

Which sources of knowledge-books, web sites the media, personal experience, authorities or some other-do you consider most trustworthy, and why?

Knowledge can be defined as the fact or state of knowing. There are many different aspects of knowledge. Knowledge comes from many different places. There are great numbers of philosophers who have tried to describe where knowledge comes from. Also knowledge can be divided into different parts according to the way we receive knowledge. There are many things that related to the knowledge of something. The development of questions in philosophy about knowledge began back in the day of Plato. They are still around today. These questions are the hardest to answer. Also these questions are used to give background on a lot of philosophies. Epistemology is the theory of knowledge. This theory asks three questions: what are the sources of knowledge? What is the nature of knowledge? And is our knowledge valid?

Knowledge is believed to come from four different sources. The sources each have their own way to look at the world. The appeal to authority is the first source of knowledge. We learn things about the past from the testimony of others. The experience of the person who gives you the testimony is the actual source. Although authority is used a lot as a source of knowledge, this is only a secondary source. Another source is the senses through empiricism. The realm of knowledge is given to us through all of our perceptions of something concrete. Whatever someone sees, hears, touches, smells, and tastes then is made into an idea that becomes a part of the knowledge that person can receive. The philosophy of pragmatism is similar to empiricism. The next source is rationalism. Rationalists say that thinking is a source of knowledge. They also say that the mind has the ability to discover truth by itself, or knowledge is obtained by comparing ideas with ideas. The things that the senses detect are just raw material of knowledge in rationalism. The last source is intuition, or the direct apprehension of knowledge that is

not the result of conscious reasoning or of immediate sense perception. Intuition has four different ways that it is connected with being a source of knowledge. First George Santayana believed intuition was the awareness of the immediate data of consciousness. He said that intuition is in the knowledge of oneself and one's own life. The second is that intuition is actually just a combination of one's past experiences and thinking. It comes from subconscious induction or deduction. People who have done a lot of thinking and have done a certain type of work will have a good intuition in that area. The belief that intuition is a higher kind of knowledge is the third way it could be a source. Bergson said that intelligence and intuition are travelling in opposite directions. Intelligence is a tool used by science to deal with matter, while intuition is the instinct of someone that leads that person to the very inwardness of life. The last way intuition could be a source of knowledge is through mystical expressions. It is believed that mystical expressions can enable someone to gain an immediate knowledge that transcends knowledge gained through reason and the senses. This fourth description of intuition says that it could be a manifestation of the self in union with spiritual reality. These sources of knowledge range from the very perception of objects to the supernatural induction of knowledge

Knowledge does not only have its sources but it also can come from different natures. The two main natures of knowledge are subjectivism and objectivism. Other than the nature of knowledge there are two types of knowledge. These types are associated into both natures. Subjectivism is the belief that things do not exist without a preconception of the object. Through consciousness we can find reality. The dreams, hallucinations, and illusions that a person has are all part of subjectivism. These things that a person experiences are not physical in the outside world making them a part of the experiences in the mind. Locke described the colour, sound, taste, odour, and so on of an object to not belong to that object in the outside world. He called these secondary qualities. The secondary qualities vary from person to person. Later after Locke had had problems getting around the notion of "material substances", Berkeley stated that all qualities, both primary and secondary, are in the mind therefore matter doesn't exist. More recent subjectivists have said that we cannot get outside our own experiences. The other nature

of knowledge is objectivism. Objectivists reject Berkeley's view. They believe that there is an independent reality apart from minds. In part of the arguments for objectivism is that the conclusion is drawn that all known things are known. This is a way of saying that we cannot know things until we experience them. Although the subjectivists give a definition to the word idea, they also give that word another definition. The two definitions are, the concept held by the knower and the object known. This is a little confusing and brings up different questions about it. There is no way that the object of an act of thought can be the actual thought itself. Another argument for objectivism is that the existence of an outside world explains the experiences that we have to contribute to everyday life. These experiences are forced upon us by the outside world. The last argument is that we have other events that come in and break our train of thought. These experiences have to come from an outside world. These events have to obey laws outside our minds. The subjectivists and objectivists will argue day and night until both are blue in the face, but we will never know the nature of knowledge.

The tests of knowledge are made up of scepticism, the correspondence theory, the coherence theory, and the pragmatic theory. Scepticism shows that there is no knowledge and the quest for truth is vain. Furthermore, scepticism is the attitude of questioning any assumption or conclusion until it can be subjected to rigorous examination. The correspondence theory is also the agreement with "fact", which is most widely accepted by the realists. This theory says that truth is the agreement between the statement of fact and the actual fact. Also through this theory, belief has no effect on the truth or falsity of something. The idealists accept the coherence theory of consistency. This theory judges validity by the consistency or harmony of all our judgments. A judgment is true if consistent with other judgments that are accepted as true. The pragmatists see utility in the pragmatic theory as the test of truth. This theory states that ideas have to be tested before they can be found true.

Knowledge is the most powerful tool known to man. If it is ever mastered, it could be very dangerous. Although people try everyday to find total knowledge they will never

because there are so many ways knowledge can be found, the choice of nature of knowledge, and the tests of knowledge. It all hurts my head trying to understand everything that is known.

Considering this definition of knowledge as trustworthy I believe that the most reliable source of knowledge are the books, considered as way of catalogue and relaborate human experience throughout history.

It is clear that the several theories can be accept or not, but anyhow I firmly believe that knowledge is made up of the sum of all the various theories that has have been developed by mankind throughout history.