

From Recognition to Knowledge: A Study on Modes of Human Cognition

Tanımadan Bilmeye: İnsanın İdrak Tarzları Üzerine Bir İnceleme

MAHMUT SAMİ ÖZDİL 

Necmettin Erbakan University

OSMAN ZAHİD ÇİFÇİ 

Selçuk University

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Abstract: The article presents a distinction between the cognitive processes of knowing and recognizing from a variety of philosophical, psychological, and religious perspectives. The term "recognition" is used to describe an intuitive awareness or instinctive grasp of fundamental properties, whereas the term "knowledge" is used to denote a more profound conceptual understanding that emerges from experience and analysis. This research draws upon philosophical theories such as Plato's anamnesis and theological concepts such as fitrah and sensus divinitatis. This article examines the ways in which these processes complement each other in shaping moral awareness and intellectual development. It emphasizes the role of both empirical and logical structures in understanding the acquisition and verification of knowledge. The analysis posits that knowing and recognition are inextricably linked components of human cognition, and that both play a role in existential understanding and the validity of moral judgments.

Keywords: Logic, knowledge, recognition, fitrah, sensus divinitatis.

✉ Mahmut Sami Özdil

Necmettin Erbakan, İlahiyat Fakültesi, Felsefe ve Din Bilimleri Bölümü
42090, Konya, Türkiye | mahmutsami.ozdil@erbakan.edu.tr

✉ Osman Zahid Çifçi

Selçuk Üniversitesi, İlahiyat Fakültesi, Felsefe ve Din Bilimleri Bölümü
42130, Konya, Türkiye | zahid.cifci@selcuk.edu.tr



Introduction

When human beings offer an account of phenomena, events, and objects, they must claim that this account is knowledge or is based on correct knowledge. However, when attempting to define the concepts of "knowledge" and "knowing," a circular argument emerges, as this definition would also be considered "knowledge." Providing an account of the nature of knowledge inevitably leads to a tautological explanation. Another issue pertaining to the concept of knowledge is that any definition of knowledge must encompass both human knowledge and divine knowledge. (Haklı, 2021, p. 450). Consequently, the question of the nature of knowledge has constituted one of the most vigorously contested issues in the history of philosophy.

The conceptions of humanity, the universe, and the divine held by philosophers have been pivotal in shaping their perspectives on the nature of knowledge. A variety of schools of thought have offered disparate explanations regarding the nature of knowledge within their respective systems, employing a range of terminologies to do so. The term "ilm," for instance, is used in some contexts to refer to knowledge, as is "marifah" and "malumat." (Taylan, 1992, p. 157). Conversely, while some philosophers have proposed a definition of knowledge, others have asserted that it is a self-evident concept that requires no definition.

The concept of knowledge has been defined in a multitude of ways. These include the following: as a certain belief that corresponds with reality; as the form of a thing that is realized in the mind; as the act of perceiving a thing as it truly is; as the act of removing secrecy from the known; as the distinguishing attribute by which universals and particulars are perceived; as the soul's access to the meaning of a thing; as the special relation between the intellect and the intelligible; and so on. (al-Jurjānī, 1985, pp. 160-161).

As evidenced by the definitions provided, the concept of knowledge is inherently based on the individual who possesses it. In light of these considerations, it is pertinent to inquire: How does one come to know? What is the nature of knowledge? To what extent can one claim to possess knowledge? How can one ascertain the veracity of their knowledge? These are the fundamental inquiries that arise immediately following, and in



conjunction with, the question of what knowledge is.

In addressing these issues pertaining to knowledge, the science of logic assumes a pivotal role in elucidating the formal and methodological foundations of knowledge. This is because logic provides the means to challenge the legitimacy and soundness of knowledge, which is a crucial instrument for elucidating the nature of knowledge and the processes through which it is acquired.

The veracity of any given piece of knowledge is typically demonstrated through the application of logical rules of inference and reasoning processes. In order for a proof to be considered valid, it must adhere to the established logical rules. It is not possible to assess the soundness of a proof without first establishing its logical validity. The soundness of a proof is contingent upon the veracity of all the propositions utilized in its construction. These propositions, or structures that convey knowledge, must be true for the proof to be sound (Hurley, 2000, pp. 44-47). This situation can be evaluated not within the field of logic per se, but within the field to which each proposition belongs. In this regard, the rules of logical inference and reasoning establish the manner in which transitions can be made from one form of knowledge to another, or, in other words, from what is known to what is unknown. This enables a systematic analysis of knowledge.

At this juncture, the information to be accessed can be classified into two distinct categories. Such knowledge may be either that of a concept or that of a judgment. When individuals seek to comprehend a concept, they achieve this by reorganizing the existing concepts they are aware of in a specific manner. This signifies the act of defining the previously unknown concept. In the case of an unknown judgment, it is necessary to reach it by organizing the known judgments in a specific form. In the context of classical logic, it is futile to attempt to use a concept that lacks a definition in a judgment, given that the fundamental elements of a proposition that expresses a judgment are concepts. Consequently, the initial stage of the human pursuit of knowledge entails the formation and definition of concepts.

Given that the attainment of a definition hinges on the possession of certain concepts, it appears that no human being can know anything without a certain degree of comprehension. It follows that some concepts must



exist a priori in order for knowledge to be possible. The concepts that facilitate this possibility are referred to as "bedihi" concepts. In light of the aforementioned considerations, the proponents of the "bedihi" concept have postulated that the fundamental nature of knowledge must be inherent in human beings in order for them to be able to cognitively process and comprehend the world around them.

Moreover, it is not feasible to define certain concepts in accordance with the tenets of scientific logic. This is due to the fact that the definition theory of classical logic necessitates that the concept to be defined must be demonstrated in a species-genus relationship. In other words, the concept in question must be demonstrated as a species within a genus, and the manner in which it differs from other species of the same genus must be elucidated. Nevertheless, it is not feasible to demonstrate that every concept can be defined in this manner. This is due to the fact that some concepts lack a genus that encompasses them. Such concepts may be the highest genera, or they may be concepts that cannot be conceived in a species-genus relationship with other concepts. For example, the concept of a human being can be defined as a talking/thinking animal by using the concept of animal, which is its genus, and the concept of speaking/thinking, which differentiates the concept of animal from other species. Nevertheless, it is not feasible to define the concepts of God or substance in this manner. The former is not conceived as a species of a genus, nor is it conceived as a genus of other species. Even if we posit that the latter can be conceived of as a genus of other species, there is no other concept above it as a genus of itself.

One reason why some concepts cannot be defined in terms of classical logic is that they denote singular objects (Emiroglu, 2004, p. 91). In accordance with the tenets of classical logic, the objective of scientific inquiry is to attain knowledge of the universal, as postulated by the founder of the scientific method, Aristotle (Aristotle, 1996, p. 31). It is not possible for singularities to be the subject of scientific enquiry. Moreover, the lack of definability of concepts pertaining to senses and emotions is a further limitation of classical logic (Emiroglu, 2004, pp. 90-91). This is because a definition serves as a means of transferring the knowledge of one thing to another. In contrast, the phenomena of senses and emotions are exclusively



experienced by the individual subject, rendering them inaccessible to external observation and transferability to others.

It is evident, therefore, that not all human knowledge is conceptual. Such an argument would imply that humans are unable to comprehend concepts that they are unable to define. If singular objects cannot be defined, or if the warmth of the sun on one's skin cannot be defined, can it be said that one does not know these things? "Or, conversely, if I am unable to articulate the characteristics of my acquaintance Ahmet, does that imply a lack of knowledge about him?" Nevertheless, the majority of individuals would likely respond in the negative to these inquiries. Such an approach would, however, ignore an important part of human experience. Furthermore, self-knowledge is not a concept that can be fully defined. Nevertheless, all other forms of knowledge are contingent upon the knower's ability to understand themselves. In light of these considerations, it becomes pertinent to inquire as to the nature of the knowledge that one possesses of the self in the absence of a definitional framework. This form of knowledge may be designated as that which is obtained through recognition. The primary distinction between this form of knowledge and that which is defined is that in the latter, the knower and the known are inherently intertwined, at least to some extent. The act of defining a human being involves mentally encompassing the concept of a human being by distinguishing it from other related concepts. Nevertheless, this kind of mental encapsulation does not occur in the context of knowledge acquired through recognition. In contrast to definition, recognition can be a graded form of knowledge. It is meaningful to posit that one's knowledge of an entity may be characterized as either more or less comprehensive. Nevertheless, it is not possible to define a concept in terms of its degree of certainty. However, with regard to veracity, these two forms of knowledge are identical. Additionally, it is possible to know someone or something correctly or incorrectly.

It is therefore necessary to identify knowledge by definition and knowledge by recognition as two distinct modes of cognition. In evaluating these two modes of cognition in terms of their acquisition, what differences or similarities can be identified? It can be stated that all knowledge acquired through definition is subsequently obtained at a later point in



time. Even if we are already acquainted with the terminology used to describe a concept, we cannot assert that we fully comprehend its denotation and connotation in the same manner as we do after the concept has been defined. Otherwise, this would imply that definitions are devoid of informative value. Nevertheless, it is evident that a portion of what we perceive through recognition is not acquired subsequently. For example, the knowledge of the self represents a case in point.

To avoid confusion, this article will employ the terms "knowing" and "recognizing" as mutually exclusive concepts, thus enabling a clear distinction between these two modes of cognition. In essence, this distinction corresponds to two modes of human cognition. The term "recognizing" is typically understood as an intuitive, pre-reflexive grasp of a concept or entity. In contrast, the term "knowing" is associated with a deeper, more reflective, and analytical understanding. Both processes are essential for humans in their pursuit of understanding the world around them and their place within it.

From a philosophical perspective, the relationship between knowing and recognizing can be traced back to Plato's theory of anamnesis. This theory posits that learning is a form of remembering, implying that knowledge is already present in the soul and can only be "recognized" through philosophical inquiry (Plato, 2008a). This perspective was a foundational tenet of ancient philosophical thought and continues to inform contemporary discussions about the innateness of specific forms of knowledge. In contemporary epistemology, Alvin Plantinga's work on true basic beliefs (beliefs known without inference) reflects this idea. Plantinga (2000) argues that some knowledge is simply known without the need for empirical verification or logical inference. Such beliefs include knowledge about the existence of God, moral truths, and basic logical principles.

In the field of cognitive science, the distinction between recognition and knowing has been elucidated through the lens of intuitive and reflective cognition (Kahneman, 2011, p. 13). Kahneman's work delineates the distinction between System 1 and System 2 thinking. System 1 thinking is rapid, automatic, and intuitive, akin to recognition. In contrast, System 2 thinking is slower, more deliberate, and analytical, akin to knowing. Paul Bloom further develops this argument by proposing that humans possess



an innate moral sense that enables them to intuitively recognize certain ethical truths. Additionally, he suggests that this process is further refined through experience and reflection, ultimately leading to the formation of moral knowledge (Bloom, 2007, pp. 17-33).

From a theological perspective, the Islamic concept of *fitrat* and the Christian concept of *sensus divinitatis* provide illustrative examples of the interplay between recognition and knowing as it is viewed in religious traditions. John Calvin posited that the *sensus divinitatis*, an inner sense of the divine, enables people to recognize the existence of God without the need for formal theological training (Calvin, 1536). Similarly, in Islamic thought, *fitrat* refers to the innate inclination to recognize God and moral truths and functions as a basis for the acquisition of further knowledge (al-Jurjānī, 1985, p. 147; Hökelekli, 1996, p. 47; Nasr, 2007, p. 44). These concepts indicate that the comprehension of God and moral principles originates from an intuitive grasp and is subsequently developed through educational and contemplative processes.

Empirical research in the field of cognitive science also provides insights into the relationship between recognition and knowing in human development. For example, Bloom's (2007) work on moral cognition demonstrates that children possess an innate capacity to discern moral actions and agents, which lends support to the notion that specific forms of knowledge—especially moral and existential knowledge—are preconfigured within the human cognitive apparatus. Moreover, Haidt's research on social intuitionism posits that moral judgments are predominantly shaped by intuitive recognition, with reasoning often serving a secondary function in post hoc justification (Haidt, 2001, p. 817). This is consistent with the broader perspective that recognition serves as a foundation upon which more profound, contemplative understanding is constructed.

Therefore, the distinction between knowing and recognizing is not merely a philosophical abstraction; rather, it is supported by contemporary cognitive science, which demonstrates that humans are equipped with cognitive structures that enable them to recognize fundamental truths. However, these structures must be cultivated and expanded through experience, education, and critical reflection. The interplay between these two forms of cognition—recognition and knowing—plays an important role in



shaping human intellectual and moral development and influences how individuals relate to and form beliefs about the world.

In conclusion, the act of recognizing entails a preliminary, intuitive awareness, whereas the process of knowing necessitates the engagement with that awareness through more profound analysis, reasoning, and experience. Both are indispensable for comprehending human cognition, and their dynamic interplay has far-reaching implications for how individuals gain knowledge about themselves, others, and the universe.

CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS AND FRAMEWORK

It is essential to gain an understanding of the conceptual differences between knowing and recognizing in order to fully comprehend the intricacies of human cognition. Although these processes are interrelated, they serve distinct roles in the manner by which individuals perceive and comprehend the world. This section will examine the linguistic, philosophical, and epistemological frameworks that define and distinguish these two cognitive functions, with insights from contemporary philosophy and cognitive studies.

Linguistic and Semantic Distinctions

In examining the conceptual framework of knowing and recognizing, an analysis of language provides a crucial lens through which to view these processes. The Arabic verbs 'arafa (عرف) and 'alima (علم) offer a wealth of semantic nuances that elucidate the distinction between knowing and recognizing. 'arafa, typically translated as "to recognize," signifies an intuitive grasp or immediate awareness of a person, concept, or object. In most cases, it signifies a direct encounter that does not necessitate extensive reflection or analysis. This verb and its cognates were employed in classical Islamic philosophy to denote practical knowledge. Moreover, since the aforementioned singulars are not defined as things that are known, the verb "arafa" is preferred for their cognition. This definition can be compared to that proposed by Michael Polanyi, who described tacit knowledge (a type of knowledge that is implicit and often experiential, which individuals recognize without being able to articulate it fully) (Polanyi, 1966, pp. 1-26). In this context, the mind is unable to fully encompass the object of its awareness; however, it is nevertheless familiar with it.

In contrast, "alima" denotes a more precise comprehension, signifying



the possession of comprehensive, analytical, and frequently propositional knowledge. It entails conceptual engagement and reflective thought, transcending mere familiarity to attain a more profound comprehension. This is consistent with the Western philosophical distinction between propositional knowledge ("knowing that") and procedural knowledge ("knowing how"), as outlined by Gilbert Ryle (Ryle, 2009, pp. 16-21). Ryle's argument that "knowing that" refers to knowledge of facts, while "knowing how" refers to practical knowledge of how to perform certain actions, illustrates the fundamental difference between immediate recognition and deeper understanding.

This distinction is not unique to Arabic from a linguistic perspective. In numerous languages, including English and French, the terms "recognize" and "know" (e.g., "connaître" and "savoir") reflect disparate cognitive processes. In his work on narrative identity, Paul Ricoeur builds upon this concept, noting that recognition typically entails a relational or existential encounter with an "other," whether a person, concept, or object. Conversely, knowing necessitates a more detached and objective stance, wherein analysis, reflection, and justification play a pivotal role (Ricoeur, 1992, pp. 27-40).

The distinction between these two forms of cognition becomes more evident when they are the subject of interpersonal interaction. Although there is no objective method for determining whether an introduced topic has been fully comprehended by the interlocutor, such a test is possible for a communicated topic. For example, the interlocutor's capacity to provide proof or, in other words, justification in an appropriate manner can be regarded as an indication that the communicated topic has been effectively conveyed to them.

Epistemological Dimension: Justified True Belief

The philosophical debate surrounding the definition of knowledge has spanned centuries, with one of the most notable contributions being Plato's definition of knowledge as a justified true belief. In accordance with this framework, for something to be regarded as knowledge, it must satisfy three criteria: it must be believed, it must be true, and it must be rationally justified (Plato, 2008c). In contrast, recognition often does not necessitate such an explicit requirement for justification. To illustrate, when an



individual recognizes a familiar face amidst a crowd, this recognition does not typically entail a rational process of verification. However, for this recognition to become knowledge—such as knowing the identity of the person in the crowd—there needs to be some form of justification through prior experience, contextual cues, or reflective thought.

The process of justification is a pivotal aspect of epistemological discourse pertaining to the nature of knowledge. Alvin Goldman's reliability approach posits that knowledge is only valid if it is produced by reliable cognitive processes, with recognition forming a crucial initial step in this process. For example, perceptual recognition is regarded as a reliable process due to its evolutionary and experiential development (Goldman, 1986, pp. 81-122). However, the act of knowing entails a more rigorous verification process. In Kantian epistemology, recognition occurs at the level of intuition, which is defined as the immediate, pre-conceptual awareness of phenomena. Conversely, knowing requires the application of categories of understanding that structure and interpret sensory data (Kant, 2003).

Cognitive Science and Recognition

The field of cognitive science offers empirical insights into the distinct yet interrelated processes of recognition and knowing. In his 2011 work, Daniel Kahneman introduced the concept of two distinct systems of thought: System 1, which is rapid, reflexive, and intuitive, is closely aligned with recognition. System 2 is slower, more deliberate, and reflective, and corresponds to the process of knowing. Kahneman's framework posits that the majority of human cognition commences with intuitive recognition and is subsequently refined and deepened through analytical reasoning.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory provides an additional perspective on this understanding by emphasizing that knowing is not solely an individual cognitive act, but is also shaped by social interactions and cultural tools. Vygotsky posited that the development of knowing is a mediated process, shaped by language, education, and the wider social environment. In contrast, recognition typically occurs at a pre-social or immediate level, as it involves an instinctive or intuitive understanding of reality. (Vygotsky, 1978, pp. 84-91).

From the perspective of developmental psychology, Paul Bloom's



(2007) research on innate moral cognition lends support to the notion that specific forms of recognition are preconfigured within the human cognitive apparatus. Bloom posits that children possess an innate capacity to recognize moral agents and actions, which subsequently matures into more nuanced moral reasoning. This is consistent with the broader concept that recognition is an innate, intuitive form of cognition, whereas knowing is a learned, reflective process that is shaped by experience and socialization.

The Role of Bedihi Concepts in Awareness

The existence of a priori knowledge, or knowledge that exists prior to experience, is a fundamental aspect of the conceptual framework of knowing and recognition. In Islamic epistemology, the term "self-evident concepts" is used to describe a category of truths that are perceived as self-evident and do not necessitate external verification. Such concepts, including the existence of the self and fundamental moral intuitions, are recognized innately and do not require learning. Classical Islamic thinkers such as al-Ghazali and Fakhr al-Din Razi underscored the significance of these bedihi concepts in formulating a framework for knowledge. Indeed, some have even proposed that all mysticism is bedihi (Haklı, 2021, p. 471). In this context, recognition functions as an instinctive encounter with these truths, whereas knowing involves the expansion and deepening of this encounter through reflective reasoning and intellectual inquiry.

In contemporary analytic philosophy, Alvin Plantinga (2000) develops the concept of true basic beliefs, which are beliefs that are accepted as true without inferential support. Examples of such beliefs include the existence of an external world or the existence of other minds. Plantinga's concept of true basic beliefs is analogous to the notion of recognition, whereby individuals intuitively comprehend certain fundamental truths. Nevertheless, a fuller understanding of these truths necessitates a more active engagement with them, accompanied by questioning and justification.

Consequently, the conceptual distinction between knowing and knowing is both profound and multifaceted. The distinction between these two processes is reflected in the linguistic terms used to describe them. For example, in Arabic, the terms "arafa" and "alima" highlight the intuitive aspect, while in French, the terms "savoir" and "connaître" emphasise the reflective aspect. This demonstrates how different languages



encode intuitive and reflective cognition. From a philosophical perspective, the transition from knowing to knowing entails the application of logical and justificatory frameworks, as elucidated by thinkers from Plato to Kant. These perspectives collectively demonstrate that recognition and knowing, while distinct, are inextricably intertwined aspects of human cognition, with each playing a pivotal role in our understanding of the world.

A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF KNOWING AND RECOGNITION

The philosophical distinction between knowing and knowing has been a central topic of epistemological inquiry since antiquity and remains a pivotal area of focus in contemporary philosophy.

The act of recognizing typically signifies an immediate and intuitive comprehension of an entity or concept, whereas the process of knowing generally entails a more systematic and reflective understanding. This distinction has implications not only for our approach to knowledge but also for our perception of reality and morality.

Plato's theory of anamnesis provides a fundamental framework for elucidating the distinction between knowing and recognizing. In his dialogues, particularly the *Meno* and *Phaedo*, Plato posits that knowledge is a form of recollection. Once exposed to the eternal truths that reside in the realm of forms, the soul is able to recognize these truths in the material world through the process of anamnesis. This implies that recognition is the act of recalling preexisting knowledge, whereas knowing entails the re-recognition and more profound comprehension of these forms through philosophical inquiry (Plato, 2008b, 2008a).

Accordingly, Plato's model situates recognition as a prerequisite to knowledge. In order to arrive at true knowledge, initial intuitive awareness must be followed by rational thinking and dialectical reasoning.

The distinction has been further elaborated by contemporary philosophers. For instance, Michael Polanyi (1966) introduced the concept of tacit knowledge, which refers to knowledge that individuals are aware of but cannot fully articulate. Such knowledge frequently emerges through recognition, which is an intuitive and experiential understanding that precedes explicit conceptualization. Polanyi posits that a significant portion of our cognitive processes are grounded in tacit knowledge, whereby we



recognize patterns or facts without being able to articulate them in formal terms. This concept is consistent with the idea that recognition is a fundamental basis for deeper knowledge and serves as the intuitive foundation upon which reflective knowledge is constructed.

The distinction between recognizing and knowing is also of significance with regard to the question of epistemic justification. In accordance with Alvin Goldman's (1986) conceptualization of reliability, knowledge is deemed justified if it is derived through reliable cognitive processes, which frequently encompass intuitive forms of recognition. For example, perceptual recognition—such as recognizing a familiar face—may not necessitate reflective thought, but it is nevertheless a reliable means of acquiring knowledge. Nevertheless, for something to be regarded as knowledge in its entirety, it must undergo further analysis and justification. This is where the distinction between knowing and recognizing becomes evident. While recognition represents a reliable starting point, knowing entails the application of critical thinking, coherence, and evidence-based reasoning.

Similarly, Gilbert Ryle (1949) distinguishes between two forms of knowledge: knowing-as-knowing and knowing-how-knowing. This distinction can be equated with the distinction between knowing and knowing. Ryle posits that a significant portion of what is designated as knowledge, particularly in practical domains, transcends mere propositional understanding (knowing that) and encompasses procedural expertise (knowing how). This is consistent with the aforementioned example of the use of the verb "arafa" to denote practical knowledge. To illustrate, the ability to ride a bicycle differs from an understanding of the mechanical and physical principles that underpin the activity. In this sense, the act of knowing something may entail an immediate and intuitive comprehension of the appropriate course of action, whereas the act of knowing entails a more analytical and detailed understanding of the underlying principles that govern that action.

An additional significant contribution to this discourse is provided by phenomenology, particularly the work of Edmund Husserl. In his phenomenological method, intentionality—the orientation of consciousness towards objects—serves as a pivotal explanatory concept in understanding how we recognize and know things. In this context, recognition refers to



the pre-reflexive experience of objects to which consciousness is immediately directed. In contrast, knowing necessitates a reflective return to these experiences, wherein individuals can analyze and categorize their perceptions (Husserl, 1970, pp. 82-83). Phenomenologists such as Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty place significant emphasis on the role of embodied cognition in recognition. They argue that a substantial proportion of what we recognize is based on our bodily interaction with the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, pp. 103-178). This lends support to the notion that recognition is an intuitive, lived experience, whereas knowing is a reflective process that builds upon this pre-reflective awareness.

The critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant (2003) also provides a valuable analytical framework for understanding the distinction between knowing and knowing. In the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, recognition is compatible with what he calls intuition, or the immediate, sensory apprehension of phenomena. However, for this recognition to become knowledge, it must be processed by categories of understanding that organize sensory data into coherent and meaningful experiences. Accordingly, Kant's transcendental idealism establishes recognition as a necessary but insufficient condition for knowing. Recognition provides the fundamental data of experience, but knowing necessitates the synthesis of this data through the active application of reason and conceptual frameworks.

In conclusion, John McDowell further developed the discourse by establishing a connection between intuition and conceptualization. McDowell's work posits that recognition and knowing are not wholly disparate processes, but rather part of a continuous cognitive experience. He posits that humans possess an intrinsic capacity to recognize meaningful structures in the world, which he asserts already operates within the domain of conceptual understanding. McDowell posits that knowing is an extension of recognition, whereby initial intuitive insights are refined and expressed using reason and language. This perspective challenges the rigid dichotomy between recognition and knowing, arguing that they are deeply interrelated and that recognition provides the initial step towards the reflective development of knowledge (McDowell, 1996, pp. 3-24).

In conclusion, a philosophical examination of the processes of knowing and recognition demonstrates that, although they are discrete, they are



also interdependent. Recognition provides an intuitive and often pre-reflexive awareness of concepts or truths, whereas knowing necessitates a more profound analysis, reflection, and justification. Both forms of cognition are significant in how individuals interact with the world and obtain knowledge, whether in practical, moral, or metaphysical domains. The interplay of recognition and knowing enables individuals to progress from immediate perceptions to sophisticated understanding, thereby influencing both their intellectual and existential experiences.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN KNOWING AND RECOGNIZING

The following section will examine the main differences between these two processes in various disciplines, including philosophy, cognitive science, and theology.

Momentary Intuition and Reflective Understanding

In essence, recognition is an intuitive process that occurs automatically and without significant cognitive effort. This process entails the recognition or acceptance of something that is already familiar or self-evident. Kahneman's (2011) theory of bi-systemic thinking offers a valuable framework for elucidating this distinction. Kahneman posits that System 1 thinking, which is rapid, reflexive, and effortless, parallels the process of recognition. When individuals recognize something, they rely on instinctive responses that have been developed through previous experience or innate tendencies. This kind of cognitive processing requires minimal cognitive effort and is typically preconscious, which allows individuals to respond rapidly to their environment.

In contrast, the process of knowing entails the engagement of System 2 thinking, which necessitates a slower, more deliberate, and conscious effort. The process of knowing is evaluative in nature, necessitating the analysis of the object of recognition, reflection on its accuracy or validity, and frequently the verification of this with other forms of information or evidence. To illustrate, while an individual may immediately recognize a familiar face in a crowd, actual knowledge of that person's identity or significance necessitates reflective thinking, such as associating recognition with memories, relationships, and contextual information.

The distinction between these two concepts can be traced back to the



philosophical tradition of empiricism, as espoused by John Locke. Locke posited that knowledge is constituted by a conjunction of ideas formed through sensory experience and reflection. Recognition is the direct perception of ideas, whereas knowing is the reflective process by which these ideas are analyzed and combined to form true knowledge. Locke's emphasis on reflection indicates that although recognition is a fundamental cognitive process, it must be supported by more profound intellectual engagement to attain genuine knowledge (Locke, 1999).

The Role of Justification and Verification

The primary distinction between knowing and recognizing hinges on the necessity for justification. Recognition is typically an immediate and instinctive response that does not necessitate further corroboration.

For example, the recognition of a shape or a sound may occur without the necessity for conscious verification. However, the process of knowing entails a more intricate epistemic justification, wherein the veracity of the known is substantiated by evidence or logical coherence.

In this sense, Plato's understanding of knowledge as a justified true belief is an accurate representation of the concept of knowing. (Plato, 2008c) is consistent with traditional epistemological theories. In Plato's framework, belief alone is insufficient for knowledge; it must also be true and justified. As it is based on immediate perception or familiarity, recognition can occur without such justification. However, to attain the status of knowledge, one must demonstrate that the belief in question corresponds to reality and is supported by sound reasoning or evidence, moving beyond mere recognition.

The distinction is illuminated by Alvin Goldman's (1986) reliability approach, which introduces a modern perspective. Goldman posits that knowledge should be produced by reliable cognitive processes, which he defines as those that lead to consistently true beliefs. In certain instances, recognition can be regarded as a reliable process, particularly in the context of perceptual experiences that have been shaped by evolutionary or learned mechanisms. However, the act of knowing entails not only the accuracy of perception but also a more comprehensive reliability that encompasses logical consistency and evidential support.

Depth of Cognitive Engagement



In his discussion of intuition and understanding, Immanuel Kant (2003) presents a critical distinction between recognition and knowing. In Kant's framework, intuition is defined as the immediate sensory apprehension of phenomena, which is related to recognition. In Kant's view, this mode of cognition is indispensable for engagement with the external world but insufficient for attaining knowledge. In order for knowledge to be attained, the mind must apply the categories of understanding to the raw data of intuition and organize and synthesize them into coherent and meaningful knowledge. In this view, the act of knowing is an active and constructive process that is built on the passive reception of intuitive recognition.

Kant's critical philosophy underscores the notion that the act of knowing entails a more profound cognitive engagement with the object of recognition. While recognition represents the initial stage of engagement with the external world, the process of knowing entails the categorization, comparison, and critical evaluation of acquired knowledge. In Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, the concept of knowing is further developed through the lens of social interaction and the utilization of cultural tools. Vygotsky posits that higher cognitive functions, such as knowing, are not solely individual cognitive acts; rather, they are mediated by language, education, and the social environment. In contrast, recognition frequently occurs at a pre-social or intuitive level, obviating the necessity for such mediation.

In his phenomenology of perception, Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962) similarly underscores the profound cognitive engagement that distinguishes recognition from knowing. As postulated by Merleau-Ponty, recognition is founded upon a pre-reflective encounter between the body and the external world. This embodied experience enables individuals to recognize objects, gestures, and patterns without conscious thought. However, the act of knowing necessitates a reflective cognitive process, whereby individuals engage with and articulate their experiences in a conscious manner. This reflective process transforms recognition into knowledge by situating it within a broader conceptual and experiential framework.

Theological Perspectives: Theological Perspectives and the



Distinction Between Knowing and Knowing

Theological perspectives also illustrate the distinction between knowing and knowing. In Islamic theology, the concept of *fitrat*—the innate disposition to recognize God and moral truths—illustrates how knowing functions as an intuitive apprehension of existential realities. As posited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr (2007), *fitrat* represents a pristine, primordial state in which human beings are born with an innate capacity to recognize the divine and the natural moral order. However, this recognition does not constitute complete knowledge in the theological sense. To know God requires a more profound level of reflection, engagement with religious teachings, and personal experience. This goes beyond the initial intuitive recognition provided by nature.

In Christian theology, John Calvin's concept of *sensus divinitatis* serves a similar function. Calvin (1536) posits that human beings are innately endowed with an intuitive sense of the divine, which enables them to recognize the existence of God without formal instruction. This recognition is immediate and intuitive.

Nevertheless, to achieve a comprehensive understanding of God in the context of theology, it is essential to engage with scriptural texts, engage in prayer, and embrace a reflective approach to one's spiritual beliefs. Consequently, while recognition may prompt individuals to acknowledge divine truths, knowing necessitates a more profound intellectual and spiritual exploration.

The recognition of moral and ethical principles also represents a distinction between the processes of knowing and knowing. The assertion by G. E. Moore that the concept of goodness is a straightforward and indescribable one exemplifies the intuitive nature of moral recognition. Moore posits that individuals can recognize the goodness of a moral act in a manner analogous to how they perceive the color yellow: through immediate perception rather than a definitional process. This intuitive grasp of moral truths reflects the process of recognition (Bruening, 1971, pp. 143-144; Moore, 1976, pp. 13-15). However, the understanding of what is morally good necessitates more than mere recognition. Ethical reasoning necessitates deliberation and justification, frequently through the application of normative theories such as utilitarianism, deontology, or virtue ethics. For



example, Elizabeth Anscombe's work on intention and moral action underscores the fact that while individuals may intuitively recognize that an action is wrong (such as lying), actual knowledge of why it is wrong necessitates a more profound engagement with moral principles and the logic behind them (Anscombe, 2000, pp. 27-33). In this way, moral recognition functions as a precursor to moral knowledge, which is further refined through ethical analysis and reasoning.

In conclusion, the distinction between knowing and recognizing hinges on the depth of cognitive engagement, the function of justification, and the degree of reflection necessitated. Recognition is an immediate and intuitive process, frequently occurring without the necessity for conscious verification. In contrast, knowing entails a more conscious and reflective engagement with the object of recognition. The act of knowing necessitates rational analysis, logical consistency, and, on occasion, the utilisation of empirical evidence. This process transforms the initial recognition into a more comprehensive and reliable form of knowledge. These processes are observed across a wide range of human experiences, from perceptual judgments to moral and theological truths, thereby underscoring their foundational role in shaping human cognition.

THE RECOGNITION OF GOD AND MORAL PRINCIPLES

The recognition of God and moral principles represents a profound aspect of human cognition, one that has been the subject of investigation through a variety of lenses, including theological, philosophical, and cognitive. This chapter examines the role of the process of recognition, an intuitive, pre-thinking awareness, in both religious experience and moral understanding. By examining concepts such as *fitrat* in Islam and *sensus divinitatis* in Christianity, as well as contemporary moral psychology, we can gain a deeper understanding of how recognition serves as a foundational element in the development of theological knowledge and moral reasoning.

Theological Perspectives: Nature and Sensus Divinitatis

In Islamic theology, the concept of "*fitrat*" is of paramount importance in understanding human nature and the recognition of God. The term "*fitrat*" refers to the natural inclination of human beings to recognize the existence of God and the moral attitude He demands of man. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (2007) posits that *fitrat* represents the intrinsic essence of



the human soul, which inherently discerns divine truths without the necessity of external direction. Nevertheless, this recognition must be cultivated through spiritual practice, education, and reflection, enabling individuals to progress from recognizing God's existence to truly knowing God through faith and understanding.

The Qur'an frequently makes reference to the innate inclination of humanity towards the divine, as evidenced by verses such as "Turn your face towards the true religion, towards the nature in which God created mankind" (Qur'an 30:30). This verse underscores the fundamental recognition of God in human nature. Similarly, instances of this divine recognition can be observed in verses that indicate an intensification of faith, such as hearts that quiver at the mention of God's name and trust in God. "The believers are those whose hearts are moved with awe when the name of Allah is mentioned, and when the verses of Allah are recited to them, it reinforces their faith. They place their trust solely in their Lord. They observe their prayers assiduously and allocate a portion of their material resources to the service of Allah (Qur'an 8:2-3). The human nature provides a cognitive framework through which humans can recognize not only the existence of God but also their moral duties. This is in line with Islam's broad emphasis on the harmony between divine law (Shari'ah) and human nature. This innate predisposition is manifested in a faith that deepens through worship and is completed by the journey of self-knowledge through divine commands.

In Christianity, John Calvin's concept of *sensus divinitatis* bears resemblance to the Islamic idea of *fitrat*. Calvin (1536) put forth the argument that human beings are endowed with an innate cognitive faculty that enables them to recognize the existence of God without the need for empirical evidence or rational argumentation. He posits that this faculty is implanted in the human soul by God, enabling individuals to perceive His presence in the world around them. Nevertheless, this innate faculty of divine recognition, like nature itself, remains a potentiality that must be actualized and deepened through the practice of faith and worship. Calvin underscores the necessity of engaging with Scripture and the practice of faith to achieve a profound understanding of God. This engagement enables the transformation of this divine disposition into a comprehensive knowledge through



the act of worship and faith.

In his work on Reformed epistemology, Alvin Plantinga (2000) extends Calvin's *sensus divinitatis* to argue that belief in God is a properly basic belief that is justified without recourse to further evidence because it is grounded in the nature of human cognition. Plantinga's argument serves to reinforce the notion that the act of knowing God is an intuitive one, not requiring any inferential support. However, progressing from a state of mere knowledge of God to a state of knowledge about God necessitates a process of theological reflection, prayer, and the cultivation of a spiritual life. This is because the depth of one's faith can be enhanced through engagement with religious traditions and experiences.

Moral recognition is an innate ethical awareness. Just as theological recognition operates through innate cognitive structures, moral recognition operates through an immediate, intuitive grasp of ethical truths. Paul Bloom (2007) posits that humans possess an innate moral sense that enables them to discern right from wrong even in the absence of formal moral education. This perspective is corroborated by findings from developmental studies indicating that even infants exhibit a proclivity for prosocial behavior over antisocial behavior, suggesting that moral recognition is an intrinsic aspect of the human cognitive apparatus (Hamlin et al., 2007).

This innate moral capacity is consistent with moral intuitionism, a philosophical view initially proposed by G. E. Moore and subsequently developed by scholars such as Jonathan Haidt (2001). Moore posits that moral properties such as the good are unnatural and indefinable; rather than being derived from empirical or logical reasoning, they are recognized through intuition. Similarly, Haidt's social intuitionist model posits that moral judgments are primarily guided by intuitive reactions, with rational thought serving to justify these intuitions only after the fact. In Haidt's view, moral reasoning plays a secondary role, emerging only after moral truths have been intuitively recognized.

However, the transition from moral awareness to moral knowledge necessitates reflective thought, ethical reasoning, and, on occasion, philosophical debate. In his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Immanuel Kant elucidates this distinction by postulating that individuals are capable of discerning their moral obligations through their intrinsic sense



of the categorical imperative. However, he asserts that to fully comprehend and act in accordance with these obligations necessitates rational reflection. Kant posits that the recognition of moral truths is a pre-thinking act, whereas ethical knowledge—or the understanding of one's moral duties—demands active engagement with reason and the formulation of universal moral principles (Kant, 1991).

Similarly, Alasdair MacIntyre offers a critique of the modern moral landscape, arguing that while individuals may intuitively recognize certain ethical values, they lack the philosophical coherence and narrative context necessary to fully know and apply these values in a context of moral fragmentation. MacIntyre posits that traditional ethical systems, such as Aristotelian virtue ethics, provide the framework for transitioning from moral recognition to moral knowledge. The ethical theory of virtue ethics places significant emphasis on the role of practical wisdom (*phronesis*) in transforming an intuitive understanding of the good into a rational and virtuous life. Consequently, the comprehension of what is morally praiseworthy is not merely an act of recognition; it is also a process of profoundening insight through reflective practice and ethical reasoning (MacIntyre, 2007, pp. 51-79).

The following section presents empirical evidence. Cognitive Science and Moral Recognition

Cognitive science also provides insights into the distinction between knowledge and knowledge in the moral domain. Joshua Greene's research on moral decision-making indicates that two distinct processes are involved, one intuitive and emotional, the other rational and reflective (Greene, 2013, pp. 132-147). Greene's dual process theory is consistent with Kahneman's (2011) System 1 and System 2 thinking. Greene's work underscores the inherent tension between immediate moral recognition and the necessity for reflective deliberation, particularly in the context of complex ethical dilemmas where intuitions may conflict with rational principles.

For example, Mikhail's work on the trolley problem demonstrates how individuals can instinctively discern the moral appropriateness or inappropriateness of an action in relatively simple moral scenarios, such as pushing a man onto the tracks to save others. Nevertheless, a comprehensive understanding of the moral status of such actions necessitates a more



profound engagement with philosophical inquiry, encompassing both utilitarian and deontological principles. The discrepancy between these intuitive and rational responses indicates that moral recognition and moral knowledge frequently occur at disparate cognitive levels (Mikhail, 2007, pp. 82-84).

The concept of complementary processes is an integral aspect of Greene's dual process theory. Recognition as the Initial Phase of Cognition

In both theological and moral contexts, recognition represents an initial intuitive step towards deeper knowledge. The process of recognizing the existence of a deity or discerning moral truths typically occurs instinctively and relies on cognitive constructs such as *fitrat*, *sensus divinitatis*, or moral intuition. Nevertheless, recognition does not necessarily equate to complete knowledge. As Plato's theory of *anamnesis* indicates, recognition represents merely the initial stage in the process of individuals recalling and acquiring deeper truths. The process of knowing God, like the process of knowing moral principles, requires a progression beyond initial intuitive awareness, necessitating the development of critical thinking, reasoning, and experience.

This distinction is exemplified by al-Ghazali's spiritual journey in Islamic theology. Although recognition of God may be intuitive and immediate, full knowledge of God necessitates *tahqiq* (verification). This entails a more profound intellectual and spiritual engagement through contemplation, study, and mystical experience. Similarly, in the field of moral philosophy, Elizabeth Anscombe (2000) underscores the significance of intentionality and reasoning in the transition from the recognition of moral actions to the comprehensive understanding and application of ethical principles.

In light of this, it can be seen that innate dispositions such as nature and *sensus divinitatis* play an essential role in the cognitive processes involved in the recognition of God and moral principles. Nevertheless, mere recognition does not suffice to constitute knowledge in the theological or moral sense. To attain knowledge of God or moral truths, one must engage in intellectual discourse, employ philosophical reasoning, and undergo spiritual or ethical development. The transition from knowing to knowing is a



critical process that shapes both religious belief and moral action, as evidenced by the work of Calvin and Plantinga in theological reflection and Kant and MacIntyre in ethical reasoning.

CONCLUSION

This paper has demonstrated that the relationship between knowing and recognizing is one of interrelated and complementary cognitive processes. While these two processes are distinct, they are fundamentally interrelated and complementary in human cognition. The process of knowing necessitates a more analytical, reflective, and reasoning approach, whereas recognizing involves an intuitive, immediate awareness that typically occurs at a pre-thinking level. Both forms of cognition are indispensable for humans to interact with the world, construct beliefs, and orient themselves to moral and existential truths.

One of the most profound insights to emerge from this analysis is that recognition serves as a premise of knowing. From Plato's theory of anamnesis, which posits that knowledge is a process of recollection, to Kant's critical philosophy, where intuition provides the raw data for conceptual knowledge, philosophers have long recognized that momentary awareness—recognition—is the foundation upon which knowledge is built. Recognition, therefore, is not a passive process; rather, it is an active interaction with reality that enables individuals to identify patterns, truths, and values, which can then be transformed into full knowledge through reflective inquiry.

This dynamic between recognition and knowing is particularly evident in the theological context, as evidenced by the concepts of *fitrat* and *sensus divinitatis*. The innate human capacity to recognize the divine, whether through *fitrat* in Islam or *sensus divinitatis* in Christianity, underscores the fact that recognition is an integral aspect of the structure of human cognition. However, this recognition represents merely the initial stage of a more profound spiritual journey. Theological reflection, scriptural study, and engagement in spiritual practice are prerequisites for knowing God. This process goes beyond the initial intuitive recognition of the divine to a fuller and more complete understanding of one's faith and moral responsibilities. As al-Ghazali emphasises, *tahqiq* (verification) is the process by



which intuitive recognition is transformed into a verifiable and reflective knowledge of God.

Similarly, the moral dimension demonstrates the interplay between recognition and knowing. Philosophers such as G. E. Moore and Immanuel Kant place significant emphasis on the importance of moral recognition, whereby individuals intuitively grasp fundamental ethical truths, such as the goodness of helping or the wrongness of harming others. This form of recognition is consistent with Haidt's social intuitionist model, which posits that many moral judgments arise from rapid, intuitive processes. However, while recognition provides an immediate, emotional sense of right and wrong, knowing requires reflective ethical reasoning, deliberation, and philosophical justification. Moral knowledge is not merely the recognition of the good; rather, it encompasses an understanding of the reasons behind the goodness of an action and its compatibility with broader ethical principles. This is exemplified by Kant's categorical imperative and MacIntyre's virtue ethics.

In the field of cognitive science, the dual-process theories put forth by thinkers such as Daniel Kahneman and Joshua Greene offer empirical evidence in support of this distinction. System 1 recognition, which is based on cognitive processes, is rapid, automatic, and frequently emotional. This enables individuals to make rapid assessments and to negotiate intricate contexts with a reduced expenditure of cognitive resources. However, knowledge derived from System 2 thinking is slower, more deliberate, and necessitates rational engagement. This distinction is not limited to moral and theological cognition; it also pertains to everyday decision-making processes, where intuitive knowledge must often be subjected to scrutiny, refinement, and justification through reflective thought.

From a philosophical perspective, the recognition-knowing dynamic highlights the epistemological challenges associated with defining and justifying knowledge. As evidenced by Plato's model of justified true belief, Alvin Goldman's credentialism, and Plantinga's Reformed epistemology, the act of knowing necessitates a process of verification and justification that is not a prerequisite for recognition. While recognition is often reliable, it is nevertheless incomplete. It serves merely as a starting point, whereas knowing requires a more extensive interaction with evidence,



reason, and coherence. Therefore, the transition from recognition to knowledge represents a shift from a state of pre-reflective awareness to a state of reflective understanding. A more detailed examination of this transition demonstrates the dialectical nature of human cognition, where recognition and knowing operate in a cyclical process. The initial cognitive input is provided by recognition, while knowing enriches and transforms this input through the processes of analysis and reflection. For example, the recognition of moral truths may evoke an immediate emotional response, but the act of knowing these truths necessitates a more profound engagement with one's moral framework, reasoning, and participation in ethical discourse. This is also the case with religious experience, where the recognition of the divine is an innate aspect of human nature. However, the knowledge of God necessitates the utilisation of intellectual and spiritual instruments to enhance one's comprehension of the divine.

While the philosophers whose ideas are referenced throughout this article did not explicitly delineate two distinct modes of cognition—namely, knowing and recognizing—it is evident from their ideas that they espoused an approach that would justify such a distinction within their thought systems. A number of thinkers have highlighted these two aspects of human cognition, albeit using different terminology.

In essence, recognition and knowing are two processes that reinforce one another. Recognition provides the fundamental awareness that underpins human experience, whereas knowing extends this awareness into structured, justified belief systems. This dynamic is pivotal to the manner in which individuals obtain knowledge, interact with their environment, and negotiate intricate moral and existential terrain. The capacity to recognize provides individuals with a foundation for inquiry, whereas the process of knowing facilitates the refinement, justification, and integration of these intuitive insights into a coherent framework of understanding.

In conclusion, the interdependence of knowing and recognition underscores the intricate nature of human cognition. While recognition allows individuals to grasp basic truths and facts at an intuitive level, knowing requires deeper cognitive engagement, reflection, and justification. The distinction between these two processes is of paramount importance in fields as diverse as theology, moral philosophy, and cognitive science, as



it enables a deeper understanding of how individuals make sense of the world. By recognizing divine and moral truths and deepening this recognition through knowing, humans can arrive at a more complete and comprehensive understanding of themselves and the universe.

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Öz: Bu makale, bilme ve tanıma bilişsel süreçleri arasındaki ayrımı ve ilişkiyi felsefi, psikolojik ve dini perspektiflerden incelemektedir. Tanımak sezgisel farkındalık, temel özelliklerin içgüdüsel olarak kavranması anlamına gelirken, bilmek deneyim ve analiz yoluyla daha derin kavramsal anlayışı içerir. Bu araştırma Platon'un anamnesis'i gibi felsefi teorilerden ve fitrah ve sensus divinitatis gibi teolojik kavramlardan yararlanmaktadır. Bu süreçlerin ahlaki farkındalık ve entelektüel gelişimi şekillendirmede birbirlerini nasıl tamamladıkları incelenmekte, bilginin edinilmesi ve doğrulanmasının anlaşılmasında hem ampirik hem de mantıksal yapıların rolü vurgulanmaktadır. Analiz, bilme ve tanımanın insan bilişinin iç içe geçmiş bileşenleri olduğunu ve hem varoluşsal anlayışı hem de ahlaki yargıların geçerliliğini etkilediğini savunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mantık, bilme, tanıma, fitrat, sensus divinitatis.



