Locke, Sydenham and the "Tyrrell Memoir"

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Abstract: This paper examines the contents of the sixth paragraph of the "Tyrrell Memoir". This paragraph makes some strong, critical claims about both Locke's "obsession" with the London physician Thomas Sydenham, and his purported dismissive attitude towards another physician, Richard Lower. In the paragraph, Tyrrell sides with the First Earl of Shaftesbury's mocking attitude towards the triumvirate Locke, his close friend David Thomas, and Sydenham, and relates some extraordinary and hitherto unknown anecdotes. Tyrrell's claims are assessed in relation to what we know about the relations between these four men and in relation to the current state of Sydenham historiography.

Keywords: Pierre Des Maizeaux, John Locke, Richard Lower, First Earl of Shaftesbury (Lord Ashley), Thomas Sydenham, David Thomas, James Tyrrell

Introduction

The "Tyrrell Memoir" recently identified by Felix Waldmann proves to be a fascinating document, one that surprisingly was overlooked by scholars for nearly 240 years.[1] While its most startling claims are those that it makes about Locke's reading of and promotion of Hobbes' *Leviathan*, other material within the memoir is also worthy of comment. This paper concerns one paragraph near the mid-point of the memoir wherein James Tyrrell comments on Locke's obsession (*enflé*) with the London physician Thomas Sydenham. Given that the historiography of Thomas Sydenham, the so-called English Hippocrates, is contested, and given that Tyrrell makes a number of derogatory claims about Locke, Sydenham, and the Salisbury physician David Thomas, it is worth

[1] See Waldmann, "John Locke as a reader of Thomas Hobbes's Leviathan: a new manuscript". Waldmann's case for James Tyrrell as the memorialist is compelling.

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unpacking this paragraph of the memoir and assessing its likely veracity and bearing on recent developments in Sydenham historiography.

First, however, some general comments on the memoir itself. As Waldmann explains, the context of Des Maizeaux's interview with Tyrrell is his (Des Maizeaux's) preparation of materials relating to Locke that were soon to be published in the very "pro-Locke" *A Collection of Several Pieces of Mr. John Locke*, 1720.[2] This collection was to include an English translation of Pierre Coste's *éloge* of Mr Locke which had first appeared in French in February 1705, just four months after Locke's death.[3] Des Maizeaux's reason for including Coste's adulatory *éloge* was to counter recent criticisms of Locke by Coste himself.[4] Under the cover of an anonymous letter dated 4 February 1720 that prefaces the *éloge*, most likely composed by Anthony Collins,[5] we read:

> Mr. Locke's Friends judge its publication necessary, not only, as they think it contains a just Character of Mr. Locke, as far as it goes; but, as it is a proper Vindication of him against the said Mr. Coste, who in several Writings, and in his common Conversation throughout France, Holland, and England has aspers'd and blacken'd the Memory of Mr. Locke; in those very respects wherein he was his Panegyrist before.
>
> For, they conceive, the Elogium contain'd in the following Letter, must stand good, till Mr. Coste thinks fit, either to deny his own Experience; or to confess, that the same things, which he then thought praise-worthy, have since changed their Nature.[6]

Thus, given the scathing attack on Locke that we find in Des Maizeaux's notes from his interview with James Tyrrell, it is hardly surprising that none of Tyrrell's comments were mentioned in *A Collection of Several Pieces* and that Des Maizeaux went to some length to anonymise his hand-written notes themselves by referring to the memorialist as 'Mr ...' or 'Mr T'; they reflect very badly on Tyrrell's character and Des Maizeaux was perhaps more likely to have been protecting Tyrrell's reputation than Locke's through the suppression of Tyrrell's name.

2 Waldmann, "Locke as reader", pp. 247-53.

3 Coste, "Lettre de Mr. Coste à l'auteur de ces Nouvelles, à l'occasion de la mort de Monsieur Locke".

4 For the origins of Coste's critique of Locke, see Dybikowski, "'Aspers'd and blacken'd': Pierre Coste's critique of Locke's moral theory".

5 For the authorship of the letter, see the references given in Waldmann, "John Locke as reader", p. 251 n30, and Collins, *Correspondence of Anthony Collins*, Collins to Mr. ***, 4 February 1720, pp. 312-13.

6 *A Collection of Several Pieces of Mr John Locke*, pp. ii-iii.

Indeed, on reading the memoir one can only be struck by the vitriol of a bitter and vengeful old man. For those with a knowledge of Locke's life and works, including his weaknesses and failings, the reader must question both Tyrrell's memory and his motives. Factual errors are present, and it is difficult to sort the wheat from the chaff. On the one hand, as Waldmann rightly judges, Tyrrell's claim that while at Oxford "[t]he English translation of Voiture's *Lettres* was all his delight" has a ring of authenticity to it, even if the trigger for this claim was the reference to Voiture (deriving from Damaris Masham)[7] in Le Clerc's memoir of Locke.[8] On the other hand, the assertions either side of the comment on Voiture are, on the most charitable reading, confused: "When he was at Oxford, he did not study at all; he was lazy and nonchalant, and he amused himself with trifling works of wit ... He despised science and erudition".[9] What should we make of this?

It is possible that Tyrrell is referring to Locke's student days pre-1658 and yet Tyrrell, by his own admission, only met Locke in 1658 around the time Locke graduated MA. Tyrrell appears to be exaggerating Damaris Masham's claim in her 1705 letter to Le Clerc, which, again, was reproduced, in part, in Le Clerc's *Life and Character of Mr. Locke*, that "he had so small satisfaction There from his Studys ... that he became discontented with his manner of Life ... This discouragement (he said) kept him from being any very hard Student; and put him upon Seeking the Company of Pleasant, and Witty men".[10] However, in her 1705 letter Damaris Masham also recorded, "Mr Tyrrell ... tells me that he became acquainted with Mr Locke in Oxford in the yeare 1658 and that Mr Locke was then look'd upon as one of the most Learned and Ingenious young men in the Colledge he was of".[11] If this is true, then how could Locke

[7] See Woolhouse, "Lady Masham's account of Locke", p. 173, and Le Clerc, *Life and Character of Mr Locke*, p. 2. It is perhaps worth noting that Masham's sentiment there, "I doubt whither Voiture exell'd him in that kind of writeing", is almost certainly an allusion to her first letter to Locke in 1682 when she said indirectly referring to Locke's letters: "I have beene told Lately by a Person for whom I have a greater Esteeme then for Voiture ..."; Damaris Masham to Locke, 6 January 1682, in Locke, *Correspondence*, vol. 2, p. 472.

[8] As Waldmann notes, Tyrrell would have known that Locke could not read French in his Oxford years. The English translation of Voiture's *Lettres* was licensed on 30 July 1656 (*A Transcript of the Registers of the Worshipful Company of Stationers*, vol. 2, p. 76) and a copy was in Locke's Library (LL 3102[a]). Locke recommends the reading of Voiture's *Letters* in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, § 189, p. 243.

[9] Waldmann, "Locke as reader", p. 273.

[10] Woolhouse, "Lady Masham's account of Locke", pp. 172-73. See Le Clerc, *Life and Character of Mr Locke*, p. 2.

[11] Woolhouse, "Lady Masham's account of Locke", p. 172.

have despised science and erudition before 1658? Furthermore, Jeffrey Collins establishes a strong case that Locke was reading widely in the later 1650s with a focus on his fellow Oxonians' responses to Hobbes' ecclesiology and views on conscience and that it is "unlikely that he [Locke] was himself unacquainted with the famous target of these works [Hobbes]".[12] On the back of this, Collins goes on to claim that Tyrrell's comments on Locke's reading of and promotion of *Leviathan* reinforce his conclusion about Locke's familiarity with Hobbes' writings. Yet if this is true, then Locke could hardly have been "lazy and nonchalant", amusing "himself with trifling works of wit" while a student. In short, Tyrrell's claim about Locke and Hobbes corroborates evidence that, in turn, falsifies Tyrrell's other claim about Locke's attitude to erudition.[13] It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Tyrrell's memories about Locke's Oxford years over half a century before the interview with Des Maizeaux skate lightly on the truth and are more concerned with criticism of Locke than regard for the facts.

1. *Paragraph six on Locke and Sydenham*

Our concern, however, is with Tyrrell's claims about Locke's relations with Thomas Sydenham and this brings us to paragraph six:

> He had become obsessed with Dr Sydenham, next to whom Dr Lower was esteemed a dunce and was not even credited with common sense. Dr Thomas, the physician from Salisbury, did not admire Dr Sydenham any less, and they wished that he had been made the physician to the Queen, claiming that he would enable her to have children. This obsession made his Lordship [Lord Shaftesbury] often compare them to three fanatics who travelled to Rome; two of them saying that the third was the Holy Spirit [*comme il le disoit lui meme*], upon which an Inquisitor, touched with pity, declared that these two men would suffer in order to maintain their belief, and it would be better to make the third confess his knavery in order to disabuse them: which succeeded. In this way, the best means of disabusing these two men was to expose Sydenham.[14]

[12] Collins, *In the Shadow of Leviathan*, p. 30.

[13] It may be that the use of "neanmoins" ("Tyrell Memoir", line 6, Waldman, "Locke as reader", p. 271) that bridges Tyrrell's comment on Locke's attitude to erudition and his claim about *Leviathan* being 'almost always on his table' – assuming it derives from Tyrrell – is a tacit admission of an inconsistency in his account. I thank the anonymous referee who pointed this out.

[14] Waldmann, "Locke as reader", p. 275.

We can break this paragraph up into five claims:

(T1) Locke became obsessed (*enflé*) with Sydenham
(T2) In contrast to the esteem in which Locke held Sydenham, the physician Richard Lower was considered by Locke to be a dunce
(T3) David Thomas was equally obsessed with Sydenham
(T4) Locke and Thomas had wished Sydenham had been made physician-in-ordinary to Queen Catherine as he would have cured her of her infertility
(T5) The Earl of Shaftesbury often compared Locke, Thomas, and Sydenham to three fanatics who travelled to Rome with the former two saying that the third [Sydenham] was the Holy Spirit, as the third one himself attested. An Inquisitor there who felt pity for them, declared that the best way to put these two gentleman out of their misery would be for the third to confess his knavery. Shaftesbury concluded that exposing Sydenham was the 'best means of disabusing' Locke and Thomas.

Let us take the polemical stance of the whole passage first. It is well documented that Sydenham had very few friends and supporters in the latter half of the seventeenth century and that he faced much opposition from within the medical fraternity. He was never a fellow of the College of Physicians and he struggled to find wealthy patients to support his London medical practice.[15] To take just two well-known examples: one pertaining to character and another pertaining to medical competence. In December 1667, Henry Oldenburg, secretary to the Royal Society, spent some time in the Tower of London during which he was apparently attacked by Sydenham. For he reports to Boyle:

> I must beg your excuse for not seeing Dr Sidenham, who hath been the only man that I hear off, who, when I was shut up, thought fit (God knows without cause) to raile against me, and that was such a coward, as afterwards to disowne it, though undeniable. I confesse, that with so mean and un-moral a Spirit I can not well associate.[16]

[15] See Anstey, "The creation of the English Hippocrates", pp. 460-62; Burrows and Anstey, "John Locke, Thomas Sydenham, and the 'Smallpox Manuscripts'", pp. 201-2.

[16] Oldenburg to Boyle, 29 December 1667, in *Correspondence of Robert Boyle*, vol. 3, p. 386. For Sydenham's falling out with Lady Ranelagh, Boyle's older sister, see *Correspondence of Robert Boyle*, vol. 3, p. 239, and for an assessment, see Burrows and Anstey, "John Locke, Thomas Sydenham, and the 'smallpox manuscripts'", p. 205.

Again, ten years later, in December 1677, when Locke was attending to Lady Northumberland in Paris who was suffering from the severe condition now known as trigeminal neuralgia, Locke sought urgent medical advice via the physician John Mapletoft in London. Mapletoft, one of Sydenham's few physician-friends, sent advice from three prominent fellows of the College of Physicians: Charles Scarburgh (First physician to the King), John Micklethwaite (Physician-in-Ordinary to the King), and Edmund Dickinson (Physician-in-Ordinary to the King). He had also procured advice from Sydenham, but in a postscript to Locke wrote: "I thought it not best to mention these our Friend's [Sydenham's] directions for reasons you may know" and suggested instead that Locke himself might use Sydenham's directions concerning her case "as you find cause".[17] That Sydenham's name had to be suppressed is strongly suggestive of the problems he faced with regard to his professional reputation in London medical circles. So, the general stance of Tyrrell's anecdote vis-à-vis Sydenham's character and professional standing fits the historical record. Let us proceed then, to the itemised claims.

First, (T1), Tyrrell claims that Locke became obsessed with Sydenham. To be sure, this is strong language, however, the lengths to which Locke went to promote Sydenham's writings and medical method, particularly after his death in 1689, while perhaps not obsessive, are remarkable. Here is a summary. Locke included Sydenham as one of the 'great Master-Builders' along with Boyle, Newton and Huygens in the 'Epistle to the Reader' of the *Essay*.[18] In 1690 Locke and another Sydenham promotor, Charles Goodall, distributed a questionnaire to some foreign physicians that included a question aimed at gauging "the Esteeme which Physitians have had of Doctor Sydenham and his works".[19] Again in 1690, Locke sent Dr Pieter Guenellon of Amsterdam copies of two medical writings that "tried to follow the plan of Dr Sydenham".[20] In a series of letters, Locke wrote approvingly of Sydenham's method to Thomas Molyneux in Dublin in late 1692;[21] in April 1695, Locke sought out information about

[17] Locke, *Correspondence*, vol. 1, p. 537. For Mapletoft's letter and the enclosures, see Locke, *Correspondence*, vol. 1, pp. 529-37.

[18] Locke, *Essay*, p. 9.

[19] Transcribed in Dewhurst, *John Locke (1632-1704), Physician and Philosopher*, p. 301.

[20] See Pieter Guenellon to Locke, 11/21 March 1690, *Correspondence*, vol. 4, p. 26.

[21] For example, Locke writes: "That which I always thought of Dr. Sydenham living, I find the world allows him now he is dead, and that he deserved all that you say of him. I hope the age has many who will follow his example, and by the way of accurate practical observation, as he has so happily begun, enlarge the history of diseases, and improve the art of physick, and not by speculative hypotheses fill the world with useless, tho' pleasing visions. Something of this kind permit me to promise my self one

another follower of Sydenham's method, Andrew Brown in Scotland through correspondence with Dr John Hutton, Physician-in-General. At the time, Brown was under attack from the Edinburgh medical fraternity over the death of his patient Lord Crichton who was thought to have died as a result of the application of Sydenham's method for the cure of continual fevers. The report Hutton sent was not at all complimentary.[22]

Second, (T2), Tyrrell claims that Locke considered Richard Lower to be a dunce and "was not even credited with common sense". This assertion is, prima facie, difficult to maintain in the light of what little extant evidence we have of Locke and Lower's relations. The general drift of this evidence from their undergraduate days until Lower's death in 1691 is one of friendship, albeit one that was not particularly close. In many respects Locke followed in Lower's footsteps: Lower was a few years ahead of him at Westminster, then as a Student at Christ Church; Lower was more central to the group of Oxford physiologists than Locke in the 1660s, though both of them worked very closely with Boyle during this period. There are a fair number of notebook entries that evidence Locke's and Lower's collaborating together on anatomical and physiological investigations dating from their time at Oxford[23] and corroborating evidence of their friendship at that time. For example, on 20 August 1660, George Percivall wrote to Locke of "all our friends at Oxford"

day from your judicious pen. I know nothing that has so great an encouragement from the good of mankind as this", Locke to Thomas Molyneux, 1 November 1692, *Correspondence*, vol. 4, p. 563. See also, Locke to Molyneux, 20 January 1693, ibid., pp. 628-29.

22 Browne "was never out of this Country except once at London, wher he had occasion to converse with Dr Sydnham, of whose opinions he is very fond, especialy of the method of purging in feavers, which he carrys a greater length then it seems it was designed by that Author, for he uses it universaly in all feavers. ... His reputation for knowledg and learning is but very smal, he has never been well founded, and tho some of his thoughts taken singly are good, yet when he endeavours to put them together in a system they do not frame and look like a disjoynted peece of work. as for his success in the cure of feavers, he having seldom the occasion to consult with other Physitians, it must depend upon his own testimony both as to the certainty of the thing and as to the circumstances the sick were in, but it is certain that no body talks so much of it as he does himself", Locke, *Correspondence*, vol. 5, p. 383, enclosure with Hutton to Locke, 25 May 1695. For further discussion, see Cunningham, "Sydenham versus Newton".

23 For Locke's relations with Lower at Oxford, see Frank, *Harvey and the Oxford Physiologists*, pp. 186-88 and Walmsley, "Locke on respiration", though I cannot agree with the claims Walmsley makes about the influence of Sydenham on Locke's method, ibid., pp. 474-76. Locke's medical notebooks that mention Lower include (dates of use in brackets): Bodleian Library (BL) MS Locke e. 4 (1657-1658), BL MS Locke f. 19 (1662-1669), BL MS Locke f. 27 (1663-1666), BL MS Locke f. 25 (1663-1667), British Library Add. MS 32554 (1660-1667), Biblioteca Marciana MS Lat. VII, 22 (c. 1658-c. 1684).

and included Lower in his list.[24] Again, Boyle wrote to Locke on 2 June 1666 and signed off with the words: "my humble service to ... Dr Lower, mr Thomas and the rest of my Freinds at Oxford".[25] Then, in February 1667, Boyle had Lower deliver to Locke at Christ Church some sheets of his [Boyle's] queries on mines.[26] Nearly thirty years later, Benjamin Furly probably has Lower in mind when he writes to Locke of "our Oxford friend".[27] It is also worth noting that Lower was Damaris Cudworth's physician in 1682[28] at the time of her and Locke's first acquaintance.

It was not until the late 1660s that both Lower and Locke left off their studies and medical research and took different courses for professional advancement: Lower setting up a medical practice in London and Locke moving into the Ashley household. Lower was elected Fellow of the Royal Society on 17 October 1667 but ceased to attend meetings and to experiment in March 1668 to manage his large practice and to work on his ground-breaking book *Tractatus de corde* which appeared in March 1669.[29] Locke was elected Fellow on 26 November 1668, immediately after assisting with the life-saving operation on Lord Ashley's hydatid cyst and his long convalescence from June to early November 1668.[30] According to Le Clerc, it was Lord Ashley who "advis'd him to turn his thoughts another way, and would not suffer him to practice Physick out of the house to any but his particular Friends".[31] So, by the early 1670s Lower's and Locke's lives were on quite different trajectories. Nevertheless, all indications from Locke's correspondence are that relations remained amicable. Locke differed from Lower in so far as Locke aligned himself with the chymical physicians early and had an ongoing commitment to mercurialist transmutational alchemy and a Helmontian approach to therapeutic medicine.[32] Lower was not known to have strong chymical interests and

[24] George Percivall to Locke, 29 August 1660, *Correspondence*, vol. 1, p. 153.

[25] Boyle to Locke, 2 June 1666, *Correspondence*, vol. 1, p. 280.

[26] See Locke to Boyle, 24 February 1667, *Correspondence*, vol. 1, p. 309 and Boyle to Locke, 2 June 1666, ibid., p. 279. The queries on mines were published in the *Philosophical Transactions* on 19 November 1666; see Boyle, "Articles of inquiries touching mines".

[27] Furly to Locke, 10 June 1689, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 638. This identification is de Beer's based on Furly's letter to Locke of 24 May; see Locke, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 624.

[28] Locke, *Correspondence*, vol. 2, p. 497.

[29] This work established that the animal heart is a muscle. For discussion, see Frank, *Harvey and the Oxford Physiologists*, pp. 208-13. Locke owned a copy of the first, 1669 edition, LL 1815.

[30] See Anstey and Principe, "John Locke and the Case of Anthony Ashley Cooper".

[31] Le Clerc, *Life and Character of Mr Locke*, p. 6.

[32] The copious evidence for these claims is set out in Anstey, "John Locke and Helmontian medicine".

is better classified as what Harold Cook has called a virtuoso-physician,[33] that is, a physician who managed to straddle both the College of Physicians and the Royal Society, though he did not become a fellow of the College until 1675.

As for Lower's relations with Sydenham, the only known connection is some investigative work that Lower carried out in Oxford in 1663 at the behest of Boyle. Sydenham claimed to have an MA from Oxford and for some reason Boyle seems to have become suspicious of this. He requested Lower to check the relevant authorities and records in Oxford. In spite of a very thorough investigation, no evidence was found.[34] More importantly, however, in 1675 the year Lower was elected Fellow of the College of Physicians, on the death of Thomas Willis he became a court physician and ministered to the King himself. Anthony Wood claimed that Lower was considered "the most noted physician in Westminster and London, and no man's name was more cried up at court than his".[35] Indeed, he is among the group of physicians who were with Charles II on his deathbed.

This brings us to Tyrrell's anecdote (T4) concerning Queen Catherine, namely, that "[Locke and Thomas] wished that he [Sydenham] had been made the physician to the Queen, claiming that he would enable her to have children". There is no known corroborating evidence for this claim.[36] Nevertheless, there is an event in which Lower was confronted by Charles II, that was probably well known and discussed at the time, and it is worth speculating that it was this sort of event that may have led to a conversation between Locke and Thomas about Sydenham's prospects at Court.

It is perhaps best to set out the background before describing Lower's confrontation with his monarch. In 1672, the little known apothecary from Cambridge, Robert Tabor (or Talbor), found himself in a position to prescribe Peruvian Bark (containing quinine) to Charles II who was suffering a fever. Happily for all concerned Charles was cured and Tabor was richly rewarded by being brought into the circle of medical advisors at Court. No doubt seeing his opportunity, Tabor immediately published a work on the Peruvian Bark entitled *Pyretologia: A Rational Account of the Cause and Cure of Agues*.[37] Then,

[33] See Cook, "Physicians and the new philosophy".

[34] See Lower to Boyle, 27 April 1663, *Correspondence of Robert Boyle*, vol. 2, pp. 76-77; Meynell, *Materials for a Biography of Dr Thomas Sydenham*, p. 18.

[35] Munk, *Roll of the College of Physicians*, p. 381.

[36] Though see *Correspondence*, vol. 9, pp. 155-56.

[37] Tabor, *Pyretologia*, London 1672, LL 2828[a]. Locke purchased and took notes from the book in 1679; see BL MS Locke d. 1, pp. 21, 25, 29, 33 and 37.

in 1678 he was created court physician and subsequently knighted. Sydenham was scandalised. In his first book, *Methodus curandi febres* (1666, 2nd edition 1668), Sydenham considered the bark as an example of a remedy that needed to be used with caution,[38] but in his revised and updated version, the *Observationes medicae* (1676), he advocated the drug and seems to have developed a proprietorial attitude towards it.[39] On hearing the news of Tabor's elevation, he wrote to Locke who was in Paris:

> understanding how much Tabor, now knighted here, hath bin admired for his skill in curing Agues, I thought fitt to lett you know a way if you have not allready observed it in my book, page 99 ... I never gott 10l. by it, he [Tabor] hath gott 5000. He was an Apothecary in Cambridg wher my booke of practise never much obteyned. ... I am I thank god perfectly well of my pissing bloud, gout etc. and understand my trade somwhat better then when I saw you last, but am yet but a Dunse.[40]

Harold Cook regards this as an expression of "jealousy and possibly suspected plagiarism" on Sydenham's part.[41] Sydenham, of course, had missed the boat on the bark, not fully endorsing it as a specific medicine in print until four years after the appearance of Tabor's book.

In 1679, Tabor was sent to visit a number of European courts and while away Charles became "dangerously ill at Windsor with an intermittent fever".[42] The court physicians, according to the diarist John Evelyn, refused to give the King the bark "out of envy" of Tabor, so Charles sought the advice of Dr Thomas Short who recommended he ought to take it. During his recovery Charles confronted Lower as to why the physicians would not prescribe it, and Lower's reply must have created some stir at court, for we have versions from two independent sources. On John Evelyn's account: "Dr Lower said, it would spoile their practise or some such expression: & at last confessed it was a Remedy fit onely for Kings".[43]

38 Sydenham, *Methodus curandi febres*, 1666, pp. 107-8.

39 Sydenham, *Works of Thomas Sydenham*, vol. 1, pp. 84-87.

40 Sydenham to Locke, 3 August 1678, *Correspondence*, vol. 1, pp. 601-2, modified after Dewhurst, *Dr. Thomas Sydenham*, p. 171.

41 Cook, "Markets and cultures", p. 134.

42 See the translation of the anonymous account in French in Siegel and Poynter, "Robert Talbor, Charles II, and cinchona", p. 85.

43 Quoted in Seigel and Poynter, "Robert Talbor, Charles II, and cinchona", p. 83. For the anonymous report, see ibid., pp. 84-85.

Might not Locke, Thomas, Tyrrell, and perhaps even Sydenham, have discussed this event?[44] They knew Lower well; they advocated the use of the bark and probably viewed Lower's refusal to prescribe it to the King as a bad error of judgment, one that Sydenham would not have made. Indeed, perhaps Sydenham himself might do a better job at Court than Lower ... he might even turn his curative powers to the Queen. Perhaps it is Lower, not Sydenham, who is the dunce, or at least lacks common sense? One can easily speculate as to how, forty years later, Tyrrell, in anti-Lockean mode, might embellish the anecdote as an example of Locke's own errors in judgment. Of course, this is pure speculation, but it does provide enough historical context to render Tyrrell's claims (T2) and (T4) plausible.

Tyrrell's claim (T3) that the Salisbury physician David Thomas was also obsessed with Sydenham also goes well beyond any extant evidence. Thomas, like Locke, had trained as a chymical physician and, unlike Sydenham, was a Helmontian. The first reference to Sydenham in Locke's correspondence is in a letter from Thomas to Locke of 19 October 1669, in which he asks Locke to inquire of Sydenham whether he has a cure for the acute "grypeing of the gutts" that had broken out in London. The same letter also refers to Thomas' "tinctures of antimony", marking Thomas and Locke's ongoing interest in mercurialist transmutational chymistry.[45] And yet, Thomas and Sydenham were friends. Sydenham describes him as such in *Observationes medicae*: "Last year I was called to Salisbury to consult with my learned and dear friend Dr. Thomas".[46] Later, Tyrrell himself was part of this friendship group. He wrote to Locke in 1686: "as for Friends Dr: S[ydenham] and Dr: T[homas] are both well I hope for they were so lately".[47]

This brings us finally to (T5) and Shaftesbury's likening of Locke, Thomas, and Sydenham to pilgrims in Rome hoping to declare their revelation that Sydenham was in fact the third person of the Trinity. Waldmann leaves off translating the clause 'comme il le disoit lui meme' (as he himself [i.e., Sydenham] said), yet this is important in so far as it implies that Shaftesbury thought Sydenham had far too high an opinion of himself.[48] With or

44 Locke was back in London on 30 April 1679.

45 Thomas to Locke, *Correspondence*, vol. 1, pp. 324-25. For Locke and Thomas and antimony, see also Thomas to Locke, 6 July 1666 and 18 November 1666, ibid., pp. 285-86 and 296 and for further references and analysis, Anstey, "John Locke and Helmontian medicine".

46 Sydenham, *Works of Thomas Sydenham*, vol. 1, p. 94.

47 Tyrrell to Locke, 20 January 1686, *Correspondence*, vol. 2, p. 768.

48 An anonymous referee alerted me to the untranslated clause.

without this clause, this is the most significant of all Tyrrell's claims and the most cutting. It is significant because, if true, it provides an explanation of Sydenham's abandoning of a projected work on smallpox to be dedicated to Lord Ashley and his failure to ingratiate himself in the household of Lord Ashley. It is the most cutting, not simply because of its blasphemous connotation, but because it presents a caricature of Locke as an enthusiast: the very sort of person against whom Locke wrote in the chapter "Of Enthusiasm" which he added to the fourth edition of the *Essay concerning Human Understanding*.[49] Here is Locke's patron and friend, if what Tyrrell says is true, mocking Locke and Thomas as 'fanatiques' and accusing Sydenham of knavery. It is worth noting too that 'Fanatique' is the very word Pierre Coste uses in his translation of Locke's *Essay* for the 'enthusiast' who believes they have "immediate communication" with the Holy Spirit.[50] How credible is this scathing anecdote?

In 1670, Locke composed a dedicatory epistle and preface for a projected work on smallpox for Thomas Sydenham.[51] Manuscripts of these writings in Locke's hand are found among the Shaftesbury papers.[52] The book was to be dedicated to Anthony Ashley Cooper. In our detailed study of these manuscripts, (the late) John Burrows and I canvassed a variety of reasons for Sydenham's choice of Lord Ashley as the dedicatee. In the dedicatory epistle, Sydenham intimates that he had successfully cured someone in the Ashley household from smallpox using his cooling regime, thus providing a natural connection;[53] Sydenham presents the work as a natural history of smallpox and as such it promised to be a work that conformed to the methodological

[49] Locke, *Essay*, IV.xix.

[50] Compare Locke, *Essay*, IV.xx.10, p. 713 with Locke, *Essai philosophique concernant l'entendement humain*, IV.xx.10, p. 925: "Qu'un *Fanatique* prenne pour Principe que luy ou son Docteur est inspiré & conduit par une direction immediate du Saint Esprit". For further discussion, see Anstey, "Locke, the Quakers and enthusiasm".

[51] For Locke's authorship of these MSS, see Burrows and Anstey, "Locke, Sydenham and the 'smallpox manuscripts'"; Anstey, "Further reflections", pp. 220-21.

[52] National Archives, PRO 30/24/47/2, fols 60-3 and 64-9. For transcriptions, see Dewhurst, *Dr. Thomas Sydenham*, pp. 101-9.

[53] National Archives, PRO 30/24/47/2, fol. 62*r*: "At least my Lord I thought it reasonable to let your Lordship see that I have practised noething in your family but what I durst owne & publish to the world, & let my country men see that I tell them noe thing here but what I have already tried with noe ill successe on severall in the family of one of the greatest & most eminent personages amongst them". For an assessment of the evidence for Sydenham's working as a physician in the Ashley household, which probably numbered about thirty, see Burrows and Anstey, "Locke, Sydenham and the 'smallpox manuscripts'", pp. 203-4 and 210. Sydenham also provided advice on the retention of the silver tap in Lord Ashley's side in 1668, though this might have been solicited by Locke. See Anstey and Principe, "John Locke and the case of Anthony Ashley Cooper", pp. 398-99.

orientation of the Royal Society and its commitment to Baconian natural history, including the histories of disease; then there may have been more mercenary reasons, namely, Sydenham hoped to secure more wealthy patients by having an association with Lord Ashley. Sydenham had earlier dedicated his *Methodus curandi febres* to Boyle, even though there is little evidence of cordial relations between them.[54] He later dedicated his tract on gout to the Catholic Dr Thomas Short when he was in favour in Court after Lower's fall from grace – a reversal of fortune brought about, not by the incident with the Peruvian bark, but by Lower's political views.[55] Yet again, there seems to be no evidence of a pre-existing relationship between Short and Sydenham. Was Sydenham trying to ingratiate himself with Short as he had tried with Boyle in 1666?

Whatever the motivation for the tract on smallpox, it was soon abandoned, and Tyrrell's nasty anecdote may well explain why. For even if it is stripped of much of the detail and allowance made for Tyrrell's memory, it does seem probable that the kernel of the matter – that Shaftesbury disliked Sydenham and distrusted his medical expertise – is true. Once this fact dawned on Locke and Sydenham, the project would have seemed hopeless. Though Sydenham did not leave off writing about this disease, he merely included his new, extensive discussion of smallpox in his *Observationes medicae*.[56]

2. *The "Tyrrell Memoir" and Sydenham historiography*

This brings us, finally, to the question of the bearing of paragraph six on recent Sydenham historiography. A cursory survey of references to Sydenham in recent medical publications, reveals that the hagiographic tradition in the history of medicine, namely, that Sydenham was, as G.A.J. Rogers put it, "probably the greatest physician of the age", is alive and well.[57] By contrast,

[54] For a review of the evidence of Boyle's relations with Sydenham before 1670, see Burrows and Anstey, "Locke, Sydenham and the 'smallpox manuscripts'", pp. 204-6.

[55] See Munk, *Roll of the College of Physicians*, pp. 377-78, 456. For Sydenham's dedication to Short, see *Tractatus de podagra*, London 1683, sigs. A2*r*-A5*r*; an English translation of the dedication is in *A Treatise on Gout and Dropsy*, in Sydenham, *Works of Thomas Sydenham*, vol. 2, pp. 121-22.

[56] See Sydenham, *Thomas Sydenham's* Observationes medicae *and Medical Observations*, pp. 8-9 for a collation of the various smallpox MSS and the *Observationes medicae*.

[57] Rogers, "The intellectual setting and aims of the *Essay*", p. 9. For contemporary Sydenham hagiography, see, for example, Nilsson, "Early vascular aging", Johnson and Currow, "Chronic refractory breathlessness", Robinson, "Why the poppy remains all the rage", and Greydanus, "Adverse effects of psychopharmacologic products in pediatrics: Primum non nocere!".

I have argued that the hagiographic tradition arose, not in virtue of Sydenham's accomplishments as a physician, but from his promotion by the likes of John Locke. As for Locke-Sydenham relations, the key question today concerns direction of influence. J.C. Walmsley claimed in 2010, "If Anthony Ashley Cooper ... had the greatest impact on Locke's life and politics, Thomas Sydenham had the greatest impact on his philosophy".[58] Taking issue with this interpretation, I have argued for the view that, while Locke had enormous respect for Sydenham's therapeutic medicine, the direction of "philosophical" influence, if such there was, goes the other way: Locke influenced Sydenham's methodology.[59]

However, there is little point in rehearsing the evidence for these claims and counter claims to the hagiographic Sydenham historiography here, for superficially the claims of the "Tyrrell Memoir" are consistent with all sides of the debate. If, for example, one follows Maurice Cranston in claiming that Sydenham was "the greatest English physician",[60] this provides a good explanation of Tyrrell's claim (T1) about Locke's obsession (though it does raise the question as to why Tyrrell frames it as a criticism). Again, Tyrrell's claim about Locke's obsession (T1), together with the "greatest English physician" premise, provides a strong evidential premise for the view that Sydenham had a strong influence on Locke's philosophical thought. Yet, if Tyrrell is right about Sydenham's "knavery", then we have more evidence for my own revisionist historiography that in his own day Sydenham was widely regarded as an unsound physician. Moreover, if we accept that Locke helped shape Sydenham's methodology as I do, then Tyrrell's claim about Locke's obsession with Sydenham helps to explain why Locke would go to such great lengths to promote him. Ostensibly, the "Tyrrell Memoir" provides a little grist for everyone's mill.

We are not, however, at an impasse. The new evidence from Tyrrell via Des Maizeaux on the Locke-Sydenham relationship, when carefully examined does, I believe, enable us to finesse the case against the hagiographic tradition in so far as it adds two more strong critics of Sydenham, critics who were intimate with Locke, namely Tyrrell and Shaftesbury. It does, though, raise the further question as to when Tyrrell came to see through Sydenham? Did this coincide with the shift in his opinion of his former friend Locke? Perhaps a pre-existing disregard for Sydenham, in part, fuelled the turn against Locke?

58 Walmsley, "Thomas Sydenham (1624-89)", p. 84. See also, Walmsley, "Sydenham and the development of Locke's natural philosophy" and Henríquez Garrido, "The ontological concept of disease".

59 See, for example, Anstey, "The creation of the English Hippocrates", pp. 463-64.

60 Cranston, *John Locke: A Biography*, p. 91.

The "Tyrrell Memoir" also sheds new light on Shaftesbury's relations with Sydenham, providing a new explanation as to why Sydenham abandoned his planned tract on smallpox that was to be dedicated to (the then) Lord Ashley. Finally, the memoir also forces a re-examination of Locke's relations with the physician Richard Lower. Did Locke turn against Lower in the way Tyrrell betrayed his late friend? Did Locke really regard the author of *Tractatus de corde* to be a dunce? There is no doubt that in the final analysis, the "Tyrrell Memoir" raises more questions than it answers.

Abbreviations

LL: *The Library of John Locke*, 2nd ed., by John Harrison and Peter Laslett, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1971.

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