

The Classification and Characteristics of Concepts

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ABSTRACT: According to classic philosophers, 'knowledge' (*ma'rifa*) in its general concept is divided into the 'knowledge by presence' and 'knowledge by representation.' These two kinds of knowledge include both 'immediate' and 'mediated' as well as conceptions (*taṣawwurāt*) and propositions (*taṣdiqāt*).

A section of epistemology is devoted to crucial arguments and the logic behind these various divisions of the knowledge. Having examined these arguments, the classification of concepts and characteristics of each of them, the paper with an epistemological approach, will present a thorough and comprehensive system for various kinds of concepts in philosophy.

KEYWORDS: knowledge, epistemology, classification of concepts, knowledge by presence, knowledge by representation.

Introduction

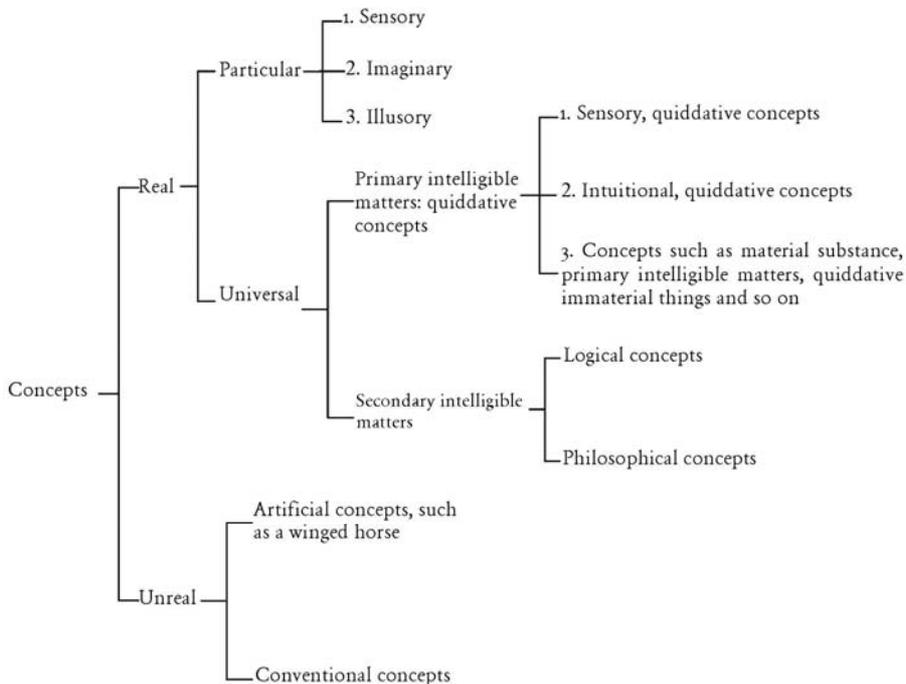
Various arguments will be presented regarding concepts and their classification; the reality, variety and characteristics of universal concepts; and the objective reality of a universal concept, i.e., whether it is a conceptual truth or a lexical conformity, and so forth. The universal concept should be examined philosophically due to its existential structure. Since the given foundation of the reality of the universal plays a fundamental role in epistemology, a presentation of its primary status is unnecessary.

Although concepts play a fundamental role in epistemology, the classification

of their characteristics is not properly considered, even in logic and philosophy. We attempt here to examine this in some detail, and clarify the characteristics of each category in a comprehensive classification. However, a more thorough survey would need another opportunity.

The Proposal of a Comprehensive System for the Classification of Concepts

There are many of ideas that could be presented as concepts, particularly universal concepts. However, the main problem addressed here is that of classification, for no comprehensive system has so far been presented.¹ What might be detected as an undercurrent in certain works is either scattered, unsystematic or flawed.² By contemplating the research of certain Muslim thinkers, the following table of concepts can be presented:



It seems that some philosophical concepts may be classified into correlative concepts (such as cause and effect) and non-correlative concepts. However, the

classification above is comprehensive, and does not entail any of the problems that might occur in an alternative arrangement. We will now explain the characteristics of the categories.

Real and Unreal Concepts

There is a primary division between concepts that are real and unreal. Unreal concepts are those which have no real, external origin, i.e., they do not reflect reality, but are either ideas fabricated by the imagination from existent forms, such as a winged horse or a phoenix, or conventional concepts formed on the basis of some other criteria. Hence, unreal concepts are, in turn, divided into artificial and conventional, the latter possibly having other subdivisions.

It should be noted that role of certain concepts should not be ignored because of their 'unreality,' for they play a significant role in some vital human enterprises. Conventional concepts are used in the conventional sciences and artificial concepts are applied in poetry and painting. The poet and the painter, or any artist, uses the imaginal faculty and creates the most beautiful forms, meanings and concepts, whereas conventional concepts are the foundation of sociology, for example. It is only through specific conventions and intended meaning that marriage, sale, lease, ownership, legality and the like are created, without which concepts such as adultery, falsely utilising the property of others and false ownership are established. If ethical and legal concepts are considered real, then other concepts upon which society depends, for instance, driving laws, may also be considered real.

It should be emphasised that unreal concepts are divided into at least two conventional and artificial categories, and cannot be referred to one category. To consider them as undifferentiated is an obvious mistake. They have fundamental differences which should be dealt with elsewhere. In short, it can be said that artificial concepts are those which are formed by the faculty of imagination. Using the power of imagination and benefitting from sensations, emotions and the like, one can create new meanings, and describe things by presenting them in the framework of analogy and metaphor. The

beautiful or frightening images created by artists, especially poets, are of this kind. Poetic expressions are not reflections of external realities, but of the poet's mental creativity influenced by inner emotions and tendencies.

Thus, the artist's view of the world is coloured by emotions. As his emotions differ under different circumstances, his view changes too. In particular circumstances he might see a certain thing as the most beautiful, and express the sensation accordingly, while under different circumstances he might see the same thing in another way, and express it differently. Hence, it can be said that these kinds of concepts are subject to transformation.

As for conventional concepts, they have real or actual effects despite being intangible, in such a way that should such effects not be predicated by them, the convention would be annulled. Driving rules are among this kind of convention, and have real effects. However, these concepts can be formed in another way. Such concepts do not reflect external facts, but are formed by man according to needs. Because of changes occurring to particular needs over time and other circumstances, a significant aspect of such concepts is their changeability.

Characteristics of Unreal Concepts

The characteristics of unreal concepts can be enumerated as follows:

Conventions formed by them have no productive relationship with one another or with real concepts, and cannot be proved by demonstrative deduction. For instance, they cannot be divided into self-evident, deductive, necessary or impossible, according to the framework of real concepts. It cannot be said of a conventional proposition that it indicates an impossibility, but rather that it makes no sense. This characteristic, especially its indivisibility, is not a contradiction.

An unreal concept can be the basis of other perceptions, but it has no external, objective example. Artificial ideas are actualised at a certain level of

the mind, while those of conventional concepts are realised in terms of convention, which in turn can be referred to the mind.

Could the above-mentioned definition be treated as a particular characteristic of unreal concepts? It is clear that since they occur in the mind, but this is not peculiar to unreal concepts. Logical concepts, although real, have no external, objective reality, since they are equally actualised in the mind, and their truth is perceived in the mind. Hence, logical concepts share this common characteristic with unreal concepts.

However, an unreal concept depends upon a real concept. In other words, conventional concepts are not sheer convention, but rather have a real origin. Conventional concepts apply to facts outside the mind, whereas unreal concepts do not. Therefore, a real concept applies to facts outside the mind in the external world of which it is a reflection. Despite this characteristic of conventional concepts, the mind cannot innovate one. It could even be said that the mind cannot innovate a form without perceiving it somewhere, whether it be real or conventional, or has a mental or external actuality or not. The mind can create a form only when it is existentially connected to a fact which it discovers. Without some intuitional connection, the mind cannot form a concept.

Thus, all mediated cognitions refer to immediate cognitions from an existential point of view.³ Real concepts, as well as unreal concepts mediated by real concepts, directly refer to immediate cognitions. After forming a real concept, the mind analyses it, creates new concepts from it, and uses them according to the intended meanings. Thus, the mind or imagination forms unreal concepts through real concepts, and by expanding real concepts within certain conventions, enters the realm of supposition. The mind actualises this mental activity through the faculty of imagination. Therefore, pure convention is not actualised in this way, just as nonexistence by definition does not exist. Pure convention, like complete falsehood, is unattainable.

In summary, an unreal concept, whether artificial, conventional or otherwise,

is derived from real concepts upon which it depends, whereas a real concept has a real instance.⁴

Having this characteristic, a real concept can be used as a tool for reasoning, whereas an unreal concept cannot. The rules of logic govern real concepts, while conventional judgements are not governed by logic. Real perceptions have a real value, while unreal perceptions have either a conventional or an imaginary value. Finally, real concepts can be assessed as possible or impossible, or as presupposing this eventuality, whereas unreal concepts cannot.

Many questions might be asked regarding unreal concepts. Why do the logical rules of definition and reasoning not govern unreal concepts? Why are such rules peculiar to real concepts? Why cannot conventional judgements be demonstratively argued? What are the characteristics of real concepts which cause them to be governed by such judgements? In other words, why do real concepts have a productive relationship with one another, while unreal concepts do not? Why should one speak of the senselessness of unreal concepts rather than their impossibility? If unreal concepts are not governed by logic and sound judgement, what method should be used for thinking, reasoning, and arguing? In other words, what is the logic behind the conventional sciences?

Furthermore, several arguments might be put forward concerning unreal concepts as to whether they are conventional or artificial. For instance, what is their origin? How does the mind form such concepts? Do we comprehend them with or without the mediation of an instrumental faculty? If so, then what is that faculty? Several proposals could be made regarding such concepts, but here we are simply dealing with their classification.

It is noteworthy that certain characteristics of real concepts can be discerned in what we have described as unreal concepts, some of which were mentioned earlier.

The Division of Real Concepts into Particular and Universal

A division of real concepts into those that are particular and those that are

universal goes back to ancient Greece and the time of Plato. Aristotle defines concepts in this way in a passage from his writings. This division is generally accepted in the history of philosophy, and apart from certain extreme nominalists who consider the universal obscure, or reduce it to a term or a sign, none have disagreed.⁵ The particular and universal are defined by all concerned as denoting one or several instances respectively. Here one might ask whether such a division is possible with unreal concepts as well. However, even if such a division were possible for unreal concepts, it would have no result, epistemological or otherwise, and since the division is valid only when there is a result, it cannot be applied to unreal concepts.

Ultimately we should note that any concept is *per se* universal and has many applications. That some concepts are qualified as particular involves their relationship with the external world, a relationship derived from sensory concepts through sensory means.⁶

Varieties of the Particular Concept

Particular concepts can in turn be divided into categories:

1. Sensory concepts

Sensory concepts are those which are actualised through the apparent relationship of the sensory organs to material facts, such as ideas about things seen, heard or touched. The subsistence of these concepts depends upon a continuing relationship with the external world, and should this be cut off, they would terminate shortly thereafter. On the other hand, the more contact the senses have with the external world, the more concepts will appear. Thus, the number of sensory concepts depends upon the number of perceptions by the senses.

Muslim thinkers generally hold that the sensory concepts which are acquired through sensory tools are mediated knowledge. We do not have direct knowledge of external facts with our sensory tools; rather, it is the forms of the sensory concepts that are actualised in the mind.⁷ Contrary to the overall

perspective of Muslim thinkers, Shaikh al-Ishrāq maintains that vision creates concepts which are immediately known by the mind. From his point of view, since God's knowledge of the world is through presence, man's knowledge of external things is the same, i.e., as soon as something is seen, he knows it immediately, on condition that it not obstructed.⁸ Although Mullā Ṣadrā's criticism of Shaikh al-Ishrāq is rejected by al-Sabzawārī, Muslim thinkers have generally refuted the theory.⁹

One can, of course, claim that man's knowledge of the effects of the senses is through presence. Material effects originate from material facts, i.e., accidental sensory objects are connected to the mind through the senses, and hence knowledge of the effects is by presence.¹⁰ This view, however, does not mean that man's knowledge of material facts existing in the external world have to be by presence, because what is known of them can be mediated by concepts and mental forms.

However, it should be noted that we distinguish between sensation and sensory conception, treating the former as being by presence. We emphasise that sensory concepts are acquired through them and are not 'sensory concepts.' In other words, conceiving that honey is sweet and yellow is mediated knowledge. This does not necessitate that man's knowledge of material facts in the external world should be by presence, but it does mean that sensory concepts and, subject to them, imaginal concepts are formed by the knowledge of sensations, which is by presence. Thus, the origin of both sensory and imaginal concepts is knowledge by presence.

2. Imaginal concepts

A record of sensory concepts is made simultaneously with their formation in the mind. That faculty, which is the treasury of common sense that takes note of all the findings of the physical senses, is the faculty of imagination, and the records it keeps are 'imaginal concepts.' Thus, imaginal concepts are the very reflection of sensory concepts in the imagination. The mind can recall a sensory concept or form which is stored in the faculty of imagination. It can thus recall the scene of a sunny day and review it in the mind.

The function of the imaginal faculty can, of course, be developed to include the formation of mediated cognitions and intuitions as well. In the same way that the imaginal faculty forms a picture conceived through the external senses, it forms images from the intuitional and mediated findings of the soul with which the soul has an existential connection.

Although it could be that the formation of such images is done by a faculty other than the imagination,¹¹ it seems most likely to be the imagination. After forming images of internal and external findings, the images are archived, although further research is needed to prove this. The science of the knowledge of the soul would be able verify this or not.

We should note that it does not matter from an epistemological perspective which of the faculties of perception performs this activity. What matters is that the images appear within the mind which form concepts such as attraction or repulsion in relation to its surroundings. Therefore, whatever faculty is responsible, particular concepts formed from observation appear in the mind simultaneously with the immediate perceptions.

Finally we should note that what has been said about imaginary concepts is based on a lack of distinction between the awareness of sensory input and all such mediated conceptions. However, allowing for a distinction between them, and adopting the theory that sensory concepts are formed by our knowledge of sensation – which is an immediate knowledge – one might say that the faculty of imagination makes images of the perceived sensory experiences as various emotional states of the mind emerge.

3. Illusory concepts

Some of the peripatetic philosophers regarded illusion as a perceptual faculty or inward sense. In animals, meanings which are not conceived through the senses or the imagination are conceived by the faculty of illusion. Examples are the passion felt by both man and animals for their offspring, or the enmity between some animals.

As for man, it might be said that emotions such as passion, fear, joy, sorrow and so forth are facts known by the soul through knowledge by presence. According to later philosophers, these emotions are perceived by immediate knowledge.¹² A thorough investigation of the theories presented by the ancient philosophers concerning man's passions¹³ indicates that in such cases man has one of the following conceptions:

1. A particular concept of passion in the perceiver, such as the passion one feels regarding someone else;
2. A perception of passion in someone else;
3. A universal concept of passion.

It should be clear that a particular perception of passion in the perceiver is a kind of knowledge by presence, and cannot be treated as a concept derived from mediated knowledge. The image made from this by the mind is an intuitional knowledge, i.e., our knowledge of our passion regarding others is a mediated perception derived from immediate knowledge. The faculty of illusion makes an image of the intuitional experience and shapes it into an imaginary form.

Discerning passion in someone else is a kind of mediated concept. It is not a direct and immediate sensation, but rather a concept that man has found in himself beforehand, and then attributes to someone else in a similar situation, on the basis of such evidence such as the colour of the face and a change in attitude.

Finally, passion as a universal concept is a function of the intellect. Only the intellect can perceive universal concepts. Hence, other concepts and meanings should be regarded as having been produced by another faculty and considered 'illusory,' since it seems that their conception should be regarded as mediated. Nonetheless, one can accept the view of Mullā Ṣadrā,¹⁴ 'Allāmeḥ Ṭabāṭabā'ī¹⁵ and Miṣbāḥ,¹⁶ and negate these particular concepts and thus omit illusory concepts from the classification.

It should be noted that the illusory concept has another application, whereby concepts with no external actuality are formed by the imagination by altering

existing concepts into things such as a griffin or a winged horse. It is obvious that such concepts are unreal and should not be mistaken as real concepts.¹⁷

Varieties of Universal Concept

Universal concepts are real concepts and are of two kinds:

1. Primary intelligibles or quiddative concepts;
2. Secondary intelligibles.

Secondary intelligibles have in turn two subdivisions:

1. Logical concepts;
2. Philosophical concepts.

This categorisation is one of the most extraordinary innovations of the Muslim philosophers, and contributes significantly to the epistemological and philosophical sciences. Here, we expound the three varieties and briefly explain their characteristics.

Quiddative Concepts

Although there are notable discussions concerning the varieties and characteristics of quiddative concepts to be found among the works of the Muslim philosophers, they are sadly not given due consideration. Quiddative concepts can be divided into three categories: (1) the sensory, (2) the intuitional, and (3) those which are not preceded by a particular, personal conception, and are proved through reasoning, the senses and so forth, such as substance, primary matter and abstract quiddities. The process of arriving at these categories is as follows:

1. Sensory conception → imaginal conception → sensible quiddative concepts,
2. Immediate knowledge → imaginal conception → intuitional quiddative concepts,
3. Intellect and intellectual reasoning → concepts which are not preceded by a particular conception.

Sensible quiddative concepts are preceded by a sensory conception, whereas intuitional ones are not. The former cannot usually happen without a sensory conception being actualised through the external senses. After the sensory information has entered the range of the external senses, the sensory information will be reflected in the mind. The generation of a sensory form and its conception in the mind is simultaneously accompanied by the imaginal faculty making an image of it. Hence, when a similar connection with the external, sensory world occurs, the mind can recall the image by referring to the imagination. With the generation of one or more particularly similar concepts in the soul, the intellect forms a universal concept which corresponds to those particular forms. The way in which the intellect forms these concepts, whether by derivation, generalisation, abstraction or otherwise, is beyond the scope of this study.¹⁸

Thus, sensible quiddative concepts are preceded by sensory perception, while intuitional concepts are preceded by intuitional conception and knowledge by presence. An intuitional concept is a universal concept which is perceived by the intellect through an intuitional discovery. After the soul has had an intuition of passion or sorrow, etc., the imagination records these findings. To be more precise, the faculty of imagination makes images of the immediate findings of the soul and archives them, just as it does with those it conceives through the senses. After the generation of one or more forms in the imagination, the intellect forms a universal concept of passion, joy, sorrow and the like. Thus, intuitional quiddative concepts have no particular, sensory forms, but derive from knowledge by presence. Although sensory quiddative concepts and intuitional quiddative concepts are distinct from one another in this respect (i.e., sensory quiddative concepts derive from sensory concepts, while intuitional quiddative concepts derive from knowledge by presence), they have in common the fact that both of them are derived from particular concepts in the imagination.

However we approach them, sensory concepts, like intuitional concepts, are derived from knowledge by presence, and the intellect abstracts the concepts after the imagination has recorded them.

Nonetheless, both kinds of quiddative concept derive from particular forms, whether on the basis of selection or otherwise, as opposed to concepts of the third category which derive from no particular conception, even particular ones in the imagination such as the concept of substance, primary matter or abstract quiddities. As we do not know substance in itself, we prove the external existence of substance by reasoning, and thus form a quiddative concept of substance through reasoning. When dealing with the knowledge of existents and their classification, we realise that the contingent existent is either 'in the subject' or 'not in the subject.' If the latter, it is substance, and if the former, it is accident. We do not perceive the concept of 'not in the subject' by any means other than the intellect, and such concepts are perceived by the intellect through reasoning. This also applies to abstract quiddative concepts, which have no particular, sensory form. Of course, one may know abstract quiddities through an unveiling of immediate knowledge. However, people usually form such concepts through intellectual reasoning or religious texts, in which case knowledge of them is not immediate.

It could be said that some of the early ages perceived such concepts through unveiling and intuition, and then the intellect, and after the imagination had distinguished them, a universal concept was formed. Ancient philosophers prepared the ground for our general understanding of universal concepts by recording their ideas and defining them. However, even on the basis of later probability concerning concepts of substance, primary matter, abstract quiddities and the like, it is accepted that those who have not discovered these truths through an unveiling became familiar with them through the intellect, reasoning and definition, or possibly traditional proofs, since being universal concepts, they cannot be directly conveyed to others, but may nonetheless be defined.

Characteristics of Universal Concepts

Considering what has been said, we can qualify the most significant characteristics¹⁹ of quiddative concepts, whether sensory or intuitional, or those not preceded by a particular conception, which are mostly

epistemological as opposed to logical and philosophical concepts. It should be noted that some of these characteristics carry over and likewise refer to another type:

1. Primary intelligible matters, or quiddative concepts, are conceptual frameworks which define the quiddative limits of things, while secondary intelligible matters, or logical and philosophical concepts, are descriptions of being and recount types of existence. To explain this, one should note that, on the basis of an intellectual analysis, every contingent existent consists of two parts: (a) quiddity or nature, and (b) existence or being. Some concepts denote the nature of objective things, while others denote existence and its qualities.²⁰ Quiddative concepts depict the natures and quiddities of objective things, while philosophical and logical concepts indicate existence and its qualities. Thus, concepts which denote the existence and nature of existents and how external facts are actualised – such as necessary, contingent, cause, effect, originated, pre-eternal, abstract, material, simple, graded, potential and actual – are philosophical concepts, and there are no differences between them in this respect. They are all qualities of existence which describe the being of things. The concept of ‘simple’ is a quality of being, such as ‘potential’ or ‘actual.’ We might add that concepts of quiddity and existence are also philosophical, for they describe external facts in some way. Quiddity is an indication of existence and denotes the limits of existence, while existence denotes its reality. Hence, the relationship between the concepts of ‘existence’ and ‘quiddity’ on the one hand, and external facts on the other, is that of concept and instance, not of quiddity and instance.

2. The number of quiddative concepts or primary intelligibles is mostly²¹ subject to the amount of information discovered by the soul through the senses or immediate knowledge. The more information the soul discovers, the more quiddative concepts or primary intelligibles exist in the mind and vice versa. This is not the case with secondary intelligible affairs or philosophical/logical concepts, whose number does not depend upon a

multiplicity of facts. The soul might discover a single fact, but abstract several secondary intelligibles and form a number of concepts.

3. Quiddative concepts have separate external referents in the form of instances or accidents. Thus, each quiddative concept has its own specific factuality outside the mind, and there are as many external facts as quiddative concepts. One cannot derive two quiddative concepts from only one actually existent referent since, as mentioned earlier, quiddative concepts are limits and indicators of existence, and each has its own particular existent to which it refers. Some facts, of course, may be dependent upon one another in terms of external existence, just as man's will, which is a psychic quality, is dependent upon man's existence. However, it should be clear that the dependence of one quiddity upon a second external existent does not mean that one existent can be the referent of two quiddative concepts.

Secondary intelligibles, whether philosophical or logical, have no separate referents. Such concepts are qualities of the being and denote the qualities of existent things. They have no actuality of their own, since their actuality is that of what they qualify. It should be clear that philosophical concepts are qualities of external, objective things, and logical concepts are subjective qualities. This essentially distinguishes the difference.

Therefore, quiddative concepts have separate referents, and two quiddative concepts with only one existent cannot be found. But being limits of existence, philosophical and logical concepts have no separate referents, and one state of existence can be qualified by several concepts. For example, the existence of man can be qualified by concepts such as one, actual, originated, contingent, effect, etc.

Logical concepts follow a similar pattern, and many can be predicated by one subjective existent, such as the concept of man as a subjective being capable of the qualification of universality and simultaneously an essential species. Here the qualities of species, essential, concept and universal have no separate referents; it is a single fact qualified by all of these qualities.

One may question the mentioned distinction between philosophical and logical concepts, and say that the term 'logical concept' describes the quality of a concept, and not a type of subjective existence, for subjective existence is a personal fact without a universal application. As for logical concepts and their characteristics, one should therefore say that they are concepts of qualities, not of subjective existence. However, it should be noted that this being so does not contradict their being qualities of subjective existence, for there are at least two considerations with regard to subjective existence, either of which has its own specific nature:

- a) subjective existence with the characteristics of recollection and reflection, and
- b) subjective existence as its own identity.

Subjective existence is subjective because it has the ability to recall and reflect as well as being a concept, otherwise it would be a kind of external existence with regard to its identity. Subjective existence can mean mediation, but it is unmediated in terms of its being. Hence, when it is said that the concept of man is universal, subjective existence is meant. Should its actuality be considered, the boundary between objective and subjective existence is removed, since they are both external.²²

Nullification of the Comprehensiveness of the Proposed Classification

In spite of our claim that the classification of concepts as mentioned comprehensively covers the majority of concepts, there are several exceptions, most of which are as follows:

1. Compound concepts, such as man's existence, or the triangle and square;
2. Accidental concepts, such as 'white' or 'sweet' (not 'whiteness' and 'sweetness' which are quiddative concepts);
3. Relative concepts, which are adequations;

4. Fantastical concepts, or concepts which are unreal, such as nonexistence and impossibility; and
5. Concepts which are parts of a complete quiddative species while themselves being an incomplete quiddity, such as vegetative, animal, rational, and other concepts of genera and species.

So, where should these categories be applied?²³

In spite of there being exceptions, they should cause no problems, since the classification is deductive. Also, the classification is not exclusive, despite its comprehensiveness in comparison with similar ones. This is why we said earlier that it covers *most* concepts. We should however add that the most important, fundamental concepts needed by the major sciences are the very concepts we named.

Nevertheless, these confusions can be addressed. Let us deal with compound concepts first, i.e., those which are composed of two or more independent concepts. These have no reality other than that of their components, therefore they should be classified according to their parts. For example, the concept 'man's existence' is composed of 'existence,' which is a philosophical concept, and 'man,' which is a quiddative concept. Since the composite is posited by the mind, it has no place in the classification of real concepts, except in respect of its components.

As for accidental concepts, since they refer to quiddative concepts, they cannot be considered a separate category. Even if this should seem unacceptable, it cannot be overlooked that accidental concepts are composites, and as already mentioned, this type of concept has no separate reality other than those of its parts. The reason why accidental concepts are composites is that the meaning of 'white,' for example, is the essential quality by which whiteness is realised. Thus, each accidental concept is reduced to the essential reality of the accident, in this case 'whiteness.' The essence and the accident are independent concepts and have separate actualities. In our example, the essence and 'whiteness' are quiddative concepts. Hence, the

components of accidental concepts are referred back to universal concepts and cannot therefore nullify the comprehensiveness of such a classification.

Considering what has been said, we may conclude that real universal concepts comprise simply the three categories of quiddative, philosophical and logical concepts. By mingling some of them with others we arrive at composite and accidental concepts which, as explained, have no actuality apart from their parts. They are no more than mentally-positated concepts whose combination is essentially unreal. Therefore, composite and accidental concepts should be referred to their components, and it is those components which should be classified, since apart from the components they are unreal concepts.

Clearly this solution means regarding accidental concepts as composite. However, should we hold that an accidental, such as 'white,' is unconditional, and the accident is a kind of 'negatively conditioned' accidental, the answer would be clearer, and not nullify the proposed classification.

Relative concepts such as 'is,' 'is not,' 'from' and 'to,' etc., do not nullify the classification for, as such, they are not independent concepts. If they are considered independently, they can be referred to real concepts, and if they cannot be referred to real concepts, they are therefore unreal concepts.

It seems that non-existential concepts, or concepts which are unreal qualities, might be considered philosophical concepts, or to be more precise, can be allied with them, since all the characteristics of philosophical concepts, other than their being qualities of existence, hold true for them. Such concepts, like philosophical ones, have no separate referents, and they qualify external objects. The difference between them and philosophical concepts is that they are qualities of non-existence, while philosophical concepts are those of existence. Thus, we can join them to philosophical concepts and define the latter in such a way that it covers both concepts, i.e., the qualities of existence and those of non-existence. In order to avoid this problem, they are usually defined in this way instead of according to their characteristics, whereby philosophical concepts are subjective whilst being qualified as objective.

As for the fifth type, i.e., concepts which are parts of a complete quiddity whilst themselves being incomplete quiddities, it is obvious that they are not logical concepts, since logical concepts are qualities of subjective existents, i.e., subjective forms and concepts, whilst in fact being parts of a complete species of quiddity. In other words, they are different subjective genera of objective matter and form when they are considered negatively. Thus, according to the peripatetic philosophers, such concepts are quiddative ones with separate referents by which external objects are qualified. This is clear from the fact that external objects which are composed of matter and form are of various genera that are not subject to analysis, but there is some difficulty with regard to existents such as accidents which are simple, and whose various genera are a matter of subjective analysis. How can such concepts be considered quiddative when their external referents are not composed of the characteristics, matter and form of real genera? The solution seems to be that some accidental categories, such as 'quantity,' are secondary philosophical concepts and not quiddative ones. We could even say that relative categories and concepts, such as 'relation,' 'activity' and 'passivity,' are also the same. Thus, these categories are not quiddative concepts, let alone those whose genera are analysed in the mind. It is obvious that such genera cannot be considered quiddative concepts. This corrective should solve any problem of the classification of concepts which have no real genera.

To summarise what has been said: we encounter some problems with the classification of certain concepts, at least with non-existential concepts and those which are parts of complete quiddities. The question is where to place these two categories of concepts; could they be addressed in some other way?

The solution regarding non-existential concepts is that they can be joined to philosophical concepts, in which case the 'non-existence' can be attributed to the latter. But is this meaningful for philosophy and epistemology? It seems that by expanding the definition of philosophical concepts in such a way that it includes this aspect of non-existential concepts, one could say that

philosophical concepts are those which indicate either the existence or non-existence of things as a comprehensive assessment. This annexation indicates a conventional conceptual development, which for the definition of knowledge, the classification of concepts, induction, bases of reasoning and so forth is both possible and correct from the author's point of view. If this solution seems unacceptable for some reason, it could be said that non-existential concepts are ultimately another category which is similar to that of philosophical concepts. This should cause no problems, since it is an inductive classification that can be confirmed in many other cases. Furthermore, there is a solution if we examine the characteristics of philosophical concepts, and merely emphasise the point that their occurrence is subjective whilst being externally qualified.

As for concepts which are parts of a complete quiddity, they are of two kinds:

1. Those whose instances are of external matter and form. Such a concept is a genus when considered unconditioned by the mind, and external matter and form when considered as 'negatively conditioned.' Such concepts as 'animal,' 'rational' and 'growing' can also be regarded as quiddative.
2. Those whose instances are not external matter and form. These are of a simple genus acquired through analysis and intellectual convention, such as the concept of 'quantity.' To consider them as quiddative presents problems both structurally and superstructurally (i.e., pertaining to culturally accepted ideas and beliefs). A sound structure would be to treat such concepts such as those related to quantity, as well as relative accidents, as philosophical concepts which are judgements on and qualities of existence, not of quiddity. This would solve the problem of classifying this kind of concept as well. As for concepts which are considered incomplete quiddities, especially those which refer to genus and differentia and have external instances, we should note that all the presented solutions can be beneficial if we accept the Aristotelian system of genus and differentia as well as the method of definition in his logic. It should be remarked, however, that defending this

perspective is not that simple, since it faces several problems which would need to be dealt with elsewhere.²⁴

In the end, it could be said that even if we do not reach a final conclusion with regard to those concepts which are parts of complete quiddities and are in themselves considered incomplete quiddities, and place them in the proposed classification, the comprehensiveness of that classification would not be harmed; for only complete quiddative concepts, i.e., species, are taken into consideration in that classification, not separate incomplete quiddative concepts. Furthermore, these concepts are considered on the basis of Aristotelian logic and philosophy, from which we are unable to muster an alternative to include them.

However, we should not forget that the method employed in this classification is inductive, and is comprehensive compared to other attempts, since it includes all the principal concepts needed in the various sciences.

Conclusion

A whole range of discussions could be presented concerning concepts, including their classification and the reality of universal concepts with their varieties, distinctions and characteristics. The ones that play major roles in epistemology, as well as being presented in logic and philosophy, are their classification and their characteristics. By having a precise look at this problem, we have attempted to present a comprehensive system for the classification of concepts and highlight the characteristics of each category. Before that, however, we examined the background, and realised that a division of concepts into particular and universal goes back to the time when Plato and Aristotle were also engaged with the same problem. This was followed up by an analysis of the varieties of particular and universal concepts, coming to the conclusion that in Islamic philosophy, theology and logic, the division of universal intelligibles and concepts into primary and secondary groups extends from ancient times – the division of secondary

intelligibles into philosophical and logical concepts, despite seeming new at a glance, going back to the era of Ibn Sīnā and Fārābī.

Notes

1. Contrary to the ontological classification of existence that several philosophers, especially Muslim thinkers, have dealt with systematically, no such classification can be found for concepts. Some references are made here and there in logic and philosophy with a relatively comprehensive system might be found. The system presented by Muslim philosophers involves existence being either necessary or contingent, therefore quidditive or having an existential limit. It is divided into an existential substratum of accidents with substance, the latter in turn having degrees such as intellect, soul, bodily form, and so forth. The former is of different kinds whose number is a matter of dispute. The peripatetic philosophers consider there to be nine, as follows: quality, quantity, time, place, relationship, position, possession, activity, and passivity, while the illuminationist philosophers consider four as follows: quality, quantity, relation and motion. See Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusain Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Nihāyat al-Ḥikmat*, 6th level, chapter 1. Other opinions cannot be examined here. However, a comprehensive classification of concepts of this kind has not been made.
2. Some other classifications are presented, among which perhaps the best known is that of Descartes (1596-1650), who divided ideas into the three categories of natural, sensory and artificial concepts.
3. This theory, innovated by 'Allāmeḥ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, is a new perspective that extends beyond the prevailing view which treats the knowledge of mental forms as immediate knowledge. From this point of view, the mediated knowledge of something is actualised when that thing is actualised in the mind and the perceiver knows it immediately (through knowledge by presence). Hence, man's knowledge of sensory perception is immediate, and in this way he knows external things. See Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusain Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Uṣūl-e Falsafeh*, article 5, p. 60; Murtaḍā Muṭahharī, *Majmū'e-ye Āthār*, 6, 271-73. A detailed assessment of this theory would require another discussion. The present discussion is existential and philosophical, though it has several epistemological consequences.
4. Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusain Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Uṣūl-e Falsafeh*, article 6, 93-139; Murtaḍā, Muṭahharī, *Majmū'e-ye Āthār*, 6, 391-402.
5. Muḥammad, Ḥusain-zādeh, *Ma'rifat Shināsī*, chapter 6.
6. Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusain Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Nihāyat al-Ḥikmat*, 11th level, chapter 3; Muḥammad Taqī, Miṣbāḥ, *Ta'liqa 'alā Nihāyat al-Ḥikmat*, 90, 355 and 159.

7. Mullā Şadrā, *al-Ḥikmat al-Muta‘āliyah fi al-Asfār al-‘Aqliyyat al-Arba‘at*, 179.
8. Shaikh al-Ishrāq, *al-Mashārī‘ wa al-Muṭārīḥāt*, *Majmū‘eye Muşannafāt*, 486-87.
9. Ḥāj Mullā Hādī al-Sabzawārī, *al-Asfār*, vol. 8, 179-81, annotation 1.
10. Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusain, Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, *Uşūl-e Falsafeh*, 4, and the annotation by Muṭahharī, No. 1.
11. Muḥammad Taqī, Mişbāḥ, *Commentary of Volume Eight of al-Asfār*, vol. 1, 437.
12. ‘Murūrī bar Zīrsākthāye Ma‘rifat-hā-ye Bashārī: Maḥsūsāt wa Wijdāniyyāt,’ in *Ma‘rifat-e Falsafī*, No. 6.
13. Muḥammad Taqī, Mişbāḥ, *Ta‘līqa ‘alā Nihāyat al-Ḥikmat*, 365-70; *Āmūzish Falsafeh*, 1, Lecture 14.
14. Mullā Şadrā, *al-Ḥikmat al-Muta‘āliyah fi al-Asfār al-‘Aqliyyat al-Arba‘at*, 215-18.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 217, annotation no. 1.
16. Muḥammad Taqī, Mişbāḥ, *Āmūzish Falsafeh*, 1, 166, Lecture 14. In *Sharḥ al-Asfār al-Arba‘a*, however, Mişbāḥ demonstrates the faculty of illusion in another way, i.e., by making forms of our immediate conceptions and storing them in the memory. Just as the imagination forms images from sensory conceptions, makes forms of them, and stores them in the memory, the faculty of illusion forms images of psychic qualities and the soul’s immediate knowledge, and remembers them after the intuitional relationship has ended.
17. The faculty of illusion is also used for propositions regarding illusory matters, which are accordingly false propositions that are treated as true by the faculty of illusion as opposed to the intellect. See Khawāja Naşīr al-Ṭūsī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt*, 1, 221-23.
18. Mullā Şadrā, *al-Ḥikmat al-Muta‘āliyah fi al-Asfār al-‘Aqliyyat al-Arba‘a*, vol. 3, 363-65, 366, vol. 6, 152-53; Murtaḍā, Muṭahharī, *Majmū‘e-ye Āthār*, vol. 10, 264-44; ‘Abdurrasūl, ‘Ubūdiyyat, *Darāmadī bar Naẓām-e Ḥikmat-e Şadrā‘ī*, vol. 2, 69-78.
19. A detailed discussion on the characteristics of universal concepts is beyond the scope of the present study, but we might mention that philosophical bases play a fundamental role.
20. Or nonexistence and its qualities.
21. It is obvious that this condition refers to the third category of quidditative concepts we have already mentioned. This category is not preceded by particular forms.
22. This answer may be made clearer, with some difference in explanation, on the

basis of Mullā Ṣadrā's stating that quiddity or subjective form is not known by essence; what is known by essence is knowledge and its external existence.

23. We may consider a sixth qualification as when the concept of existence is not treated as a philosophical concept, and hence is excluded from the three-fold variety of universals. However, it seems that the concept of existence is a philosophical one, but proof of this is beyond the scope of this study.
24. Muḥammad, Ḥusain-zadeh, *Manābi' Ma'rifat*, chapter 1.