni jalb qilishning nazariy modelini tahlil qilish. *Sharq uyg'onishi: innovatsion, ta'lim, tabiiy va ijtimoiy fanlar* , *2* (6), 937-942.

7. У.К.Эрниёзов, М.Н. Ҳасанов, & Х.С.Машарипов. (2022). АБУ НАСР ФОРОБИЙНИНГ ИЖТИМОИЙ-АХЛОҚИЙ ТАЪЛИМОТИ ВА УНИНГ АНТРОПОЛОГИК ХУСУСИЯТЛАРИ . *JOURNAL OF NEW CENTURY INNOVATIONS*, *4*(3), 130–136.