

TABULA RASA AND THE DOGMAS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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Abstract: Humans as thinking creatures produce theories of thought. One of the well-known in the world of education is John Locke's Tabula Rasa theory. Religion is present as something that is believed by the Creator so both are two interesting things to study. The research method used is the literature by finding sources that are by following per under the discussion. The result of the discussion is that John Locke's Tabula Rasa theory that humans are born clean like white paper is not by following religious education. Because religions have innate beliefs that are innate, including Islam in the form of potential reason and conscience and the concept of nature, Christianity in the form of inherited sin, free will, and divine response, and Hinduism in the form of *Atman* or *atma*, reincarnation, and *triguna*. Nevertheless, the three religions still encourage humans to continue sense to gain knowledge and experience.

Keywords: *Tabula Rasa, Education, Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism.*

A. INTRODUCTION

Humans are creatures that have extraordinary potential. As Caliphs on earth, humans are given advantages in the form of bodies and spirits. Through the body, the ability to move, and through the spirit or soul humans can think and seek knowledge (Albina & Aziz, 2021). These two things encourage humans to explore themselves and develop and form civilizations that exceed other creatures.

According to the Convergence theory pioneered by William Stern, human development is influenced by innate talent factors (internal) and the natural environment. A person's development is influenced by what he gets from the inner drive and the surrounding circumstances (Sholichah, 2018). Therefore, the influence of the surrounding environment is also very strong in influencing the development of an individual. Humans always want to know and understand what is in the surrounding environment. It can be for needs or science that leads to the development of civilization and knowledge. One of these advances is in the world of education.

The world of education has a very broad domain. Not only limited to economics or anatomy, but both are one of the scopes in the world of education itself. According to Dr. Ki Hajar Dewantara, he explained that education is the activity of mobilizing all the abilities that a person has so that they as an individual and part of society can achieve the best possible benefits (Sholichah, 2018). It can be understood that as long as something is learned or attempted by a person or community to improve the benefits of both individuals and groups, it can be called education.

Education is generally divided into three types formal (structured, organized, and tiered institutions), non-formal (a place to add scientific insights to formal education), and informal (family) (Athaillah et al., 2023). The variety of educational theories has sprung up along with the times. Both from the west and east, from Asia and Europe. Scientific ideas are present in the form of human thought as intelligent beings. One of these educational theories is John Locke's tabulation theory which reads that humans are born white, clean, and without stains like a piece of white paper.

On the other hand, a new form of theory or doctrine also emerged and existed long before modern theories emerged. The doctrine is a belief system known as religion. Religion is a form of human belief in something powerful and supernatural and humans in a broad scope of life (Taufik, 2019). As a belief system, religion can also be categorized as part of education. Moreover, religious ideology is independent in influencing humans. That is, it is not humans who regulate religion - but rather religious teachings that regulate humans with the main concept of absolute truth from God (Nurma, 2022).

Religion and knowledge have an important role in human life in terms of behavior, thoughts, and feelings (Johnson et al., 2023). Religion makes humans know their purpose and not be arrogant while knowledge regulates humans to keep living a law that should be. According to Slatter, religion can provide a clear purpose and mental calmness for a person (Slatter, 2023). The influence of religion on life is very strong because religion can be interpreted as a system that is manifested in a pattern of life, a community of faith, and a worldview regarding something sacred and important in the end (Smith et al., 2021).

If you look closely, there seems to be a stark difference between religion and tabulation. Tabulation suggests that humans are based on blank like white paper while religion expresses the existence of something powerful and allows for something that humans get from God. That something then makes him no longer a white paper. This contradiction seems interesting to study, especially in the realm of dogma in religious education itself.

B. METHODS

The type of research is a qualitative method to examine John Locke's Tabula Rasa theory through the lens of dogma contained in religious education. The religions referred to here are Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism. The data collection method uses literature studies sourced from the Qur'an, the Bible, journals, and other supporting documents. The research was conducted from February to May 17, 2023. Steps to obtain subjects by reviewing various journals and literature related to the discussion. The data analysis technique uses content analysis. The purpose of this research is to examine the views of three religions (Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism) to find out something that humans are born with according to the educational dogma of each religion. The results of the search will then be compared with John Locke's Tabula Rasa theory to find out whether Tabula Rasa is in line with the dogma of religious education or not. Labinoni, Dobbins, and Riedel's research entitled "There Is No Tabula Rasa - The Effect Of Varieties Of Communism On Organizational Formation Rates In Pretransition Interest Group Populations" in 2021. Mudin, Ahmad, and Rohman with the title "Human innate potential: A Comparative Study of Tabularasa Theory and the Concept of Fitrah" in 2021. Riswan and Ndruru with the title "Theological Argumentation on the Impact of Sin on the Mind" in 2022

C. JOHN LOCKE AND THE TABULA RASA THEORY

John Locke was born in Somersetshire, England in 1632 and died in 1704. He lived when political conditions were less conducive. John Locke at a young age was a student at Oxford University. During his time in college, John Locke often participated in various campus activities,

especially those related to campus political activities. He has the view that all students should pay more attention to social sensitivity and creativity (Triandini, 2020).

John Locke then grew and became known as a British thinker who became one of the thinkers who used the view of empiricism. His approach to political philosophy became famous along with Isaac Newton. Along the way, John Locke became an important figure in the Enlightenment era. Locke also became a figure who supported the rise of the modern era until the post-Descartes era. This is because at that time Descartes' method of thought was no longer the only method that was the main approach to philosophy. John Locke outlined the importance of using empirical experience and sensory experiments in science (Ryan & Renna, 2022).

The notion of the emptiness of knowledge has emerged since the Greek period from the thinker Aristotle as he thought "thought in a certain sense is potentially whatever can be thought is nothing until it thinks" (Gorman, 2021). John Lock's Tabula Rasa theory then followed by bringing a more extreme explanation, namely making humans born in a blank state like white paper so that an individual does not bring any knowledge or potential. The practice of the five senses will fill the soul from simple to complex knowledge. This is also in line with David Hume's thought that humans from birth have no knowledge at all, knowledge is then obtained through sensing activities. The results of these observations produce two things, namely impressions, and ideas that give rise to knowledge and experience (Octaviana & Ramadhani, 2021). According to Thach and Thuy, the application of Lock's concept in the world of education is like a whiteboard, where the senses will write on it, word by word, pleasure, and pain will direct individuals to good, bad, allowed, and prohibited (Thach & Thuy, 2021). Sensing is the key to an individual's knowledge process.

The two main pillars of scientific knowledge are rational and empirical (Muhajir et al., 2021). Based on the rationalist point of view such as Descartes and Plato, there is certainly a contradiction with the empirical-based Tabula rasa concept. Descartes states that knowledge comes from the mind, *u cogito ergo sum* (I think, then I exist) (Vera & Hambali, 2021), while in Plato's theory knowledge comes from the world of ideas or forms which are the realm of reason. Rationalists make thought and understanding the main focus in obtaining knowledge. John Locke knows this discussion, so in his understanding, the realm of reason or mind is also included in the "white paper" (Uzoigwe, 2022). When humans are born, it is the emptiness of their minds and knowledge that makes them spotless. It is only when examining Labanino's research on the existence of large organized populations in communist areas with their respective goals that it shows that the sensing of the surrounding environment can not affect the knowledge and innate nature of the individual (Labanino et al., 2021). It is understandable that empirically, Tabula Rasa is still lacking in defending its theory.

D. DISCUSSION

In language, education means the process of transforming the character and behavior of individuals or communities of people to mature someone through learning (Moeljadi, 2022). As for the term, as stated by Soedijarto in Agus Nur Qowim, education is an activity that is regulated to create learning conditions and learning stages so that individuals can gain the development of their abilities, have inner values, able to control themselves, are wise, smart, highly civilized, and have field skills (Qawim, 2020). It can be interpreted that education is a deliberate effort aimed at developing a person's potential in all positive aspects to become a wise individual.

Religion itself is a depiction of the relationship between the two parties, where the first party is in a higher position than the second party which contains the relationship between the creature and its creator manifested in the attitude of inner obedience, worship, and daily attitudes (Irawan, 2022). For someone religious, religion has several benefits including a source of knowledge and life guidance, a way to become a better person, a way of salvation, and peace (Andika, 2022). Based on

the above discussion, the meaning of religious education is a deliberate effort aimed at developing a person's potential in the relationship between creatures and their creator to realize an attitude of inner obedience, worship, and daily attitudes toward God.

The essence of religious education is so that a religious believer can be more obedient and closer to the deity who is considered a worshipper, get his blessing, and get salvation according to the dogma of belief that is believed. The value of religious education does not only focus on religious rituals but also morals, manners, and sensitivity (Sulmiftah et al., 2022). As legally stated in Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 55 of 2007 concerning Religious Education and Religious Education Chapter 1 Articles 1 and 2, the definition of religious education is emphasized, namely:

"Religious education is education implemented through subjects or lectures at all levels of education which aims to provide knowledge and form attitudes, human personalities who are faithful and pious to God Almighty, as well as skills and abilities of students in responding to religious values, and to prepare students to become human beings who can carry out and practice their religious teachings" (Firmansyah, 2019).

Religion as one of the human guidelines is widespread throughout the earth with the foundation of each dogma. This also results in the dogma of education in each religion being different. The following is a description of the meaning of religious education based on three religions. Islam. Islamic education is an activity that is carried out by teaching tawhid, faith, piety to Allah, and instilling noble morals into the souls of individuals (Tang S. et al., 2021). The purpose of Islamic Education is the formation of manners according to the Shari'a and belief in Allah based on the sources of Islamic dogma (Al-Qur'an and Hadith) (Awwaliyah & Baharun, 2018).

Christianity. Christian Religious Education is religious learning that shows and embodies Christian identity and characteristics in its teachings, namely the belief that Jesus is God who has honor over individual followers (Tobing, 2020). Hinduism. Hindu religious learning is based on five basic principles, namely the *Vedic* scriptures, *Tattwa*, *Susila* or ethics, *Acara* or ceremonies, and History with the basic beliefs of *Pancasradha* (*Widhi Tattwa*, *Atma Tattwa*, *Karmaphala Tatwa*, *Punarbhawa Tattwa* (Reincarnation), and *Moksa Tattwa*) (Susila, 2021).

Based on the understanding of religious education from the three religions, it can be drawn in common that all three have the main goal in the dogma of education, namely directing belief in the worshiped and faith in teachings that may have dogmas regarding the nature, knowledge, or innate potential of a person so that it is no longer a *Tabula Rasa* individual. Here are some dogmas in the education of the three religions that have criticized John Locke's theory:

1. Dogmas in Islamic Education

Islam in language means to submit or obey and in other expressions, it can also mean salvation. As for the term, it is an acknowledgment, testimony to the omnipotence of God Almighty, and complete self-obedience to all His commands (Junaedi, 2022). Full obedience to God is included in the rituals of belief worship, as well as socializing. According to Islam, humans have several innates that God has given since birth including:

- a. Potential of Intellect and Conscience. Intellect has a very special position in Islam. Many verses explain the command for humans to use their intellect. Even so, the majority of scholars agree that reason does not have the authority to prescribe laws, but reason is tasked with forming and determining laws (Syuhud, 2021), so that reason is still bound by Allah's guidance. The heart in sharia is known as *al-qalb* which means "up and down", so called because the heart often changes state, sometimes happy, sometimes sad (Napitupulu, 2019). In terms of *qalbu* has two meanings. First, the *haqiqi* meaning is the beating heart. Second, the *majazi* meaning means the inner or psychological ability to understand and feel

various conditions such as anxiety, joy, and sympathy (Amda & Daheri, 2020). Allah Swt. says:

Say (Prophet Muhammad), "The bad is not equal to the good, though the abundance of the bad may attract you. So, fear Allah, O people of understanding, that you may prosper." (Q.S. Al-Mā'idah [5]:100)

According to the above verse, people should use their intellect so that they will be fortunate. This shows that the potential of reason has existed in man since he was created.

- b. *Fitrah*. *Fitrah* can mean pure, the beginning of the event, and the beginning. As for the term among Muslims, it is *fitrah* which means faith. According to Ibn al-Qayyim and Ibn Kathir in Samsuri, because the word *fathara* in Arabic means to create, *fitrah* means the state resulting from that creation (Samsuri, 2020). Islam believes that an individual when he is born has brought the *fitrah* of Islam and recognizes Allah as his god. Allah swt. said:

"(Remember) when your Lord brought forth from the backbone of the sons and daughters of Adam their offspring and Allah took testimony against themselves (saying), "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes (You are our Lord), we bear witness." (We do this) so that on the Day of Resurrection you may not say, "We were careless about this" (Q.S. Al-A'rāf [7]:172).

Every individual is born with religious potential or *fitrah* (Hartati, 2022). This knowledge is in the form of the science of faith that is planted in each individual before being born and this contradicts John Locke's concept of white paper.

Based on this explanation, it can be understood that in the dogma of Islamic education, the concept of Tabula Rasa is still inaccurate because there is innate potential and *fitrah* that has been embedded in every individual since birth. Even so, Islam also obliges its adherents to study (Muslimah et al., 2020) which makes Tabula Rasa theory still have a part in the realm of science, not faith.

2. Dogmas in Christian Education

The essence of Christian Education is to convey knowledge, values, character, skills, feelings, and behavior consistent with the Christian faith by the Bible (Tubulau, 2020). Looking at the breadth of the content of the Bible itself, of course, there are many dogmas contained in Christian Education. Some of the dogmas that have to do with Tabula Rasa include:

- a. Inherited Sin. Sin in the Christian perspective is doubt in the form of rejection of divine goodwill and truth (Ndruru, 2022). One form of sin that has become a dogma of Christian education is the sin of inheritance. The Bible states:

"Behold, I was born in iniquity, and my mother conceived me in sin." (Psalm 51:5 (SB2010))

According to Paul in Situmorang and Sihombing, the power of sin existed before man was able to sin personally. The sin was acquired from the ancestor (Adam) and passed on to every person. Adam's sin was inherited through reproduction. Indeed, it was Adam who sinned, but its effects exist in human civilization today (Situmorang & Sihombing, 2020). Sin certainly affects human thought and temperament to encourage the rejection of divine truth and this sin has been carried from birth. While John Lock asserts that humans are born with a moral nature that is not hindered by sin (Riswan & Ndruru, 2022), this makes the white paper theory also dismiss the impulse or nature both towards bad and good.

- b. Free will. God created humans with free will in both doing good and sinning. Even Deism explains that this will also include organizing the universe. So that the human mentality already exists in the form of a will not in a state of "Empty". The Bible states:
"This is my advice: "Keep the king's commandments because of your oath to God. Do not hasten to depart from his presence, nor persist in evil, for he can do whatever he pleases."
(Ecclesiastes 8:2-3 (SB: 2010))
- c. Divine response. According to Stephen Tong, humans are endowed with the ability to respond to revelation which is divided into two, namely outward (external) in the form of culture and activities and inward (internal) in the form of religion (Tanuwidjaja & Uda, 2020). The urge to respond to this revelation has existed since humans were born as a gift from God so humans are not Tabula Rasa.

Apart from the three dogmas above, Christian education also emphasizes the potential of the mind and heart like the dogmas of Islamic education (Stevanus, 2021). This shows that the whiteness of the human soul when it is born is not correct when viewed from the dogma of Christian Education.

3. Dogmas in Hindu Education

The discussion on education in Hindu dogma revolves around faith in the *Vedas*, *atman*, and *brahman*, as well as the afterlife and *Deva* (Shukla & Shukla, 2022). so closely related to the white paper theory, among others:

- a. *Atman*. *Atman* or *Atma* is a part of Brahman that gives life to all beings. Linguistically, the term *ātman* comes from the root "an" meaning to breathe. Through breath, living beings can move. Breath is the main element in life. Meanwhile, according to Sankara in Yasa, the meaning of the word *ātman* comes from the word "at" which means to eat or obtain (Yasa, 2021). *Atman* is a part of God given to every creature and whoever understands it gets the whole world.

Ya ātma apahata pātmā vijaro vimrtyur visako vijighatso 'pipāsah satya kāmah, satya samkalpah, so 'nvestavyah, so vijijñāsitavyah sa sarvāms ca lokān āpnoti sarvāms ca kāmān. Yas tam ātmānam anuvidya vijañati. Iti ha prajāpatir uvāca
(Chāndogya Upanisad VIII.7.1)

"*Ātma* is free from evil, free from old age, free from death, free from sorrow, free from hunger, and thirst. What it desires is truth. It can be sought, to it one can desire to understand it. One who has found it and understood it gets the world, the whole world. Thus Prajapati says" (Yasa, 2021).

This is certainly at odds with the concept of "white paper" because *atman* already exists in every being before they are born even because the existence of *atman* beings can exist according to Hindu dogma.

- b. *Punarbhawa Tattwa* (Reincarnation). The term "reincarnation" means "coming again to the flesh". Reincarnation teaches that life revolves in a circular cycle. When the body dies, the consciousness or soul remains alive and will return to a new body to become a new life (Tenggana, 2020). According to Hindu teachings, it is not only humans who can reincarnate but all living souls. The deeds in the previous life will determine the fate of the creature in its reincarnation life. As for if a person has detached himself from the world, then he will achieve *moksa* and unite with Brahman.

*jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyur dhruvaṁ janma mṛtasya ca,
tasmād aparihārye 'rthe na tvaṁ śocitum arhasi.
(Bhagavad Gītā II.27)*

"For one who is a lair, death is certain and there must be birth for those who die; so for this inevitable thing, do not grieve" (Maheswari, 2021).

Based on this, it can be understood that reincarnation is the next form of life for the soul after death. This life will be based on the deeds he has done in the previous life and become a carrier for the new life so that it is not Tabula Rasa.

- c. *Triguna*. *Triguna* are three innate traits that humans have had since birth. The three traits are *Satwam* is calm, *Rajas* is dynamic, and *Tamas* is slow (Gunawijaya & Srilaksmi, 2020).

*Laghu prakasakam sattwam cancelam tu rajah sthitam
Tamo guru varanakam ityetaccinta laksanam.
Ilang citta mahangan mawa, yeka sattwa ngaranya,
Ilang madres mola, yeka rajah ngaranya, ilang abwat
Peteng, yeka tamah ngaranya.
Warhaspati Tattwa Sloka 15*

"A mind that is light and calm, that is *sattwam*, that is fast-moving, that is *rajah*, that is heavy and dark, that is *tamah*."

Every human being has these three qualities to different degrees. The person with more *sattwam* *guna* will be wise, compassionate, and righteous. The person with more *guna* *rajas* will be agile, violent, arrogant, and violent. A person whose *guna* *tamas* predominates will be slow, lazy, and stupid. These qualities also dominate each other and affect the *atman*. If *sattwam* prevails over *rajas* and *tamas*, the *atman* will attain moksa. If *sattwam* and *rajas* are equally strong, the *atman* attains heaven. And if the power of *sattwam*, *rajas*, and *tamas* is stronger than *sattwam* and *rajas*, *Atma* will become animals and plants (Gunawijaya & Srilaksmi, 2020).

*Yapwan tamah magong ring citta, ya hetuning Atma matemahan triak, ya ta dadi. ilang
dharmasadhana denya, an pangdadi ta ya janggama
Wrhaspati Tattwa Sloka 24*

"When there is great affection for the *citta*, that is what causes the *Atma* to become an animal, it cannot perform dharma by it, which causes it to become a plant."

Such is the description of several dogmas in religious education that indicate the existence of potential or something that has been carried by humans since birth so there are differences in the theory of *Tabula Rasa* and the dogma of religious education. This is to the research of Mudin, Ahmad, and Rohman regarding the comparative *tabula rasa* and *fitrah* which states that John Locke's theory is not in line with the concept or dogma of *fitrah* in Islam. this concept believes that humans already have clear goals and directions as explained by al-Ghozali, not as white paper (Mudin et al., 2021). In line with that, Riswan and Ndruru's research refutes the opinion of John Locke which states that humans at birth are clean from everything including sin. According to Riswan and Ndruru in the dogma of Christian education, there is inherited sin that humans carry at birth as previously explained (Riswan & Ndruru, 2022). Based on the explanation above, John Locke's theory is not suitable if juxtaposed with the dogma of religious education. Religion itself, which is believed to come from God, certainly has a dogma regarding God's intervention in the body of a creature or individual, while John Locke's *Tabula Rasa* empiricism that cleanses all innate from birth to be called white paper is very contrary to the dogma of religious education. Then more clearly, examining from the empirical point of view itself, the research of Labinoni, Dobbins, and Riedel explains that there are large populations organized in communist areas with the aim of each showing that the sensing of the

surrounding environment can not effect individual self-knowledge and innate (Labanino et al., 2021). It is understandable that empirically, Tabula Rasa is still lacking in defending its theory, especially when juxtaposed with the dogma of religious education.

E. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that John Locke's Tabula Rasa Theory with the view that humans are born with nothing like white paper and only receive knowledge or other things after they sense and experience new knowledge and other things he gets is less acceptable based on religious education dogma. This is because as a belief system that follows dogma, the third religious education has a belief that humans have innate knowledge that has been given by the creator which is certainly very contrary to John Locke's Tabula Rasa understanding. This theory is also broken by the fact that there is a group of people who can be separated from communism even though they grew up in a communist environment.

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