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Foreword

Locke's influence on the history of Western thought has been immense, as Hans Aarsleff has remarked. His works have inspired a myriad of philosophers, educators, writers, and continue to attract the attention of a large number of scholars from different countries. The wealth of source material that Locke left for posterity, the greatest part of which became accessible to the public less than a century ago, has stimulated interest in his ideas and has contributed to a better understanding of his works. Extensive research into Locke's manuscripts, carried out by Benjamin Rand, Richard Ayer, Jocelyn Gibb, Wilhelm von Leyden, Peter Laslett, William Yolton and Kenneth Dewhurst, to mention but a few, has clarified key aspects of Locke's thought and has provided us with a more accurate account of his sources, interests, and beliefs. Other scholars have opened up new perspectives on some aspects of his oeuvre and have thus contributed to improving our appreciation of crucial issues in his philosophy. As a consequence, Locke's views on politics, ethics, religion, physics, education, and even economics appear today in a new light. Our understanding of his ideas regarding Aristotelianism, Scholasticism, Cartesianism and corpuscularianism is clearer than in the past.

Scholars from various countries have contributed to making this reassessment of Locke's work available to a larger public. New editions of Locke's corpus, translated into various languages, appeared almost everywhere in the past century. In Italy, Armando Carlini and Vittorio Sainati published the first Italian translation of the drafts of the *Essay*, while Carlo Augusto Viano edited the Italian translation of the *Two Tracts on Government* and *A Letter concerning Toleration*. A new edition of the *Essay* was published by Nicola Abbagnano in 1971, and was followed

by another edited by Viano. Locke's writings on toleration appeared in 1997, translated and edited by Diego Marconi. Thanks to Mario Sina, several of Locke's manuscript notes on religion were published for the first time in Italian in 2000, together with the *Abregé*, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, and *Of the Conduct of the Understanding*. All these Locke specialists have offered us powerful insights into Locke's work. This is also the case with Chiara Giuntini's recent book on Locke's concept of awareness (2015).

Studi lockiani. Ricerche sull'età moderna intends to follow the path pursued by these scholars by promoting international scholarly dialogue about central issues in Locke's thought. This journal aims at providing a forum for the discussion of Locke's ideas and the theories of authors who influenced him (e.g. Hooker, Descartes, Hobbes, Boyle, Malebranche, Arnauld, Pascal, More, Newton, etc.), or were engaged in debate with him (e.g. Stillingfleet, Butler, Clarke, Damaris Cudworth, Norris, Astell, Leibniz, Toland, Collins, Clarke, Hume, Reid, Voltaire, etc.). The focus of this journal is mainly on key themes, which may take us some way towards an understanding of the religious, political, cultural and intellectual contexts that influenced Locke, or were influenced by him.

The inaugural volume of *Studi lockiani* has a sharp focus on Locke. It is devoted to some aspects of his thought, with the aim of offering a broad view on various perspectives of research on his works. The essays and notes collected in this first volume have been written by members of the Editorial Board of the journal, and represent the first fruit of a project involving scholars from different countries. We would like to thank all of them for their support, which has encouraged us to go ahead in hard times like these. A special "thank you" goes to the reviewers, who have helped us significantly with their valuable suggestions.

The Editors of Studi Lockiani
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Articles

Locke and the Trinity

Diego Lucci

Abstract: In *The Reasonableness of Christianity, as Delivered in the Scriptures* (1695), John Locke described faith in Jesus the Messiah, repentance for sin, and obedience to the divine moral law as the fundamentals of the Christian religion. According to Locke, adherence to these fundamentals, along with the diligent study of the Bible, is what the Christian Law of Faith prescribes as essential to salvation. All other beliefs and practices are non-fundamental and, hence, irrelevant to salvation. Thus, Locke did not cover non-fundamentals in the *Reasonableness*. One of the beliefs omitted from Locke's elucidation of Christianity is belief in the Trinity. This omission implicitly made belief in the Trinity unnecessary to salvation and was surprising to many, given also that the *Reasonableness* appeared in the middle of the Trinitarian controversy of the late seventeenth century. Therefore, some critics accused Locke of anti-Trinitarianism and Socinianism and also pressured him to explain his position on the Trinitarian doctrine. Although Locke abstained from publicly clarifying his views on the Trinity, he expressed, unsystematically and at times ambiguously, his views on Christ's nature and mission in the *Reasonableness*, *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St Paul*, and several theological manuscripts. Moreover, he focused on Trinitarian issues in "Adversaria Theologica", "Lemmata Ethica", and various other manuscripts. Locke's public as well as private writings denote a Messianic and non-Trinitarian Christology, which, although presenting Socinian and Arian elements, was essentially grounded in Locke's own reading of Scripture. Nevertheless, irenic and prudential reasons led him to avoid public discussion of the Trinitarian dogma, for he deemed it inappropriate and immoral to fuel pointless and divisive debates and he considered it unwise to cause himself unnecessary troubles with the authorities.

Keywords: Arianism, Christology, Messiah, Socinianism, Trinity

1. *Introduction*

In *The Reasonableness of Christianity, as Delivered in the Scriptures*, published anonymously in 1695, John Locke described faith in Jesus the

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Messiah, repentance for sin, and obedience to the divine moral law as the fundamentals of the Christian religion. He argued that these fundamentals are plainly revealed in Scripture. Accordingly, adherence to these fundamentals, along with the diligent study of the Bible, is what the Christian Law of Faith prescribes as essential to achieve eternal life[1]. All other beliefs and practices are non-fundamental and, thus, irrelevant to salvation. Locke maintained that much is not plain in Scripture. He regarded even only searching for religious truth as saving, on condition that one accepted the fundamentals of Christianity and studied Scripture conscientiously, and he claimed that error about non-fundamentals, when held after sincere search, did not impede salvation[2]. Therefore, he did not take into account non-fundamentals in the *Reasonableness*. One of the beliefs omitted from Locke's elucidation of Christianity is belief in the Trinity. This omission implicitly made belief in the Trinity unnecessary to salvation. Furthermore, the *Reasonableness* described Jesus as the Messiah and utilized the term "Son of God" as a synonym for "Messiah". Locke maintained that Jesus had been charged by God the Father with a salvific mission and had hence reaffirmed the divinely given, eternally valid, and universally binding law of nature, complementing it with assurance of otherworldly rewards and sanctions and with the promise of God's forgiveness of the repentant faithful. But Locke did not talk of Jesus as a divine person.

Locke's disregard of the Trinity in the *Reasonableness* was surprising to many, given also that this book appeared in the middle of a Trinitarian controversy that caused turmoil in late seventeenth-century England. When attacking the Trinitarian doctrine, the English Unitarians drew mainly, but not exclusively, on the ideas of the anti-Trinitarian and anti-Calvinist Italian scholar Faustus Socinus (1539-1604) and his mostly Polish and German disciples. Socinian views had already reached England in the mid-seventeenth century, mainly thanks to the adventurer Paul Best and the schoolmaster John Biddle, and those maintaining anti-Trinitarian ideas were persecuted during the Civil War and Interregnum and after the Restoration as well. However, Socinianism raised new attention during the Trinitarian controversy of the late seventeenth century[3]. Thus, following the publication

1 J. Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity, as Delivered in the Scriptures*, ed. by J.C. Higgins-Biddle, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1999, pp. 22-25, 109-12.

2 Ibid., pp. 168-71.

3 Concerning the vast historiography on Socinianism in England and the English Trinitarian controversy, see D. Lucci, "Reassessing the Crisis of the Trinity in Early Modern England", in *Cromohs: Cyber Review of Modern Historiography* 19 (2014), pp. 153-64. Relatively recent studies include the follow-

of the *Reasonableness*, the debate on Locke's religious thought revolved mainly around his disregard of the Trinity.

Two of Locke's critics, the Calvinistic divine John Edwards and the latitudinarian Bishop Edward Stillingfleet, pressured him to clarify his position on the Trinitarian dogma. Locke obstinately abstained from publicly explaining his views on the Trinity. However, he expressed, unsystematically and at times ambiguously, his views on Christ's nature and mission in his public writings on religion, including *The Reasonableness of Christianity* and the unfinished *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistle of St Paul*, and in various theological manuscripts. Moreover, he focused on Trinitarian issues in "Adversaria Theologica", "Lemmata Ethica", and several other manuscripts. Like Socinus and his followers, Locke put a strong emphasis on Christ's resurrection and exaltation. Furthermore, his analysis of Ephesians 1:10 in the *Paraphrase* indicates belief in Christ's pre-existence, thus denoting an incipient Arianism[4]. Conversely, Locke's writings on religion indicate no belief in the Trinity. Briefly, Locke's Christological reflections and his consideration of Trinitarian issues denote a Messianic and non-Trinitarian Christology, which, although presenting Socinian and Arian elements, was essentially grounded in his own reading of Scripture[5].

2. *The Trinity in Late Seventeenth-Century England*

The publication, in 1687, of *A Brief History of the Unitarians, called also Socinians* by the clergyman Stephen Nye is commonly considered as the beginning of the Trinitarian controversy of the late seventeenth century. Nye's

ing volumes: S. Mortimer, *Reason and Religion in the English Revolution: The Challenge of Socinianism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2010; P.C.H. Lim, *Mystery Unveiled: The Crisis of the Trinity in Early Modern England*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2012; C.J. Walker, *Reason and Religion in Late Seventeenth-Century England: The Politics and Theology of Radical Dissent*, I.B. Tauris, London 2013.

4 Arianism, named after the third- to fourth-century presbyter Arius, is the doctrine maintaining that Christ was begotten by God the Father at a point in time before his conception and birth – according to most Arians, before all other creatures – and, hence, was not coeternal with the Father. While describing Christ as the Son of God, Arianism entails the denial of the Son's coeternity, coequality, and consubstantiality with God the Father. Arian ideas were condemned at the First Council of Nicaea of 325 CE, which affirmed a Trinitarian view of the Godhead, but Arian views were revived in the post-Reformation era, particularly in late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England. See M. Wiles, *Archetypal Heresy: Arianism through the Centuries*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2001.

5 Some of the issues addressed in the present essay are covered, more extensively and thoroughly, in my new monograph on Locke: Diego Lucci, *John Locke's Christianity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2021.

Brief History was followed by many other anti-Trinitarian tracts, published mostly anonymously and mainly thanks to funds provided by the merchant Thomas Firmin. The Unitarians were encouraged to make their ideas public when, in 1687, a Declaration of Indulgence by James II extended religious liberty in a failed attempt to draw support from Nonconformists. The Trinitarian controversy was also triggered by problems inherent to the Protestant doctrine of *sola Scriptura*, according to which Scripture contains all that is necessary for salvation. Protestants rejected the Catholic dogma of transubstantiation as unscriptural and illogical. John Tillotson's *Discourse against Transubstantiation*, which received seven editions between 1684 and 1687, revived the debate on this subject in England. However, the Continental Socinians argued that belief in the Trinity, too, could not be inferred from Scripture. This enabled English Catholic polemicists to attack *sola Scriptura* and insist on the necessity to ground biblical interpretation in ecclesiastical tradition – the Catholic rule of faith – in order to salvage the Trinity[6]. English Protestants had three options to respond to Catholic attacks. They could maintain their commitment to Scripture alone as the rule of faith and prove the Socinians wrong about the Trinity. Alternatively, they could maintain their commitment to Scripture alone as the rule of faith and concur with the Socinians' denial of the Trinity. The last option was to renounce *sola Scriptura* and agree with Catholics that only ecclesiastical tradition could secure the Trinitarian doctrine. English Protestant theologians chose the first of these three options. Conversely, Nye and other Unitarians rejected both the Trinitarian dogma and ecclesiastical tradition, and they described themselves as the truly "orthodox" Christians adhering to *sola Scriptura*.

The Unitarians depicted the Trinitarian dogma as unscriptural, illogical, and absent from the first Christians' beliefs. Thus, they argued that this dogma should not be among the tenets of the Church of England or, at least, should not be forced on all members of this church. Their rejection of the Trinity provoked the reaction of various Church of England clergymen, who employed different philosophical theories to defend the Trinity and, hence, clashed with one another. For instance, William Sherlock described the three divine persons as three distinct "minds", self-conscious and reciprocally conscious of one another[7]. He was accused of tritheism (that is, the theory that the three

6 [A. Woodhead?], *The Protestants Plea for a Socinian*, London 1686; Anon., *A Dialogue between a New Catholic Convert and a Protestant*, London 1686.

7 W. Sherlock, *A Vindication of the Doctrine of the Holy and Ever Blessed Trinity*, London 1690, pp. 48-50, 55-57, 66-68.

persons of the Trinity are three distinct deities) by John Wallis and Robert South, who argued that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were three manifestations, aspects, or modes of existence of the same divine substance[8]. But the aforesaid John Edwards leveled the charge of modalism (that is, the view that the three persons of the Trinity are merely "modes" of God) against Wallis and South[9]. That internal conflict between Trinitarian apologists caused deep embarrassment to the ecclesiastical and political authorities. Moreover, the exclusion of non-Trinitarian Christians from toleration in the Toleration Act, which was passed shortly after the Glorious Revolution, and the persecution of various Unitarian authors proved ineffective to stop the spread of anti-Trinitarian ideas. Therefore, in 1696, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Tenison, persuaded William III to issue a Royal Injunction forbidding discussion of the Trinity in terms different from those contained in Scripture, the Apostolic, Nicene, and Athanasian creeds, and the Thirty-Nine Articles. One year later, the Parliament approved a Blasphemy Act that made denial of the Trinity a crime. However, these measures did not put an abrupt end to the controversy, which waned only gradually in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

The Reasonableness of Christianity appeared in the middle of that controversy. Both before and after Locke's authorship was revealed, this book was accused of promoting anti-Trinitarianism, Socinianism, creedal minimalism, and even atheism, given also that some Trinitarian apologists, such as John Edwards, judged Socinianism to be a shortcut to atheism. Not only the omission of the Trinitarian doctrine and the characterization of Jesus as the Messiah, but also other elements of the *Reasonableness* led some critics to denounce it as a Socinian book. *Contra* both antinomianism and deism, the *Reasonableness* endorsed a moralist (and clearly anti-predestinarian) soteriology, arguing that both faith and works contribute to salvation. Moreover, this book presented mortalist ideas, as Locke believed that the soul is not naturally immortal, but dies at physical death and will be resurrected by divine miracle for the Last Judgment. Finally, the *Reasonableness* denied original sin and disregarded the satisfaction theory of atonement. These are all points in common with the Socinian theological tradition, which Locke knew well, for he owned, and often cited in his manuscripts, many anti-Trinitarian, Socinian, and Unitarian books,

[8] J. Wallis, *Theological Discourses*, London 1692; R. South, *Animadversions upon Dr. Sherlock's Book*, London 1693; W. Sherlock, *A Defence of Dr. Sherlock's Notion of a Trinity in Unity*, London 1694; R. South, *Tritheism Charged upon Dr. Sherlock's New Notion of the Trinity*, London 1695.

[9] J. Edwards, *Theologia Reformata*, 2 vols., London 1713, vol. 1, pp. 282-90.

and he was friends with various anti-Trinitarian intellectuals[10]. However, Locke did not subscribe to all tenets of Socinianism, and he described his account of the Christian religion as based on Scripture alone. In fact, he always made sure that his religious views were consistent with, and indeed grounded in, the Scriptures. Nevertheless, shortly after the publication of the *Reasonableness*, Edwards described this book as a Socinian work in four tracts published between 1695 and 1697, prompting Locke to write, in 1695 and 1697, two vindications of his book[11]. Moreover, Stillingfleet criticized Locke's way of ideas, and particularly his agnosticism on substance and his non-substantialist account of personhood, in *A Discourse in Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity* (1697). Although Stillingfleet did not consider Locke an anti-Trinitarian proper, he blamed *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* for providing the anti-Trinitarians – especially "the author of *Christianity Not Mysterious*", namely, the freethinker John Toland – with a powerful weapon to question the Trinitarian dogma. According to Stillingfleet, Locke's rethinking of the concepts of essence, nature, and person in nominalist terms was harmful to the Trinitarian doctrine, which relied on a substantialist understanding of these concepts[12]. Stillingfleet's attack on Locke in 1697 provoked a heated dispute, during which Stillingfleet composed two more writings and Locke responded in three replies. This harsh exchange came to an end only with Stillingfleet's death in 1699. Edwards's and Stillingfleet's critiques of Locke's theological and philosophical ideas encouraged other critics, including the nonjuror John Milner, to expose the Socinian elements of Locke's religious thought[13].

Locke always refused to clarify his position on the Trinity and abstained from intervening in the Trinitarian controversy. This, however, does not mean that he was uninterested in this controversy. In fact, he corresponded with the Remonstrant theologian Philipp van Limborch, the Arminian scholar Jean Le Clerc, and other intellectuals about various Unitarian works, mainly Nye's *Brief History* and Arthur Bury's *Naked Gospel* – a book that caused great turmoil shortly after its publication in 1690. Bury's work of creedal minimalism, which

[10] J. Marshall, "Locke, Socinianism, 'Socinianism', and Unitarianism", in M.A. Stewart (ed.), *English Philosophy in the Age of Locke*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 2000, pp. 118-19, 132-35.

[11] J. Edwards, *Some Thoughts concerning the several Causes and Occasions of Atheism*, London 1695; Id., *Socinianism Unmask'd*, London 1696; Id., *The Socinian Creed*, London 1697; Id., *A Brief Vindication of the Fundamental Articles of the Christian Faith*, London 1697; J. Locke, *Vindications of the Reasonableness of Christianity*, ed. by V. Nuovo, Clarendon Press, Oxford 2012.

[12] E. Stillingfleet, *A Discourse in Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, London 1697, pp. 230-92.

[13] J. Milner, *An Account of Mr. Lock's Religion*, London 1700, pp. 180-88.

described belief in the Trinity as unnecessary to salvation, was condemned by a convocation of the University of Oxford as "impious and heretical" and was consequently seized and burnt. Moreover, Bury was deprived of his rectorship of Exeter College at Oxford in July 1690. Locke sent copies of Nye's *Brief History* and Bury's *Naked Gospel* to Le Clerc, who promptly wrote a defense of Bury's treatise[14]. Locke also referred to Nye, Biddle, and other anti-Trinitarians, including several Continental Socinians, in some of his manuscripts. Locke himself was unorthodox when considering Christological and Trinitarian issues in some of his manuscripts and, in less explicit terms, in his theological writings intended for publication. His Christology indeed deviated significantly from the Trinitarian norm. Locke's Christology has much more in common with the Socinians' *Messianic* Christology than with the *incarnational* Christology that is a crucial element of Trinitarian Christianity. These two types of Christology are conceptually distinct, as Victor Nuovo has observed:

> Although both make Christ the centre of salvation, a Messianic Christ achieves this goal through deeds, and, he being a king, the benefits of his saving activity are distributed to those who become his subjects after a judicial process; an incarnational Christ, although not inactive, accomplishes salvation through the communication of his divine being, which he makes available to his beneficiaries by becoming human[15].

Along with these two kinds of Christology, there are two other Christological models: "One represents Christ as a mediator between God and man, the *Logos*, the other as a heavenly man, the founder of a new race, the second Adam"[16]. These two models, too, play a role in Locke's Christianity, as is demonstrated by his soteriology, which is centered on the saving power of the Law of Faith revealed by Christ. Briefly, Locke's Christology is predominantly Messianic and also describes Christ as a mediator and as the second Adam – namely, as a literal son of God, miraculously conceived in a virgin's womb. However, Locke's Christology is non-incarnational and, accordingly, non-Trinitarian.

[14] J. Le Clerc, *An Historical Vindication of the Naked Gospel*, London 1691. For Locke's correspondence concerning Unitarian works, see J. Locke, *Correspondence*, 8 vols., ed. by E.S. de Beer, vol. 3, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1978, no. 1120 (Locke to P. van Limborch, 12 March 1689); ibid., vol. 4, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1978, no. 1248 (J. Tyrrell to Locke, 18 February 1690); ibid., no. 1325 (B. Furly to Locke, 16/26 October 1690); ibid., no. 1329 (J. Le Clerc to Locke, 22 October / 1 November 1690).

[15] V. Nuovo, *Christianity, Antiquity, and Enlightenment: Interpretations of Locke*, Springer, Dordrecht 2011, p. 76.

[16] Ibid.

3. *Locke's Theological Manuscripts and the Corruption of Early Christianity*

The manuscript "Adversaria Theologica", composed for the most part in 1694-95, contains several entries on different theological questions, including four pairs of entries concerning Trinitarian issues – namely, "Trinitas" and "Non Trinitas", "Christus Deus Supremus" and "Christus non Deus Supremus", "Christus merus homo" and "Christus non merus homo", and "Spiritus Sanctus Deus" and "Spiritus Sanctus non Deus"[17]. These eight entries present only eight arguments supporting the Trinitarian doctrine and thirty-six arguments against it. This imbalance is partly due to Locke's use of the anti-Trinitarian John Biddle's *Twelve Arguments drawn out of the Scripture* (1647) and *A Confession of Faith touching the Holy Trinity* (1648) as his main sources in these eight entries. The anti-Trinitarian arguments in "Adversaria Theologica" endorse the theory that Jesus had only a human nature – a theory consistent with Socinian Christology. However, despite the numerical prevalence of anti-Trinitarian arguments in "Adversaria", Locke's position on Christ's nature in this manuscript is still a matter for discussion. In this manuscript, both Trinitarian and anti-Trinitarian arguments are accompanied by supporting references to scriptural texts. Moreover, Locke endorsed with his initials only one argument in the eight entries on Trinitarian questions, precisely in a note under the entry "Christus non merus homo". Based on 1 Peter 1:11 ("Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them [*i.e.*, the prophets] did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow"), this argument maintains that "his [*i.e.*, Christ's] spirit was in the ancient prophets"[18]. This argument might be taken as signifying the pre-existence of Christ's *spirit* to his conception and birth and, hence, as compatible with a later suggestion on Christ's pre-existence in *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St Paul*, which I examine below. However, even if we suppose that Locke accepted the notion of Christ's pre-existence already in "Adversaria Theologica", several years before drafting the *Paraphrase*, this does not mean that he believed in Christ's *eternal* pre-existence and, thus, this does not make him a Trinitarian. Locke's endorsement of the theory of Christ's pre-existence, in the

[17] J. Locke, "Adversaria Theologica 94", in J. Locke, *Writings on Religion*, ed. by V. Nuovo, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2002, pp. 23-28.

[18] Ibid., p. 27. In this article, all biblical citations are from the King James Version, which Locke, too, used.

Paraphrase and possibly in "Adversaria", might actually denote an Arian notion of Christ as *pre-existent but created* – namely, begotten by God the Father *at a point in time* and, hence, not co-eternal with the Father. At any rate, there is no evidence to conclude that Locke pursued a specifically Arian agenda in "Adversaria Theologica" or in other theological writings, including the *Paraphrase*, as I explain below. Moreover, when considering his reference to the pre-existence of Christ's *spirit* in "Adversaria", it is possible to reach a different conclusion. It is indeed possible that, when writing the aforesaid note on 1 Peter 1:11, Locke intended to call attention to Biddle's disregard of this biblical verse and (indirectly) criticize Biddle's view of the Holy Spirit. In fact, while the Continental Socinians regarded the Holy Spirit as God's power, Biddle's early writings depicted the Holy Spirit as the "principal Minister of God and Christ, [...] singled out of the number of the other heavenly Ministers or Angels"[19]. 1 Peter 1:11 contradicts this view of the Holy Spirit, in that this verse describes the spirit of the prophets as the spirit of Christ – not as a heavenly minister or angel. Therefore, it is possible that, when mentioning the "spirit" in his note on 1 Peter 1:11 in "Adversaria", Locke meant the Holy Spirit, which had inspired first the ancient prophets and then Christ. Thanks to his divine inspiration, Jesus was not a common man. To Locke, Jesus was indeed the Messiah. But acknowledging Jesus' divine inspiration and Messiahship is still consistent with a view of Christ as *created as a man* – and not as an *uncreated divine person* or as a *creature pre-existing his own conception and birth*. Therefore, this interpretation is compatible with the hypothesis that, in "Adversaria Theologica", Locke upheld a view of Christ's nature consonant with Socinian Christology, while in the *Paraphrase*, which he composed several years after "Adversaria", he developed a different understanding of Christ's nature, consonant with Arian Christology in regard to Christ's pre-existence, as I clarify below. Furthermore, this interpretation is consistent with the views on Christ's nature and divine inspiration that Locke expressed in several other manuscripts of the mid-1690s.

In 1695, Locke took several notes on some Trinitarian questions in the manuscript "Lemmata Ethica". In one of these notes, under the heading "Trinity", he wrote that "the papists deny that the doctrine of the Trinity can be proved by the Scripture"[20]. Moreover, in the entry "Unitarians" in this manuscript, Locke made reference to anti-Trinitarian authors, such as the Socinians Johann

[19] J. Biddle, *A Confession of Faith touching the Holy Trinity*, London 1648, p. 44. This view echoes Arius's notion of the Holy Spirit as an angel.

[20] J. Locke, MS Locke d. 10, "Lemmata Ethica, Argumenta et Authores 1659", p. 167.

Crell and Johann Ludwig von Wolzogen and the Unitarian Stephen Nye, when observing that in the Bible there is "scarce one text alledgd by the Trinitarians which is not otherwise expounded by their own writers"[21]. He also maintained that the Bible contains "a multitude of texts that deny those things of Christ which can not be denied of god; & that affirme such things of him that cannot agree to him if he were a person of god. In like manner of the holy ghost"[22]. It is worth noting that "Lemmata Ethica", particularly in its entry on the Trinity, denotes Locke's interest in the corruption of early Christianity by unscriptural, pagan, Platonic ideas. Locke's interest in this subject also emerges from other manuscript notes of the same period, including some notes in Locke's interleaved copies of the polyglot New Testament and of *Censura celebriorum authorum* (1690) by Thomas Pope Blount[23]. Locke showed his curiosity in this matter already in the late 1670s, as is proven by a journal note of 20 December 1678. In this note, he gave a description of several manuscripts of the New Testament that he had examined when visiting the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés in Paris with the clergyman and natural philosopher John Covel:

> In the library of the Abbé of St. Germains, M. Covell and I saw two very old manuscripts of the New Testament, the newest of which was, as appeared by the date of it, at least 800 years old, in each of which 1 John c. v. v. 7. was quite wanting, and the end of the eighth verse ran thus, "tres unum sunt"; in an other old copy the seventh verse was, but with interlining; in another much more modern copy, v. 7. was also, but differently from the old copy; and in two other old manuscripts, also, v. 7. was quite out, but as I remember in all of them the end of the eighth verse was "tres unum sunt"[24].

This journal note refers to the Johannine Comma, namely, 1 John 5:7-8 ("For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one"). This biblical passage was the subject of a long controversy in the early modern era, since Erasmus excluded it from the first two editions

21 Ibid., p. 177.

22 Ibid.

23 J. Locke, LL 2864, BOD Locke 9.103-9.107, *Le Nouveau Testament*, 5 vols., Mons 1673; J. Locke, LL 358, BOD Locke 15.38, T.P. Blount, *Censura celebriorum authorum*, London 1690.

24 J. Locke, MS Locke f. 3, "Locke's Journal, 1678", p. 386, quoted in P. King, *The Life of John Locke*, Colburn, London 1829, p. 78.

of his Greek New Testament in 1516 and 1519[25]. Erasmus maintained that the Johannine Comma did not appear in any ancient Greek manuscript of the Bible. Therefore, he would include the Comma in his New Testament only if at least one Greek manuscript containing it was found. When such a manuscript was shown to him, he added the Johannine Comma to the 1522 edition of his New Testament, but he accompanied this insertion with a note setting out his suspicion that this manuscript had been concocted to refute his position on the Comma. Later, among those who challenged the authenticity of the Comma, with different purposes, were Hugo Grotius, Isaac Newton, William Whiston, and Samuel Clarke, besides Socinus and his disciples. Moreover, the French Catholic priest Richard Simon indirectly questioned the Johannine Comma in his *Critical History of the Text of the New Testament* (which Locke recommended to Limborch in 1688, shortly before its publication in 1689)[26]. Despite Simon's pious intentions, his work was harmful to the Comma because he had recourse to ecclesiastical tradition to uphold its "authenticity" and defend the Trinitarian doctrine. He indeed considered reliance on Scripture alone impracticable, given the numerous errors, corruptions, and interpolations that had affected the transmission of the biblical texts.

The rejection of the Comma as inauthentic was crucial to anti-Trinitarian biblical criticism in the early modern period, not only among openly anti-Trinitarian writers, but also among scholars who were hesitant to publicly express their doubts on the Trinitarian doctrine. One of such scholars was Isaac Newton. In 1690, Newton asked Locke to help him to publish *An Historical Account of Two Notable Corruptions of Scripture*[27]. These two "notable corruptions" were the Johannine Comma and another passage commonly alleged to substantiate the Trinitarian doctrine, 1 Timothy 3:16 ("And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit,

[25] On this controversy, see G. McDonald, *Biblical Criticism in Early Modern Europe: Erasmus, the Johannine Comma and Trinitarian Debate*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2016.

[26] Locke, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, cit., no. 1058 (Locke to P. van Limborch, 12/22 June 1688).

[27] I. Newton, "An Historical Account of Two Notable Corruptions of Scripture", in I. Newton, *Correspondence*, 7 vols., ed. by H.W. Turnbull, A.R. Hall, J.F. Scott, and Laura Tilling, vol. 3, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1961, pp. 83-146. On this treatise and Newton's and Locke's aborted attempt at publishing it, see S.D. Snobelen, "'To us there is but one God, the Father': Anti-Trinitarian Textual Criticism in Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-Century England", in A. Hessayon and N. Keene (eds.), *Scripture and Scholarship in Early Modern England*, Ashgate, Aldershot 2006, pp. 128-31; R. Iliffe, "Friendly Criticism: Richard Simon, John Locke, Isaac Newton and the *Johannine Comma*", in Hessayon and Keene (eds.), *Scripture and Scholarship*, cit., pp. 137-57; Id., *Priest of Nature: The Religious Worlds of Isaac Newton*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2017, pp. 354-89.

seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory"). These two verses were rejected as inauthentic by Stephen Nye in his *Brief History*, which drew attention to the absence of the Johannine Comma from the most ancient Greek manuscripts of the Scriptures, from Coptic, Arabic, Syriac, and Ethiopic Bibles, from the most ancient Latin versions of Scripture, and from the Church Fathers' works[28]. Concerning 1 Timothy 3:16, Nye argued that the word "God" in this verse was an interpolation, because it appeared neither in the most ancient texts of the Bible nor in the Fathers' citations of this verse[29]. Newton's, and Locke's, interest in these two passages was probably triggered by Nye's remarks. Newton's *Historical Account* actually presents arguments similar to Nye's points, albeit developed more thoroughly. The controversy on Bury's *Naked Gospel*, too, probably furthered Newton's and Locke's interest in the Johannine Comma, given also that the clergyman William Nicholls asserted the authenticity of the Comma based on Cyprian's authority in order to refute Bury's creedal minimalism[30]. Newton drew on Greek, Syriac, Ethiopic, and other ancient versions of Scripture, on Patristic sources that disregarded the Johannine Comma, and on modern scholars, such as Erasmus and the Arian writer Christoph Sand, to argue that the Comma was an interpolation introduced by copyists. He sent *An Historical Account* to Locke with a letter dated 14 November 1690, in which he wrote that he wanted this tract to be first translated into French and then published[31]. He obviously intended to conceal his authorship of this treatise, although he also considered the possibility to subsequently publish it in English. In December 1690, Locke sent *An Historical Account* to Le Clerc, who accepted to translate and publish it in a volume with other tracts[32]. However, Newton later felt uncomfortable with the prospect of publishing his views on such a controversial issue. He was afraid that his analysis of those biblical passages would be understood by only a few and would cause him problems with the ecclesiastical and political authorities. Therefore, after providing Locke with some additions regarding Richard Simon's and Gilbert Burnet's comments on the Johannine Comma, as Le Clerc and Locke had recommended him to do, and after further corresponding with Locke on this subject, in February 1692

28 S. Nye, *A Brief History of the Unitarians, called also Socinians*, London 1687, pp. 151-53.
29 Ibid., pp. 137-39.
30 W. Nicholls, *An Answer to an Heretical Book called the Naked Gospel*, London 1691, p. 63.
31 Locke, *Correspondence*, vol. 4, cit., no. 1338 (I. Newton to Locke, 14 November 1690).
32 Ibid., vol. 4, no. 1381 (J. Le Clerc to Locke, 1/11 April 1691), no. 1410 (J. Le Clerc to Locke, 21/31 July 1691).

he decided to call off the publication of *An Historical Account*[33]. Of course, this decision upset Le Clerc, who, in the meantime, had completed the French translation[34]. Almost two decades later, in 1709, Newton attempted, once again, to publish *An Historical Account*; and this time, too, the publication was held back. *An Historical Account* was eventually published for the first time, posthumously and imperfectly, in 1754.

Besides being receptive to researches concerning scriptural passages of dubious authenticity, as his involvement in the attempt to publish Newton's *Historical Account* demonstrates, Locke was critical of the corruption of early Christianity by scheming priests. In "Lemmata Ethica" and in his interleaved copy of Blount's *Censura*, he referred to various writings by Nye to expose the Platonic distortion of early Christianity. In the entry on the Trinity in "Lemmata Ethica", he pointed out the "parallelism betwixt the Ancient or Genuine Platonick, and the Christian Trinity"[35]. This was a major topic of discussion in the seventeenth-century English debates on early Christianity, both before and after the Cambridge Platonist Ralph Cudworth attempted to justify this parallelism in *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* (1678)[36]. Cudworth argued that the Trinitarian doctrine had found "such Admittance and Entertainment in the Pagan World, and [was] received by the wisest of all their Philosophers, before the times of Christianity; thereby to prepare a more easie way for the Reception of Christianity amongst the Learned Pagans"[37]. Despite Cudworth's pious intentions, his theory provided the Unitarian cause with more arguments to denounce the Platonic corruption of Christianity and the pagan roots of Trinitarian belief. In "Lemmata Ethica", Locke expressly made reference to Cudworth's theory on Platonic and Christian Trinitarianism – a theory that one of Locke's sources, Nye's *Letter of Resolution* (1691), employed to reject the Trinitarian dogma[38]. Other books, such as Christoph

33 Ibid., vol. 4, no. 1465 (I. Newton to Locke, 16 February 1692).

34 Ibid., vol. 4, no. 1486 (J. Le Clerc to Locke, 1/11 April 1692).

35 Locke, MS Locke d. 10, cit., pp. 167-68.

36 D. Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom in the Age of the New Science: Histories of Philosophy in England, c. 1640-1700*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2015, pp. 447-541; D. Lucci, "Ante-Nicene Authority and the Trinity in Seventeenth-Century England", in *Intellectual History Review* 28 (2018), 1, pp. 101-24.

37 R. Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, London 1678, p. 625.

38 Locke, MS Locke d. 10, cit., pp. 167-68; S. Nye, *A Letter of Resolution*, London 1691, pp. 11-18. See, also, Id., *Considerations on the Explications of the Doctrine of the Trinity by Dr. Wallis, Dr. Sherlock, Dr. S-th, Dr. Cudworth, and Mr. Hooker*, London 1693, pp. 13-19. Locke referred to Nye's *Considerations* in regard to the satisfaction doctrine in: Locke, "Adversaria Theologica", cit., p. 32.

Sand's *Nucleus Historiae Ecclesiasticae* (1669) and Bernard de Fontenelle's *Histoire des Oracles* (1687), proved helpful to Locke in his consideration of the "Platonizing" of Christianity. Locke drew on Sand and Nye when maintaining, in his interleaved copy of Blount's *Censura*, that "the fathers of the three first Centuries [...] speake rather like Arians than Orthodox" and that "all antiquity was Arian"[39]. This thesis also appears in "Lemmata Ethica", in which Locke wrote that "the fathers before the Council of Nice speak rather like Arians than Orthodox"[40]. Nevertheless, as Locke read in Fontenelle's *Histoire des Oracles*, and as he noted in his copy of Blount's *Censura*, Plato soon became a "philosopher in fashion among the learned Christians of the first ages", who regarded him as a "kind of prophet, who had found out several important matters of Christianity, especially the Trinity"[41]. Concerning the Church Fathers' views on the Godhead, in the mid-1690s Locke probably conversed with his friend, the anti-Trinitarian Alexander Beresford, about the difficulty to deduce Trinitarian concepts from the early Christian writers' works. In a letter dated 24 March 1695, Beresford informed Locke of his intention to "peruse" Eusebius and Epiphanius in order to understand "whether or not they are as much misrepresented as Irenaeus", whom Beresford considered to be "more against than for" Trinitarianism. Beresford also gave Locke his "own thoughts of the Trinity-texts of Scripture", rejecting Trinitarian interpretations of several biblical passages and maintaining that the Scriptures were "against" the Trinitarian doctrine. Moreover, he denied Christ's pre-existence, as he described Jesus as a man. However, Beresford, like Locke, regarded Jesus as literally the Son of God[42]. Although no letter from Locke to Beresford on Trinitarian and Christological issues has been found, Beresford and Locke remained good friends and correspondents. Thus, Beresford's letter of 24 March 1695 indicates that Locke was receptive to anti-Trinitarian ideas[43].

Another intellectual with anti-Trinitarian leanings, the Huguenot refugee Jacques Souverain, attracted Locke's attention. At some point in the 1690s, Locke had one of Souverain's manuscripts copied by his amanuensis Sylvester Brounower. This manuscript, entitled "Some General Reflections upon the Beginning of St. John's Gospel", presents ideas that Souverain also explained in

39 Locke, LL 358, BOD Locke 15.38, cit., pp. 620-21.
40 Locke, MS Locke d. 10, cit., p. 177.
41 Locke, LL 358, BOD Locke 15.38, cit., p. 119.
42 Locke, *Correspondence*, cit., vol. 5, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1979, no. 1865 (A. Beresford to Locke, 24 March 1695).
43 Marshall, "Locke, Socinianism", cit., p. 135.

his treatise *Le Platonisme dévoilé*, published in 1700 and translated into English the same year, shortly after its author's death in 1699[44]. Locke owned a copy of *Le Platonisme dévoilé* and knew of Souverain since at least 1691. Souverain was indeed an acquaintance of Locke's Unitarian friend William Popple. Moreover, during the 1690s, Locke kept himself informed about the persecution of various Huguenots, including Souverain, suspected of Socinianism by their coreligionists. Souverain's work actually presents many points in common with English Unitarianism, concerning in particular the Platonic corruption of Christianity. Furthermore, Souverain, like Locke, regarded faith in Jesus the Messiah as the core tenet of Christianity. In *Le Platonisme dévoilé*, Souverain described faith in Jesus the Messiah as sufficient for baptism into the Church and, in the manuscript "Some General Reflections", he advanced a clearly anti-Trinitarian interpretation of John's Gospel. He argued that John had conceived of Jesus not as a divine person, but simply as the Messiah – namely, as a prophet inspired by God the Father, through the Holy Spirit, in a more constant and excellent way than any other prophet before. To Souverain, Christ had a divine office, and his words were of divine authority because they were divinely inspired. In a manuscript note taken, probably, in the first half of the 1690s, Locke wrote some comments on Jesus' divine inspiration very similar to Souverain's views on this matter. The subject of this manuscript note is John 3:34 ("For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him"), although this note also presents an interpretation of Colossians 2:9 ("For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"). Here is the text of this note:

> The last & highest degree of Revelation was that given to our Saviour expressed here by the Spirit given not by measure. there was noe stint of it, noe intervals where in our Saviour had not the presence & assistance of this Spirit whereby every thing he said was of divine authority every thing he did was according to the will of god. And by this I think we may understand that expression of St Pauls Col. II. 9 for in him dwelleth all the fulnesse of the Godhead bodily viz. that the Spirit of god without stint or measure was as certainly & constantly in him to be the sourse of all his words & actions, as our souls are annexed & fixd to our bodys as the principle of action in us. The context will lead us to this

[44] [J. Souverain], "Some General Reflections upon the Beginning of St. John's Gospel", in J. Locke, MS Locke e. 17, 1690s?, pp. 175-223; Id., *Le Platonisme dévoilé*, Cologne [Amsterdam] 1700; Id., *Platonism Unveil'd*, London 1700. On Souverain, see Lim, *Mystery Unveiled*, cit., pp. 311-17; Id., "The Platonic Captivity of Primitive Christianity and the Enlightening of Augustine", in W.J. Bulman and R.G. Ingram (eds.), *God in the Enlightenment*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2016, pp. 136-56.

> sense, for the Apostle there is perswading the Colossians to rest satisfied in the truth & wisdom of the Gospel revealed by Jesus Christ. JL[45]

This note may be taken as supporting my interpretation of what Locke meant when, drawing on 1 Peter 1:11 in "Adversaria Theologica", he talked of Christ's spirit as present in the ancient prophets. As I have explained above, in this passage of "Adversaria" Locke most likely meant that the Holy Spirit had inspired other prophets before Christ. Likewise, Locke's note on John 3:34 refers to "the fulnesse of the Godhead bodily" dwelling in Christ as denoting the presence of the "Spirit of god" (that is, the Holy Spirit) in Christ, and not a divine nature in Christ. Therefore, as John Marshall has aptly observed, this note seems "to indicate disbelief in the Trinity", as does the fact that the *Reasonableness* was "silent about baptism in the name of the Holy Ghost, Jesus Christ, and God the Father, which many trinitarians adduced in support of the Trinity"[46]. In the *Reasonableness*, Locke affirmed the miraculous conception and birth of Christ, "conceived in the Womb of a Virgin (that had not known Man) by the immediate Power of God"[47]. Nevertheless, he used the term "Son of God" as a synonym for "Messiah" and mainly in order to parallel Jesus' sonship with that of Adam. He never subscribed to the eternal generation of Christ and, in the *Reasonableness*, he did not even mention John 1:1 ("In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"). This verse was commonly alleged to substantiate belief in the Trinity, but was interpreted in anti-Trinitarian terms by the Socinians, who argued that by "beginning" John simply meant the beginning of Christ's ministry. And Locke, too, believed that John's Gospel had the main purpose to teach that Jesus was the Messiah.

4. *Christ's Mission and Nature*

Locke recognized Jesus' reticence about his being the Messiah. Over one-third of *The Reasonableness of Christianity* is devoted to clarifying the reasons behind Jesus' "Messianic secrecy", which Locke described in the following terms:

[45] J. Locke, "Note on John 3:34", in J. Locke, MS Locke f. 30, early 1690s, f. 43r, quoted in Nuovo, *Christianity*, cit., p. 66. See, also, Marshall, "Locke, Socinianism", cit., p. 131; V. Nuovo, *John Locke: The Philosopher as Christian Virtuoso*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2017, p. 233.

[46] Marshall, "Locke, Socinianism", cit., pp. 131, 164.

[47] Locke, *Reasonableness*, cit., p. 113.

> This concealment of himself will seem strange, in one who was come to bring light into the world, and was to suffer death for the testimony of the truth. This reservedness will be thought to look, as if he had a mind to conceal himself, and not to be known to the world for the Messiah, nor to be believed on as such. But we shall be of another mind, and conclude this proceeding of his according to divine wisdom, and suited to a fuller manifestation and evidence of his being the Messiah; when we consider that he was to fill out the time foretold of his ministry; and after a life illustrious in miracles and good works, attended with humility, meekness, patience, and suffering, and every way conformable to the prophesies of him; should be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and with all quiet and submission be brought to the cross, though there were no guilt, nor fault in him[48].

According to Locke, Jesus' behavior was part of a strategy of gradual self-disclosure. In order to explain this strategy, Locke focused on the history of Jesus' Messianic actions (that is, his miraculous birth, miracles, and resurrection) in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, which relate the fulfillment of Old Testament Messianic prophecies. Locke's consideration of Jesus' Messianic activity indicates his interest in the reconstruction of biblical harmony. This was one of the major projects of early modern biblical scholarship, as Victor Nuovo has observed:

> The aim of this project, overall, was to rearrange all the parts of the Bible into a single chronological order, relocating whole books, transposing parts of them, and reconciling different accounts of the same events, fitting all the parts into a single continuous history. The general purpose of this undertaking was to facilitate the retrieval of the meaning of the several parts of the Bible by placing them in their proper context[49].

Locke was familiar with several harmonies, including those written by John Lightfoot, Jean Le Clerc, and William Whiston. Moreover, in 1679, he received from his friend, the French philologist Nicolas Toinard, a draft of the latter's harmony, which was published posthumously in 1707 as *Evangeliorum Harmonia Graeco-Latina*[50]. Locke's reconstruction of Jesus' Messianic activity is similar to that of Toinard, in that it concentrates on the role of all those involved in the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies – not only Jesus and

48 Ibid., pp. 40-41.

49 Nuovo, *Christianity*, cit., pp. 114-15.

50 Ibid., pp. 37, 114-15; G. Di Biase, *John Locke e Nicolas Thoynard. Un'amicizia ciceroniana*, Edizioni ETS, Pisa 2018, pp. 42-45, 154-65, 200-6, 233-39.

his disciples, but also the Jewish priests who were hostile to Jesus, the Roman officials and soldiers who condemned and executed Jesus, and even ordinary Jewish people who were awaiting the Messiah but conceived of him as "a Mighty Temporal Prince, that should raise their Nation into an higher degree of Power, Dominion, and Prosperity than ever it had enjoyed. They were filled with the expectation of a Glorious Earthly Kingdom"[51]. This was the main reason why Jesus revealed himself as the Messiah only gradually:

> It was not fit to open himself too plainly or forwardly, to the heady Jews, that he himself was the *Messiah*; That was to be left to the Observation of those who would attend to the Purity of his Life, and the Testimony of his Miracles, and the Conformity of all with the Predictions concerning him. By these marks those he lived amongst were to find it out without an express promulgation that he was the *Messiah*, till after his Death. His Kingdom was to be opened to them by degrees, as well to prepare them to receive it, as to enable him to be long enough amongst them; to perform what was the work of the *Messiah* to be done; and fulfil all those several parts of what was foretold of him in the Old Testament, and we see applyed to him in the New[52].

Even Jesus' Apostles, who were simple people, were often perplexed by his words. Locke thought that only after Christ's resurrection could his Apostles understand his message completely. According to Locke, Jesus' deeds were part of a providential plan placing him in circumstances suited to his mission, which unfolded in a time when the Jews were subject to the oppressive Roman power and lived in a period of decadence. In that time, their monotheism needed to be revived and perfected by the Messiah, who promulgated God's universal dominion. As a result of Christ's Messianic mission, the Law of Moses was replaced by the Law of Faith, before the Jewish theocracy eventually came to an end with the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. Locke saw the "destruction" of the Jews' "state and religion" as a divine act of vengeance putting an end to the Jews' "Church, Worship, and Commonwealth", which were superseded by the Christian Church[53]. To Locke, Jesus' miraculous birth, miracles, and resurrection, through

51 Locke, *Reasonableness*, cit., p. 89.

52 Ibid., pp. 88-89.

53 Ibid., p. 95; J. Locke, *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St Paul to the Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans, Ephesians*, 2 vols., ed. by A.W. Wainwright, vol. 1, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1987, p. 174 (1 Corinthians 2:6); ibid., vol. 2, p. 506 (Romans 3:8); N. Matar, "John Locke and the Jews", in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 44 (1993), 1, pp. 45-62; R. Russo, "Locke and the Jews: From Toleration to the Destruction of the Temple", in *Locke Studies* 2 (2002), pp. 199-223.

which Jesus gradually revealed his Messiahship, were three important phases in a biblical chronology that did not end with Christ's death and resurrection, but looked ahead to the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon Christ's Second Coming, the resurrection of the dead, and the Last Judgment[54].

Locke's emphasis on the Messiah's kingly office diverges from the Socinians' stress on his prophetic role, although the Socinians also called attention to the exaltation and reinstatement of Christ as head of the Church and lord in the Kingdom of God, thus emphasizing the Messiah's priestly and kingly offices as well[55]. The *Reasonableness*, however, admits that Jesus spoke of himself as a prophet, albeit only incidentally, whereas it notes that Jesus never expressly claimed the title of priest for himself. But other writings by Locke demonstrate that he also believed in the Messiah's priestly office. In a note added, probably in the mid-1670s, to the 1667 manuscript *Essay concerning Toleration*, Locke characterized Jesus as "the Great high preist" and "the last preist" in whom "all preisthood terminated"[56]. Furthermore, Locke focused on the Messiah's priestly office in a manuscript analysis of the Epistle to the Hebrews composed around the year 1700, perhaps in preparation of a paraphrase, since he (mistakenly) believed that Paul was probably the author of Hebrews[57]. This epistle portrays Jesus as "a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 5:6), who was "priest of the most high God" (Hebrews 7:1). Drawing on a belief widespread among Jews since much before the time of Christ, Hebrews 7:15-16 associates the Messiah with Melchisedec and his priestly office: "After the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life". Locke argued that this epistle, besides emphasizing Christ's priestly office, attempts to demonstrate that "under the gospel the covenant is much better than that under the law"[58]. The author of Hebrews indeed aimed to confirm the Jewish converts to Christianity in their belief that Jesus was the Messiah, in order to dissuade them from apostatizing back to Judaism[59].

54 Locke, *Reasonableness*, cit., pp. 93-108. On the resurrection of the dead and the Last Judgment, see, also, Id., "Resurrectio et quae sequuntur", in Locke, *Writings on Religion*, cit., pp. 232-37; Id., *Paraphrase*, cit., vol. 1, pp. 246-56 (1 Corinthians 15); ibid., vol. 2, p. 578 (Romans 11:26).

55 Marshall, "Locke, Socinianism", cit., pp. 175-76.

56 J. Locke, *An Essay concerning Toleration and Other Writings on Law and Politics, 1667-1683*, ed. by J.R. Milton and P. Milton, Clarendon Press, Oxford 2006, p. 313.

57 J. Locke, "On the Priesthood of Christ: Analysis of Hebrews", in Locke, *Writings on Religion*, cit., pp. 238-41.

58 Ibid., p. 240.

59 Ibid.

Whereas Locke saw the Messiah as a divinely appointed king, a prophet, and a priest, he never described the Son and the Holy Spirit as divine persons. *The Reasonableness of Christianity* completely disregarded the Trinitarian doctrine, and the word "Trinity" does not appear even once in the *Paraphrase*. In the latter work, Locke actually interpreted in non-Trinitarian terms several passages commonly alleged in support of the Trinitarian dogma (*e.g.*, Romans 1:3-4, Romans 9:5, 1 Corinthians 1:2, and Ephesians 3:9). When examining, a few months before his death, Romans 1:3-4 ("Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead"), he deviated from the widespread view that these verses attest the "union of the two natures" in Christ. Although Locke abstained from expressly denying Christ's divinity, which he did not mention at all in his paraphrase and notes on Romans 1:3-4, he took "the flesh" to be simply Christ's body (and not his human nature) and he regarded "the spirit of holiness" as merely Christ's "more pure and spiritual part" (and not a divine nature)[60].

Briefly, Locke's considerations on Christ in his writings on religion denote a non-Trinitarian Christology. However, the Christology that emerges from the *Paraphrase* is not completely in line with a Socinian notion of Jesus, as Locke's paraphrase and notes on Ephesians 1:10 demonstrate. This biblical verse reads: "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him". Locke paraphrased it as follows: "Until the Coming of the due time of that dispensation wherein he had predetermined to reduce all things again, both in Heaven and Earth under one Head in Christ"[61]. Furthermore, he explained in a note on this biblical passage: "'Tis plain in Sacred Scripture, that Christ at first had the Rule and Supremacy over all, and was Head over all"[62]. Satan's rebellion disrupted Christ's unitary rule and supremacy over all, but, in Locke's words, "Christ recovered this Kingdom, and was re-instated in the Supremacy and Headship, in the fullness of time [...] at his death

60 A.W. Wainwright, "Introduction" to Locke, *Paraphrase*, cit., vol. 1, pp. 35-39; Marshall, "Locke, Socinianism", cit., pp. 173-76. Locke benefited from Newton's feedback when revising his paraphrase and notes on Romans 1:3-4: see K.I. Parker, "Newton, Locke and the Trinity: Sir Isaac's Comments on Locke's *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistle of St Paul to the Romans*", in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 62 (2009), 1, pp. 40-52.

61 Locke, *Paraphrase*, cit., vol. 2, p. 616 (Ephesians 1:10).

62 Ibid.

and resurrection"[63]. There is wide consensus among historians that Locke's paraphrase and notes on Ephesians 1:10 denote belief in Christ's pre-existence, although not in Christ's divinity, and hence reveal an incipient Arianism[64].

The section on Ephesians 1:10 in the *Paraphrase* is not the only place in which the theme of Christ's pre-existence appears in Locke's corpus. Locke also considered this subject some time before 1679, when he drafted a set of comments on twelve biblical texts in his interleaved Bentley Bible[65]. In these comments, he made reference to the heterodox views on the Trinity expressed by a certain "G", whom Victor Nuovo has identified with the seventeenth-century clergyman Nicholas Gibbon, the Younger. Locke probably drew on an unidentified manuscript by this author, who maintained that the Godhead consists of three subsistences – the Father and Creator, the Word, and the Spirit. According to Locke's account of the views held by "G", immediately after the Fall the Father created the intellectual nature or soul of the Messiah, which was united with the Word and remained with it in the bosom of the Father until incarnation. This heterodox theory tended to Origenism, although Origen maintained that Jesus' (human) soul had become fused with the *Logos* only at incarnation. Nevertheless, Locke did not express any support for this theory. Conversely, his paraphrase of Ephesians 1:10 – especially the words "to reduce all things again, both in Heaven and Earth under one Head in Christ" – and his note on this verse stating that "Christ at first had the Rule and Supremacy over all, and was Head over all" essentially affirm Christ's pre-existence.

Locke's avowal of Christ's pre-existence in the *Paraphrase* is incompatible with Socinianism – even with the ideas of a second-generation Socinian like Jonas Schlichting, who believed that the term "Christ's pre-existence" meant, simply, that Christ's Coming had been foreseen[66]. In fact, when commenting on Ephesians 1:10, Locke maintained that Christ had lost and then recovered his kingdom. But Christ could not lose his power if he had possessed it only as foreseen[67]. That Locke's Christology was neither Trinitarian nor completely Socinian is confirmed by his citation of Colossians 1:15-17 as a gloss on Ephesians 1:10. In Colossians 1:15-17, the Son is indeed described as "the

63 Ibid.

64 Wainwright, "Introduction", cit., p. 38; Marshall, "Locke, Socinianism", cit., pp. 173-76; Nuovo, *Christianity*, cit., pp. 36-37, 41-43.

65 Ibid., p. 36. See, also, ibid., pp. 100-1, for a transcription of these comments from: J. Locke, LL 309, BOD Locke 16.25, *The Holy Bible*, printed by William Bentley, London 1648.

66 J. Schlichting, *Confessio fidei Christianae*, n.p. 1642, pp. 5-11.

67 Marshall, "Locke, Socinianism", cit., p. 174.

firstborn of every creature" and as being "before all things"[68] (although these terms do not necessarily denote primacy *in time*). Locke's paraphrase and notes on Ephesians 1:10, with his reference to Colossians 1:15-17, actually indicate a Christology echoing Arianism. Yet, Locke's Christological considerations, taken as a whole, do not warrant the conclusion that he was an "Arian" proper. Even the passage indicating belief in Christ's pre-existence in his analysis of Ephesians 1:10 denotes a purpose typical of Socinianism, as John Marshall has noted:

> The note itself includes emphasis on Christ's death and resurrection as reinstating him in his power, and leading to his position as head of the Church as what was significant for humans to know. Focus on that exaltation and on Christ's lordship following the resurrection – his headship of the Church and position as lord in the kingdom of God – was thus what this note itself made most important, and the issue of his pre-existence only came up in this one note and nowhere else in the text. Such focus was more distinctive of Socinian emphases than of Arian or trinitarian emphases[69].

In Locke's note on Ephesians 1:10, as Victor Nuovo has observed, "Christ is a far more exalted and sublime figure than the one represented in the Gospels and in the *Reasonableness*"[70]. Christ's resurrection and exaltation actually have an important role in the *Paraphrase*, as several passages in this work show. For instance, a note on Romans 1:4 in the *Paraphrase* describes "Christs resurrection from the dead and his entring into immortalitie to be the most eminent and characteristical marke whereby Christ is certainly known and as it were determined to be the Son of god"[71]. It is worth noting that Locke's emphasis, in the *Paraphrase*, on Christ's resurrection as the distinguishing mark of his being the son of God denotes a subtle theological shift from the *Reasonableness*[72]. In his book of 1695, Locke portrayed Jesus' sonship as being "The First-born from the dead" – a phrase borrowed from Colossians 1:18[73]. However, the *Reasonableness* also described Jesus' virgin birth as an indicator of his literal sonship of God, which entails immortality since birth.

68 Locke, *Paraphrase*, cit., vol. 2, pp. 616-17 (Ephesians 1:10).

69 Marshall, "Locke, Socinianism", cit., p. 175. See, also, D. Wootton, "John Locke: Socinian or Natural Law Theorist?", in J.E. Crimmins (ed.), *Religion, Secularization and Political Thought: Thomas Hobbes to J.S. Mill*, Routledge, London 1989, p. 45.

70 Nuovo, *John Locke*, cit., p. 245.

71 Locke, *Paraphrase*, cit., vol. 2, p. 487 (Romans 1:4).

72 Parker, "Newton, Locke", cit., p. 49.

73 Locke, *Reasonableness*, cit., p. 114.

And, according to Locke, Jesus' sonship of God and immortality since birth distinguished him from the mortal descendants of Adam, who had forfeited the state of immortality when sinning and being subsequently expelled from Paradise:

> God nevertheless, out of his Infinite Mercy, willing to bestow Eternal Life on Mortal Men, sends Jesus Christ into the World; Who being conceived in the Womb of a Virgin (that had not known Man) by the immediate Power of God, was properly the Son of God; [...] So that being the Son of God, he was, like his Father, *Immortal*[74].

In the *Reasonableness*, Locke maintained that Jesus' immortality since birth entailed that he did not have to suffer death, but Jesus chose to die because otherwise his resurrection and, consequently, the fulfillment of his Messianic office would not be possible. Locke also argued that "the great Evidence that Jesus was the *Son of God*, was his Resurrection. Then the Image of his Father appeared in him, when he visibly entered into the state of Immortality"[75]. Nevertheless, in the *Reasonableness* Jesus' immortality since birth plays a primary role in his salvific mission, which Locke clarified when referring to the "*Spirit of Adoption*" mentioned in Romans 8:15. According to Locke, by the "*Spirit of Adoption*" the faithful become Christ's brethren and, hence, "adoptive" sons of God and are eventually admitted to eternal life: "And we by Adoption, being for his sake made his Brethren, and the Sons of God, come to share in that Inheritance, which was his Natural Right; he being by Birth the Son of God: Which Inheritance is Eternal Life"[76]. Conversely, in the *Paraphrase* it is essentially Christ's resurrection that distinguishes him as the Son of God. Thus, the *Paraphrase* echoes the Socinian emphasis on Christ's resurrection and exaltation, instead of focusing on his virgin birth. However, there is still a significant difference between Socinianism and Locke's Christology, in that the Socinians conceived of Jesus as created mortal and then made immortal by divine miracle upon his death, while Locke, in the *Reasonableness*, affirmed Christ's immortality since birth, and he never recanted this position. At any rate, what really counts, in the Christology of the *Paraphrase*, is Christ's resurrection and exaltation, not his pre-existence or miraculous birth; and this is certainly a Socinian leitmotif. Moreover,

74 Ibid., p. 113.
75 Ibid., p. 115.
76 Ibid., pp. 114-15.

there is an important point of divergence between Locke and Arianism. While most Arians believed in the Son's primacy in time, Locke's paraphrase and notes on Ephesians 1:10 do not clarify whether he conceived of Christ's pre-existence as pre-cosmic[77]. Briefly, the analysis of Ephesians 1:10 in the *Paraphrase* is the only place denoting belief in Christ's pre-existence in Locke's oeuvre, which presents no additional clarifications about this subject. This might indicate that the theme of Christ's pre-existence does not play a major role in Locke's Christology, which, instead, emphasizes Christ's exaltation and lordship following his resurrection.

5. *Conclusion*

Although Locke's views on Christ's nature and relation to God the Father denote several similarities with Socinianism and Arianism, his Christological considerations are essentially grounded in his own reading of Scripture. Yet, Locke always abstained from clarifying his position on the Trinitarian doctrine. During his dispute with Stillingfleet, he repeatedly blamed his opponent for pushing him to talk of a subject – the Trinity – which he preferred to avoid, because he intended to consider only principles that the Scriptures expound plainly. He made this point in acerbic terms in his last reply to Stillingfleet:

> My lord, my Bible is faulty again; for I do not remember that I ever read in it either of these propositions, in these precise words, "there are three persons in one nature, or, there are two natures and one person". [...] I deny that these very propositions are in express words in my Bible[78].

Furthermore, when responding to Edwards in *A Second Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity* (1697), Locke openly disassociated himself from Socinianism, given also his actual disagreement with the Socinians about several topics, and he protested to have never denied the Trinity[79]. Nevertheless, he never took the trouble to affirm belief in the Trinity. His silence on the Trinity was most probably due to irenic as well as prudential reasons. He indeed deemed it inappropriate and immoral to fuel pointless and divisive debates

[77] Marshall, "Locke, Socinianism", cit., p. 175.
[78] J. Locke, "Reply to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Worcester's Answer to His Second Letter", in J. Locke, *Works*, 9 vols., London 1824, vol. 3, p. 343.
[79] Locke, *Vindications*, cit., p. 126.

about non-fundamentals, such as the then ongoing Trinitarian controversy. Furthermore, he probably considered it unwise to cause himself unnecessary troubles with the ecclesiastical and political authorities[80]. However, although Locke never committed himself to an unequivocally anti-Trinitarian stance, his considerations on Christological and Trinitarian issues definitely denote a Messianic and non-Trinitarian Christology.

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[80] G.A.J. Rogers, "John Locke: Conservative Radical", in R.D. Lund (ed.), *The Margins of Orthodoxy: Heterodox Writing and Cultural Response, 1660-1750*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1995, pp. 109-12.

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The Lamp under the Bushel. Messianic Secrecy in Locke's Christology

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> Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.
> (Matthew, 5:14-15)

Abstract: Locke published (anonymously) his first work on religious hermeneutics in 1695: *The Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the Scriptures*. The fundamental thesis of the work is that the only article of faith one must believe in order to become a Christian is that Jesus was the Messiah. This article is indeed all that is necessary *to believe* to be a Christian, but it is not all that one must *do* to deserve salvation: if you believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, then you must take him as a guide in your life, and your works. You must try sincerely to understand what his teachings are and live by them. Locke's work also seeks to respond to the following question: if Jesus was really the Messiah, and if to believe this is so important, why did he keep this identity hidden for most of his life? Why did he not declare it openly? Locke's answers to these questions are an essential part of his interpretation. To fully understand them one must take into account two crucial contexts: the theological debate on the nature and on consequences of the original sin, in the seventeenth century, and the complex set of messianic expectations of the Jews in Jesus' time – the Jewish messianism – to which the *Reasonableness of Christianity* makes extensive references to explain Jesus' singular reserve about his messiahship.

Keywords: Messianic secrecy, faith, morality, antinomianism, Jewish messianism.

1. *"Salvation or Perdition depends upon believing or rejecting this one Proposition"*

In the summer of 1696, Locke received a letter from his friend and correspondent Philip van Limborch, the famous Dutch theologian[1]. In itself it

[1] Philippus van Limborch to Locke 14/24 July 1696, in J. Locke, *Correspondence*, ed. by E.S. de Beer, vol. 5, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1976, pp. 665-71.

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was a common occurrence: the friendship between Locke and Limborch was established in 1684, at the time of Locke's exile in Holland, and over the years they had exchanged dozens of letters on various topics, mostly having to do with their common theological interests. We do not know with what feelings Locke opened that particular letter, but we can imagine he might have been somewhat apprehensive, as Locke knew that his friend was reading a French translation of *The Reasonableness of Christianity*. Locke's work had been published in 1695, and was followed almost immediately, in 1696, by a French translation, *Que la religion chrétienne est très-raisonnable, telle qu'elle nous est représentée dans l'Écriture Saint*, written by Pierre Coste. The translation did not name the original author and since the English version had been published anonymously, it is possible that Coste actually did not know it was Locke[2]. Philip van Limborch, however, was certainly privy to the author's identity, and must have been anxious to read his friend's work. Nevertheless, he did not speak English well (his works are written mostly in Latin), and the first opportunity to do so was offered by the French translation.

Locke's hermeneutic treatise was important for both scholars: it was related in many parts to their conversations and correspondence[3], and had the great ambition of helping put an end to the religious dissension that had been blooding Europe throughout the seventeenth century, by identifying a common ground to the various theological positions, a core drawn directly from the

[2] At least, we have a letter from Coste to Locke, in which the author of the translation sends the text of his work, to have an opinion, without giving the impression of knowing that Locke was indeed the author of the original. Of course, however, this may have been a measure agreed between the two, to prevent prying eyes, intercepting their correspondence, from having material proof of the identity of the author of the work. In his letter, Coste implicitly denied that Locke may have been the author of the *Reasonableness*, suggesting that if Locke had not read the book yet, he could enjoy reading it in French (Coste to Locke, 23 June / 3 July 1696, in J. Locke, *Correspondence*, cit., vol. 5, pp. 432-34).

[3] For example, regarding a passage from the second letter to John ("For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh", 2 John 7), it is Limborch who suggests the alternative – and interpretative – translation to Locke, the one which appears in the version of *Reasonableness* kept at Harvard (which we can consider the final version issued by Locke's hands): "That Jesus is the Messiah who is come in the flesh" (cf. J. Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1999, p. 24). The suggestion is present in the same letter in which Limborch approves the general conclusions of the work. Furthermore, it was also Limborch, in the same text, who suggested to Locke to corroborate this alternative translation with a cross-reference to Mt 10:32 ("Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven"). Interesting interpretation of the texts in question, to tell the truth, but far from obvious. * The biblical references contained in this note, like all subsequent ones, are taken from the King James Bible of 1611, the translation used by Locke, which was a standard textual reference in the theological discussions of the time.

Bible[4]. This eminently political purpose of Locke's treatise is implicit throughout his work, and was in fact made explicit by Coste in a dissertation he added to the second edition of his French translation (published eleven years after Locke's death), bearing the programmatic title: "une dissertation où l'on établit le vrai et unique moyen de réunir tous les Chrétiens, malgré la différence de leurs sentimens"[5].

In *Reasonableness*, Locke carefully analyses the historical books of the New Testament, and comes to a number of simple but very relevant conclusions: (1) the only article of faith that one needs to believe in order to call oneself Christian is that Jesus was the Messiah, sent by God to men for their salvation[6]; (2) This does not suffice however to obtain salvation or *justification*: one must also act or *work* according to one's faith; (3) in order to work following one's faith, it is necessary to understand the teachings of Jesus, to study as much as possible the scriptures through which those teachings have been handed down; (4) reason alone is not sufficient to discover a system of moral rules capable of guiding men on the path of salvation: due to the fragility of human reason, it needs to integrate reason with revelation; (5) there is no contradiction between the message of the gospel and reason.

All five of these points are important, but one – the notion that one must act according to faith to obtain salvation – is especially important for the

[4] So Locke's aim was intended by Limborch himself: "Hoc recte percepto (i.e. the general tenor of the *Reasonableness of Christianity*) gravissimas ac acerbissimas in Ecclesia Christianæ disputationes feliciter componi posse puto; saltem Ecclesiæ, non obstante opinionum diversitate, pacem facili negotio posse restitui. Ea enim, quæ nunc a plerisque ut unicum ferme Christianismi fundamentum urgentur, objecto fidei non comprehendi planum fiet. Quod unicum anathematismis, schismatibus, et odiis tollendis remedium est", Locke, *Correspondence*, cit., vol. 5, p. 668.

[5] Coste, in all his editorial operations, had shown considerable independence of judgment. For example, the English text of *Reasonableness* was not divided into chapters with titles, and the division according to which we read it today was introduced precisely by Coste, who had also inserted more or less long titles for each chapter, bringing the attention of readers on the point that he judged more significant from time to time. Locke did not disapprove of the young scholar's initiative and indeed thought of introducing a similar subdivision also in a subsequent English edition of *Reasonableness*. However, as for the programmatically political character of the title of Coste's dissertation, Locke would likely have considered it too explicit for his tastes.

[6] In chapter 5 of *Reasonableness*, Locke identifies in the theme of the messiahship of Jesus the element that made the break between early Christianity and the Jewish community inevitable. When Paul cursed the Jews of Antioch, telling them that their blood would fall on their heads, he did so out of their refusal to believe this single phrase, the one that declared that Jesus was the Messiah: "'Tis plain here, St. Paul's charging their Blood on their own heads, is for opposing this single Truth, that Jesus was the Messiah; that Salvation or Perdition depends upon believing or rejecting this one Proposition" (Locke, *Reasonableness*, cit., p. 31).

understanding of the theoretical framework of *Reasonableness*. In chapter 5, Locke accumulates many references, taken from the Gospels and Acts, to show that all that is necessary to believe in to obtain justification is the simple proposition "Jesus is the Messiah". However, immediately afterwards he specifies that this is not enough and that there are also things that need to be done : "All, I say, that was to be believed for Justification: For that it was not all that was required to be done for Justification, we shall see hereafter"[7]. In chap. 11, Locke returns to this point: an essential part of the covenant of grace consists in taking Christ as one's sovereign (that is, as a guide for orienting one's conduct), and acting accordingly from that moment on, at least as far as the limits and frailty of human nature allow. Indeed, under the covenant of grace, sincerity of one's attempt and repentance for one's failings can count as righteousness. In Locke's view, these two parts of the covenant of grace are so essential in the evangelical and apostolic writings (even in those of the apostle Paul) that the one often implies the other, in a sort of theological metonymy: "Believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and Repenting, were so Necessary and Fundamental parts of the Covenant of Grace, that one of them alone is often put for both"[8]. The anti-Calvinist implications of this metonymic interpretation are quite obvious, given that the classic Calvinist reading of the New Testament (and in particular of the letters of the apostle Paul) upheld the crucialness of faith to obtain salvation but was certainly not prone to recognising works a similarly crucial role, especially where the text spoke only of faith.

None of the five key statements of *Reasonableness* was revolutionary in itself: their inspiration was on the whole close to that of latitudinarian theology, not far from the arminianism of Limborch. On the other hand, none of these claims could expect to go uncontested in the English cultured society of the time: in general, the *Reasonableness of Christianity* was bound to arouse controversy[9], if only because of its anti-Calvinist implications, in the context of the heated debate on the consequences of original sin and the (related) Lutheran and Calvinist doctrines of justification by faith.

Locke work was inspired by the most modern trends in contemporary hermeneutics, using an historical-critical method that descended from the "new antiquarianism" of the 16th century. It was based on the idea that sacred texts should be read using the same philological tools used for any other text,

7 Ibid., p. 33.

8 Ibid., p. 111.

9 See V. Nuovo, Introduction to John Locke, *Vindications of the Reasonableness of Christianity*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 2012, p. xxx.

and above all, must be understood on the basis of the problems and culture of the time in which they were written, and in relation to the expectations and linguistic uses of their original audience[10]. Only in this way could they truly speak to those who read them centuries later, and who turned to them for answers concerning their own contemporary problems.

The *Reasonableness of Christianity* was not only important for what it said, but also for what it did not say: it took no position, for example, on the controversial issue of the Trinity – the debate that was raging in England and throughout Europe in those same years. From the start, countless interpretations began to be offered concerning Locke's ideas on the topics on which he had not expressed himself. Locke, however, by stating that Jesus' messiahship was deducible from Scripture and that belief in this principle was sufficient to make a man a Christian, seemed to imply that faith in the Trinity, or in the divinity of the person of Christ, was not an essential aspect of the Christian faith; that we are free to believe it or not believe it, without significant consequences for the eternal salvation of our soul[11].

2. *"But whom say ye that I am?"*

There would have been nothing strange, then, if Locke had been anxious to hear Limborch's opinion on his new work. The more so because with this work of his late maturity, Locke was venturing on new ground, that of theological and hermeneutical writing, and his friend was one of the most influential Protestant theologians of his time: his judgment and his advice carried therefore a lot of weight. Locke must have also been anxious to be sure his friend would keep Locke's identity as author a secret. Those were difficult times, and many books on controversial topics were published anonymously.

Locke had good reason to worry on this count. In the case of his earlier *Epistola de tolerantia*, Limborch had already betrayed Locke's trust by revealing him as the author to his friends and colleagues. Could Locke hope that, this time at least, Limborch would be a "good keeper" of his confidence? Locke

[10] See L. Simonutti, Introduction to Simonutti (ed.), *Locke and Biblical Hermeneutics. Conscience and Scripture*, Springer, Cham (Switzerland) 2019, p. 3.

[11] See, in this same volume, Diego Lucci's essay, "Locke and the Trinity", which gives a lucid reconstruction of the Trinitarian emergency at the end of the seventeenth century, and of the role that Locke had in that debate, both with what he said and with what he did not say.

was by nature a cautious man and did not easily admit, in writing, that he was the author of the books he had decided to publish anonymously, even when communicating with his closest friends. Indeed, at first glance, his attitude can seem at times almost paranoid. But a letter could be easily intercepted and opened, exposed to prying eyes, in a context full of suspicion and partisan controversy, between opposing political and religious factions. That is why Locke was so cautious: so much so that when we look at the catalogue he made of the books in his personal library, one sees that even there, in that most private of places, the *Reasonableness of Christianity* is not listed along with the works Locke published under his name.

The year 1695 was very important for the history of the freedom of publication: the Licensing Act had not been renewed, and therefore the preventive censorship, by state authority, on every book in press, was no more law in the kingdom of England[12]. It had been replaced however by careful examination after publication, which could lead to legal proceedings against the author, the publisher (or possibly the translator)[13]. In theory, this concerned mainly works dealing with political subjects, or anyway judged to be seditious, and not austere theological treatises such as the *Reasonableness of Christianity*. Nonetheless, in May 1697 a Middlesex Grand Jury condemned Locke's book as scandalous, precisely on the basis of the new rules governing the lawfulness of works published in England, leading to a request to proceed against the author "according to the utmost severity of the Laws"[14]. This

[12] Among the numerous critics of the Licensing Act, there was also Locke himself, who was able to deal with that law as an advisor to his friend Edward Clarke, one of the members of the commission that was in charge of its modification (see "Locke's criticism of the Licensing Act of 1662", in J. Locke, *Political Essays*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1997, pp. 330-37). It is striking what, in that text, Locke wrote about the possibility of publishing anonymously. He proposed that to prevent the possibility that anyone could print while remaining unknown, the law could prohibit printing, selling, publishing a book without the name of the printer or bookseller, establishing significant penalties whatever the content of the publication. In Locke's scheme, the printer or bookseller, whose name was printed on the book, would be responsible for anything it contained contrary to the law, as if he were the author himself, unless he could produce the person from whom he has had the work (ibid., p. 331). This restraint, in Locke's opinion, was the only one that should be imposed on the press. In this perspective, the author always has the right to remain anonymous, and the legal responsibility for what stated in an anonymous book should pertain to the printer.

[13] See T. Keymer, *Poetics of the Pillory: English Literature and Seditious Libel, 1660-1820*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2019.

[14] The same action was taken in that session against Toland's book *Christianity not Mysterious* and against another controversial anonymous book of religious argument: *A Lady's Religion* (cf. J. Champion, *Republican Learning: John Toland and the Crisis of Christian Culture, 1696-1722*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York 2003, pp. 70-71).

decision was not entirely surprising: the line between politics and religion had always been blurry in England, as elsewhere, and after the Puritan revolution, the long years of the Interregnum, and the recent change in the ruling dynasty, political and religious reasons appeared inextricably mixed.

In any case, shortly before the letter by Limborch, a violent attack against the *Reasonableness of Christianity* had been published by the fervent Calvinist theologian John Edwards, accusing Locke's book of promoting de facto the spread of Socinianism and atheism. It is worth remembering that atheism was then a crime in England, which, in the most serious cases, could carry the death penalty. Nor was it just Edwards: other books and pamphlets had recently come out – or were about to come out – both in favour of and against Locke's *Reasonableness*. Reviews – some favourable, others hostile – followed one another in literary magazines not only in England but throughout Europe. Moreover, some of the defences of Locke's work that were being prepared in those same days were so extreme and partisan that they ended up damaging Locke's reputation even more than the explicit accusations levelled at his work.

All of this was certainly enough to worry even a less cautious man than Locke. Still, he had realistically not much to fear in terms of the legal consequences of his publication. But, as an author so aware of the underlying mechanisms of prejudices, to whom he had dedicated illuminating pages of his *Essay concerning the Human Understanding*, he certainly must have feared that the mud-slinging that Edwards was unleashing against him would be enough to cool his intended readership. The purpose of Locke's book was substantially irenic: to cool the current controversies among Protestants, not to create new ones. Edwards' attack threatened to turn *Reasonableness* in one of many partisan publications, the subject of slander and suspect, accessible only to a limited number of intrepid open-minded readers[15], undermining for good its conciliatory purpose.

Numerous other speculations have been made about the importance Locke attached to maintaining his authorship secret. One of the most common is that Locke saw some unresolved contradictions between his chief work (the *Essay concerning the Human Understanding*) and this theological treatise, and did not want the one to be read in relation to the other. While possible, this seems unlikely, given that Locke continued to revise both volumes up to the last year of his life[16]. It is also possible that Locke intended to prevent any controversy

[15] Cf. Nuovo, Introduction to John Locke, *Vindications of the Reasonableness of Christianity*, cit., p. xix.

[16] Cf. Higgins-Biddle, Introduction to John Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, cit., p. CXXXI.

concerning *Essay on Human Understanding* from affecting his new work, prejudicing readers against it. Finally, it is possible that Locke might have paradoxically thought to protect *Reasonableness* from the prestige attached to his name: the mechanisms of censorship were such that the same words could have a different impact if attributed to a famous author or to an unknown one.

In any case, Locke's possible concerns about Limborch's discretion, as well as his judgment, were probably dispelled on the first quick reading of his letter. The author's identity was kept secret (Limborch's letter talks about the book as if it written by someone else)[17], and Limborch, while criticizing a few secondary aspects of the volume, expressed his great appreciation for the work, and in particular for Lock's discussion of the question of Jesus' early silence on his messianic role. In dealing with this problem, Locke started from the following questions (connected to each other): Why, according to the historical books of the New Testament, did Jesus not explicitly declare, from the beginning of his public life (i.e. after the baptism by John the Baptist) that he was the Messiah, the one whom the Jews had been waiting for generations? Why did he not make his role evident, through miracles that only a divine being could perform, in the most frequented public places, in front of reliable witnesses, miracles that could have made his message immediately known and universal? Why, when he performed miracles and healings, did he do them in secluded places, and often ordered his beneficiaries not to tell anyone about these miracles? Why, when his disciples began to understand the truth about him, did Jesus enjoin them to keep the secret, up to the very last days of his stay on Earth[18]?

After meditating on this issue for a long time, Locke arrived at what he felt was a satisfactory answer. Nevertheless, when reading the passage in which he introduces the question of messianic secrecy, one can glimpse something of the hermeneutic perplexity which Locke must have felt when he began to reflect on this issue:

> This concealment of himself will seem strange, in one who was come to bring Light into the World, and was to suffer Death for the Testimony of the Truth. This reservedness will be thought to look, as if he had a mind to conceal

[17] See, as an example of Limborch's prudence, the following sentence, referring to the rumours about the author of *Reasonableness*: "Illius autorem volunt esse amicum meum. Ego respondi, nihil mihi de eo constare; et cum autor, quisquis ille sit, latere vult, nostrum non esse conjecturis, ut plurimum fallacibus, indulgere" (Locke, *Correspondence*, cit., vol. 5, p. 668).

[18] "But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God", Matthew, 16:15-16.

himself, and not to be known to the World for the Messiah; nor to be believed on as such[19].

Explaining this aspect of the earthly parable of Jesus of Nazareth is certainly important for any theological interpretation of the New Testament. However, it is crucial for Locke, since in his interpretation of the message of the New Testament the messianic character of the figure of Jesus is the only thing to believe in to obtain salvation[20]. If this is the only thing one needs to believe, and if it has such significant consequences for the eternal destiny of the souls of the witnesses of those events (and of those who will hear or read this story, generation after generation), why hide it almost to the very end? Why light a lamp and then keep it hidden under a bushel?

Locke's answer to this question occupies about a third of the *Reasonableness of Christianity* as a whole, and therefore Limborch's praise of his friend in this regard concerned a substantial aspect of his work. It is an extremely articulated response, which starts from a precise reconstruction of the context of Jesus' earthly journey, a reconstruction that Locke mostly based on Jesus' *ipsissima verba*, and a meticulous reconstruction of the precise temporal sequence of Jesus' words and actions. A characterizing aspect of Locke's interpretation is indeed his preference, in narratological terms, for the *fabula* told by the Gospel rather than the *syuzhet* (the plot) through which it is communicated, for the chronological reconstruction of the events, rather than the way the writers of the sacred histories present them.

There were many works among those Locke had been studying in recent years that could help him chronologically reorder the events narrated in the historical books of the New Testament. Among these were John Lightfoot's *The Harmony of the Foure Evangelists with each other and with the Old Testament*, and also *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae and Centuria Chronographica*. He had long read the *Histoire et concorde des quatres Evangélistes*, by Antoine Arnauld[21]. Above all,

19 Locke, *Reasonableness*, cit., p. 40.

20 A further reason why this theme was so relevant to Locke was the programmatically literal character of his hermeneutics of the New Testament, united with his basic option of never questioning the reliability of the text handed down. When, centuries later, the theme of messianic secrecy was taken up by the German theologian William Wrede, the explanation of those apparent New Testament discrepancies was completely different: in his book *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien: zugleich ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Markusevangeliums* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1901), Wrede suggested that Jesus' instructions to the disciples to keep quiet about the nature of his work (e.g. Mark 1:44) were not really uttered by him, but were apologetic devices of the Church, later introduced, to explain the embarrassing fact that the contemporaries of Jesus did not immediately acclaim him as the Messiah.

21 About Lightfoot's works, see Locke's notes in Locke, *Manuscripts*, f. 1, foll. 302-3; f. 2, fol. 328; f. 3, foll. 302-3; and regarding Arnauld's works, see *Manuscripts*, f. 28, fol. 42.

he had established relationships of trust and friendship with Nicolas Thoynard, who was then compiling his *Harmonia Evangelica*, a work of New Testament interpretation which included a meticulous reconstruction of the events narrated in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles[22]. Locke attached great importance to this chronology, since Thoynard's method seemed to provide him with the tools to read and interpret Scripture without resorting to external authorities or allegorical interpretations: "in many passages, without the need for further explanation, it stands out at first sight clearly order and meaning of evangelical history"[23]. And a few months later, faced with Thoynard's hesitation to publish the results of his work, Locke added that a work so well done and so precious would not be lost without serious damage to religion[24].

The precise chronological reconstruction of the events is, in fact, the first step of the interpretation proposed by *Reasonableness*, and serves to extract from the facts themselves the centrality of that single and decisive article of faith, completely independent of the crowd of articles that over the centuries the various religious confessions had used to differentiate themselves from others. Locke's aim was to make Christianity a factor of unity in the construction of the social edifice, which is the exact opposite of what he had experienced in his formative years, the troubled period of the civil war that had torn apart England, the foundational trauma of Locke's moral character.

In any case, already from this first hermeneutic passage, an articulated hypothesis emerges on how Jesus chose to reveal the secret about his role and mission: (1) Jesus let the evidence of the facts speak from the beginning, performing miracles and healings, which testified to the divine character of his person, but he did it away from the most public places, far from Jerusalem, where, until the last week of life, he actually went only as a private citizen; (2) he used turns of phrase and circumlocutions, which implied the messianic character of his figure, but were such that they could not be immediately understood, in fact, they could only be understood *a posteriori*, through a sort of contrastive hermeneutics; (3) he explicitly declared his messianic role only at the end, after the Resurrection.

[22] On the epistolary and personal relationship between Locke and Thoynard, cf. G. Di Biase, *John Locke e Nicolas Thoynard. Un'amicizia ciceroniana*, Edizioni ETS, Pisa 2018.

[23] "Unde plurimis in locis sine explicationibus aliunde petitis ex ipso solum intuitu, historia Evangelica suus constat et nitor et ordo et sensus", Locke, *Manuscripts*, c. 27, f. 53.

[24] "tam egregium et proficium opus summo cum religionis damno ne intercidat", Locke, *Correspondence*, 26 September / 6 October 1685, cit., vol. 3, p. 30.

3. *"Take all England and remove it, upon thy Shoulders, into the West-Indies"*

Locke's answer to the problem of *messianic secrecy* must be understood in the context in which he conceived it, namely the late seventeenth-century controversy over original sin and justification by faith, which is also the first of the contexts in which one needs to consider the works of Locke – not only the *Reasonableness of Christianity* but indeed Locke's entire intellectual itinerary.

The Calvinist doctrine of original sin and the (related) doctrine of justification had had a significant influence on the post-Edwardian Anglican church. It had conditioned a document of great historical importance, those XXXIX articles which had been promulgated at Canterbury in 1571, and which had remained the founding text of the Anglican church. This is how original sin is defined:

> Original sin is a vice and a corruption of nature that belongs to every man, transmitted by Adam naturally: because of this vice, which creates an enormous distance from original justice, everyone tends naturally towards evil, for which from birth he deserves the wrath and condemnation of God"[25].

Strictly speaking, this hereditary state of sin could not fail to imply the total corruption and ineffectiveness of human reason and will, and from it logically derived a characteristic conception of justification: "It is only by merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not through our work and merit, that we can be considered righteous before God"[26].

This position devalued the role of reason and personal initiative in justification, advancing as the typical model of faith the sudden and unpredictable conversion of Paul on the road to Damascus[27]. It gave rise to

[25] "Peccatum originis ... est vitium et depravatio naturae, cuiuslibet hominis, ex Adamo naturaliter propagati: qua fit, ut ab originali iusticia quam longissime distet, ad malum sua natura propendeat ...unde in unoquoquenascentium, iram Dei et damnationem meretur", in *Synodalia. A collection of Articles of Religion, Canons and Proceedings of Convocations*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1842, art. IX, p. 78.

[26] "Tantum propter meritum Domini, ac Seruatoris nostri Jesu Christi, per fidem, non propter opera et merita nostra, iusti coram Deo reputamur", ibid., art. XI, p. 79.

[27] See on this point W.M. Spellman, *John Locke and the Problem of Depravity*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1988, p. 32: "The story of Paul's sudden seizure on the road to Damascus, described in Acts 22:6-11, was the ideal model taken for the norm. All ideas of preparation for grace were rejected out of hand; God would call the sinner for reasons of his own and the question of whether or not those who were so chosen had conformed to the moral standards of their own puny intellects was of no consequence. Man's reason counted for nothing in the process, its dilapidated and depraved nature having disqualified it from service".

various interpretations, in the Puritan culture, among which the most rigid was that of the so-called "antinomians". Antinomians argued that justification depended only on divine grace, which is irresistible for those who receive it, so much so that he or she is undoubtedly among the saved, regardless of his actions, and despite the contribution he or she individually makes to the work of salvation. This contribution can only be irrelevant, given the infinite disproportion between divine grace and human nature. No role is attributed to good works or virtue, not even as a preparation for faith.

During the civil war, the religious panorama was highly diversified but in general the influence of the antinomians was great. Their theses were thus summarized in an official document from 1644:

> (1) That God doth never inflict punishment upon the Elect for his sins. (2) That God is never angry with his children. (3) That God sees no sin in those that are his. (4) That only such as are elected, are at all times beloved of God, in what condition soever they be, be they never so great sinners, yea in the very act of sinne it selfe. (5) That sanctification of life, in duties of Piety, is nothing at all esteemed of God. (6) That the godly finds no difficulties in the way to Heaven, but live in much pleasure and delight in this world. (7) That those who belong to God, are able in this world presently to distinguish between God's people and the wicked[28].

Many opponents of the antinomian views described them – polemically – as an invitation to immorality, which risked discrediting the entire Puritan movement. Among them there was also Henry Hammond, a highly respected author, whom Locke had studied very attentively. Hammond expresses himself as following on the antinomian doctrine of predestination:

> "the rigid doctrine (is) [...] apt to cool all those mens love of God, who have not the confidence to believe themselves of the number of the few chosen vessels, and to beget security and presumption in others, who have conquered those difficulties, and resolved they are of that number, and to obstruct industry and vigorous endeavours, and fear of falling, and so to have malignant influences on the practice"[29].

[28] *A Declaration against the Antinomians and their doctrine of Liberty*, in G. Huehns, *Antinomianism in English History*, The Cresset Press, London 1951, exergue. Of course, this reconstruction is a processual document, intended to give a synthetic (and non-sympathetic) review of the antinomian thesis. The interpretation is not entirely fair, but it is very close to how antinomianism was often perceived in the seventeenth-century context.

[29] H. Hammond, *Χάρις και Εἰρήνη, or A Pacifick Discourse of Gods Grace and Decrees*, London 1660, pp. 17-18.

Attempts at mediation began to appear, such as the those of Thomas Hooker, who argued that God cannot save us without our participation and diligence – even if it remains true that not even we can save ourselves without the grace of God, which presents itself as a necessary condition of salvation, but no longer sufficient. God entrusts us with grace, the means of salvation, which it is then up to us to use. For Hooker it was clear beyond any doubt that only God can save us, but it was equally clear that "he will not do it without us, because we are reasonable men and women, and God affords us the means"[30]. Both Hammond and Hooker were inspired by arminian positions – as did Locke and Limborch. All these authors had in common the idea that the sovereignty of God and the free will of man were compatible, and that original sin had not irremediably corrupted the human will.

The debate on antinomianism had been particularly acute during the years of the civil war and the Commonwealth, when moderate Calvinists like Baxter became concerned about the more extreme sectarians, particularly the Baptists. These years had been a formative phase for the young Locke, a student during the period of the revolution, who had looked with horror at the spread of ideas that seemed to him subversive of the moral and political order of his country[31]. However, the phase of the controversy that concerned Locke more closely began many years later, in a wholly changed political situation, namely in 1690, when *Christ Alone Exalted* was published, a posthumous collection of the works of the antinomian Tobias Crisp.

Crisp's conception of the religious life and grace stemmed from the consideration – shared by much of English theology – that it was impossible to obey the Mosaic law in everything. Crisp emphasized this impossibility more than other theologians: for example, he interpreted the possibility of saving oneself by following the Law almost as a mockery. When the Law says *do this and you will live*, Crisp said, this is not a great help:

> "poor comfort is it, because it first requires such doings that are impossible to be attained; just as if a Man should be condemned to die at a Bar, with this promise; take all England and remove it, upon thy Shoulders, into the West-Indies, and then thou shall be saved from this Death. The Judge had as good say nothing, for the thing is impossible to be done"[32].

30 T. Hooker, *The Poor Doubting Christian Drawn Unto Christ*, in *Writings in England and Holland*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Massachusetts) 1976, p. 176.

31 See Raffaele Russo, *John Locke e gli antichi maestri*, Guida, Naples 2003.

32 T. Crisp, *Christ alone Exalted: being the Compleat Works of Tobias Crisp, D.D. containing XLII Sermons, On several Select Texts of Scriptures*, London 1690, vol. I, sermon 8, p. 119.

This position in itself was not at odds with the Calvinist or Anglican mainstream. The controversial point, however, comes immediately after. Crisp was not willing to recognize any difference in principle between Mosaic law and any system of ethical norms that was considered necessary to obtain justification, or at least as a preparation of the heart to receive grace. For him, anyone who accepts a cause-effect relationship between transgression and punishment was mistaken: "you that will still maintain and establish the Curse as a necessary attendant upon transgression and disobedience, and take this to be your condition and your portion, you are the Men that are under the Law, that are under the curse of it"[33]. Nor can it be said, according to Crisp, that works prepare the believer to receive grace. On this position, indeed, he lets the full weight of his sarcasm fall when, in the sermon for the death of the vicar of Wroughton, he said: "Is not this to put a Cart before the Horse, or rather to send the Cart a going, and the Horse must come after? To have man sanctified before they can be justified. If Men must be thus qualified, before they believe to Justification, How can Christ be said, To Justifie the Ungodly? By this Rule he rather justifies the Godly"[34]. Crisp adopted the position he attributed to the primitive Christians, who, to the pagans who accused them of believing in an immoral doctrine, replied that God did not tell them that he would love them if they were holy, but that if he loved them, they would be holy[35].

In any case, the uselessness of works for salvation according to the Calvinist or antinomian teaching must be viewed in relative terms. It is not as if Calvin (or Crisp) encouraged a morally dissolute life. What he argued was that a moral conduct as blameless as possible is a consequence of strong faith, a faith which in turn derives from divine grace. He believed no one could embrace the grace of the gospel without passing from the errors of his past life to a straight path, and without applying all his efforts to the practice of repentance[36]. Calvin applied these principles also in his practice. The tensions that arose in the reformed church of Geneva after 1541, when Calvin tried to induce the Genevans to "live according to the word of God", introducing severe discipline and excluding notorious sinners from communion are well known. And just as strict, of course, was the personal conduct of the English Puritans. However, Locke's point is that in Calvinism, as in Lutheranism, we do not find a truly religious foundation of morality: if good works are not seen as also

33 Ibid., p. 121.
34 Ibid., vol. IV, sermon 10, pp. 98-99.
35 G. Huehns, *Antinomianism in English History*, cit., p. 14.
36 Calvin, *Institutes*, III.3.1.

instrumental to one's own salvation, this cannot help resulting in a weakening of the moral conduct of all Christians.

For this very reason, Crisp's book, at the time of its re-publication in the 1690s, was immediately attacked by a moderate Presbyterian of Baxterian inspiration, Daniel Williams[37]. Moderate Presbyterians insisted on the conditional character of grace and describe justifying faith in ways that included repentance and the promise of new life. In this same spirit, Williams argued that the sanctification of life and sincere obedience to the teachings of Christ are necessary for the salvation of every believer, so much so that without them there can be no salvation – even if they are not sufficient, nor possible, without grace.

For Locke, the publication of Crisp's works represented the reappearance of the old ghosts that had troubled his youth. And the position Locke expressed in *Reasonableness* had much in common with that of moderate Presbyterianism[38], but it was even more explicit. Locke spoke of Jesus as the ruler of a new kingdom, and used a political vocabulary in pointing out that he proposed laws to those who wanted to be his subjects, and that he made those laws an essential part of the pact of grace. In short, Jesus asked obedience to his commands in addition to faith in his being the Messiah, in order to be admitted into the kingdom of God.

Chapter 12 of *Reasonableness* expresses this point with particular force: Jesus is *King*, and he expects his commands to be observed by his *subjects*, who owe him *obedience*, in the absence of which they will face *punishment*. This is what the *Transgressors* can expect for having challenged the *Authority* of their sovereign, or the Authority of those who have the *Power to chastise the disobedient*. Therefore: " 'Tis not enough to believe him to be the *Messiah*, unless we also obey his Laws, and take him to be our King, to Reign over us"[39].

The language used here is that of sovereignty, but it is crucial, to understand Locke's position, to appreciate the *metaphorical* character of this terminology. Locke's Jesus certainly did not come to found an earthly kingdom alongside others, but to establish a new covenant between God and men, a covenant that passed through a radical re-orientation of the lives and conduct of human beings.

37 Williams' sermons were published in 1694, under the title *Man made Righteous by Christ's Obedience*.

38 See D.D. Wallace, Jr., "Socinianism, Justification by Faith, and the sources of John Locke's The Reasonableness Of Christianity", in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 45, 1984, on this relationship between Locke and Baxter, also if in this article the derivation of Locke's theses from those of Baxter seems to me too exclusive.

39 Locke, *Reasonableness*, cit., p. 128.

That is why it becomes essential, for Locke, to deny the antinomian identification of any code of ethics with the ancient Mosaic Law of works. Locke, actually, agrees with Crisp in deeming the Mosaic law impracticable for the purposes of salvation, and he too maintained that the multiple prescriptions of the Law crush any good practice in an unsustainable way. Indeed, in chapter 2 of *Reasonableness* (the one on the advantages that Jesus procured for men with his coming), the requests of the Mosaic law are presented as even more hyperbolic than Crisp thought, such that they were never have been absolved by any human being. Locke says: "For Righteousness, or an exact obedience to the Law, seems by the Scripture to have a claim of Right to Eternal Life ... *To him that worketh*; *i.e.* does the works of the Law, *is the reward not reckoned of grace, but OF DEBT*"[40]; however, the problem is that no one can succeed. Locke quotes in this regard St. James, when he says: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all"[41]. In other words, Locke concludes, quoting the letter to the Romans: "*by the deeds of the Law, no one could be justified*, ... it follows, that no one could then have Eternal Life and Bliss"[42].

In this regard, one cannot fail to note that the characterization of the Mosaic law as a hyperbolic law of works, a law that punished even the slightest transgression with damnation, is an extremely questionable theoretical interpretation on Locke's part (a reflex of a similar prejudice, often present in the Christian theology of the seventeenth century). Both in textual terms and from the perspective of the history of religious practices, Locke's mistake lay in radically separating the ceremonial part of the Mosaic law from the moral part, which according to Locke corresponded to the law of nature. This interpretation excluded from the set of rules of behaviour that made up the Mosaic ethics any possibility of forgiveness or reparation for transgressions: respecting those rules meant only doing one's duty, and following them did not in any way allow for reparation of previous wrongs. In reality – of course – things in Jewish religious practice were quite different. The ancient Israelites, before offering sacrifices to God on the altar of the Temple for the forgiveness of their sins, had to show sincerity, reverence and purity of heart. To these dispositions of mind, it was necessary to add the confession of sins (Leviticus 5:5) and the restitution of (possible) illicit gains (Leviticus, 5:5 and 6:4), as part

40 Locke, *Reasonableness*, cit., p. 12.
41 James, 2:10.
42 Locke, *Reasonableness*, cit., p. 13.

of the repentance process. Moreover, almost all the prophets denounced any mechanical and formal application of the Law. Jeremiah, for example, disputed with hot words the uselessness of a purely ceremonial devotion: "Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench *it*, because of the evil of your doings"[43].

There is an evident similarity between these practices and the ideas of faith and repentance, as conceived in evangelical morality. Locke's failure to see this may be explained however with his interest in setting up a straw man, a negative hermeneutic pole – that of the Mosaic law of works – that would take the brunt of the negative observations on the law of works that are scattered in Paul's letters, and which have so much importance in the Calvinist theological construction, protecting his own position from them. To this negative pole, Locke opposes the positive pole of the pact of grace, which includes a sincere effort on the part of the believer to operate according to the teaching of evangelical morality. In this perspective, the essential advantage of Christ's coming for humanity is precisely having replaced the "impracticable" Mosaic law of works with the covenant of grace, which does not require perfect observance, but rewards sincere repentance and sincere effort to improve the orientation of one's moral life.

4. *Jewish messianism in Locke's hermeneutics*

In the context outlined in the previous paragraph, Locke's hermeneutical strategy becomes clearer. His intent is that of founding the importance of the moral life for salvation directly on the sacred text, interpreting the sacred writings in their own terms as much as possible, without superimposing successive confessions of faith and extraneous theological and philosophical elements. We have seen that, in this perspective, it was essential for Locke to reduce the competing articles of faith to a minimum and assert instead the essential role of obedience to evangelical morality. Morality was not to be conceived as an inevitable consequence of grace, but as a free and conscious choice, the choice to become subjects in the Kingdom of Christ. This type of analysis allows Locke to reach his central objective, recurrent in this last phase of his intellectual itinerary: to save the works from a fideism which,

[43] Jeremiah, 4:4.

questioning the very usefulness of moral life, ended up compromising all the virtues capable of transforming a good Christian into a good citizen[44].

It becomes even clearer, then, in this context, that the reserve of Jesus regarding his messianic role is particularly problematic for a messianic interpretation of his figure such as Locke proposed. In Locke's messianism, the fundamental intent of the earthly parable of Jesus of Nazareth and his apostles had been precisely to persuade humanity of this simple proposition: "Jesus is the Messiah", and of the implicit need to obey his teachings.

The issue was complicated by the fact that even the simple proposition *Jesus is the Messiah* is problematic. What, exactly, does *Messiah* mean? Edwards, the first and ferocious critic of *Reasonableness*, had already pointed this problem, in his book concerning the causes of atheism: *Messiah* is after all a Hebrew term, and if Locke pointed to it as the only essential article for the great illiterate mass of the faithful of his time and country, how could he expect them to understand it[45]? Of course, when Edwards asks this question, he is choosing to ignore the breadth of Locke's explanations on this subject in *Reasonableness*[46], but he is not wrong in recalling the importance of the Jewish context in the interpretation of this term, and of the use that Locke makes of it. Indeed, one of the most modern and original features of Locke's hermeneutical approach is precisely the placement of the figure and preaching of Jesus in the Jewish-Roman context in which it occurred, with a contextual and historical interpretation of his character and his words.

The significant context in which Locke places the historical story of Jesus is that of Jewish messianism, at the time of the Roman protectorate in Judea: "they were waiting for the Messiah, and for the liberation, which he was to bring, in a kingdom that he was to build, based on their ancient prophecies

[44] Locke completed this rescuing of the works, begun with the *Reasonableness of Christianity*, with his great hermeneutic book of the last years of his life: *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul*. With this book, Locke moved his hermeneutical critique to the favourite theological arsenal of predestinationists. For a recent review of the critical debate on this book, see Maria Cristina Pitassi, "Locke's Pauline Hermeneutics: A Critical Review", in Simonutti (ed.), *Locke and Biblical Hermeneutics*, cit., pp. 243-56.

[45] "Why therefore doth this Author, who thinks it absurd *to talk Arabick* to the Vulgar, talk *Hebrew* to them, unless he be of opinion (which no body else is of) that they understand this Language better than that?", J. Edwards, *Some Thoughts Concerning the Several Occasions and Causes of Atheism*, *Socinianism Unmask'd*, Garland Publishing, Inc., New York & London 1984, p. 120. Edwards reiterated this same point in *Socinianism Unmask'd* (ibid., p. 32).

[46] Locke in his *First Vindication* observe that "this ... is so fully explained in the New Testament, and in those places I have quoted out of it, that no body, who can understand any ordinary Sentence in the Scripture, can be at a loss about it" (Locke, *Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity*, cit., p. 24).

about him"[47]. The very language of hope, used by Jesus, is entirely taken from that of the Jewish messianic hope[48].

That the imminent expectation of the advent of a messianic age was ubiquitous in the Jewish culture of the time of Herod, is true. This expectation is, also in the light of the most recent historiography, the significant context in which to place the preaching of Jesus, who, moreover, said he did not come to abrogate the Mosaic Law, but to complete it, and therefore did not reject the culture in which he had grown up.

However, it often is the case, in the history of ideas, that the most evident elements of continuity combine with the most significant differences. In the Jewish tradition as we know it, the figure of the Messiah is certainly recurrent. Nevertheless, the form it takes with the evangelical Christ is quite different. For one thing, in the Jewish tradition, this figure was not necessarily a single occurrence. In many Talmudic writings, there is explicit mention of *two* Messiahs, who must arrive one after the other[49]. In other traditional writings, the messianic function is split in two: a messiah-priest and a messiah-King, a liberator, descendant of David. The latter is a significant figure, decisive for the Jewish hope of liberation, but subordinate to the figure of the Messiah-priest. Moreover, even the liberating Messiah is not always described in the same way. In some texts, he is a political leader, who would free the Jews from the Roman rule (and from corrupt clergy), in others an eschatological figure, who would change the history of the world, establishing a reign that would last a thousand years.

During the Roman protectorate, Jewish worship was centralized in the Jerusalem temple, and everywhere, in Judea and Galilee, people gathered to read the Torah and other Scriptures. The Jews of that time nourished, through those readings that marked their lives, a continuous current of hope, which however did not constitute a unified system of beliefs, since the traditional texts (which were read and commented on, repeated and sent to memory) belonged to

[47] "they were in expectation of the *Messiah*, and of deliverance by him in a Kingdom, he was to set up, according to their Ancient Prophesies of him", Locke, *Reasonableness*, p. 37.

[48] See, for example, the paradigmatic position of a classic interpreter of the Christian perspective on Jewish hope, Pierre Grelot, who described Jesus as shaped in all his personality by the environment in which he was born, which he began to accept as it was, to transform it from the inside, developing latent potentialities to the extreme (P. Grelot, *La speranza ebraica al tempo di Gesù*, Borla, Città di Castello 1981, p. 12).

[49] For example, the Talmud (Sukka 52a) speaks of the existence of two distinct messianic figures: Mashiach ben Yosef (son of Joseph) and Mashiach ben David (son of David). Based on an interpretation of Psalm 21, that Talmud passage describes the killing of the first Messiah, ben Yosef, and the moment when the second Messiah, ben David, seeing this, asked God to give him the gift of life.

different epochs. They were read, as is the case for any religious text, in the light of the problems of the present day, and they were thus subjected to a continuous process of actualization that detached them from their original context.

How much awareness could Locke have of all this? Locke obviously did not know the Qumran manuscripts, but he did have direct access to all that elements of the Jewish tradition that had merged into the Old Testament. Not only that: even the Talmudic and sapiential tradition was by no means unknown to him. We have already said that Locke was an attentive reader of John Lightfoot, the great English Judaist, author of the *Horae Hebraicae*, a reference for an entire generation of scholars. And Lightfoot, before Locke, had insisted on the importance of knowledge of the Hebrew historical and linguistic context for an adequate understanding of the New Testament:

> "when all the books of the New Testament were written by Jews, and among Jews, and unto them; and when all the discourses made there, were made in like manner by Jews, and to Jews, and among them; I was always fully persuaded, as of a thing past all doubting, that that Testament could not but every where tastes of, and retain, the Jews' style, idiom, form, and rule of speaking"[50].

Lightfoot was by no means an isolated figure in the English landscape of the time. Indeed, there was an ancient tradition of studies of Hebrew language and of Hebrew culture in England dating back to the times of the venerable Bede and Alcuin. A Hebrew language school had already been established in Oxford in the time of King William II. A great English intellectual, famous for his Jewish and Talmudic culture, was Roger Bacon. Further, many other scholars thought it was necessary to draw on the study of sacred texts in their original language.

Nevertheless, the interest in the Hebrew language and culture had often been met with fierce resistance. There had been recurrent outbursts of antisemitism accompanied by the expulsions of Jews from England on several occasions. In those periods, the interests of scholars such as Roger Bacon were looked upon with suspicion and hostility. Indeed, some considered the knowledge of Jewish culture as a means of interacting with the Devil[51].

[50] J. Lightfoot, *Horae Hebraicae Et Talmudicae; Or, Hebrew And Talmudical Exercitations Upon The Gospel Of St. Matthew*, in *The Whole Works of the Rev. John Lightfoot*, D. D., Master of Catharine Hall, Cambridge, edited by the Rev. John Rogers Pitman, A. M., London 1823, vol. XI, p. 3.

[51] See, on this context, D.M. Walton, *John Lightfoot, the English Hebraist*, Ackerman & Glaser, Leipzig 1878.

The study of the influence of Jewish religious thought on European culture has found in recent times an important interpreter in the works of Eric Nelson, who has demonstrated that not only a special focus on the Hebrew Bible had existed throughout the Middle Ages, but above all that the Reform opened the way for a real revival of Jewish studies (after the relative eclipse of predominantly classical humanism). Those studies included the reading of the Hebrew Bible in its original language, without the mediation and interpretations imposed by the authoritative comments of the Catholic Church[52]. Hence the great influence that the economic, political, social and cultural ideas contained in the Old Testament, in the Talmud and subsequent rabbinic literature had on the ideas and sensibilities of many European theologians, philosophers and politicians at the beginning of the modern age, also through the mediation of a widely read author like Maimonides.

It is no coincidence, therefore, that at the time of the reign of Henry VIII, the study of Hebrew was once again widespread in English universities, together with that of the classical languages. Against those who contested the "anti-Christian" character of this academic practice the king himself intervened, officially stating that the study of Greek, Hebrew and the associated literatures should not only be permitted, but should become an indispensable requirement of university education. It was at that time that the University of Oxford's chair of Hebrew was born. Nor was the study of Hebrew interrupted in the era of the Stuart dynasty: indeed Charles I and Bishop Laud promoted the study of the Hebrew language and culture. Some of the most important English works on Hebrew culture date back to the period of the Civil War, when Lightfoot wrote the works afterwards carefully studied by Locke. Furthermore, during Locke's formative period in Oxford, many of the most illustrious scholars of the Hebrew culture resided in the city, including the famous Edward Popocke, an expert in Jewish prophecy.

The sources which Locke could draw on for his knowledge of Jewish literature and culture, and Jewish messianism, in particular, were therefore many and diverse. The most direct information we have of his studies on the subject relates in any case to the works of Lightfoot, which we know were not only present in Locke's private library, but also the object of study and meticulous notes. From this set of readings and stimuli, Locke drew the conviction that

[52] E. Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic. Jewish Sources and the Transformation of European Political Thought*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Massachusetts) 2010, p. 2, pp. 10-11 and *passim*. See also Y. Leiter, *John Locke's Political Philosophy and the Hebrew Bible*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2018.

it was impossible to understand the historical physiognomy of Jesus – born in Bethlehem, lived in Nazareth, and died in Jerusalem – without taking into account the Jewish context in which he lived and the system of expectations and hopes that defined his figure. In Locke's perspective, the historical Jesus was shaped by the environment in which he was born and raised. Of course, according to Locke, Jesus started from that historical context as it was, and then transformed it from the inside, developing latent potentials in it, in a radical and revolutionary way. In fact, Locke too, like all Christian culture, interprets the ancient prophecies *ex-post*, as a prophetic announcement of the decisive event in the history of salvation, the coming and works of Christ. However, the peculiarity of Locke's interpretation lies in placing himself also *ex-ante*, within the system of expectations of Jewish messianism, from the point of view of one who had come to fulfil it.

Of course, it was not easy, from Locke's historical and hermeneutical perspective, to grasp precisely what Jewish messianism consisted in (indeed, it is not easy also for contemporary historiography, for which Jewish messianism remains an open question). The study of the messianic expectations of the Jews of the generation immediately preceding the life of Jesus is a minefield: a terrain crossed by internal tensions and contradictions, divisions between political and religious parties, different priestly and tribal affiliations, different basic religious options.

In short, the nature of Jewish messianism varied with the religious parties and factions that made up the conflicting mosaic of Jewish culture of that time. However, a few points can be established: there was at least (1) a *sacerdotal* interpretation of the coming messianic figure (the Messiah would have purified the cult of Israel, corrupted by unfaithful priests); (2) a *political* interpretation of the Messiah, that of the arrival of a charismatic leader and liberator, who would free the Jewish people from the oppression in which they lived; and (3) an *apocalyptic* interpretation, the arrival of a Messiah who would mark the end of time and inaugurate a celestial kingdom, in which even the dead would be resurrected, joining the righteous of the last generation, and would last forever[53].

[53] In Lightfoot, Locke could learn of the two Messiahs of the Talmudic tradition and of the different expectations of the Jews concerning the Messiah: "For, since they despised the true Messiah, who came in the time fore-allotted by the prophets, and crucified him; they still expect I know not what chimerical one, concerning whom they have no certain opinion: whether he shall be one, or two; whether he shall arise from among the living or from the dead; whether he shall come in the clouds of heaven, or sitting upon an ass, &c: they expect a 'Son of David;' but they know not whom, they know not when" (Lightfoot, *Horae Hebraicae Et Talmudicae; Or, Hebrew And Talmudical Exercitations*

Of the above, Locke chooses to attribute to the Hebrews of the time of Jesus only the expectation of a *political* Messiah: the Messiah expected by the Jews was a powerful royal messiah, a descendant of David, a great prophet (capable of extraordinary miracles) and a political leader, who was supposed to come and put an end to the suffering and oppression of the Jewish people and to build a new great earthly kingdom, where those belonging to the then living Jewish generation would be the first to enter. This political expectation on part of the Jews, according to Locke, was based on an erroneous interpretation of the ancient prophecies. It fell upon Jesus to deal with this gigantic misunderstanding, taking it apart one piece at a time, gradually introducing the idea of the New Kingdom and the New Covenant, whose political language was – as we saw in the previous paragraph – only metaphorical. In doing so, Jesus had to undo a deep-seated prejudice. So deeply rooted was this prejudice, that it was shared by the apostles themselves, who in this respect participated in the mentality and ideas of their time[54].

Now, the expectation of this royal, davidic Messiah was undoubtedly widespread in the years of Roman domination in Judea, which among other things explains the violent reaction that Matthew attributes to King Herod in the face of the Magi's announcement. While the evidence from which modern historiography draws is much broader than that available to Locke, it does not lead to contradict Locke's fundamental point: the extent of the expectations for a political liberator by significant sections of the Jewish population of that time, the decades immediately preceding the life of Jesus. But, as already mentioned, this expectation was not the only one, not even the prevalent one. The exclusively political, royal, interpretation of the figure of the Messiah in Jewish culture, offered by Locke, over-simplifies a complex cultural stratification.

Be as it may, this is Locke's hermeneutic thesis: Jesus did speak in the terms of the Jewish messianism, but he radically reinterpreted them, in a way that he could only gradually reveal, as it was susceptible to disconcert and scandalize his contemporaries, including the apostles themselves. In particular, Jesus had to do away – little by little – with any political interpretation of the role of

Upon The Gospel Of St. Matthew, cit., vol. XI, p. 12). The tone of Lightfoot was not sympathetic with the ancient beliefs of the Hebraic people, and it could not be different, in the puritan context in which he wrote. However, the content of those beliefs was there, for everyone to study and to consider.

[54] In fact, Locke dedicated a manuscript to these expectations of the apostles, a paraphrases of Acts 1:3, in which the apostles ask Jesus, after his resurrection, if the time had finally come when he would restore the kingdom of Israel (Locke, *Manuscripts*, fo. 98^{r} e 98^{v}, and Locke, *Reasonableness*, p. 195).

the Messiah, a circumstance which imposed a substantial secrecy on him until the end, so that he could not be accused of subversion, an accusation that it would have prevented the fulfilment of the prophecies, according to which the Messiah was to be condemned as innocent.

The strategy of the gradual unveiling, at the centre of Locke's interpretation of the figure and actions of Jesus, was also directed at the meticulous fulfilment of the prophecies – a decisive leitmotif in the *Reasonableness of Christianity* - according to which a crucial part of the public life of Jesus can be explained precisely by the need to give posterity a tool to understand, beyond any reasonable doubt, the messianic character of his figure, based precisely on the comparison between his life and the ancient prophecies[55].

Locke meticulously records, and consistently interprets, the various moments of bewilderment created by the mysterious words of Jesus. Even when those words, repeated by an age-old habit, have become commonplace, Locke tries to underline their enigmatic character for those who were listening to them for the first time. *How long dost thou make us to doubt?* This was the question, in the last days, which some unspecified "Jews" posed to Jesus, turning to him under the portico of Solomon, near the Temple. *If You are the Christ, tell us plainly*. The doubt and bewilderment of these ancient interlocutors of Jesus also resonate in the pages of Locke. The bewilderment of contemporaries – apostles, Pharisees, Romans – is indeed one of the mightiest impressions that we can draw from this short essay of religious hermeneutics of 1695.

Locke, therefore, states that Jesus could never have fulfilled the prophecies if he had immediately publicly preached that he was the Messiah, that is, for many of his contemporaries, the king who was about to establish the kingdom announced by the prophets. Neither the Jews nor the Romans would have allowed him to carry out his ministry. For this reason, says Locke, the words of Jesus were mysterious and enigmatic almost to the end: "he so involved his sense, that it was not easie to understand him"[56].

[55] A relevant passage from the *Acts of the Apostles* is commented in Locke's *Reasonableness*, the interrogation of the apostle Paul by King Agrippa, in which Paul explicitly connects the ancient Hebrew prophecies with the life and with the death on the cross of Jesus, providing an explicit interpretative key of the Old Testament, read from a Christian perspective: "I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles", Acts 26:22-23. Locke's text reproduces this passage verbatim, and immediately afterwards he adds: "Which was no more than to prove that Jesus was the *Messiah*". See in Locke, *Reasonableness*, cit., p. 33.

[56] Ibid., p. 70.

One of the most enigmatic passages in the Gospels, and one of the most problematic for Locke's messianic interpretation, is the story that describes the last days before the Passion. According to the sacred text, in fact, not even then did Jesus publicly admit that he was the Messiah, not before the Roman rulers and the Jewish priests. At that point, the reason could not be merely prudential: as Locke says on the subject, *he knew his hour was come, and was prepared to his death*[57]. From the text, it is clear that Jesus has, at this point, abandoned the prudence of the first part of his ministry, so much so that he performed miracles in the Temple in front of the priests. Even then, however, he did not clearly state, before the authorities, that he was indeed the Messiah. In fact, he also hid the fact that he was born in Bethlehem, as for the Jews of that time, being born in Bethlehem would have been a clear sign, in the case of a prophet, that he was the Messiah. In the climate of messianic expectation that pervaded the country, everyone knew Micah's prophecy by heart:

> But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting[58].

Locke attaches great importance to the fact that Jesus did not state his birthplace, not before the priests (who believed him a native of Galilee), nor before Pilate, who explicitly asked him where he was born without receiving an answer[59]. Locke's point is that if Jesus had declared he was born in Bethlehem, not only the priests but even Pilate would have been suspicious about his plans, and the governor would have believed him guilty of subversive projects against the empire. By doing so, however, Jesus caused Pilate himself to declare him innocent, thus fulfilling the last prophecy: the Messiah was to be led to the gallows as innocent[60]. On the other hand, if Jesus had openly declared himself to be the Messiah, Pilate would have had no choice but to pursue him for high treason according to Roman law. Jesus would not have been martyred while innocent, and would have not fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy about the suffering and innocent servant, the one who smarts for the sins of

[57] Ibid., p. 76.
[58] Micha, 5:2.
[59] "And hence we see, that when *Pilate* asked him, *John* XIX. 9, Whence art you? Jesus gave no answer" (Locke, *Reasonableness*, cit., p. 77).
[60] Ibid., pp. 77-80.

others. Instead, it was possible for Pilate to declare him innocent of the charge of political subversion[61].

5. *"How long dost thou make us to doubt?"*

Let us briefly summarize, by way of conclusion, the interpretation we have proposed here of how Locke deals with the theme of messianic secrecy, in the context of his interpretation of Christianity, and of the centrality that the foundation of ethical life has in his thought.

Locke's interpretation of Messianic secrecy is a hermeneutic net built by Locke to defend the politico-religious core of his interpretation of Christianity: Christianity as an easy to understand religion, within anyone's reach, based on a single article (the messiahship of Jesus), but with vast moral implications. In order to credibly establish his message, Jesus had to fulfil all the ancient prophecies concerning the Messiah while avoiding presenting himself as such, especially to the authorities. Everything he did and said was intended, from the beginning, to make people understand, although only in retrospect, this fundamental truth.

This interpretation becomes evident only when one examines carefully the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth in the context of the widespread Jewish messianism of his time, which defined the conditions in which he lived and worked. The careful analysis of Christian scriptures, *seen in the light of Jewish messianism*, was the tool that Locke used to complete his overall and ambitious project: to propose an interpretation of Christian religion that would help overcome the divisions between competing factions, which had long bloodied England and Europe. A religion that would not undermine the importance of leading a moral life but would instead provide its basis. A conception of religion that would ensure that anyone who adopted it would be not only a good Christian, but also a good subject, and a good citizen.

It is interesting – in this perspective – that Locke insisted so much that his friends kept the bond of secrecy about who was the author of *Reasonableness of Christianity*: there are, as we have seen, various reasons for this, but Locke here clearly manifested an attitude of discretion and secrecy that had much in common with that of his Messiah.

[61] Higgins-Biddle observes in this regard that Locke is here consistent with his *Epistola de tolerantia*, according to which magistrates cannot exercise tolerance towards people and churches that threaten public order. See Higgins-Biddle, in Locke, *Reasonableness*, cit., no. 3, pp. 44-45,

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Tracce di una 'filosofia dell'essere' nella concezione lockiana dell'astrazione. Spunti critici

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Abstract: Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding* introduces a coherent theory of knowledge and a clear conception of philosophy, its method and purposes, yet it is far from being intended as a systematic work and, consequently, does not adopt an extreme coherentism. On several occasions and with regard to key aspects, Locke puts the readers in front of deliberately open-ended reflections and uncertainties which, rather than being symptomatic of weakness, reveal that he agreed with Bacon that the search for the truth should be a collective (shared and supportive) and *in fieri* (unexhausted and perfectible) activity. This is highlighted by his conception of abstraction: in the *Essay*, two different kinds of abstraction coexist, which are not always compatible, although they are sometimes treated as if they were equivalent. In addition to the classical conception of abstraction involved in the formation of general ideas, Locke puts forward another conception which introduces a non-inductive and, therefore, non-empiricist process focusing on the existence of the content. This second kind of abstraction, which has been, in my opinion, scarcely explored in the history of philosophy, helps reflect on Locke's concept of existence (or, maybe, on 'the concepts' of existence, given some ambiguities in his thought) and its central role in the *Essay*, adding a further element to what could be called a Lockean experimental ontology.

Keywords: Abstraction, General Ideas, *Principium individuationis*, Idea of Substance, Ontology

1. *Introduzione: Locke, "il [filosofo] meno sistematico"*

Giuseppe Zamboni, gnoseologo veronese, nell'imponente *Corso di gnoseologia pura elementare* (1927), opera in cui espose la propria posizione speculativa in un serrato confronto con i principali protagonisti della storia della filosofia, ebbe a dire di Locke che quest'ultimo era "il meno sistemati-

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co"[1] tra i pensatori della filosofia moderna. Cosa significa? Questa espressione, che, a prima vista, potrebbe sembrare poco lusinghiera, non fa riferimento né allo stile della trattazione (colloquiale e spesso dialogica) dell'*Essay*, né al fatto che tale opera manchi di un'organizzazione interna degli argomenti ben ordinata e scandita (è un *essay* e non un *tractatus*, per quanto ricalchi i trattati di logica destinati allo studio accademico, e, come Locke stesso ammette nell'*Epistle to the Reader*, non manca di ripetizioni, salti e ridondanze)[2]. Né si vuole accusare il pensatore inglese di quella colpa che Kant, nella *Critica della ragion pura*, rimprovera ad Aristotele relativamente all'enumerazione delle categorie, ossia la rapsodicità[3]. L'essere "il meno sistematico" indica, al contrario, il disinteresse del pensatore inglese per la costruzione di un sistema e la sua tenuta e costituisce, da parte di Zamboni, una dichiarazione di stima per la fedeltà dimostrata dal filosofo inglese a quanto l'esperienza immediata offre, approcciata in maniera anti-dogmatica, s-pregiudicata, senza cesure o forzature.

Che il pensiero di Locke sappia essere solido e coerente al proprio interno, senza patire le strettoie dell'estremo coerentismo (esacerbazione di un atteggiamento metodologico – il quale, in sé, non è solo corretto, ma condizione necessaria dell'elaborazione di qualcosa che possa dirsi 'un pensiero' – che è coessenziale alla preoccupazione per l'inviolabilità degli assunti e dei nuclei concettuali su cui si regge un sistema), emerge già dal fatto che l'*Essay concerning Human Understanding* presenta tutti i caratteri di un'opera che incarna un pensiero vivo e in evoluzione: dalla sua prima edizione del 1690, fino alla quinta edizione, postuma, del 1706, è andato incontro a molteplici re-visioni, intese non solo come chiarificazioni e integrazioni di quanto in esso contenuto (si pensi al capitolo sull'identità, aggiunto a partire dalla seconda edizione, o a quelli su associazione ed entusiasmo, che costituiranno la cifra della quarta edizione, o, ancora, agli *addenda* pensati per l'edizione postuma, riguardanti la questione della libertà di indifferenza e scritti dietro suggestione del teologo

[1] G. Zamboni, *Corso di gnoseologia pura elementare*, I.1, *Spazio, tempo, percezione intellettiva*, introdotta e curata da F.L. Marcolungo, presentazione di G. Giulietti, IPL, Milano 1990, p. 216.

[2] J. Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. with a foreword by P.H. Nidditch, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1975, *Epistle to the Reader*, pp. 7-9.

[3] I. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A 81/B 107, in Id., *Gesammelte Schriften*, Bd. 4, hrsg.: Bd. 1-22 Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften; Bd. 23 Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin; ab Bd. 24 Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Reimer, Berlin 1900ff. (Hrsg.: Akademie-Textausgabe, Unveränderter photomechanischer Abdruck des Textes der von der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 1902 begonnenen Ausgabe von Kants gesammelten Schriften, de Gruyter & Co., Berlin 1968).

olandese Philipp van Limborch)[4], ma anche come vere e proprie rivisitazioni di aspetti tutt'altro che marginali del proprio pensiero. Nell'*Epistle to the Reader* si assiste a una vera e propria *confessio philosophi*:

> Upon a closer inspection into the working of Men's Minds, and a stricter examination of those motives and views, they are turn'd by, I have found reason somewhat to alter the thoughts I formerly had concerning that, which gives the last determination to the Will in all voluntary actions. This I cannot forbear to acknowledge to the World, with as much freedom and readiness, as I at first published, what then seem'd to me to be right, thinking my self more concern'd to quit and renounce any Opinion of my own, than oppose that of another, when Truth appears against it. For 'tis Truth alone I seek, and that will always be welcome to me, when or from whencesoever it comes[5].

Il riferimento è al sostanziale ampliamento del capitolo XXI del secondo libro (dai 47 paragrafi della prima edizione, si passò ai 73 paragrafi nella seconda edizione), con vera e propria riscrittura delle parti relative al motivo determinante del volere, per effetto del dialogo epistolare con l'amico William Molyneux (cui si deve altresì l'inserimento dell'aggiunta al § 8 del capitolo IX del secondo libro, inerente al rapporto tra i sensi della vista e del tatto e il giudizio nella percezione dei corpi e della loro forma)[6].

Ora, venendo all'argomento del presente contributo, questo atteggiamento di Locke si manifesta anche in una serie di oscillazioni e di incoerenze in merito all'astrazione, alla terminologia utilizzata per descriverla e, di conseguenza, alle operazioni che, secondo il filosofo inglese, sono messe in atto sui contenuti di esperienza. Il presente contributo non intende inserirsi nel lungo e acceso dibattito sulla natura del processo astrattivo (per quanto, indirettamente, non possa esimersi dal richiamarlo e dal prendere una posizione in merito)[7], ma vuole compiere una serie di riflessioni e sviluppare degli aspetti e delle sfumatu-

[4] Cfr. J. Locke, Ms.: Autogr. Clericus Joh., Oefeleana 63 II, riprodotto in L. Simonutti, "Considerazioni su *Power* e *Liberty* nel *Saggio sull'intelletto umano* secondo un manoscritto di Coste", in *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana* 4 (1984), 1, pp. 194-99; P. Coste, *Coste an Leibniz* (25 Août 1707), in G.W. Leibniz, *Die philosophischen Schriften*, herausgegeben von Gerhardt (Berlin, 1879), Olms, Hildesheim-New York 1978, III, *Briefwechsel zwischen Leibniz und Coste*, pp. 398-99.

[5] Locke, *Essay*, cit., *Epistle to the Reader*, p. 11.

[6] Ivi, II, IX, 8, pp. 145-46.

[7] Una posizione già parzialmente espressa in D. Poggi, *Lost and Found in Translation? La gnoseologia dell'*Essay *lockiano nella traduzione francese di Pierre Coste*, Olschki, Firenze 2012, pp. 241-45.

re meno noti della gnoseologia lockiana, seppur, a mio avviso, alquanto fecondi al fine di tracciare i lineamenti di una 'ontologia sperimentale' lockiana che sia (il più possibile) 'consistente' tanto nell'accezione tradizionale del termine (nel senso di dotata di solidità e robustezza), quanto in quella di recente conio, calibrata sull'omofono inglese *consistent* (ossia coerente con altri passi e tesi esposte nell'*Essay* e in altre opere ad esso legate).

1. *Astrazione o astrazioni? Una domanda guida per iniziare l'analisi*

Seguiamo l'ordine di presentazione adottato nell'*Essay*, partendo dal primo luogo in cui si parla di astrazione, il capitolo II del primo libro:

> The Senses at first let in particular *Ideas*, and furnish the yet empty Cabinet: And the Mind by degrees growing familiar with some of them, they are lodged in the Memory, and Names got to them. Afterwards the Mind proceeding farther, abstracts them, and by Degrees learns the use of general Names. [...] The Knowledge of some Truths, I confess, is very early in the Mind; but in a way that shews them not to be innate. For, if we will observe, we shall find it still to be about *Ideas*, not innate, but acquired: It being about those first, which are imprinted by external Things, with which Infants have earliest to do, and which make the most frequent Impressions on their Senses. In *Ideas* thus got, the Mind discovers, That some agree, and others differ, probably as soon as it has any use of Memory; as soon as it is able, to retain and receive distinct *Ideas*[8].

Pur vago, tale passo introduce i due *powers* che costituiscono, l'uno, la condizione materiale dell'astrazione, ossia la memoria, l'altro, la condizione formale, ovvero la funzione di distinguere, intesa come capacità di cogliere le distinzioni (omogeneità o disomogeneità strutturali tra contenuti). Il capitolo XI del secondo libro si riallaccia proprio a questo tema, poiché si parla di astrazione inserendo il discorso nel contesto della trattazione delle operazioni (*wit* e *judgment*, *comparing*, *compounding*, *naming* e *abstraction*) che la mente compie sulle idee semplici, a cominciare (e, forse, proprio come fulcro di tutte queste funzioni) dal *discerning*:

> [...] the Mind makes the particular *Ideas*, received from particular Objects, to become general; which is done by *considering them as they are in the Mind such Appearances, separate from all other Existences, and the circumstances*

[8] Ivi, I, II, 15, p. 55.

> *of real Existence, as Time, Place, or any other concomitant Ideas. This is called ABSTRACTION*, [corsivo nostro] whereby *Ideas* taken from particular Beings, become general Representatives of all of the same kind; and their Names general Names, applicable to whatever exists conformable to such abstract *Ideas*. Such *precise, naked Appearances in the Mind, without considering, how, whence, or with what others they came there* [corsivo nostro], the Understanding lays up [...] as the Standards to rank real Existences into sorts, as they agree with these Patterns, and to *denominate* them accordingly. Thus the same Colour being observed to day in Chalk or Snow, which the Mind yesterday received from Milk, *it considers that Appearance alone, makes it a representative of all of that kind* [corsivo nostro]; and having given it the name *Whiteness*, it by that sound signifies the same quality wheresoever to be imagin'd or met with; and thus Universals, whether *Ideas* or Terms, are made[9].

Nel capitolo successivo, il dodicesimo, all'astrazione si dedica un rapido cenno, nel contesto delle tre tipologie di azioni della mente sulle *simple ideas*, azioni mediante le quali si ottengono le *complex ideas*:

> [...] as the Mind is wholly Passive in the reception of all its simple *Ideas*, so it exerts several acts of its own, whereby out of its simple *Ideas*, as the Materials and Foundations of the rest, the other are framed. The Acts of the Mind wherein it exerts its Power over its simple *Ideas* are chiefly these three, 1. Combining several simple *Ideas* into one compound one, and thus all Complex *Ideas* are made. 2. The 2*d*. is bringing two *Ideas*, whether simple or complex, together; and setting them by one another, so as to take a view of them at once, without uniting them into one; by which way it gets all its *Ideas* of Relations. 3. The 3*d*. is *separating them from all other Ideas that accompany them in their real existence; this is called Abstraction: And thus all its General Ideas are made* [corsivo nostro][10].

Successivamente, all'interno del terzo libro, nel capitolo III, Locke si concentra sulle modalità in cui avviene il processo astrattivo, in relazione alla trasformazione dei termini particolari in generali. Il passo si compone di una prima parte in cui è formulata la natura del processo astrattivo e di una seconda parte in cui se ne dà illustrazione mediante un esempio:

> [...] *Ideas become general, by separating from them the circumstances of Time, and Place, and any other Ideas, that may determine them to this or that particular*

[9] Ivi, II, XI, 9, p. 159.
[10] Ivi, II, XII, 1, p. 163.

> *Existence. By this way of abstraction they are made capable of representing more Individuals than one* [corsivo nostro] [...]. There is nothing more evident, than that the *Ideas* of the Persons Children converse with, (to instance in them alone,) are like the Persons themselves, only particular. The *Ideas* of the Nurse, and the Mother, are well framed in their Minds; and, like Pictures of them there, represent only those Individuals. [...] Afterwards, when time and a larger Acquaintance has made them observe, that there are a great many other Things in the World, that in some common agreements of Shape, and several other Qualities, resemble their Father and Mother, and those Persons they have been used to, they frame an *Idea*, which they find those many Particulars do partake in; and to that they give, with others, the name *Man*, for Example. And *thus they come to have a general Name*, and a general *Idea*. *Wherein they make nothing new, but only leave out of the complex Idea they had of Peter and James, Mary and Jane, that which is peculiar to each, and retain only what is common to them all* [corsivo nostro]. By the same way, that they come by the general Name and *Idea* of *Man*, they easily *advance to more general Names* and Notions. For *observing, that several Things that differ from their Idea of Man, and cannot therefore be comprehended under that Name, have yet certain Qualities, wherein they agree with Man, by retaining only those Qualities, and uniting them into one Idea, they have again another and a more general Idea; to which having given a Name, they make a term of a more comprehensive extension* [corsivo nostro]: Which new *Idea* is made, not by any new addition, but only, as before, by leaving out the shape, and some other Properties signified by the name *Man*, and retaining only a Body, with Life, Sense, and spontaneous Motion, comprehended under the Name *Animal*[11].

Un processo, questo, che viene riproposto alcuni paragrafi dopo, laddove si osserva che *general* e *universal* sono *inventions and creatures of the understanding*, ossia non sono entità reali, perché la dimensione della *real existence* è propria di ciò che è *particular*:

> [...] *Ideas* are general, when they are set up, as the Representatives of many particular Things: but universality belongs not to things themselves, which are all of them particular in their Existence, even those Words, and *Ideas*, which in their signification, are general. *When therefore we quit Particulars, the Generals that rest, are only Creatures of our own making, their general Nature being nothing but the Capacity they are put into by the Understanding, of signifying or representing many particulars* [corsivo nostro][12].

[11] Ivi, III, III, 6-8, pp. 411-12.
[12] Ivi, III, III, 11, p. 414.

L'ultima presentazione dell'*abstraction*, concisa ma estremamente significativa, si trova nel nono capitolo del quarto libro:

> [...] we have only considered the Essences of Things, which *being only abstract Ideas, and thereby removed in our Thoughts from particular Existence, (that being the proper Operation of the Mind, in Abstraction, to consider an Idea under no other Existence, but what it has in the Understanding,)* [corsivo nostro] gives us no Knowledge of real Existence at all[13].

Molteplici sono le domande che sorgono dalla lettura di questi passi: cosa fa, esattamente, la mente sui contenuti concreti/particolari di cui è in possesso, al fine di ricavarne delle idee astratte? L'astrazione è cioè una 'separazione' o una 'parziale considerazione' operata dall'intelletto? Non ci concentreremo su questa domanda, che è, in sé e per sé, pur di estrema importanza e che, avendo Locke usato in modo apparentemente indifferente entrambi i verbi/sostantivi (quasi fossero sinonimi), *to consider/partial consideration* e *to separe/separation*, è all'origine di una precisa disputa tra gli esegeti lockiani (la disputa Walmsley/Ayers)[14].

Si noti, a titolo di breve inciso, che Locke, così facendo, è stato il primo a violare una delle regole della buona comunicazione da lui stesso formulate nel terzo libro, ossia dare una precisa definizione (*exactness*) ai termini (specialmente nei contesti in cui si compie quello che è chiamato *philosophical use of words*)[15] e usarli senza oscillazioni. Per questa ragione, non è forse possibile trovare una soluzione a tale questione cercando appoggi in evidenze testuali che, basandosi sul criterio dell'analisi delle occorrenze lessicali, puntino a essere probanti col denunciare eventuali preferenze terminologico/concettuali (il

[13] Ivi, IV, IX, 1, p. 618.

[14] I principali momenti di tale disputa sono brevemente ricordati in J. Walmsley, "Locke, Ayers, and Abstraction", in *Locke Studies* 14 (2014), pp. 29-30; si tratta dell'ultimo di una serie di articoli nei quali è stata condotta la discussione in merito all'astrazione: Id., "Locke on Abstraction. A Response to M.R. Ayers", in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 7 (1999), pp. 123-34; "The Development of Lockean Abstraction", in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 8 (2000), pp. 395-418. L'articolo del 2014 segue la replica di Ayers ai due contributi di Walmsley del 1999 e del 2000: M. Ayers, "Locke's Account of Abstract Ideas – Again", in S. Hutton, P. Schuurman (eds.), *Studies on Locke. Sources, Contemporaries, and Legacy*, Springer, Dordrecht 2008, pp. 59-73. Una disputa che continua, anche indirettamente, in K.L. Pearce, "Locke, Arnauld, and Abstract Ideas", in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 27 (2019), 1, pp. 75-94.

[15] Cfr. Locke, *Essay*, cit., III, IX, 3, p. 476: "[…] by the *Philosophical Use* of Words, I mean such an use of them, as may serve to convey the precise Notions of Things, and to express, in general Propositions, certain and undoubted Truths, which the Mind may rest upon, and be satisfied with, in its search after true Knowledge".

fatto che *to separe* spesso sembri prevalere, nelle presentazioni dell'astrazione date nell'*Essay*, non significa molto, alla luce dell'esistenza di più passi in cui questo verbo è usato con il preciso senso di 'tenere ben distinte' due idee essenzialmente diverse l'una dall'altra, a prescindere da ingannevoli analogie)[16]. A tal fine, non resta che combinare più elementi: l'attenzione alla coerenza tra *Essay* e i *Drafts* (speciamente il *Draft C*)[17], le definizioni di *separation* (*actual* e/o *mental*) e di (*partial*) *consideration* fornite da Locke trattando la questione delle parti omogenee dello spazio (passi che vedono un'anticipazione nella nota del *journal* risalente al 20 giugno 1676, dove all'attenzione selettiva si dava appunto il nome di *abstraction*)[18] e la precisazione che ci sono idee che non possono esistere separatamente da altre (pur se reciprocamente distinte e distinguibili, come per esempio solidità ed estensione, colore ed estensione[19] e, da ultimo, l'idea generale di triangolo e le qualità che ne fanno 'questo' o 'quel' triangolo, ossia un preciso triangolo – una *general idea* che, senza tali elementi determinanti, sarebbe "something imperfect, that cannot exist")[20].

16 Cfr. ad esempio ivi, II, XI, 2, p. 156.

17 "Abstraction […] is nothing else but *the Considering any Idea barely* & *precisely in it self* [corsivo nostro] strip[']d of all Externall Existence & circumstances. By *this way of considering them* [corsivo nostro] *Ideas* taken from particular things become universal *being reflected on* [corsivo nostro] as nakedly such appearances as in the minde *without considering* [corsivo nostro] how or whence or with what others they came there" (J. Locke, *An Essay concerning Humane Understanding in Fower Books 1685*, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, MA 998 II, XIII, 6).

18 J. Locke, *An Early Draft of Locke's Essay, together with Excerpts from his Journals*, ed. by R.I. Aaron and J. Gibb, Clarendon, Oxford 1936, *1676. Sat. Jun. 20*, ff. 292-93, pp. 78-79.

19 "[…] I appeal to every Man's own Thoughts, whether the *Idea* of Space be not as distinct from that of Solidity, as it is from the *Idea* of Scarlet-Colour? 'Tis true, Solidity cannot exist without Extension, neither can Scarlet-Colour exist without Extension; but this hinders not, but that they are distinct *Ideas*. Many *Ideas* require others as necessary to their Existence or Conception, which yet are very distinct *Ideas*" (Locke, *Essay*, cit., II, XIII, 11, pp. 171-72).

20 "[…] when we nicely reflect upon them, we shall find, that general *Ideas* are Fictions and Contrivances of the Mind, that carry difficulty with them, and do not so easily offer themselves, as we are apt to imagine. For example, Does it not require some pains and skill to form the *general Idea* of a *Triangle*, (which is yet none of the most abstract, comprehensive, and difficult,) for it must be neither Oblique, nor Rectangle, neither Equilateral, Equicrural, nor Scalenon; but all and none of these at once. In effect, it is something imperfect, that cannot exist; an *Idea* wherein some parts of several different and inconsistent *Ideas* are put together" (ivi, IV, VII, 9, p. 596). Si noti anche l'ambiguità del *put together* finale, che cozza con le precedenti presentazioni dell'origine dell'idea astratta e generale, per esempio, di uomo (il notare che c'è qualcosa di comune a più idee distinte e il 'trattenere' tali aspetti comuni, tralasciando quelli diversi e determinanti, che non possono coesistere nella stessa idea/nello stesso ente), tanto da far pensare che la traduzione più corretta dal punto di vista concettuale sia 'confluire' e non 'mettere assieme'. A partire dalla differenza tra 'distinzione' e 'separazione' estendo quindi anche al mentale l'interpretazione, che guarda solo alla differenza tra l'esistenza reale e quella

Del resto, che non si perda la percezione della totalità o unità delle idee (percezione sintetica, non sintesi percettiva), di cui alcune servono per la creazione di un nuovo distinto psichico (non un'idea che si aggiunge a quelle esistenti da cui nasce, ma una che si sviluppa in seno ad esse: questo il senso del *nothing new* presente in un passo prima citato), mentre altre sono 'attenzionalmente accantonate', si può evincere dal fatto che Locke parla di *particular ideas* che *become general/universal* (nel *Draft C* scrive *being reflected on*)[21].

La domanda su cui ci concentreremo (cui la prima è pur sempre legata) è la seguente: quanti processi di astrazione sono proposti da Locke in questi passi? Uno o più di uno? Sono interscambiabili o meno? Nella compresenza di più linee teoriche, già Richard Aaron (che ne individuava tre)[22] intravedeva un segno della mai piena soddisfazione raggiunta dal pensatore inglese circa questo punto fondamentale tanto della teoria della conoscenza, quanto della sua filosofia della comunicazione in senso stretto. Anche George Moyal, più recentemente, sottolineava come il pensatore inglese sembri porre sullo stesso piano due diverse tipologie di astrazione (quasi come se esse costituissero due aspetti di un unico processo o portassero ai medesimi risultati), la cui difficile conciliazione mette tuttavia il lettore in una situazione di confusione e incertezza[23].

A mio avviso (e in linea con le riflessioni di Moyal, che condivido), dall'analisi dei passi riportati Locke pare proporre due processi astrattivi, una generalizzazione e una dis-individuazione, incentrati su due diverse concezioni di ciò che costituisce l'unicità e l'irripetibilità di qualcosa.

2. *Generalizzazione e dis-individuazione: tra empiria e processi sovrasensitivi*

Nell'*Essay*, l'urgenza della questione comunicativa e irenica (in senso lato), ossia l'intento di individuare una soluzione alle polemiche teologico-politiche mediante una filosofia e concetti/termini che potessero godere di *universal assent* (ribaltando il concetto platonico-cantabrigense contro il quale Locke aveva molto

dei contenuti psichici, data in V. Chappell, "Locke's Theory of Ideas", in V. Chappell (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Locke*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1994, pp. 43-44.

21 Cfr. il testo del *Draft C* riportato nella nota 17 del presente lavoro.

22 R. Aaron, *John Locke*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1955, pp. 197-207.

23 Cfr. J. Locke, *Essai Philosophique concernant l'Entendement Humain*, traduit par Pierre Coste, édité par Georges J.D. Moyal, Champion, Paris 2004, pp. 248-49, nota 61 a piè di pagina; p. 576, nota 18 a piè di pagina.

polemizzato nel primo libro)[24], comporta un inevitabile schiacciamento della presentazione dell'astrazione sulla questione della generalizzazione, ossia della genesi psicologica dei *genera et species* come concetti dai caratteri in-determinati[25].

L'attenzione viene così rivolta pressoché interamente alla 'grana' dell'esperienza, all'aspetto intensionale del concreto, in un'ottica predicativo-categoriale (aristotelica) ed epistemologica (la definizione come sussunzione, l'estensione della conoscenza per accumulazione induttiva). L'astrazione viene così a concentrarsi su ciò che ostacola, da una parte, la comprensione inter-soggettiva, lo scambio e l'intesa, dall'altra il *sorting*, come inclusione di qualcosa di concreto in 'classi' su cui più soggetti possano accordarsi e capirsi. I dettagli di ciò che viene sperimentato sono così l'elemento da cui astrarre, da cui prescindere (in senso lato) in quanto individuante. Questa versione empirista dell'astrazione e dell'individuazione è tuttavia lockiana?

Certamente lo è, ma la definizione data da Locke del *principium individuationis* porta il discorso anche in una direzione 'altra', ossia conduce dal piano della *talitas/quidditas*, ovvero dal piano dei caratteri che costituiscono la struttura fenomenale di un contenuto (qualsiasi esso sia), sul quale si gioca l'astrazione come genesi dei concetti di genere/specie, al piano esistenziale, che nulla ha a che fare con il problema di fondo del *naming/sorting* (ossia la comunicazione e l'intesa intersoggettiva) e conferisce alla cosiddetta *ontology of particulars* abbracciata da Locke (ossia: tutto ciò che esiste è particolare/individuale e l'astratto è solo un prodotto della mente che non potrebbe esistere se non in quanto 'concepito') nuove sfumature più autenticamente 'ontologiche'. La 'grana' dell'esperienza riguarda anche l''essere' (essere e/o l'esserci e il 'grado di esistenza' dei contenuti dell'esperienza – sempre in senso lato), ossia "the very Being of things"[26].

Vale la pena di riportare il passo dedicato al *principium individuationis*, espressamente indicato come tale nel celebre capitolo XXVII del secondo libro, ma presente, in maniera anonima e più o meno nascostamente, nei capitoli (sia a lui precedenti, che successivi), dedicati all'astrazione (segno di come la riflessione intorno all'identità si sia sviluppata esplicitando aspetti intrinseci

[24] Per una discussione del tema, cfr. D. Poggi, "*For 'tis Truth alone I seek, and that will always be welcome to me, when or from whencesoever it comes*: ricerca della verità ed etica della comunicazione in John Locke", in *Etica & Politica / Ethics & Politics* 19 (2016), 2, pp. 133-52.

[25] Ne è prova lo stesso *Locke Dictionary* di Yolton, che alla dis-individuazione dedica pressoché interamente la prima voce *Abstraction*, cessando poi di sviluppare questa linea esistenziale e concentrandosi sulla generalizzazione nella voce immediatamente successiva, *Abstract or General Ideas (and Words)*: cfr. J.W. Yolton, *A Locke Dictionary*, Blackwell, Oxford 1993, pp. 7-10.

[26] Locke, *Essay*, cit., II, XXVII, 1, p. 328.

di quella sull'astrazione, il cui carattere sovra-empirista è quindi tutt'altro che secondario o accidentale):

> [...] 'tis easy to discover, what is so much enquired after, the *principium Individuationis*, and that 'tis plain is *Existence it self; which determines a Being of any sort to a particular time and place* [corsivo nostro] incommunicable to two Beings of the same kind[27].

È quindi l'*existence*, assieme alle *circumstances* quali *time* e *place*, l'elemento che il *discerning* trova in un contenuto (accanto ai suoi caratteri strutturali) e che fa in modo che quest'ultimo non solo sia ciò che è, ma sia irripetibile. Il problema è che l'*abstract idea* così ottenuta, l'*appearance* dis-individuata o 'spogliata' (*naked*), resta 'intatta' per ciò che concerne le sue peculiarità (quelle infinitesime particolarità che facevano implodere lo strumento comunicativo del *naming*) e non è per ciò stesso genere/specie, ossia *idea* "of a more comprehensive extension"[28].

Certo, molte delle formulazioni dell'*abstraction* racchiudono in sé ambedue le tipologie di processo astrattivo, mediante l'inserimento di espressioni piuttosto generiche (e, per questo, non ben interpretabili) relative ad altri elementi sui quali operare (senza indicazione di una priorità degli uni rispetto agli altri e, quindi, dei relativi processi): "any other concomitant *Ideas*" (*Essay*, II, XI, 9), "how, whence, or with what others [leggi: determinazioni] they came there" (ivi, II, XI, 9), "all other *Ideas* that accompany them in their real existence" (ivi, II, XII, 1) e "any other *Ideas*, that may determine them to this or that particular existence" (ivi, III, III, 6). Una modalità di conciliazione delle due tipologie di astrazione che, come dicevamo prima, non ha certo il pregio di risolvere i problemi, ma di complicarli ulteriormente.

[27] Ivi, II, XXVII, 3, p. 330.

[28] Ivi, III, III, 8, p. 411. In merito, l'osservazione di Moyal è la seguente: "La conception de l'abstraction que présente ici Locke, s'apparente à celle des Formes platoniciennes dans la mesure où l'idée abstraite, épurée comme elle l'est des coordonnées de temps et de lieu qui en feraient une idée particulière, transcende ainsi temps et espace et assure par là son immutabilité. Cette transcendance lui permettra de participer à la formation de vérités éternelles. […] Cette façon de concevoir l'abstraction soulève nombre de difficultés. […] L'un de ces problèmes est que, étant donné le programme empiriste lockien, il est difficile d'identifier, dans les idées des choses particulières, les idées de temps et de lieu qui en déterminent autrement la particularité: ces coordonnées ne sont que des relations externes entre l'être particulier en question et ce qui l'entoure, et ne font pas partie de l'idée que l'on en a. […] À ce compte, séparer l'idée du lieu (et de même celle du temps) qu'une chose occupe de celle de la chose elle-même, conserve à cette dernière toutes ses particularités" (Locke, *Essai*, cit., édité par Moyal, pp. 248-49, nota 61 a piè di pagina).

Stando dunque alla dis-individuazione, dell'originario contenuto sperimentato viene quindi messa tra parentesi (trascurata attenzionalmente) l'esistenza: chiediamoci ora di quale esistenza si tratti. Anche in questo caso, le ambiguità non mancano: accanto ai passi in cui Locke pare assumere l'*existence* in senso 'gnoseologico', l'esserci in quanto *to appear*/darsi delle idee al *mind* (vedasi gli esempi proposti in materia di generalizzazione in senso stretto, come il caso del colore bianco incontrato nel gesso, nella neve, nel latte, etc.)[29], in continuità con quanto troviamo nel *Draft C* del 1685, le espressioni *real* ed *external existence* fanno pensare che, nell'*Essay*, il concetto vada prevalentemente assunto nella sua accezione ontologica forte, come sussistenza degli enti individuali. Si prenda per esempio in esame l'*incipit* del nono capitolo del quarto libro:

> Hitherto we have only considered the Essences of Things, which being only abstract *Ideas*, and thereby removed in our Thoughts from particular Existence, (that being the proper Operation of the Mind, in Abstraction, to consider an *Idea* under no other Existence, but what it has in the Understanding,) gives us no Knowledge of real Existence at all[30].

La *naked appearance*, ossia l'idea considerata come semplice modo del pensiero (con tutta la sua 'grana' strutturale, ossia la ricchezza degli elementi determinanti), come mera realtà oggettuale (per dirla in termini cartesiani), o con la propria attualità psichica (per dirla invece in termini gnoseologici), parrebbe così possedere uno *status* tale per cui sarebbe passibile di altre realizzazioni[31] e di inclusione, sotto di sé, di ogni altro individuo esistente "of the same kind". Il problema sorge nella misura in cui tale realtà oggettuale o solo mentale, pur diversa dalla *external existence*, è trattata da Locke in maniera analoga a quest'ultima. L'idea semplice di esistenza deriva infatti dalla considerazione sia delle idee considerate in sé (*naked*, potremmo dire), sia degli *objects without* (enti):

[29] Cfr. ivi, II, xi, 9, p. 159.

[30] Ivi, IV, ix, 1, p. 618.

[31] A mio avviso in linea con l'analisi da me svolta nel presente lavoro, sono interessanti le riflessioni (condotte con un occhio di riguardo per le problematiche fenomenologiche della questione), svolte da Cléro circa la trattazione delle verità matematico-geometriche e del processo di 'eternizzazione' di un contenuto storicamente percepito (mediante considerazione di quest'ultimo indipendentemente dalle precise coordinate spazio-temporali in cui fu còlto), come origine dell'illusione dell'inneità (radicale atemporalità) di tali verità: J.-P. Cléro, "Intuition, déduction et connaissance sensible", in L. Simonutti (ed.), *John Locke: les idées et les choses. Avec le manuscrit inédit* Notes upon Mr. John Locke's Essay concerning Human Understanding *de William Whiston fils*, Mimesis, Milano 2019, pp. 29-34.

> *Existence* and *Unity*, are two other *Ideas*, that are suggested to the Understanding by every Object without, and every *Idea* within. When *Ideas* are in our Minds, we consider them as being actually there, as well as we consider things to be actually without us; which is, that they exist, or have *Existence*[32].

Né l'analogia si arresta a questo: anche per le idee considerate come semplici modi del pensiero, l'esistenza (con le coordinate non più spaziali, ma temporali) costituisce l'elemento "individuante", ovvero, anche per loro vale quello che abbiamo incontrato nella definizione del *principium individuationis*:

> All other things being but Modes or Relations ultimately terminated in Substances, the Identity and Diversity of each particular Existence of them too will be by the same way determined: Only as to things whose Existence is in succession, such as are the Actions of finite Beings, *v.g. Motion* and *Thought*, both which consist in a continued train of Succession, concerning their Diversity there can be no question: Because each perishing the moment it begins, they cannot exist in different times, or in different places, as permanent Beings can at different times exist in distant places; and therefore no motion or thought considered as at different times can be the same, each part thereof having a different beginning of Existence[33].

Sarebbe quindi necessario, stando alle ipotesi iniziali poste da Locke stesso, ossia il combinato disposto della definizione di astrazione e di quella di principio di individuazione, sottoporre queste stesse idee, seppur *naked*, ad astrazione dis-individuante, poiché il tipo di *existence* che le caratterizza, pur diverso da quello degli enti, mantiene la propria funzione di renderle irripetibili, "particular Beings" (prendendo, come spesso il filosofo stesso fa, il termine *Being* in senso lato), non ancora capaci di svolgere il ruolo di "general representatives of all of the same kind"[34] o "representing more Individuals than one"[35].

Come emerge, il discorso sull'astrazione finisce così per subire una sorta di spiralizzazione (o di cadere in un 'terzo uomo'), richiedendo quasi una seconda dis-individuazione, più radicale ancora, la cui natura è tutta da indagare.

[32] Ivi, II, VII, 7, p. 131.
[33] Ivi, II, XXVII, 2, p. 329.
[34] Ivi, II, XI, 9, p. 159.
[35] Ivi, III, III, 6, p. 411.

3. Real existence *e* naked appearance*: verso un corretto ordine di priorità gnoseologica*

La considerazione delle idee come meri modi del pensiero fa di esse idee astratte: la loro realtà, il loro *status* esistenziale è quindi depotenziato e derivativo? Alla luce di quanto precedentemente osservato, la risposta non può che sembrare affermativa, poiché la priorità viene assegnata alla *real/external existence*. Questo esito è tuttavia condizionato, a mio avviso, dalla prevalenza del paradigma internalistico (l'esistenza di un 'mondo-interno-mentale' in contrapposizione al 'mondo-esterno-fisicalistico') e del realismo immediato a esso connesso (che si insinua nell'*Essay* attraverso i riferimenti alla teorie mediche e scientifiche dell'epoca) sull'approccio critico adottato da Locke. La trattazione della *sensation*, ossia della conoscenza dell'esistenza di un 'mondo esterno' che affètta il soggetto, un mondo reale e non solo mentale, compiuta nel quarto libro, è particolarmente importante per il presente discorso. Essa ha infatti un duplice merito: da una parte, mostra tali paradigmi in azione (laddove si adducono spiegazioni fisiologiche, col rischio di cadere in pericolosi circoli viziosi, assumendo proprio ciò che si vuol dimostrare)[36]; dall'altra, illustrando il processo psichico mediante il quale si giunge all'affermazione anti-solipsistica che 'fuori' e indipendentemente dal soggetto qualcosa 'è' (non solo come contenuto del mondo 'mentale'), fa emergere che quest'ultima conclusione avviene secondo un ordine (conoscitivo) che è l'esatto ribaltamento del percorso (ontologico) dell'astrazione dis-individuante, che dall'esistenza esterna e dalle 'cose' reali portava all'esistenza mentale e alle idee astratte.

Si mostra cioè che quella concezione di astrazione era in realtà una pseudo-astrazione, basata cioè su un concetto di 'esistenza' in senso forte precedentemente posseduto e applicato a precisi contenuti psichici, in base a determinati criteri. Quali siano questi criteri, lo si evince dal seguente passo, tratto dal capitolo II del quarto libro:

> There is, indeed, another *Perception* of the Mind, employ'd about *the particular existence of finite Beings* without us; which going beyond bare probability, and yet not reaching perfectly to either of the foregoing degrees of certainty, passes under the name of Knowledge. *There can be nothing more certain, than that the Idea we receive from an external Object is in our Minds; this is intuitive Knowledge*

[36] Cfr. ivi, IV, II, 14, pp. 536-38; IV, III, 5, p. 539; IV, XI, 2, pp. 630-31; IV, XI, 4, p. 632; IV, XI, 6-7, pp. 633-34.

> [corsivo nostro]. But *whether there be any thing more than barely that Idea in our Minds, whether we can thence certainly inferr the existence of any thing without us, which corresponds to that Idea* [ossia, qualcosa strutturalmente identico all'idea, ma dotato di ben più che di quella sola forma di esistenza in quanto oggetto di pensiero, che poi Brentano chiamerà in-esistenza intenzionale], *is that, whereof some Men think there may be a question made* [corsivo nostro], because Men may have such *Ideas* in their Minds, when no such Thing exists, no such Object affects their Senses. But yet here, I think, we are provided with an Evidence, that puts us past doubting: For I ask any one, Whether he be not *invincibly conscious to himself of a different Perception* [corsivo nostro], when he looks on the Sun by day, and thinks on it by night; when he actually tastes Wormwood, or smells a Rose, or only thinks on that Savour, or Odour? We as plainly find the difference there is between any *Idea* revived in our Minds by our own Memory, and actually coming into our Minds by our Senses, as we do between any two distinct *Ideas*[37].

Per quanto Locke arrivi anche a scrivere che nella *sensation* si ha la "percezione dell'esistenza di cose particolari"[38], l'effettiva immediata percezione è quella di un carattere peculiare di determinate idee, carattere che si coglie nel confronto di contenuti qualitativamente identici, di cui uno verrà caratterizzato come 'attuale' e uno come 'ricordato/immaginato': si tratta di una differenza che non è quindi collocabile sul piano della loro struttura (chi ha un'ottima memoria, potrebbe ricordare o riprodurre immaginativamente con esattezza quello che ha vissuto in un altro momento), ma sul piano esistenziale.

Ciò che la mente percepisce (e che genera un'invincibile certezza psicologica, una *assurance* che è includibile nella conoscenza in senso stretto) è una differenza di grado di realtà: applicando il concetto di causa[39] (per individuare una ragione che motivi il fatto sperimentale della diversità di attualità)[40], il

37 Ivi, IV, II, 14, p. 537.

38 Cfr. ivi, IV, III, 2, p. 539.

39 Significativamente, Locke preferisce parlare di una causa esistente fuori dal soggetto, *something which causes an idea in us* (cfr. ivi, IV, XI, 2, p. 630).

40 Si noti che Locke qui sviluppa e perfeziona in prospettiva fenomenologica il ragionamento esposto da Descartes nella *Meditatio III*, incentrato sulla maggiore o minore realtà/perfezione oggettiva delle idee che noi possediamo e quindi sul rapporto tra realtà oggettiva e formale. Per un più agile confronto, riporto il testo di Descartes: "Sed alia quaedam adhuc via mihi occurrit ad inquirendum an res aliquae, ex iis quarum ideae in me sunt, extra me existant. Nempe, quatenus ideae istae cogitandi quidam modi tantùm sunt, non agnosco ullam inter ipsas inaequalitatem, & omnes a me eodem modo procedere videntur; sed, quatenus una unam rem, alia aliam repraesentat, patet easdem esse ab invicem valde diversas. Nam proculdubio illae quae substantias mihi exhibent, majus aliquid sunt, atque, ut ita loquar,

soggetto è portato a inferire (*inferr*, scrive Locke) l'operare attuale e quindi l'esistenza, altrettanto attuale, di ciò che lo sta affettando, producendo in lui quel contenuto con maggior grado di realtà. Locke osserva in merito:

> [...] there is no body who doth not perceive the difference in himself, between contemplating the Sun, as he hath the *Idea* of it in his Memory, and actually looking upon it: Of which two, his perception is so distinct, that few of his *Ideas* are more distinguishable one from another. And therefore he hath certain knowledge, that they are not both Memory, or the Actions of his Mind, and Fancies only within him; but that actual seeing hath a Cause without[41].

Accanto alla 'grana' qualitativa dell'esperienza se ne aggiunge quindi anche una 'esistenziale' che Locke esprime metaforicamente, usando un termine, *force*, che ricorda da vicino la celebre terminologia usata da Hume nell'*incipit* del proprio *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-1740), laddove definisce e distingue *impressions* e *ideas*[42]:

plus realitatis objectivae in se continent, quàm illae quae tantùm modos, sive accidentia, repraesentant; & rursus illa per quam summum aliquem Deum, aeternum, infinitum, omniscium, omnipotentem, rerumque omnium, quae praeter ipsum sunt, creatorem intelligo, plus profecto realitatis objectivae in se habet, quàm illae per quas finitae substantiae exhibentur. Jam verò lumine naturali manifestum est tantumdem ad minimum esse debere in causâ efficiente & totali, quantum in ejusdem causae effectu. Nam, quaeso, undenam posset assumere realitatem suam effectus, nisi a causâ? Et quomodo illam ei causa dare posset, nisi etiam haberet? Hinc autem sequitur, nec posse aliquid a nihilo fieri, nec etiam id quod magis perfectum est, hoc est quod plus realitatis in se continet, ab eo quod minus. Atque hoc non modo perspicue verum est de iis effectibus, quorum realitas est actualis sive formalis, sed etiam de ideis, in quibus consideratur tantùm realitas objectiva" (R. Descartes, *Meditationes de Prima Philosophia* [1641[1]], apud Ludovicum Elzevirium, Amsterdami 1642[2], in Id., *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. 7, publiées par Ch. Adam & P. Tannery, Vrin, Paris 1996, pp. 40-41).

41 Locke, *Essay*, cit., IV, XI, 5, p. 632.

42 "All the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kinds, which I shall call IMPRESSIONS and IDEAS. The difference betwixt these consists in the degrees of force and liveliness, with which they strike upon the mind, and make their way into our thought or consciousness. Those perceptions, which enter with most force and violence, we may name *impressions*; and under this name I comprehend all our sensations, passions and emotions, as they make their first appearance in the soul. By *ideas* I mean the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning; such as, for instance, are all the perceptions excited by the present discourse, excepting only, those which arise from the sight and touch, and excepting the immediate pleasure or uneasiness it may occasion. I believe it will not be very necessary to employ many words in explaining this distinction. Every one of himself will readily perceive the difference betwixt feeling and thinking. […] They are in general so very different, that no one can make a scruple to rank them under distinct heads, and assign to each a peculiar name to mark the difference" (D. Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, in Id., *The Clarendon Edition of the Works*, vol. 1, critical edition by D.F. Norton and M.J. Norton, Clarendon Press, Oxford 2007, I, I, 1, p. 7).

> [...] he that sees a Candle burning, and hath experimented *the force of its Flame* [corsivo nostro], by putting his Finger in it, will little doubt, that this is something existing without him, which does him harm, and *puts him to great pain* [corsivo nostro]: which is assurance enough[43].

Non si tratta di un ragionamento, né di un vero e proprio giudizio di esistenza, ma di una immediata e spontanea (irriflessa) attribuzione dell'idea di *real existence* in senso forte, sostanziale, al complesso sperimentale di cui abbiamo l'attuale sensazione o che diciamo avere la qualità di cui abbiamo l'*appearance*[44], la quale idea di *particular/real existence* deve perciò essere già posseduta ed essere 'comunicabile', 'attribuibile'. Deve perciò essere già stata sottoposta a dis-individuazione: tale è la ragione per cui il processo astrattivo esistenziale cui Locke ci aveva messo di fronte è piuttosto una pseudo-astrazione.

4. *Conclusione: un nuovo tassello dell'ontologia critica a base sperimentale' lockiana*

Non è a mio avviso casuale che, nell'ultimo passo citato, Locke faccia riferimento alla sfera emotivo-sentimentale, ovvero alla strettissima connessione tra la *sensation* e le *passions* quali sono piacere e dolore, come a uno, se non al principale, degli elementi che potremmo definire 'di contorno' (e di supporto: sono infatti *affordancies* che guidano l'ermeneutica messa in atto nel processo che stiamo esaminando)[45] alla differenza di grado di realtà tra le due percezioni (che è l'aspetto realmente fondante e decisivo). Né si tratta solo di una prova, se mai ve ne fosse il bisogno, dell'importanza e della centralità delle 'passioni' nella concezione lockiana della mente e della conoscenza[46].

[43] Locke, *Essay*, cit., IV, XI, 8, p. 634.

[44] "[…] whilst I write this, I have, by the Paper affecting my Eyes, that *Idea* produced in my Mind, which whatever Object causes, I call *White*; by which I know, that that Quality or Accident (*i.e.* whose appearance before my Eyes, always causes that *Idea*) doth really exist, and hath a Being without me" (ivi, IV, XI, 2, p. 631).

[45] Cfr. K. Lewin, "Vorbemerkungen über die psychischen Kräfte und Energien und über die Struktur der Seele", in *Psychologische Forschungen* 7 (1926), pp. 294-329; K. Koffka, *Principles of Gestalt Psychology*, Kegan Paul-Harcourt, Brace & Company, London-New York 1936; J.J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (1979[1]), Psychology Press, New York 1986[2], pp. 127-43.

[46] Per una discussione del tema e un'analisi della principale bibliografia, rimando a D. Poggi, "*Mind*, *Understanding and Passions*. La mente emotivo-passionale di John Locke", in

Al contrario, ciò costituisce un velato accenno alla genesi psicologica dell'idea di sostanza e, conseguentemente, alla ragione dell'attribuzione della *real existence* (un *esse* di natura sostanziale, non meramente fenomenico): vari recenti studi si sono concentrati sulla domanda se la persona sia, per Locke, sostanza o modo[47]. Alla risposta affermativa cui sono giunti, manca però la vera indicazione delle ragioni della sostanzialità del *self* o *person*, che va a mio avviso individuata (coerentemente con le suggestioni contenute tanto nell'*Essay*, quanto, soprattutto, nel dialogo/scontro epistolare con Stillingfleet) nel rapporto di inerenza, lasciato trapelare da Locke con un certo timore, all'interno della trattazione della natura delle *passions* come "constitutions of the Mind", ovvero idee non solo presenti al soggetto, ma nel soggetto, suoi modi di essere[48].

Come nel caso dei poteri passivi e attivi (in cui, quella che sarà la futura humiana riduzione dei concetti di causa ed effetto a mera successione temporale di una situazione che precede e di una che segue, unico effettivo dato sperimentale sensitivo, è ancora 'compensata' dalla presenza dei poteri attivi, che conferiscono uno spessore 'ontologico' a quanto l'esperienza esterna offre, uscendo così dal verbalismo nell'uso del concetto di 'causa' e 'azione')[49], così, nel presente discorso, l'esperienza concreta, per auto-presenza e auto-percezione, dell'inerenza di contenuti psichici nell'essere del soggetto, è quindi il punto di accesso conoscitivo (con le opportune operazioni di discernimento), della nozione di persona, prima, e di sostanza, poi.

Ecco allora che le riflessioni sul *principium individuationis* compiute nel capitolo XXVII del secondo libro non paiono più slegate rispetto alla trattazione della persona (perché il *self* è auto-ascrizione non solo in senso cognitivo – ciò che tutto ha presente e manifesto, ossia il *terminus ad quem* del *to appear* dei

L.M. Napolitano Valditara (ed.), *Curare le emozioni, curare con le emozioni*, Mimesis, Milano-Udine 2020, pp. 107-33.

47 Cfr. J. Gordon-Roth, "Locke on the Ontology of Persons", in *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 53 (2015), 1, pp. 97-123; M.A. Leisinger, "Locke on Persons and Other Kinds of Substances", in *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 100 (2019), pp. 129-55.

48 Per un esame approfondito della questione, rimando a D. Poggi, "Perspectives on Experience-Based Critical Ontology. A New Interpretation of Lockean Gnoseology", in *Metafísica y Persona. Filosofía, conocimiento y vida* 13 (2015), pp. 49-66. Nel suo notevole volume, *Locke's Metaphysics*, Stuart aveva sottolineato l'importanza del concetto di inerenza, emerso dal carteggio con Stillingfleet e, quindi, la presenza di una seconda teoria della genesi psicologica dell'idea di sostanza (accanto a quella legata alla generalizzazione), senza tuttavia approfondire la peculiarità delle *ideas of passions* tra le idee di riflessione. Cfr. M. Stuart, *Locke's Metaphysics*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 2013, pp. 200-44.

49 Cfr. Locke, *Essay*, cit., II, XXI, 2-5, pp. 234-36.

contenuti sperimentali –, ma anche e soprattutto nel senso preciso di centro di inerenza e sussistenza). Di conseguenza, la dis-individuazione, come processo astrattivo in chiave esistenziale, basato proprio sull'esistenza come origine di irripetibilità e incomunicabilità, acquisisce una nuova sfumatura, perché quello da cui occorrerebbe prescindere sarebbe ciò che vi è di più 'soggettivo' nel soggetto e che rende 'soggettivi' certi contenuti (le *passions*, in quanto suoi modi), ossia il suo essere (il *sum*)[50]. La dis-individuazione diviene in tal modo dis-soggettivazione, un processo che trova un proprio erede, seppur paradossalmente, proprio in Condillac, il quale, forse per il proprio legame con l'ontologia leibniziana[51], accanto alla generalizzazione empiristica[52], finisce per coltivare (e, addirittura, radicalizzare, estendendo il tutto anche ai contenuti sensitivi), questa linea 'esistenziale' lockiana[53].

50 Si noti l'analogia e, al contempo, la differenza con quanto si trova ne *La Logique* di Port-Royal. Qui Arnauld, che resta ancora legato alla generalizzazione, pur ben consapevole, da cartesiano, dell'importanza del *sum*, scrive: "La troisiéme maniere de concevoir les choses par abstraction, est quand vne mesme chose ayant divers attributs on pense à l'vn sans penser à l'autre, quoy qu'il n'y ait entr'eux qu'vne distinction de raison. Et voicy comme cela se fait. Si ie fais par exemple reflexion que je pense; & que par consequent ie suis moy qui pense, dans l'idée que i'ay de moy qui pense, je puis m'appliquer à la consideration d'vne chose qui pense, sans faire attention que c'est moy, quoy qu'en moy, moy & celuy qui pense ne soit que la méme chose. Et ainsi l'idée que je concevray d'vne personne qui pense, pourra representer non seulement moy, mais toutes les autres personnes qui pensent" (A. Arnauld, P. Nicole, *La Logique ou l'Art de penser. Contenant, outre les Regles communes, plusieurs observations nouvelles propres à former le jugement* [Chez Guignard-Saureux-Launay, Paris 1662[1]], nouvelle impression en facsimilé in Id., *L'Art de penser. La Logique de Port-Royal*, vol. 1, éd. par B. Baron von Freytag Löringhoff et H.E. Brekle, Friedrich Frommann Verlag, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1965, I, 4, pp. 47-48).

51 Cfr. É. Bonnot de Condillac, *Les Monades*, édition établie et présentée par L.L. Bongie, apparat critique traduit de l'anglais par F. Heidsieck avec la collaboration de F. Pierobon, Millon, Grenoble 1994.

52 "[…] les notions abstraites se forment en cessant de penser aux propriétés par où les choses sont distinguées, pour ne penser qu'aux qualités par où elles conviennent" (É. Bonnot de Condillac, *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines*, in Id., *Œuvres Philosophiques*, vol. 1, texte établi et présenté par G. Le Roy, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1947, I, V, § 1, p. 48).

53 "Toutes nos premières idées ont été particulières […]. Or toutes ces idées présentent une vraie réalité, puisqu'elles ne sont proprement que notre être différemment modifié; car nous ne saurions rien apercevoir en nous que nous ne le regardions comme à nous, comme appartenant à notre être, ou comme étant notre être de telle ou telle façon, c'est-à-dire, sentant, voyant, etc.: telles sont toutes nos idées dans leur origine. Notre esprit étant trop borné pour réfléchir en même temps sur toutes les modifications qui peuvent lui appartenir, il est obligé de les distinguer, afin de les prendre les unes après les autres. Ce qui sert de fondement à cette distinction, c'est que ces modifications changent et se succèdent continuellement dans son être, qui lui paroît un certain fonds qui demeure toujours le même. Il est certain que ces modifications,

Peccato che, date le coordinate gnoseologiche iniziali del proprio sistema, in Condillac determinati concetti e termini chiave (come 'essere', 'soggetto', etc.) non abbiano più quella forza e quel valore che, invece, ancora possedevano per Locke, pur 'in sordina': pare infatti che il filosofo inglese, forse per timore di cadere nell'atteggiamento dogmatico della tradizione filosofica contro la quale si opponeva, abbia preferito de-potenziare le proprie conclusioni in materia di ontologia, rendendo il compito di ri-costruire la sua 'ontologia critica a base sperimentale' simile alla ricostruzione di un mosaico, tassello per tassello, seguendo spesso indicazioni che portano 'oltre' Locke, sia pure nel rispetto dello stesso.

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distinguées de la sorte de l'être qui en est le sujet, n'ont plus aucune réalité. Cependant l'esprit ne peut pas réfléchir sur rien […]. Comment donc ces modifications […] deviendront-elles l'objet de l'esprit? C'est qu'il continue de les regarder comme des êtres. Accoutumé, toutes les fois qu'il les considère comme étant à lui, à les apercevoir avec la réalité de son être, dont pour lors elles ne sont pas distinctes, il leur conserve, autant qu'il peut, cette même réalité, dans le temps même qu'il les en distingue" (Condillac, *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines*, cit., I, v, § 6, pp. 49-50). Si tratta di un aspetto che non viene sottolineato in: F. Duchesneau, "Sémiotique et abstraction: de Locke à Condillac", in *Philosophiques* 3 (1976), 2, pp. 147-66.

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Natura e origine del movimento in Locke

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Abstract: In the secondary literature one cannot find a study of how Locke addressed the issue of motion, of its nature and origin. With my essay I try to fill this gap, offering an overall analysis of the idea of motion in Locke's *Essay* and in his subsequent writings. Locke discussed the topic from a psychological perspective, as he adopted in his natural philosophy the mechanistic hypothesis that motion is transmitted only by impulse. I examine Locke's criticism of Descartes' theory of matter and his revision of his own mechanistic view, following Newton's theory of gravitation. My reconstruction focuses on the issue of the origin of motion that Locke defined within the metaphysical dualism of corporeal and incorporeal substances. Locke argues that the subjective experience of voluntary motions provides us with a clear idea of the origin of motion, while the observation of bodies allows us only to perceive its transmission. Locke ascribes to God the origin of motion in the universe, by analogy with its origin in spiritual finite substances. I will show how Locke maintained the long-standing metaphysical tenet of matter's passivity, and of the origin of motion through the agency of self-moving spiritual substances. However, due to Locke's psychological approach and his agnosticism on the real essence of substances, this conception loses its categorical certainty and becomes a weak analogical conjecture. Despite the conceptual difficulties besetting Locke's view of the origin of motion, his theory is noteworthy as it shows how metaphysical categories, traditionally assumed as fundamental ontological presuppositions, originate from a limited psychophysical experience.

Keywords: motion, movement, philosophy of nature, mechanicism.

1. *Premessa*

Ancora nel Settecento avanzato, Voltaire discuteva se il moto fosse o non fosse essenziale alla materia[1]. L'alternativa rispecchiava due opposte concezio-

[1] Voltaire, *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie*, in Id., *Oeuvres*, Cramer et Bardin, Genève 1775, t. 30 (6), s.v. "Mouvement", pp. 89-92.

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ni metafisiche: l'inerenza essenziale del moto alla materia apparteneva a concezioni materialistiche e naturalistiche, mentre l'inessenzialità del moto, e quindi l'integrale passività della materia, erano proprie di concezioni teistiche nelle quali l'origine del moto su scala cosmica era attribuita alla divinità. La prima concezione aveva matrici antiche nel naturalismo presocratico, nell'atomismo democriteo ed epicureo, e nell'ilozoismo stoico, mentre la seconda, di gran lunga dominante nella tradizione filosofica fino al Settecento, aveva le sue radici nel pensiero platonico e aristotelico, e fu poi accolta nel pensiero cristiano, medievale e moderno. L'affermarsi del principio di inerzia da Galilei a Newton implicò un ripensamento della natura e dell'origine del moto, che però non scardinò nel Seicento i presupposti della metafisica cristiana. Il paradigma tradizionale secondo il quale la materia è intrinsecamente passiva, mentre solo lo spirito è attivo, cosicché il moto non può che essere originariamente causato dalla sostanza incorporea, fu preservato da Descartes, mentre l'introduzione della concezione dinamica di Newton sollevò il problema di interpretare il rapporto tra la gravità e la materia. Ma anche Newton escluse che la gravità fosse inerente all'essenza dei corpi e ritenne che l'origine del moto richiedesse un principio attivo. A questo paradigma dominante non mancarono eccezioni nel Seicento: si pensi, nel solo pensiero britannico, al materialismo integrale di Hobbes oppure all'ilozoismo di Glisson. Tuttavia, la tendenza preminente in tutti gli autori che associavano la nuova scienza alla teologia cristiana era quella tradizionale di escludere l'attività della materia e l'appartenenza originaria del movimento alla materia; in questa tendenza, come vedremo, rientra anche Locke.

Una concisa illustrazione della questione che intendo affrontare ci è data da un autore come Robert Boyle, particolarmente significativo per la filosofia della natura di Locke. In *De Hypothesis Mechanicae Excellentia et Fundamentis Considerationes Quaedam Amico Propositae* (1674), Boyle aveva precisato che, nel propugnare la superiorità della filosofia corpuscolare ossia meccanica sulla filosofia naturale peripatetica e su quella spagirica, non intendeva sostenere la dottrina epicurea secondo la quale gli atomi, incontrandosi casualmente nel vuoto infinito, possono produrre da soli il mondo e tutti i suoi fenomeni; neppure intendeva aderire alla dottrina dei cartesiani secondo la quale, una volta ammessa l'attribuzione da parte di Dio di un'immutabile quantità di moto alla materia, non servirebbe altro per spiegare la formazione dell'universo, in quanto le particelle materiali con i loro moti sarebbero giunte a costituire il sistema del mondo. Scartate queste dottrine, Boyle affermava che Dio non solo ha introdotto il moto nella materia, ma ha anche diretto inizialmente i vari moti delle parti di

materia in modo che esse costituissero il mondo conformemente al suo disegno (*consilium*). Una volta stabilita questa cornice teologica, la filosofia meccanica può essere affermata come dottrina fisica, ossia si può affermare che i fenomeni del mondo "a mechanicis affectionibus partium materiae, ab iisque quae iuxta leges mechanicae illae in se invicem operantur, physice produci"[2]. Per Boyle i principi primi, semplici ed evidenti, della filosofia corpuscolare erano due, la materia e il movimento, distinguibili perché la materia, senza movimento, esiste rimanendo inerte. Ogni alterazione di un corpo e ogni azione di un corpo su un altro dipendono dal moto[3]. Posto che non possono esserci principi più semplici e primitivi del moto e della materia, Boyle enumerava le diverse possibilità di intendere la condizione della materia e il suo rapporto con il movimento:

> Neque concipere ulla Principia magis primaria possumus Materia & Motu. Nam vel ambo immediate creata fuere a Deo, vel, (ut id in eorum dicamus gratiam, qui Materiam improductam volunt) si Materia est aeterna, Motus productus sit necesse est a Supernaturali quodam Agente Immateriali, vel immediate emanare eum oportet ex natura Materiae ad quam pertinet[4].

Locke sceglierà la prima opzione e cioè che materia e moto sono entrambi creati immediatamente da Dio, precisando che il moto è un principio che Dio aggiunge all'essenza della materia. Il problema del moto era così centrale nella filosofia della natura seicentesca da rendere inevitabile che anche Locke si pronunciasse sul tema, benché non abbia mai dedicato ad esso una trattazione specifica. D'altronde, nell'ambiente intellettuale che aveva frequentato, la questione era una delle più dibattute. È utile ricordare che Locke fu ammesso nella Royal Society su proposta di uno dei fondatori, sir Paul Neile, il 26 novembre 1668 e che proprio in quei giorni al centro delle discussioni della Royal Society era la questione della collisione tra i corpi, della comunicazione e delle leggi del moto e, più in generale, della natura del moto e della quiete in relazione alla costituzione della materia. Il dibattito coinvolse Oldenburg, Wallis, Hooke, Wren e il figlio di sir Paul Neile, William[5]. Un contributo particolare al dibattito fu offerto da quest'ultimo che nelle sue lettere a Oldenburg, a par-

2 R. Boyle, *De Hypothesis Mechanicae Excellentia et Fundamentis Considerationes Quaedam Amico Propositae*, Typis T.R. impensis Henrici Herringman, Londini 1674, pp. 3-4.

3 Ivi, p. 8 s.

4 Ivi, p. 9.

5 Vedi D. Jalobeanu, "The Cartesians of the Royal Society. The Debate Over Collisions and the Nature of Body (1668-1670)", in D. Jalobeanu and P.R. Anstey (eds.), *Vanishing Matter and the Laws of Motion. Descartes and Beyond*, Routledge, New York-London 2011, pp. 112-20.

tire dal dicembre 1668, sottolineava la difficoltà di comprendere il problema della collisione dei corpi in quanto mancavano le definizioni dei concetti fondamentali coinvolti nelle leggi del moto. Secondo William Neile, le nature del moto e della quiete sono ignote perché la nostra conoscenza diretta si limita alle apparenze osservative, mentre resta sconosciuto il complesso e continuo movimento delle particelle submicroscopiche. Per quanto non vi siano indizi di un coinvolgimento diretto di Locke in questo dibattito, è plausibile pensare che ne fosse a conoscenza ed è significativo che la posizione del giovane Neile presenti affinità con le teorie di Locke.

Nel mio contributo intendo ricostruire natura e origine del movimento nell'*Essay* di Locke e negli scritti successivi[6]. Mostrerò come il presupposto della tradizione metafisica che negava alla materia la capacità di muovere se stessa e identificava l'origine del moto nel principio spirituale, pur essendo preservato da Locke, perde all'interno della *way of ideas* la sua categorica certezza trasformandosi in una debole congettura analogica.

2. *L'idea di moto in Locke*

Locke non dedica all'idea di moto la trattazione specifica che riserva alle idee di spazio, durata, espansione, numero, infinità e potere, ciascuna delle quali è esaminata in uno o più capitoli del secondo libro dell'*Essay*. Nondimeno, il moto occupa un ruolo fondamentale nella teoria delle idee perché l'origine delle idee di sensazione dipende dal contatto tra gli oggetti esterni e il nostro corpo, perché la sensazione è definita da Locke come "un'impressione o movimento" causato in qualche parte del nostro corpo e che produce una certa percezione nell'intelligenza (*Understanding*)[7]. Più precisamente, le idee di sensazione derivano dai diversi gradi e modi del movimento degli spiriti animali, che sono variamente scossi dall'azione degli oggetti esterni[8]. Alcune idee possono dipendere dalla diminuzione dei gradi di moto e quindi da cause pri-

[6] Mancano studi specifici dedicati al tema del movimento in Locke: vedi J.W. Yolton, *A Locke Dictionary*, Blackwell, Oxford 1993, s.v. "motion", pp. 151-53.

[7] J. Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. with a Foreword by P.H. Nidditch, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1975 (= *E*), II.i.23, p. 117.

[8] Ivi, II.viii.4, p. 133. Sull'origine delle sensazioni in seguito al movimento degli spiriti animali (il flusso dei corpuscoli) nei nostri nervi, causato dall'impatto degli oggetti esterni, vedi anche ivi, II.viii.12, II.viii.21, II.ix.3. Cfr. M. Jacovides, "Locke on Perception", in M. Stuart (ed.), *A Companion to Locke*, Wiley Blackwell, Chichester 2016, pp. 175-77; R.A. Wilson, "Primary and Secondary Qualities", ivi, p. 199.

vative, come ad esempio l'idea dell'ombra deriverà dalla attenuazione o assenza delle cause che generano l'idea della luce (II.viii.5-6). Locke distingue l'indagine sulle idee e la loro percezione, che è il tema proprio dell'*Essay*, dall'indagine fisica sulle cause delle idee nella struttura dei corpi, che dichiara di non voler intraprendere. D'altra parte, dovrà concedersi qualche digressione di 'filosofia naturale', per lo meno quel tanto che basta per chiarire la natura della sensazione e distinguere le qualità che risiedono nei corpi dalle idee che esse producono nella mente[9]. In quanto qualità dei corpi, il moto costituisce il nesso tra filosofia naturale e teoria delle idee, perché dal punto di vista fisico (e fisiologico) è la causa positiva o negativa (per privazione) della produzione di tutte le idee di sensazione. Questa tesi, centrale nell'*Essay*, sarà difesa da Locke anche in uno scritto del 1693 contro l'occasionalismo, nel quale affermerà che la tesi occasionalista sarebbe irrilevante perché non muta l'evidenza empirica dell'origine delle idee di sensazione dal moto impresso agli spiriti animali nei nervi:

> Whether the ideas of light and colours come in by the eyes, or no; it is all one as if they did; for those who have no eyes, never have them. And whether, or no, God has appointed that a certain modified motion of the fibres, or spirits in the optic nerve, should excite or produce, or cause them in us; call it what you please: it is all one as if it did; *since where there is no such motion, there is no such perception or idea*[10].

La tesi che le idee siano causate dal moto è 'probabile' perché si può spiegare la mutevolezza delle idee nella mente con il fatto che esse cambiano in funzione del variare del moto, che è il tramite tra gli oggetti esterni e le nostre rappresentazioni mentali:

> it seems probable that, in us, ideas depend on, and are some way or other the effect of motion: since they are so fleeting; it being, as I have elsewhere observed, so hard, and almost impossible, to keep in our minds the same unvaried idea, long together, unless when the object that produces it is present to the senses; from which the same motion that first produced it being continued, the idea itself may continue[11].

[9] *E* I.i.2, p. 43 s.; II.viii.2, p. 132 s.; II.viii.7, p. 134; II.viii.22, p. 140.

[10] J. Locke, *Remarks upon some of Mr. Norris's Books, wherein he asserts P. Malebranche's Opinion of Seeing all Things in God*, in Id., *Works*, print. for C. & J. Rivington, London 1824, 12ª ed., vol. 9, § 15, p. 254 (corsivo mio). Sulla critica di Locke all'occasionalismo vedi anche J. Locke, *Malebranche e la visione in Dio. Con un commento di Leibniz*, a cura di L. Simonutti, Edizioni ETS, Pisa 1994.

[11] Locke, *Remarks upon some of Mr. Norris's Books*, cit., § 17, p. 256.

Passando dal piano della causalità fisica a quello della teoria delle idee, Locke classifica l'idea di moto come idea semplice proveniente da più sensi, ossia dal tatto e dalla vista, come lo sono le idee di spazio, di figura e di quiete[12]. Nella nostra esperienza percettiva, l'idea di moto è associata ad altre idee semplici: può esserlo in maniera abituale, ma non costante, all'idea di colore, oppure in forma costante, all'idea di spazio. Tuttavia, l'idea del moto resta un'idea semplice perché abbiamo chiarezza percettiva della sua distinzione da altre idee che le sono congiunte[13]. Poiché le idee semplici si ricevono solo grazie all'impressione che gli oggetti fanno sulla nostra mente, anche il movimento, come tutte le idee semplici, potrà essere conosciuto solo per esperienza diretta e non mediante definizioni o spiegazioni verbali[14]. Per illustrare la tesi che le idee semplici sono per loro natura indefinibili, Locke ricorre proprio all'esempio del moto. La definizione aristotelico-scolastica del moto ("*Actus entis in potentia quatenus in potentia*") è un esempio di gergo insignificante, che non spiega nulla[15]; anche la definizione atomistica – ripresa da Gassendi – del moto come "passaggio da un luogo all'altro" non dà miglior risultato in quanto è una tautologia. Così pure risulta insoddisfacente la definizione dei cartesiani, secondo la quale il moto è "l'applicazione successiva delle parti della siuperficie di un

[12] *E* II.v, p. 127. L'idea di moto è definita 'simple' già nel Draft A § 15: J. Locke, *Drafts for the* Essay concerning Human Understanding *and Other Philosophical Writings*, vol. 1: *Drafts A and B*, ed. by P.H. Nidditch and G.A.J. Rogers, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1990, p. 30.

[13] Vedi *E* II.ii.1, p. 119; *E* II.xiii.11, p. 172: "Motion can neither be, nor be conceived without Space; and yet Motion is not Space, nor Space Motion". Vedi anche, ivi, II.xxi.3, p. 234, dove Locke riconosce che idee semplici come quelle di potere, estensione e moto hanno una componente relazionale. Sui problemi della classificazione lockiana di idee semplici e complesse vedi M. Brandt Bolton, "The Taxonomy of Ideas in Locke's Essay", in L. Newman (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Locke's "Essay concerning Human Understanding"*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2007, pp. 72-87.

[14] *E* III.iv.11, p. 424. Vedi anche, II.iv.6; III.iv.7.

[15] L'indefinibilità del movimento e la critica alla definizione aristotelica (per la quale vedi *Fisica* 201a 10) sono temi comuni nel Seicento: vedi lettera di Descartes a Mersenne del 16 ottobre 1639, in R. Descartes, *Tutte le lettere, 1619-1650*, Testo francese, latino e olandese, a cura di G. Belgioioso. Con la collaborazione di I. Agostini, F. Marrone, F.A. Meschini, M. Savini e di J.-R. Armogathe. Nuova edizione ampliata, riveduta e corretta, Bompiani Il Pensiero Occidentale, Milano 2009, p. 1061 (cfr. R. Descartes, *Oeuvres*, éd. par Ch. Adam et P. Tannery, nouv. Présent. par J. Beaude, P. Costabel, A. Gabbey et B. Rochot, Vrin, Paris 1964-74 [= AT], vol. II, p. 597); [A. Arnauld e P. Nicole], *Logique de Port-Royal* [1662], *suivie de trois fragments de Pascal, sur l'autorité en matière de philosophie, l'esprit géométrique et l'art de persuader*, avec une introduction et des notes par C. Jourdain, Hachette, Paris 1854, partie II, chap. XVI, p. 150; B. Pascal, *De l'esprit géométrique*, ivi, pp. 346-48; J. Glanvill, *Scepsis Scientifica: or, confest Ignorance, the Way to Science; In an Essay of the Vanity of Dogmatizing, and Confident Opinion*, print. by E. Cotes for H. Eversden, London 1665, p. 115: "The Philosopher that prov'd motion by walking, did in that action better defined it".

corpo a quelle di un altro corpo"[16]. Locke, peraltro, finisce anch'egli per dare nell'*Essay* una definizione del moto come 'cambiamento di distanza' quando afferma la differenza, contro Descartes, tra il moto dei corpi solidi e l'immobilità delle parti dello spazio, e quando attribuisce la mobilità non solo ai corpi, ma anche agli spiriti[17].

Dell'idea di moto abbiamo diverse varietà o modificazioni che Locke esemplifica elencando le idee riferibili ai termini 'scivolare', 'rotolare', 'rimbalzare', 'camminare', 'strisciare', 'correre', 'danzare', 'saltare', 'scavalcare', idee che sono tutte ben distinte l'una dall'altra[18]. L'idea di moto, come ogni altra idea semplice, può essere combinata con molte altre idee semplici dando origine a una grande varietà di idee complesse (II.xviii.6). La composizione dell'idea di moto con quelle di spazio e tempo dà origine alle idee complesse di 'veloce' e 'lento' (II.xviii.2).

Tutte le idee semplici, e dunque anche l'idea di moto, sono 'reali' (ossia hanno un fondamento in natura e non sono invenzioni della fantasia), 'adeguate' e 'vere' (ossia corrispondenti ai poteri insiti nelle cose che le producono). In più, il moto, insieme con la solidità, l'estensione, la figura e la quiete, è una di quelle idee che riproducono le qualità primarie dei corpi, ossia le qualità oggettive che sono realmente nel mondo a prescindere dall'esistenza di un essere senziente che le percepisca[19]. L'idea di moto, come quella di ogni altra qualità primaria, corrisponde a una modificazione reale della materia; per questo mo-

[16] *E* III.iv.8-10, pp. 422-23. Cfr. P. Gassendi, *Syntagma Philosophicum*, in *Opera Omnia*, sumptibus Laurentii Anisson & Ioan. Bapt. Devenet, Lugduni 1658, t. I, p. 273. Per la definizione dei 'cartesiani' si veda J. Rohault, *Traité de Physique*, chez la veuve de Charles Savreux, Paris 1671, p. 57. Peraltro, lo stesso Rohault aveva iniziato la trattazione del moto asserendo che "nous connoissons mieux le mouvement par experience, que nous n'en sçavons la definition ny la cause" (ivi, p. 55), e di conseguenza, per illustrare la natura del moto, aveva introdotto l'esempio di un uomo che passeggia, ricavando la definizione del moto solo a commento dell'esempio.

[17] *E* II.xiii.14, p. 173; ivi, II.xxiii.19, p. 306. Ovviamente, se il moto è definito come "change of distance" non può essere un'idea semplice: vedi D. Soles, "The Theory of Ideas", in Stuart (ed.), *A Companion to Locke*, cit., pp. 147-50.

[18] *E* II.xviii.2, p. 224. Si noti che Locke definisce l'idea di movimento un'idea semplice ed elenca le idee di modo ossia di modificazione di questa idea semplice. Locke non definisce il movimento un'idea di modo, il che contrasterebbe con la definizione dell'idea del movimento come idea semplice, in quanto tutte le idee di modo (sia le idee di modi semplici sia quelle di modi misti) sono idee complesse (II.xii.3-5). Sull'uso idiosincratico del termine 'modo' in Locke vedi P.R. Anstey, *John Locke and Natural Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2011, pp. 118-20.

[19] *E* II.xxxi.2, p. 376. Vedi anche *E* II.xxx.2, p. 373; Locke, *Remarks upon some of Mr. Norris's Books*, cit., p. 256: "Ideas may be real beings, though not substances; as motion is a real being though not a substance". Cfr. K. Allen, "Ideas", in S.J. Savonius-Wroth, P. Schuurman and J. Walmsley (eds.), *The Continuum Companion to Locke*, Continuum, London-New York 2010, p. 164.

tivo, lo scarto tra la trattazione del moto nella teoria delle idee e nella filosofia naturale si riduce al minimo grado possibile, benché debba sempre essere tenuto in conto sia perché Locke tratta il moto come idea e non dal punto di vista fisico, sia per i limiti della nostra conoscenza delle qualità primarie submicroscopiche, che stanno al di là della soglia di percepibilità.

Moto e quiete (*rest*) sono due idee semplici prodotte dalle corrispondenti qualità primarie, anche se Locke talvoltà designa come mobilità (*mobility*), ossia disposizione al moto, la qualità primaria del corpo da cui dipendono le idee di moto e di quiete[20]. Locke presenta la coppia 'moto e quiete' perché un corpo, di necessità, si trova nell'uno o nell'altro di questi due stati e Locke è incerto se interpretare l'idea di quiete come mera privazione del moto[21]. Tuttavia, dal punto di vista causale, moto e quiete non hanno pari rilevanza perché la causa di produzione delle idee di sensazione è il moto e non la quiete, e questo spiega l'uso assai più frequente in Locke del termine 'moto' per designare la corrispettiva qualità primaria, invece della coppia di stati 'moto o quiete' o del termine 'mobilità'[22]. Quando Locke descrive la genesi delle qualità secondarie, il moto soltanto (e non la quiete) entra in gioco perché la causa delle qualità secondarie altro non è che un potere nei corpi esterni di produrle in noi mediante le loro qualità primarie, ossia per mezzo della mole (*Bulk*), della figura, della struttura

[20] *E* II.viii.9, p. 135. Locke designa la qualità primaria come 'mobilità' in II.viii.9, mentre usa il termine 'moto' nella sezione successiva (viii.10) oppure parla di 'moto o quiete' (II.viii.22; II.x.6). S.C. Rickless, "Locke on Primary and Secondary Qualities", in *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 78 (1997), 3, pp. 297-319, interpreta la differenza tra mobilità e moto alla luce della distinzione tra 'determinabile' e 'determinato'; R.A. Wilson, "Locke's Primary Qualities", in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 40 (2002), 2, p. 223, osserva che Locke usa i termini 'moto', 'moto o quiete' e 'mobilità' per designare la stessa qualità primaria, ma che solo 'moto o quiete' e 'mobilità' possono correttamente riferirsi alla qualità primaria, in quanto Locke afferma che i corpuscoli non sono sempre in movimento (vedi *E* II.viii.23, p. 140). Sulle qualità primarie e la distinzione tra qualità primarie e secondarie, oggetto di molte controversie interpretative, vedi: E. McCann, "Locke's Philosophy of Body", in V. Chappell (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Locke*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1994, pp. 60-67; M. Jacovides, "Locke's Distinctions between Primary and Secondary Qualities", in Newman (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Locke's "Essay concerning Human Understanding"*, cit., pp. 101-29.

[21] "...in truth it will be hard to determine, whether there be really any *Ideas* from a privative cause, till it be determined, *Whether Rest be any more a privation than Motion*" (*E* II.viii.6, p. 134). M. Jacovides, *Locke's Image of the World*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2017, p. 103 rileva come il dubbio lockiano espresso in questo passo non sia compatibile con l'idea di spazio assoluto newtoniano, rispetto al quale moto e quiete si distinguono rigidamente. Sulla rilevanza ontologica in Locke della distinzione tra quiete e moto si veda *infra* pp. 109-11, 120-22.

[22] Wilson, "Locke's Primary Qualities", cit., p. 223 s.: "...it is not suprising to see motion alone appear on Locke's lists, since it is motion, and motion of the parts more particularly, that is typically the *efficient* cause here".

(*Texture*) e del movimento delle parti insensibili[23]. Il primato causale del moto riguarda anche le cosiddette qualità terziarie, ossia i poteri che risiedono nei corpi di produrre modificazioni in altri corpi; nel descriverli la quiete non è mai nominata e Locke fa riferimento solo alle interazioni corpuscolari[24]. D'altra parte, l'ontologia corpuscolare implicava la subordinazione della quiete al moto dal punto di vista causale, perché "tutte le cose esistenti, a eccezione del loro Autore, sono soggette al mutamento"[25] e il divenire dei fenomeni dipende dal mutamento della costituzione interna di ogni cosa, che è l'effetto dei moti corpuscolari[26].

L'ispezione mentale dell'idea di moto conduce Locke a criticare l'identità cartesiana di estensione e materia, e a introdurre l'idea di solidità. La concezione cartesiana del moto come traslazione di parti spaziali tra loro contigue non è perspicua e il pienismo cartesiano risulta in contrasto con l'esperienza ordinaria, alla quale è invece conforme la concezione atomistica che lo spazio vuoto sia necessario per permettere il movimento (II.xiii.22). La distinzione tra solidità ed estensione spaziale è legata all'idea di moto, perché lo spazio puro non può né muoversi né opporre resistenza al moto dei corpi, mentre l'idea di solidità è richiesta dal modello meccanicistico della trasmissione del moto per contatto[27]. Il pienismo cartesiano è rifiutato sul piano dell'analisi mentale delle idee, perché è possibile avere l'idea del moto di un corpo senza che ad essa si accompagni necessariamente l'idea del moto di un altro corpo: si possono concepire due corpi lontani, che si avvicinano nello spazio vuoto fino a entrare in contatto; oppure si può considerare un corpo che, movendosi rispetto ad altri corpi in quiete, abbandoni un luogo che resta vuoto e che potrà essere occupato da un

[23] *E* II.viii.10, p. 135. Vedi anche II.i.23, p. 117; II.viii.13-18, pp. 136-38 dove le idee delle qualità secondarie vengono sempre riferite a "Bulk, Number, Figure and Motion" e la quiete non è mai nominata.

[24] Vedi ivi, II.viii.10, 24 e 26; IV.vi.12.

[25] Ivi, III.iii.19, p. 419. Nel Draft B § 150 Locke aveva affermato che tutti gli effetti materiali in natura altro non sono che "modifications of motion" (Locke, *Drafts for the* Essay, cit., p. 262).

[26] Vedi anche la frase conclusiva in J. Locke, *Elements of Natural Philosophy* [1720], in Id., *Works*, cit., vol. II, p. 440: "By the figure, bulk, texture, and motion, of these small and insensible corpuscles, all the phænomena of bodies may be explained". Sul ruolo della ipotesi corpuscolare nella filosofia naturale di Locke vedi P.R. Anstey, "Locke and Natural Philosophy", in Stuart (ed.), *A Companion to Locke*, cit., pp. 69-73.

[27] *E* II.iv.3, p. 124; ivi, II.iv.5, p. 126: "*Upon the Solidity of Bodies* also *depends their mutual Impulse, Resistance, and Protrusion*". Locke aderì all'ipotesi meccanicistica dalla stesura del Draft B: vedi J. Walmsley, "The Development of Locke's Mechanism in the Drafts of the Essay", in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 11 (2003), 3, p. 444 s. Su Locke e il meccanicismo si veda il 'reassessment' di Anstey, *John Locke and Natural Philosophy*, cit., pp. 12-30; sulla interpretazione di Anstey, si vedano le puntuali critiche di J.C. Walmsley, "Review Article: John Locke and Natural Philosophy", in *Locke Studies* 12 (2012), pp. 243-84; Id., "Peter Anstey on Locke's natural philosophy", in *Locke Studies* 16 (2016), pp. 167-94.

secondo corpo, senza che nulla si opponga al moto di quest'ultimo né alcunché lo sospinga. Locke non vuole esaminare la questione fisica se il moto di un solo corpo non possa esistere senza che vi sia di necessità anche il moto di un altro corpo. Se la questione fosse posta in questi termini, afferma Locke, si potrebbe risolverla solo adottando una concezione pregiudiziale o vacuista o pienista. Il problema va esaminato invece sul piano della ispezione mentale delle idee, dove si può concepire facilmente la distinzione tra corpi solidi e spazio vuoto interposto[28]. La rappresentazione mentale delle idee di spazio, corpo e movimento deriva dall'esperienza ordinaria macroscopica e l'esistenza dello spazio vuoto si evince con chiarezza dal moto dei corpi osservabili[29]. Locke procede poi per analogia nel trapasso dall'osservazione empirica alla condizione delle particelle inosservabili: se prendiamo un corpo solido e lo dividiamo in parti, perché queste parti possano muoversi all'interno della superficie del corpo, dovrà esserci uno spazio vuoto di dimensione pari almeno alla parte più piccola in cui il corpo è stato diviso. Ma se questa è la condizione che permette il moto in un corpo osservabile, lo stesso ragionamento può essere replicato per qualunque dimensione del corpo si voglia assumere, per quanto piccola sia la divisione in parti e la porzione di spazio vuoto equivalente alla grandezza della parte più piccola. Si può procedere in *infinitum* nella riduzione della dimensione dello spazio vuoto, ma esso sarà comunque necessario per consentire il moto. La presenza di una minima parte di spazio vuoto basta a distruggere l'ipotesi pienista[30].

Alla luce dell'analisi mentale delle idee, solidità, spazio e moto si presentano come tre idee perfettamente distinguibili, anche se sempre associate:

> 'Tis true, Solidity cannot exist without Extension, neither can Scarlet-Colour exist without Extension; but this hinders not, but that they are distinct *Ideas*. Many *Ideas* require others as necessary to their Existence or Conception, which yet are very distinct *Ideas*. Motion can neither be, nor be conceived without Space; and yet Motion is not Space, nor Space Motion: Space can exist without it, and they are very distinct *Ideas*; and so, I think, are those of Space and Solidity[31].

[28] *E* II.iv.3, p. 124.

[29] Ivi, II.xiii.22, p. 177. Un'analisi degli argomenti di Locke contro l'identificazione cartesiana delle idee di spazio e corpo in L. Downing, "Locke and Descartes", in Stuart (ed.), *A Companion to Locke*, cit., pp. 108-15.

[30] *E* II.xiii.22, p. 177 s. Sull'analogia come unico procedimento che permette di formulare affermazioni probabili sulle cose che sono al di là della portata dei sensi vedi *E* IV.xvi.12. Cfr. Anstey, *John Locke and Natural Philosophy*, cit., pp. 76-80. 157 s., 166 s.; J. Walmsley, "Hypothesis and Analogy", in Savonius-Wroth *et alii* (eds.), *The Continuum Companion to Locke*, cit., pp. 157-59.

[31] *E* II.xiii.11, p. 172.

Locke afferma qui un significativo principio generale di distinzione concettuale, che potrebbe essere fatto valere contro Berkeley non solo per quanto riguarda il debolissimo argomento berkeleiano dell'associazione tra colore ed estensione, che nega la distinzione tra qualità primarie e secondarie[32], ma anche per confutare la stessa formula immaterialista "esse is percipi", che scambia la connessione inevitabile tra percezione ed esistenza per una riduzione dell'esistenza alla sfera mentale della percezione.

Nell'analisi dell'idea di moto sono di particolare rilievo le sue relazioni con l'idea di successione e di durata. L'idea di successione è gnoseologicamente prioritaria e più ampia rispetto a quella di moto, perché il moto non è percepibile direttamente, ma lo è solo perché produce una successione di idee nella mente; l'idea di successione, invece, poiché riguarda solo la sequenza psicologica delle idee, può presentarsi anche in assenza della idea di moto (II.xiv.6). Se il moto fisico è troppo lento o troppo rapido per produrre una successione di idee nella nostra mente, resta inosservato, a riprova che l'idea di moto dipende dall'idea di successione e non viceversa (II.xiv.7-12). Per quanto riguarda la durata, le idee di moto e di durata sono state spesso considerate insieme, perché per lunga consuetudine misuriamo il tempo con i moti degli astri o di strumenti artificiali; ma, precisa Locke, la vera misura del tempo non è data dai moti fisici, bensì dall'idea di successione regolare, ossia dalla percezione di apparizioni regolari di un medesimo fenomeno, le quali, anche in assenza di moto fisico, servirebbero egualmente bene a misurare il tempo, purché siano universalmente osservabili (II.xiv.19-20). La percezione della regolarità non può essere garantita dal moto in sé stesso, ma dipende dalla successione delle idee nella mente. Anche quando si ricorre a moti in apparenza molto regolari come le oscillazioni del pendolo, non possiamo essere certi della loro periodicità infallibile, perché la causa del moto ci è sconosciuta e non possiamo essere certi che operi in maniera uniforme. Perciò, per la misura del tempo, possiamo riferirci soltanto alla successione delle idee depositate nella memoria[33]. La durata è, peraltro, un'idea che eccede sia i corpi sia il moto con cui la misuriamo, perché indica la continuazione di ogni ente nell'esistenza (II.xv.4). Nella trattazione delle relazioni tra moto, successione e durata, Locke tiene distinta la realtà fisica del moto dalla sua trascrizione psicologica nelle idee; è questa dimensione mentale a risultare prioritaria.

[32] Cfr. G. Berkeley, *A Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, I § 10, in Id., *Philosophical Works, including the works on vision*, introd. and notes by M.R. Ayers, J.M. Dent & Sons, London, Charles E. Tuttle Co., Rutland (Vermont) 1992, p. 80.

[33] *E* II.xiv.21, p. 190. Vedi Jacovides, "Locke on Perception", cit., pp. 189-91.

La relazione del moto con la successione e la durata merita qualche osservazione. La prima è che, come si è già notato nel rapporto tra idea di moto e idea di spazio, l'idea di moto è un'idea semplice che però implica sempre la relazione con le idee di durata e di successione[34]. Una seconda osservazione riguarda l'affermazione che il moto non è percepibile in sé stesso, ma solo mediante la successione delle idee. Questa verità psicologica non scalfisce però il presupposto fisico che la successione di idee di sensazione nella mente dipende dal moto come impulso degli oggetti sul corpo senziente. Sarebbe infatti difficile supporre che nella mente si attivi una sequenza di idee senza che vi siano state idee di sensazione. Perciò, sotto questo profilo genetico, che pure resta ai margini della trattazione lockiana, il moto mantiene la sua primarietà. Quando Locke afferma che la misurazione della durata non dipende dal moto fisico, ma solo dalla regolarità dei fenomeni ossia da qualunque idea ricorrente in periodi equidistanti e che si possa notare universalmente[35], il suo ragionamento si riferisce a fenomeni senza moto locale osservabile: Locke propone esempi quali il variare della luminosità di un astro come il sole anche se l'astro fosse immobile, oppure il congelamento dell'acqua o il fiorire delle piante. Tuttavia, secondo l'ipotesi corpuscolare, sarebbe impossibile supporre l'accadere di qualunque fenomeno (periodico o no) in assenza di un moto microfisico che ne sia la causa. Perciò, anche se la misurazione del tempo dipende dalla percezione di idee avvertite come regolarmente ricorrenti, a prescindere dal moto locale visibile, la ricorrenza di idee sensibili è comunque l'effetto del moto locale inosservabile delle particelle.

3. *L'origine del moto*

Anche la questione dell'origine del moto è affrontata da Locke nell'ambito della teoria delle idee. Questo nuovo approccio lo separa nettamente da autori come Cudworth, il quale, poco più di un decennio prima della pubblicazione dell'*Essay*, aveva riproposto la teoria classica dell'origine del moto a partire da un primo motore incorporeo[36]. In *Essay* II.xxi, dopo aver distinto le nozioni

[34] Sulla problematica definizione di idea semplice in Locke, in quanto numerose idee semplici implicano relazioni con altre idee, si veda Allen, "Ideas", cit., p. 162. Vedi *supra* nota 13.

[35] *E* II.xiv.20, p. 189.

[36] Vedi R. Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, print. for R. Royston, London 1678, pp. 842-72 dove Cudworth stende una lunga sezione dedicata all' "Argument from Motion to prove a God".

di 'potere attivo' e 'potere passivo' (il primo è la capacità di produrre il mutamento e il secondo è la capacità di subirla), Locke ammette che sarebbe una questione meritevole di indagine se la materia sia del tutto priva di poteri attivi, se Dio sia del tutto al di sopra di ogni potere passivo e se invece gli spiriti creati, che si trovano in uno stato intermedio tra la materia e Dio, siano dotati di entrambi i poteri. Ma non appena delineato il tema ontologico, Locke lo riporta all'ambito gnoseologico, perché la sua indagine non riguarda l'origine del potere, ma dell'idea che ne abbiamo e anticipa subito che bisogna rivolgere la mente alla considerazione di Dio e degli spiriti per ottenere l'idea più chiara di potere attivo[37].

Il punto di partenza è l'osservazione che tutte le qualità delle cose sensibili sono in continuo flusso. Dall'osservazione dei mutamenti costanti si passa alla inferenza che deve esistere sia un potere attivo in grado di determinarli, sia un potere passivo ossia la capacità, nella cosa sensibile, di ricevere i mutamenti provocati dal potere attivo. Occorre stabilire in quali sostanze si trovi il potere attivo ossia, nello schema dualistico della ontologia lockiana, se il potere attivo risieda nei corpi o negli spiriti. La risposta proviene dalla comparazione tra l'osservazione dei corpi e l'introspezione mentale: "if we will consider it attentively, Bodies, by our Senses, do not afford us so clear and distinct an *Idea* of *active Power*, as we have from reflection on the Operations of our Minds"[38]. Ogni potere produce un'azione, e noi conosciamo solo due tipi di azioni: il pensiero e il movimento[39]. Occorre esaminare se abbiamo idee chiare dei poteri che producono questi due tipi di azioni. Abbiamo un'idea del pensare ottenuta dalla riflessione; quanto al movimento, l'osservazione dei corpi non ci dà un'idea dell'inizio del moto: non possiamo ottenerla dai corpi in quiete, mentre dai corpi in moto ricaviamo soltanto l'idea del potere passivo (di un'azione subìta) e non del potere attivo. L'esempio proposto da Locke – derivato da Malebranche e poi ripreso da Hume – è quello degli urti tra le palle da biliardo[40]. Quando vediamo una palla metterne in moto un'altra mediante impulso, osserviamo soltanto la trasmissione del moto e non la sua origine. Una palla

37 *E* II.xxi.2, p. 234.

38 Ivi, II.xxi.4, p. 235.

39 Ibid. Il potere che produce un'azione ha solo due forme: negli agenti intellettuali è il pensare e il volere; negli agenti corporei è "nothing else but Modifications of Motion" (ivi, II.xxii.11, p. 294).

40 Vedi N. Malebranche, *Entretiens sur la Métaphysique et sur la religion*, ed. par A. Robinet, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, Paris 1965, VII 11, pp. 161-62; D. Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section IV, part I, e Section VII, part II, in Id., *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. by L.A. Selby-Bigge, 3rd edition with text revised and notes by P.H. Nidditch, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1975, pp. 28-30 e 75-76.

comunica il moto che ha ricevuto e tanto ne trasmette quanto ne perde. Non abbiamo idea della produzione del movimento e non può essere considerata l'idea di un potere quella che ci dà soltanto la continuazione dell'azione subita e non la produzione dell'azione. Cercare l'origine del moto nella serie dei corpi è impossibile[41]. L'unico modo di concepire l'inizio di un moto deriva perciò dalla riflessione su noi stessi quando osserviamo che con un atto di volontà ("by a thought of the mind") mettiamo in movimento il corpo che prima era fermo. Comunemente si ritiene di ricavare l'idea di potere attivo dalla trasmissione del moto per impulso, ma una considerazione più attenta ci mostra che un'idea più chiara dell'origine del movimento proviene non dalle sensazioni esterne, bensì dalla riflessione che la mente svolge sulle proprie operazioni. Si deve notare che Locke propone questa tesi solo come il risultato della *maggiore chiarezza* che si ottiene comparando la riflessione sulle operazioni della mente all'osservazione del moto per impulso nei corpi:

> So that it seems to me, we have from the observation of the operation of Bodies by our Senses, but a very imperfect obscure Idea of *active Power*, since they afford us not any *Idea* in themselves of the *Power* to begin any Action, either motion or thought. But if, from the Impulse Bodies are observed to make one upon another, any one thinks he has a clear *Idea* of *Power*, it serves as well to my purpose, *Sensation* being one of those ways, whereby the mind comes by its *Ideas*: only I thought it worth while to consider here by the way, whether the mind doth not receive its *Idea* of *active Power* clearer from reflection on its own Operations, than it doth from any external Sensation[42].

Il passo mostra come la tesi metafisica tradizionale che opponeva l'attività dello spirito alla passività del corpo, ancorché confermata, venga privata della sua categorica assertività ontologica. Locke non esclude che si possa ricavare l'idea di potere dalla trasmissione del moto per impulso, ma afferma che in tal caso l'idea sarebbe più oscura e imperfetta rispetto a quella più chiara che ricaviamo dalla riflessione sulle operazioni della mente.

41 Vedi Glanvill, *Scepsis Scientifica*, cit., p. 154: "we cannot know any thing of Nature but by an Analysis of it to its true initial causes: and till we know the first springs of natural motions, we are still but Ignorants. These are the Alphabet of Science, and Nature cannot be read without them. Now who dares pretend to have seen the prime motive causes, or to have had a view of Nature, while she lay in her simple Originals? We know nothing but effects, and those but by our Senses".

42 *E* II.xxi.4, p. 235 s. In IV.iii.16 Locke parla di "Active and Passive Powers of Bodies", dipendenti dalla inconoscibile struttura e moto delle particelle. Il passo è interpretabile nel senso che per Locke i corpi hanno l'apparente capacità di produrre e non solo di subire modificazioni, ma l'idea più chiara dell'origine di tale potere proviene dagli spiriti.

L'analisi dei poteri attivi e passivi in relazione al pensiero e al movimento è approfondita in *Essay* II.xxi.72. L'uso generalizzato del termine 'azione' per designare ogni movimento è impreciso, perché molti moti non sono azioni, ma sono solo manifestazione dei poteri passivi insiti nei corpi; tali sono tutti quei moti che un corpo riceve dall'esterno, ossia che gli vengono impressi. Si ha potere attivo solo quando una sostanza agisce in maniera spontanea[43]. Nel linguaggio corrente definiamo 'azione' la modificazione che una sostanza solida, con il suo moto, opera sulle qualità sensibili di un'altra sostanza: "But yet this motion in that solid substance is, when rightly considered, but a passion, if it received it only from some external Agent. So that the *Active Power* of motion is in no substance which cannot begin motion in it self, or in another substance when at rest"[44]. Il vero potere attivo è solo quello che si riscontra nell'automovimento, che è la capacità di una sostanza in quiete di generare il moto in sé stessa o in un'altra sostanza. Per Locke l'automovimento è prerogativa degli spiriti, perché viene attestato dall'esperienza ordinaria della volontà che agisce sul nostro corpo. L'uomo è propriamente dotato di potere attivo, perché è capace di porsi da solo in movimento con un atto deliberato[45]. Ricompare così l'antica nozione platonica dell'anima come *autokineton*, ricondotta però alla sua origine psicologica nella esperienza ordinaria[46].

[43] Ivi, II.xxi.72, p. 285: "Sometimes the Substance, or Agent, puts itself into *Action* by its own Power, and this is properly *Active Power*". Locke riferisce il potere attivo alla libera volizione degli spiriti, ma riconosce che anche gli animali sono dotati di moto spontaneo (*E* III.iii.8, p. 412) e accenna alla differenza tra un organismo vivente e una macchina in II.xxvii.5, p. 331. Vedi M. Brandt Bolton, "Locke on Thinking Matter", in Stuart (ed.), *A Companion to Locke*, cit., pp. 347-48, la quale ritiene che per Locke "no system of moving particles regulates itself in virtue of the essence of moving configured bodies alone".

[44] *E* II.xxi.72, p. 286. Vedi la versione di Pierre Coste: "Et par conséquent, la Puissance active de mouvoir ne se trouve dans aucune Substance, qui *étant en repos* ne sauroit commencer le mouvement en elle-même, ou dans quelque autre Substance" (J. Locke, *Essai Philosophique concernant l'Entendement humain*, traduit de l'Anglois par M. Coste, chez Pierre Mortier, Amsterdam 1735, p. 222, corsivo mio).

[45] *E* II.xxi.72, p. 286: "...I am properly active; because of my own choice, by a power within my self, I put my self into that Motion. Such an *Action* is the product of *Active Power*". Cfr. ivi, II.xxiii.18, p. 306: "For as Body cannot but communicate its Motion by impulse, to another Body, which it meets with at rest; so the Mind can put Bodies into Motion, or forbear to do so, as it pleases". Vedi V. Chappell, "Power in Locke's *Essay*", in Newman (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Locke's "Essay concerning Human Understanding"*, cit., p. 133: "...Locke's position is that no body is an agent, properly speaking. Where then do we find active powers in the universe? Only, Locke thinks, in God and in finite spirits, including (in the latter category) our own minds...".

[46] Né in Platone né in Aristotele la definizione dell'anima come principio di moto è ricavata dall'esperienza psichica dei moti volontari. Nelle *Leggi* (894e-897b) l'anima è semovente e principio del moto perché è il principio della vita (895c-d) e Platone parla dell'anima in generale come anima del mondo (896e-897a); anche per Aristotele l'anima è principio della facoltà motrice in quanto è principio della vita (*De Anima* 413a21- 413b 15; 415b 8-14).

La differenza tra spiriti e corpi è fissata da Locke nella distinzione tra *mobility* e *motivity*: "*Mobility*, or the Power of being moved; which by our Senses we receive from Body [...] *Motivity*, or the Power of moving; which by reflection we receive from our Minds"[47]. La motività appartiene solo agli spiriti ed è indice della loro libertà, mentre la mobilità appartiene sia agli spiriti sia ai corpi. Per Locke gli spiriti finiti sono dotati, contrariamente a quanto riteneva Descartes, di mobilità ossia si muovono nello spazio congiuntamente al proprio corpo. L'argomento di Locke per sostenere la mobilità degli spiriti si basa sulla comprensione del moto come "change of distance": poiché gli spiriti finiti sono esseri reali che operano sui corpi, le loro operazioni avvengono in luoghi diversi dello spazio e gli spiriti si trovano a diverse distanze dagli altri spiriti e dagli altri corpi. La mobilità degli spiriti nello spazio è dunque deducibile dalla loro connessione con i corpi sui quali essi esercitano le proprie azioni in funzione della distanza (II.xxiii.18-20). Locke non attribuisce la mobilità a Dio, ma non in ragione della sua immaterialità, bensì della sua infinitezza: Dio è uno spirito infinito e dunque non si vede come e dove possa muoversi (II.xxiii.21).

Per comprendere la riflessione di Locke sull'origine del moto negli spiriti occorre tenere presente la distinzione tra teoria delle idee e filosofia naturale. Locke si affida all'osservazione che mentre i corpi comunicano il moto ad altri corpi soltanto per impulso, gli spiriti avvertono di essere autentica origine del moto perché dispongono del potere di iniziare e far cessare il moto di un corpo con un atto di libera volontà. Ma che valore può avere questa tesi alla luce del limite scettico che caratterizza la filosofia naturale[48], e che è dovuto alla inosservabilità della struttura corpuscolare submicroscopica? Perché negare che i corpi siano capaci di 'automovimento' se dei corpi conosciamo solo l'apparenza e non i meccanismi corpuscolari nascosti, non rilevabili percettivamente[49]?

47 *E* II.xxi.73, p. 286.

48 "Natural philosophy, as a speculative science, I think, we have none, and perhaps I may think I have reason to say we never shall. The works of nature are contrived by a wisdom, and operate by ways, too far surpassing our faculties to discover, or capacities to conceive, to be ever reduced into a science." (Lettera di John Locke a Edward Clarke del 15 marzo 1686: B. Rand, ed., *The Correspondence of John Locke and Edward Clarke*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1927, p. 156.)

49 Sulla inconoscibilità della struttura corpuscolare dovuta alla sua inosservabilità i passi sono numerosissimi: vedi, a titolo esemplificativo, *E* II.viii.13, II.xxiii.11-13, III.vi.9, IV.ii.11, IV.iii.12-14 e 16, IV.iii.24-26, IV.iii.28-29, IV.vi.11-12. Secondo L. Downing, "Are Corpuscles unobservable in principle for Locke?", in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 30 (1992), 1: pp. 33-52, per Locke i corpuscoli non sono inosservabili in linea di principio, ma soltanto in virtù dei limiti fattuali dei nostri sensi; la tesi era già stata proposta da J.W. Yolton, "The Science of Nature", in Id. (ed.), *John Locke: Problems and Perspectives. A Collection of new Essays*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1969, pp. 184-86. Su carattere e limiti dell'adesione di Locke al corpuscolarismo meccanicistico vedi: McCann, "Locke's

Perché l'ignoranza sui moti submicroscopici non induce Locke a una sospensione scettica del giudizio sul tema dell'origine del moto?

La soluzione di mantenersi sul piano della teoria delle idee, senza entrare nel merito della filosofia della natura, non è agevole sia per l'ovvia connessione tra i due ambiti, sia perché il limite scettico non riguarda soltanto la conoscenza della struttura delle sostanze corporee, ma si estende anche al nesso tra proprietà apparenti ed essenza delle sostanze spirituali. Nella sezione II.xxiii.5, intitolata "As clear an idea of spirit as body", Locke scrive:

> The same happens concerning the Operations of the Mind, *viz.* Thinking, Reasoning, Fearing, *etc*. which we concluding not to subsist of themselves, nor apprehending how they can belong to Body, or be produced by it, we are apt to think these the Actions of some other *Substance*, which we call *Spirit*; whereby yet it is evident, that having no other *Idea* or Notion, of Matter, but *something* wherein those many sensible Qualities, which affect our Senses, do subsist; by supposing a Substance, wherein *Thinking*, *Knowing*, *Doubting*, and a power of Moving, *etc.* do subsist, *We have as clear a Notion of the Substance of Spirit*, *as we have of Body*; the one being supposed to be (without knowing what it is) the *Substratum* to those simple *Ideas* we have from without; and the other supposed (with a like ignorance of what it is) to be the *Substratum* to those Operations, which we experiment in our selves within[50].

Il potere di dare origine al movimento, così come le attività intellettive o le passioni dell'anima (la paura), sono attribuite a una supposta sostanza spirituale perché non comprendiamo come tutte queste proprietà possano appartenere ai corpi; per entrambe le sostanze non si conosce la ragione della connessione tra proprietà ed essenza della sostanza. Il limite scettico è profondo, perché non si comprende come si possano spiegare le stesse proprietà: la coesione delle par-

Philosophy of Body", cit., pp. 56-60, 64-76; L. Downing, "The Status of Mechanism in Locke's *Essay*", in *The Philosophical Review*, 107 (1998), 3, pp. 406-9; S. Ducheyne, "The Flow of Influence: from Newton to Locke… and Back", in *Rivista di Storia della filosofia*, 64 (2009), 2, pp. 262-67. La questione è ampiamente discussa da Anstey, *John Locke and Natural Philosophy*, cit., pp. 31-45, 105-8, 222-23, secondo il quale il "corpuscular pessimism" è "the dominant philosophical problem that Locke confronted in his reflection on the nature of natural philosophy"; ne consegue "his nescience about the nature of matter and of its properties such as cohesion and motion" (p. 32).

[50] *E* II.xxiii.5, p. 297 s. Cfr. Glanvill, *Scepsis Scientifica*, cit., chap. IV § 1, p. 16 (incomprensibilità dell'unione di corpo e spirito); §§ 2-3, pp. 16-20 (impossibilità di comprendere come l'anima impartisca il moto al corpo anche se l'esperienza ci mostra che i moti spontanei dipendono dalle nostre volizioni). Affermazioni agnostiche sulla natura dei corpi e degli spiriti anche in R. Boyle, *The Christian Virtuoso*, The Second Part, in *The Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle*, print. for A. Millar, London 1744, vol. V, p. 707 s.

ti nella estensione è tanto difficile da intendere quanto il modo in cui gli spiriti percepiscono o danno origine al moto. Siamo davanti a fatti empiricamente constatabili, ma razionalmente inesplicabili:

> The matter of Fact is clear, I confess; but when we would a little nearer look into it, and consider how it is done, there, I think, we are at a loss, both in the one, and the other; and can as little understand how the parts of Body cohere, as how we our selves perceive, or move[51].

Se il limite epistemico è di tale portata, perché dobbiamo attribuire l'origine del moto alla sostanza incorporea piuttosto che a quella corporea, oppure perché non è più opportuno sospendere il giudizio? La risposta di Locke in II.xxiii.28-29 ("Communication of Motion by Impulse, or by Thought, equally intelligible") è che la motività appare con chiarezza nello spirito, ma non nel corpo. Più precisamente, Locke argomenta così: noi possediamo sia l'idea che i corpi hanno il potere di comunicazione del moto per impulso, sia l'idea che le nostre anime hanno il potere di suscitare il moto con il pensiero. Queste idee ci sono fornite dall'esperienza quotidiana con la stessa chiarezza, ma in entrambi i casi non riusciamo a concepire né il passaggio del moto da un corpo all'altro né come le nostre menti possano muovere o arrestare il moto dei nostri corpi con il pensiero. Se però consideriamo non più la sola comunicazione del moto da parte del corpo o dello spirito, bensì la motività ("the active power of moving"), allora il parallelismo scettico si spezza perché l'idea di motività è molto più chiara nello spirito che nel corpo. In due corpi posti in quiete l'uno accanto all'altro, non potremo mai capire come possa originarsi il potere dell'uno di muovere l'altro se non mediante un potere preso in prestito da un terzo corpo, mentre se consideriamo la mente, osserviamo in noi il potere attivo di muovere i corpi. Da questa esperienza psicologica – congiunta a un'implicita concezione meccanicistica di stampo cartesiano della trasmissione del moto tra i corpi – Locke ritiene siano legittimate *congetture* metafisiche generali che riguardano il rapporto tra gli spiriti, la materia, l'attività e passività:

> and therefore it is worth our consideration, whether active power be not the proper attribute of Spirits, and passive power of Matter. Hence may be conjectured, that created Spirits are not totally separate from Matter, because they are

[51] *E* II.xxiii.25, p. 309 s. Sulla impossibilità di comprendere la coesione e continuità delle parti della materia vedi Downing, "The Status of Mechanism in Locke's *Essay*", cit., p. 407s.; Anstey, *John Locke and Natural Philosophy*, cit., pp. 105-8.

> both active and passive. Pure Spirit, viz. God, is only active; pure Matter is only passive; those Beings that are both active and passive, we may judge to partake of both[52].

Formulate queste distinzioni ontologiche in via congetturale, Locke torna però a ribadire il parallelismo scettico tra le due sostanze:

> But be that as it will, I think, we have as many, and as clear *Ideas* belonging to Spirit, as we have belonging to Body, the Substance of each being equally unknown to us; and the *Idea* of Thinking in Spirit, as clear as of Extension in Body; and the communication of Motion by Thought, which we attribute to Spirit, is as evident, as that by impulse, which we ascribe to Body. Constant Experience makes us sensible of both of these, though our narrow Understandings can comprehend neither[53].

Questa sezione non è priva di difficoltà. Locke vi afferma che, se pensiamo a due corpi posti in quiete l'uno accanto all'altro, non potremo mai avere l'idea del potere di un corpo di muovere l'altro. Tuttavia, l'esperienza del magnetismo smentiva quest'asserzione. Locke stesso aveva presentato l'attrazione del ferro da parte della calamita come esempio degli "active Powers" e delle "passive Capacities" presenti nelle sostanze[54]. Il magnete non è l'unico caso in cui nell'*Essay* Locke si riferisce ai poteri attivi dei corpi: a proposito del significato del termine oro, Locke si riferisce alle proprietà che dipendono dalla sua 'real Constitution' e che sono i suoi poteri attivi e passivi rispetto ad altri corpi[55]. Nel quarto libro, esaminando i poteri delle sostanze di mutare le qualità sensibili di altri corpi, Locke parla di "Active and Passive Powers of Bodies" dipendenti dalla inconoscibile struttura e moto delle particelle[56]; nello stesso capitolo, a proposito dei corpi che ci restano nascosti per la loro piccolezza, Locke non esita ad attribuire l'attività ai corpuscoli:

> These insensible Corpuscles, being the active parts of Matter, and the great Instruments of Nature, on which depend not only all their secondary Qualities, but also most of their natural Operations, our want of precise distinct *Ideas* of

52 *E* II.xxiii.28, p. 311 s. Sulla natura congetturale del metodo conoscitivo lockiano, ivi, I.iv.25, p. 103.

53 Ivi, II.xxiii.28, p. 312. Il parallelismo è confermato anche in II.xxiii.29, p. 312.

54 Ivi, II.xxiii.7, p. 299. Vedi anche ivi II.xxiii.9, p. 301 circa la "alteration a Load-stone has the Power to make in the minute Particles of Iron".

55 Ivi, III.ix.17, p. 486.

56 Ivi, IV.iii.16, p. 547.

> their primary Qualities, keeps us in an uncurable Ignorance of what we desire to know about them[57].

Un secondo problema è che non si capisce come Locke possa distinguere il potere di provocare il moto con il pensiero – la cui idea egli dichiara tanto oscura o, se si vuole, altrettanto evidente quanto la comunicazione per impulso del moto da corpo a corpo – dalla motività, ossia dall'idea del potere attivo di muovere i corpi, che risiede nella mente e che non potremmo mai derivare dai corpi. Che altro è la produzione del moto da parte dello spirito se non la 'comunicazione' del moto da spirito a corpo, ossia la capacità di suscitare il moto nel corpo? L'unico modo di spiegare la rottura del parallelismo scettico a proposito dell'origine del moto può essere quello di provare a distinguere il modo in cui effettivamente avviene la comunicazione del moto dalla mente al corpo (oscuro tanto quanto la comunicazione del moto per impulso), dalla percezione che la mente ha in sé stessa della propria libera capacità di muovere il corpo (un'idea chiara alla mente). Questa distinzione non è esplicitata, ma sembra coerente con una teoria come quella lockiana che privilegia la percezione degli stati mentali: avverto con chiarezza che a una mia volizione segue un moto corporeo, laddove nel mondo esterno osservo solo trasmissione del moto tra i corpi. Nella sua indagine sul moto il testo di Locke dimostra sia la priorità del punto di vista introspettivo, sia una concezione complessiva fortemente agnostica. Le distinzioni tradizionali (spirito attivo/corpo passivo) permangono, ma perdono la loro forza assertoria categoriale e diventano deboli congetture soggette alla consapevolezza, insistentemente ribadita, dei nostri limiti conoscitivi.

Per concludere l'esposizione della teoria lockiana del moto, occorre considerarne il rapporto con l'idea di Dio. Quest'ultima è costruita per analogia con l'idea del nostro spirito finito, attribuendo ad un essere con un grado illimitato di perfezione le stesse idee semplici che abbiamo ottenuto dalla riflessione sulle operazioni della nostra mente. In analogia rispetto alla nostra capacità di muovere il corpo, attribuiamo a Dio la facoltà di generare il movimento universale[58]. In questa fondazione teologica del moto, la teoria lockiana accetta il presupposto dominante nella filosofia naturale seicentesca[59]. Nel capitolo in

[57] Ivi, IV.iii.25, p. 555 s.

[58] Ivi, III.vi.11, pp. 445-46.

[59] A titolo esemplificativo: "Considero la materia lasciata liberamente a sé e tale da non ricevere alcun impulso da altro, come pienamente in riposo. Essa viene spinta da Dio, che vi conserva tanto movimento, ossia traslazione, quanto ne ha posto dall'inizio" (Descartes a More, agosto 1649, in Descartes, *Tutte le lettere*, cit., p. 2745: AT, vol. V, p. 404); "but since Local Motion, or an Endeavour at it,

cui dimostra l'esistenza di Dio, Locke riafferma che la materia è inerte e dunque non può produrre da sé il movimento. Come la materia non potrebbe sorgere dal nulla, così il movimento non può sorgere dalla materia perché la materia non dispone della potenza causale per generarlo:

> Let us suppose any parcel of Matter eternal, great or small, we shall find it, in it self, able to produce nothing. For Example; let us suppose the Matter of the next Pebble, we meet with, eternal, closely united, and the parts firmly at rest together, if there were no other Being in the World, Must it not eternally remain so, a dead inactive Lump? Is it possible to conceive it can add Motion to it self, being purely Matter, or produce any thing? Matter then, by its own Strenght, cannot produce in it self so much as Motion: the Motion it has, must also be from Eternity, or else be produced, and added to Matter by some other Being more powerful than Matter; Matter, as is evident, having not Power to produce Motion in it self. [...] if we will suppose nothing first, or eternal; *Matter* can never begin to be: If we suppose bare Matter, without Motion, eternal; *Motion* can never begin to be: If we suppose only Matter and Motion first, or eternal; *Thought* can never begin to be[60].

La tesi è che il movimento non possa appartenere intrinsecamente alla materia e che quindi sia ingenerabile a partire dalle qualità della materia, perché la materia è passiva. Ma quale argomento può produrre Locke a sostegno di questa tesi? L'unico argomento fa leva sulla distinzione tra moto e quiete. Il moto è un'operazione che può anche essere assente, e dunque non appartiene necessariamente all'essenza della materia:

is not included in the nature of Matter, which is as much Matter when it rests, as when it moves; [...] I [...] shall not scruple to say [...] That the Origine of Motion in Matter is from God" (R. Boyle, *The Origine of Formes and Qualities*, print. by H. Hall for R. Davis, Oxford 1667, p. 3 s.); "...cum omnis quae in ipsis [Atomos] mobilitas est, a Deo authore indita sit..." (Gassendi, *Syntagma philosophicum*, cit., p. 335); "La matière est mobile essentiellement. Elle a de sa nature une capacité passive de mouvement. Mais elle n'a de capacité active, elle n'est mue actuellement que par l'action continuelle du Créateur" (Malebranche, *Entretiens sur la Métaphysique et sur la religion*, cit., VII 12, p. 164); "Atoms were produced *ex nihilo*, or created by God. [...] at their Creation, God invigorated or impregnated them with an Internal Energy, or Faculty Motive, which may be conceived the First Cause of all Natural Actions, or Motions, [...] performed in the World" (W. Charleton, *Physiologia Epicuro-Gassendo-Charltoniana*, print. by T. Newcomb, London 1654, p. 126); "All the Local Motion that is in the World, was First Caused by some Cogitative or Thinking Being, which not Acted upon by any thing without it, nor at all Locally Moved, but only Mentally; is the Immoveable Mover of the Heaven, or Vortices. So that Cogitation is in Order of Nature, before Local Motion, and Incorporeal before Corporeal Substance, the Former having a Natural Imperium upon the Latter" (Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System*, cit. p. 844).

[60] *E* IV.x.10, p. 623 s.

> I confess my self, to have one of those dull Souls, that doth not perceive it self always to contemplate *Ideas*, nor can conceive it any more necessary for the *Soul always to think*, than for the Body always to move; the perception of *Ideas* being (as I conceive) to the Soul, what motion is to the Body, not its Essence, but one of its Operations[61].

Se il moto è *una* delle operazioni della materia (insieme forse alla vita o al pensiero), lo stato alternativo al moto, ossia la quiete, non può essere definito un'"operazione" e sembra piuttosto essere la condizione in cui la materia si trova 'naturalmente', in ragione della sua sola esistenza. E tuttavia, se la possibilità della materia di essere sia in moto sia in quiete impedisce che si possa considerare il moto una proprietà essenziale della materia, altrettanto si dovrebbe poter dire della quiete. Per Locke, la coppia 'moto o quiete' è, peraltro, una qualità primaria e dunque occorre comprendere quale sia il rapporto tra le qualità primarie e l'essenza reale della materia. Se si ritiene che l'essenza reale della materia sia data dalla struttura corpuscolare submicroscopica, allora ad essa possono appartenere sia il moto sia la quiete; se invece si assume l'interpretazione (meno plausibile, a mio parere) che per Locke le proprietà (primarie e secondarie) appartengono solo all'essenza nominale e non all'essenza reale della sostanza – e quindi che l'essenza reale della materia non sia la struttura corpuscolare, ma sia qualcosa di ignoto da cui deriva e dipende la struttura corpuscolare –, allora l'affermazione che il moto non appartenga all'essenza della materia è un mero truismo[62]. Ma in tal caso, lo stesso vale anche per la quiete, dato che 'moto o quiete' sono qualità primarie osservabili nell'esperienza ordinaria dei corpi. Pertanto, in entrambe le interpretazioni, si può concludere che per Locke l'essenza della materia è indifferente al moto e alla quiete. Nondimeno, tra moto e quiete esiste uno scarto

[61] Ivi, II.i.10 p. 108. Cfr. l'annotazione nei Journals del 20 febbraio 1682: J. Locke, *An Early Draft of Locke's Essay, together with Excerpts from his Journals*, ed. by R.I. Aaron and J. Gibb, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1936, p. 123: "[Spirit and matter] may both lye dead and unactive, i.e. the one without thought, the other without motion a minute an hower or to eternity, which wholy depends upon the will and good pleasure of the first author". Vedi M. Ayers, *Locke. Epistemology & Ontology* [1991], Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005, vol. 2, *Ontology*, p. 36 s. Jacovides, *Locke's Image of the World*, cit., osserva che per Locke "*Motion* is an explanatory quality, but it's not obvious that it belongs to bodies as they are in themselves" (p. 109).

[62] Sulla questione se l'essenza reale della sostanza materiale sia o non sia identificabile con la struttura corpuscolare vedi L. Downing, *Locke's Ontology*, in Newman (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Locke's "Essay..."*, cit., pp. 354-59: "On this interpretation, Locke's core notion of primary quality emerges as that of an intrinsic and irreducible quality. It is a metaphysical notion at the same level as, and logically linked to, the metaphysical notion of real essence" (p. 356 s.); per l'interpretazione opposta vedi M. Atherton, s.v. "Essences, real and nominal", in Savonius-Wroth *et alii* (eds.), *The Continuum Companion to Locke*, cit., p. 144. Cfr. *E* III.iii.15-17, p. 417 s.

ontologico, perché il moto è un'operazione che dev'essere aggiunta, laddove la quiete è lo stato in cui la materia si trova, una volta creata. Dieci anni dopo l'*Essay*, nella polemica con Stillingfleet sulla 'thinking matter', Locke affermerà che l'essenza della materia consiste nell'essere una sostanza solida estesa; perché la materia sia in quiete non si richiede altro, laddove la proprietà del moto è una proprietà aggiunta dall'intervento divino:

> The idea of matter is an extended solid substance; wherever there is such a substance, there is matter, and the essence of matter, whatever other qualities, not contained in that essence, it shall please God to superadd to it. For example, God creates an extended solid substance, without the superadding any thing else to it, and so we may consider it at rest: to some parts of it he superadds motion, but it still has the essence of matter[63].

La tesi che la quiete sia lo stato in cui la materia si trova naturalmente una volta creata, laddove il moto richiede un'iniziativa divina che lo aggiunge alla materia, ha carattere puramente speculativo per due ragioni: perché è dedotta dalla definizione della materia come sostanza solida estesa, dalla quale è pregiudizialmente esclusa ogni attività; perché non si vede in base a quale argomento tratto dall'esperienza Locke possa presumere che Dio crei la materia in quiete e non crei invece una sostanza solida estesa, indifferentemente in stato di quiete o di moto inerziale[64].

Peraltro, la separazione tra materia e moto non giocava nell'*Essay* un ruolo nella dimostrazione dell'esistenza di Dio: se anche concedessimo che la materia fosse dotata di un moto eterno (ipotesi atomistica, evocata per amore di argomentazione), non si riuscirebbe mai a spiegare come dai moti eterni dei corpuscoli possano sorgere sensibilità, percezione e conoscenza, proprietà che devono essere causate da una sostanza spirituale (IV.x.10 e 17). La conclusione del capitolo decimo del quarto libro dell'*Essay* (IV.x.19) mette in luce il parallelismo tra il rapporto anima-corpo nell'individuo e il rapporto Dio-materia nell'universo. Anche in questo caso, l'impostazione è scettica: noi non possiamo concepire

[63] J. Locke, *Reply to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Worcester's Answer to his second Letter* [1699], in Id., *Works*, cit., vol. III, p. 460. Ulteriori *superadditiones* divine saranno la concessione alla materia della vita vegetativa (piante), della sensibilità e del moto spontaneo (animali), e infine del pensiero, della ragione e della volontà (uomo) (ivi). Vedi *infra* pp. 119-22.

[64] Nel celebre scolio su spazio e tempo assoluti Newton aveva scritto: "Può anche essere che non ci sia di fatto nessun corpo in quiete cui riferire i luoghi e moti" (I. Newton, *Principi matematici della filosofia naturale*, a cura di F. Giudice, Einaudi, Torino 2018, p. 32; cfr. Id., *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, iussu Societatis Regiae ac Typis Josephi Streater, Londini 1687, p. 7).

come Dio crei qualcosa dal nulla, ma il fatto che non possiamo comprendere come ciò avvenga non ci autorizza a negare la possibilità che avvenga; sarebbe irragionevole negare il potere di un Essere infinito soltanto perché non possiamo comprenderne le operazioni[65]. Per sostenere questa tesi, Locke ricorre all'esempio dei moti volontari, che non comprendiamo come avvengano, ma che non possiamo negare in quanto sono fatti costantemente osservabili. I moti volontari servono a dimostrare che il pensiero può agire sui corpi; per estensione analogica, il pensiero divino può creare la materia dal nulla. L'analogia è però debolissima, in quanto nel caso dei moti volontari abbiamo ripetuta esperienza di fatti, ancorché la natura della comunicazione del moto sia in sé stessa inintelligibile, mentre nella *creatio ex nihilo* non abbiamo esperienza di alcunché. Com'è noto, sarà Hume nei *Dialogues concerning natural religion* a rilevare la pochezza di simili analogie. Ma Locke non insiste tanto sulla validità dell'analogia; piuttosto, si accontenta di un appello retorico all'incomprensibilità di entrambi i lati dell'analogia, sia quello familiare sia quello trascendente, per rendere plausibile l'accettazione della incomprensibile *creatio ex nihilo.* Il ragionamento lockiano è imperniato sulla consapevolezza di un limite conoscitivo invalicabile che concerne sia l'agire umano sia l'agire divino, dalla produzione del moto e del pensiero nella mente finita, alle operazioni di Dio, fino al libero arbitrio nell'uomo:

> Thus, we having but imperfect *Ideas* of the Operations of our Minds, and of the Beginning of Motion or Thought how the Mind produces either of them in us, and much imperfecter yet, of the Operation of God, run into great Difficulties about free created Agents, which Reason cannot well extricate itself out of[66].

Il quadro metafisico tradizionale è mantenuto, ma il tratto peculiare del testo lockiano non è la conferma delle categorie consuete, quanto la loro incomprensibilità.

4. *L'analogia mente-corpo / Dio-mondo*

Partire dall'esperienza del rapporto mente-corpo nell'uomo per spiegare l'origine del movimento in Dio era un tema non insolito nel Seicento, come mostrano alcuni testi che possono fungere da elementi di confronto per inten-

[65] *E* IV.x.19, p. 629.
[66] Ivi, IV.xvii.10, p. 682.

dere la posizione di Locke. Nella lettera a More del 15 aprile 1649, Descartes aveva scritto:

> E come non è indegno di un filosofo ritenere che Dio possa muovere i corpi, anche se non ritiene Dio corporeo, così neppure è indegno di lui giudicare qualcosa di simile delle altre sostanze incorporee. E sebbene io ritenga che nessun modo di agire convenga univocamente a Dio ed alle creature, confesso, tuttavia, di non trovare nella mia mente alcun'idea che rappresenti il modo in cui Dio, o l'angelo, può muovere la materia, diversa da quella che mi esibisce il modo in cui io sono cosciente di poter muovere il mio corpo attraverso il mio pensiero[67].

Descartes non presenta qui un argomento per attribuire l'origine del moto soltanto alle sostanze incorporee, ma si limita a dire che l'unico modo in cui possiamo concepire questo evento ci è dato dalla nostra esperienza dei moti volontari, pur nella consapevolezza teologica dei limiti della analogia tra azioni umane e azioni divine[68]. Che anche Descartes considerasse la questione tutt'altro che semplice si evince dalla successiva lettera a More (agosto 1649) in cui, dopo aver ribadito che la materia in sé stessa è in quiete e viene messa in moto da Dio, il quale vi conserva la quantità di moto immessa inizialmente, afferma che la forza movente può essere o in Dio o nella sostanza creata, "come la nostra mente o qualsiasi altra cosa cui [Dio] abbia dato la forza di muovere il corpo". Ma tra l'azione movente della sostanza creata e quella di Dio l'analogia è imperfetta:

> E certamente quella forza nella sostanza creata è un suo modo, ma non in Dio; poiché, però, ciò non può così facilmente essere inteso da tutti, non ho voluto trattare di tale questione nei miei scritti, affinché non sembrassi appoggiare l'opinione di coloro che considerano Dio come l'anima del mondo unita alla materia[69].

Anche Locke è consapevole, come vedremo, del limite dell'analogia[70] e si limita a formulare una generica congettura metafisica sull'origine del moto nella sostanza spirituale finita e infinita, dichiarando peraltro inintelligibile il

[67] Descartes, *Tutte le lettere*, cit., p. 2687 (AT, vol. V, p. 347).

[68] Come Descartes anche Boyle, *The Christian Virtuoso*, The Second Part, cit., p. 707, notava: "When we ascribe power to God, as that of creating, it is *toto coelo* differing from that which we ascribe to bodies, and even from that which the human soul exercises on its own body".

[69] Descartes, *Tutte le lettere*, cit., p. 2745 (AT, vol. V, p. 404).

[70] Vedi *infra* "6. Conclusione".

modo in cui il movimento abbia origine in entrambe le sostanze. Locke mantiene ancora l'ontologia dualistica cartesiana, ma introduce un limite scettico, in quanto dichiara inconoscibili le essenze reali di entrambe le sostanze. In tal modo il dualismo perde la rigida demarcazione categoriale che aveva in Descartes e si apre un percorso che condurrà nel pensiero britannico alla crisi di quella ontologia.

Un testo più vicino a Locke è uno dei sermoni che il maestro di Newton, Isaac Barrow, aveva composto verso la fine degli anni sessanta sugli articoli del Credo. Barrow afferma che l'introspezione ci mostra come, avendo in noi "una sorgente di moto e attività volontaria", siamo esseri che agiscono finalisticamente con deliberazione razionale, non soggetti al cieco caso della necessità materiale[71]. Vi è una somiglianza tra l'anima e Dio nella natura e nell'azione: Dio "con la sua presenza e influenza [...] contiene e tiene unita l'intera struttura delle cose", così come l'anima "connette le parti del corpo con la sua unione al corpo e con la sua attività invisibile ('secret energy') sul corpo"[72]. L'analogia Dio-mondo, anima-corpo, riguarda non solo la conservazione dell'ordine materiale, ma anche l'origine del movimento: "As He [God] incomprehensibly by a word of his mind, or by a mere act of will doth move the whole frame or any part of nature; so doth she [the soul], we cannot tell how, by thinking onely, and by willing wield her body, and determine any member thereof to motion"[73]. La incomprensibilità di entrambi i lati dell'analogia ritorna anche in Locke, ma Locke non insiste, al contrario di Barrow, sul parallelismo mente-corpo e Dio-mondo, e in tal modo evita il problema della riduzione di Dio ad *anima mundi*, a cui allude Descartes nella lettera a More e che anche Newton si preoccuperà faticosamente di escludere nello *Scholium Generale*[74].

Un altro utile riferimento si trova nel *De gravitatione et aequipondio fluidorum*, in un passo in cui Newton parla della creazione dei corpi nello spazio:

[71] I. Barrow, "Sermon VII The Being of God proved from the Frame of Humane Nature", in Id., *The Works*, published by the Reverend Dr. Tillotson. Vol. II *Containing Sermons and Expositions upon all the Articles in the Apostles Creed*, print. by M. Flesher, London 1683, p. 101 ss. e p. 104: "And even such a self-moving, or self-determining power we cannot any wise conceive to be in, or to arise from any part of this corporeal mass, however shaped or sized, however situated or agitated: much less can we well apprehend the more noble faculties to be seated in, or to spring from it".

[72] Ivi, p. 105.

[73] Ivi, p. 106.

[74] Newton, *Principi matematici della filosofia naturale*, cit., p. 93: "Egli regge tutte le cose, non come anima del mondo, ma come signore dell'universo".

> Cùm quisque hominum sit sibi conscius quòd pro arbitrio possit corpus suum movere et credit etiam quod alijs hominibus eadem inest potestas quà per solas cogitationes sua corpora similiter movent: potestas movendi quælibet pro arbitratu corpora Deo neutiquam deneganda est, cujus cogitationum infinitè potentior est et promptior facultas. Et pari ratione concedendum est quod Deus sola cogitandi aut volendi actione impedire posset ne corpora aliqua spatium quodlibet certis limitibus definitum ingrediantur[75].

Il passo è inserito nel tentativo, piuttosto oscuro, di spiegare la creazione dei corpi mediante il conferimento da parte di Dio della impenetrabilità ad alcune porzioni dello spazio puro. Il *De gravitatione* rimase inedito, ma Pierre Coste riferiva che Newton gli aveva detto che Locke aveva riportato in *Essay* IV.x.18 l'idea newtoniana della creazione della materia[76]. Prescindendo dalla oscurità del tema della creazione sia nel *De gravitatione* sia nell'*Essay* (oscurità rilevata da Coste e ammessa dallo stesso Locke, che parla di "dim and seeming conception"), si può accostare il passo newtoniano ai testi di Locke[77], per quanto riguarda l'analogia dell'origine del movimento nell'uomo e in Dio.

5. *La gravità e l'automovimento della materia*

È noto che Locke, accettando il principio newtoniano dell'attrazione gravitazionale, modificò negli anni Novanta l'adesione al meccanicismo. Nelle prime tre edizioni dell'*Essay* (1690, 1694, 1695) compariva, con lievi varianti, quest'affermazione sulle interazioni dei corpi che avvengono solo per impulso:

> The next thing to be considered, is, how *Bodies operate* one upon another, and that is manifestly *by impulse*, and nothing else. It being impossible to conceive, that Body should operate on what it does not touch, (which is all one as to imagine it can operate where it is not) or when it does touch, operate any way without Motion[78].

[75] Newton, MS Add. 4003, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, folio 13 v. Vedi http://www.newtonproject.ox.ac.uk/view/texts/ normalized/THEM00093

[76] Locke, *Essai Philosophique concernant l'Entendement humain*, cit., p. 521 nota 2. Cfr. R. Iliffe, *Newton. Il sacerdote della natura*, trad. di S. Di Bella, Ulrico Hoepli Editore, Milano 2017, p. 98 e n. 30.

[77] Vedi *E* II.xxiii.28, p. 311 s.; III.vi.11, p. 446; IV.x.19 p. 629 s.

[78] J. Locke, *An Essay concerning Humane Understanding*, London, print. for Awnsham, and John Churchil... and Samuel Manship, 1695, II.viii.11, p. 60 s. Su questo passo vedi Jacovides, *Locke's Image of the World*, cit., p. 35.

Nella quarta edizione del 1700, l'affermazione viene abbreviata e collegata al tema della produzione delle idee: "The next thing to be consider'd, is how *Bodies* produce *Ideas* in us, and that is manifestly *by impulse*, the only way which we can conceive Bodies operate in"[79]. La modifica non è sostanziale, perché si continua ad affermare che l'unico modo in cui concepiamo le operazioni dei corpi è quello per impulso[80]. Locke aveva preannunciato la modifica nella Terza Lettera a Stillingfleet (1699), dove ribadiva che non è possibile concepire altra azione dei corpi se non per impulso, ma aggiungeva che l'incomparabile libro di Newton lo aveva convinto a non limitare l'onnipotenza divina alla propria ristretta comprensione:

> The gravitation of matter towards matter, by ways inconceivable to me, is not only a demonstration that God can, if he pleases, put into bodies powers and ways of operation, above what can be derived from our idea of body, or can be explained by what we know of matter, but also an unquestionable and every where visible instance, that he has done so. And therefore in the next edition of my book, I shall take care to have that passage rectified[81].

Locke non rinunciava al principio di intelligibilità in base al quale aveva aderito al meccanicismo come alla più chiara teoria di filosofia naturale, ma era disposto a riconoscere che le operazioni della materia potevano avvenire in maniera che oltrepassava la nostra comprensione, dal momento che la gravitazione era una legge universale dimostrata nei *Principia* newtoniani[82]. In *The Conduct of the Understanding*, la cui composizione risale al 1697, Locke riconosce che la gravitazione universale è una verità fondamentale della filosofia naturale:

> There are fundamental truths that lie at the bottom, the basis upon which a great many others rest, and in which they have their consistency. [...] Such is that admirable discovery of Mr. Newton, that all bodies gravitate to one anoth-

79 *E* II.viii.11, p. 135 s.

80 Vedi anche ivi, II.xxiii.18, p. 306: "For as Body cannot but communicate its Motion by impulse, to another Body, which it meets with at rest". Su altri passi (II.viii.18 e IV.x.19) che riaffermano l'idea della trasmissione del moto per contatto anche nella quarta edizione vedi Anstey, *John Locke and Natural Philosophy*, cit., p. 154, che conclude: "it is not entirely clear just how far Locke really modified his views in the light of Newton's discoveries about gravity".

81 Locke, *Reply to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Worcester's Answer to his second Letter*, cit., p. 467 s.

82 Vedi *supra* nota 27. Sulla ipotesi corpuscolare come la spiegazione più intelligibile delle qualità dei corpi vedi *E* IV.iii.16; cfr. Anstey, *John Locke and Natural Philosophy*, pp. 160-62. Per una discussione di come Locke "comes to believe in something that he earlier considered inconceivable" vedi Jacovides, *Locke's Image of the World*, cit., pp. 35-46.

> er, which may be counted as the basis of natural philosophy; which, of what use it is to the understanding of the great frame of our solar system, he has to the astonishment of the learned world shown; and how much farther it would guide us in other things, if rightly pursued, is not yet known[83].

Già in *Some Thoughts concerning Education* (1693), pur mantenendosi scettico sulla possibilità di sviluppare una scienza fisica deducibile da princìpi primi sulla natura dei corpi in generale, Locke aveva riconosciuto che Newton, applicando la matematica ad alcune parti della natura, aveva saputo darci la conoscenza di alcune regioni particolari "dell'incomprensibile Universo". Questa conoscenza si fonda su princìpi giustificati dai dati di fatto[84]: la gravità è razionalmente meno intelligibile della trasmissione del moto per contatto, ma è un dato di fatto dimostrato, di fronte al quale Locke è disposto a rettificare le precedenti concezioni di filosofia naturale sulla trasmissione del movimento.

Ammettere la gravità poteva però comportare un rischio materialistico perché poteva avvalorare l'idea che il principio del moto fosse interno alla materia: dopo tutto, che la gravità degli atomi fosse la causa del loro movimento era l'antica dottrina democritea ed epicurea. In *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* Locke aveva affermato che, nella filosofia della natura, abbinando il moto alla materia si corre il pericolo di cercare di spiegare tutto su base materiale, escludendo esseri immateriali. Questo pregiudizio è però infondato:

> it is evident, that by mere Matter and Motion, none of the great Phœnomena of Nature can be resolved: to instance but in that common one of Gravity, which I think impossible to be explained by any natural Operation of Matter, or any other Law of Motion, but the positive Will of a Superiour Being, so ordering it[85].

[83] J. Locke, *Of the Conduct of the Understanding* § 43, in Id., *Works*, cit., vol. II, p. 394 s. Vedi anche *Elements of Natural Philosophy*, cit., chap. I ("Of Matter and Motion"), p. 416: "It appears, as far as human observation reaches, to be a settled law of nature, that all bodies have a tendency, attraction, or gravitation towards one another"; "Two bodies, at a distance, will put one another into motion by the force of attraction; which is inexplicable by us, though made evident to us by experience, and so to be taken as a principle in natural philosophy" (ivi, p. 417). Anche gli *Elements*, composti verso la fine degli anni '90, furono pubblicati postumi.

[84] J. Locke, *Some Thoughts concerning Education*, print. for A. and J. Churchill, London 1693, § 182, p. 232 (§ 192 nelle edizioni successive a partire da quella del 1695).

[85] Ivi, § 180, p. 228 s. Locke formula anche l'ipotesi di un intervento diretto di Dio per alterare il centro di gravità della terra come spiegazione del diluvio: vedi Anstey, *John Locke and Natural Philosophy*, cit., p. 99 ss. Jacovides, *Locke's Image of the World*, cit., pp. 46-47, 50, che parla di "God of the Gaps".

In questa tesi metafisica, frutto di evidente preoccupazione teologica, Locke concorda con quanto aveva scritto Richard Bentley nelle Boyle lectures. Dopo aver citato esplicitamente Newton come autorevole fonte delle proprie considerazioni sulla gravità, Bentley aveva affermato: "such a mutual gravitation or spontaneous attraction can neither be inherent and essential to Matter; nor even supervene to it, unless impressed and infused into it by a Divine Power"[86]. Bentley forza apologeticamente la posizione di Newton quale risulta dallo scambio epistolare con lo stesso Bentley. Newton esclude l'inerenza essenziale della gravità alla materia, ma afferma di non conoscere la causa della gravità: "You sometimes speak of Gravity as essential and inherent to Matter. Pray do not ascribe that Notion to me, for the Cause of Gravity is what I do not pretend to know"[87]. In una lettera successiva, Newton aggiunge:

> It is inconceivable, that inanimate brute Matter should, without the Mediation of something else, which is not material, operate upon, and affect other Matter without mutual Contact, as it must be if Gravitation in the sense of Epicurus, be essential and inherent in it. And this is one Reason why I desired you would not ascribe innate Gravity to me[88].

Peraltro, Newton conclude prudenzialmente questa comunicazione avvertendo di aver lasciato decidere ai suoi lettori se l'agente che causa la gravità fosse materiale o immateriale. Anche se Locke non poteva conoscere l'epistolario tra Newton e Bentley, sapeva che nella prima edizione dei *Principia* Newton aveva ammesso di considerare l'attrazione solo come la tendenza dei corpi di avvicinarsi gli uni agli altri, senza determinare quale ne fosse la causa, e aveva prospettato, in via ipotetica, una pluralità di cause possibili:

[86] R. Bentley, *A Confutation of Atheism from the Origin and Frame of the World. Part II. A Sermon preached at St. Martin's in the Fields, November the 7th 1692. Being the Seventh of the Lecture founded by the Honourable Robert Boyle, Esquire*, print. for H. Mortlock, London 1693, p. 20 s. Il riferimento a Newton, "to whose most admirable sagacity and industry we shall frequently be obliged in this and the following discourse", è a p. 8. Molyneux farà notare a Locke che Bentley e William Whiston, nelle loro Boyle lectures, concordano con il passo sulla gravità degli *Thoughts concerning Education* e cioè che "the Phaenomenon of Gravitation cannot be Accounted for by Meer Matter and Motion, but seems an Immediate Law of the Divine Will so ordering it" (lettera a Locke del 26 settembre 1696, n. 2131, in J. Locke, *Correspondence*, ed. by E.S. de Beer, vol. 5, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1979, p. 702).

[87] Lettera di Newton a Bentley del 17 gennaio 1693: *Four Letters from Sir Isaac Newton to Doctor Bentley. Containing some arguments in proof of a Deity*, print. for R. and J. Dodsley, London 1756, p. 20.

[88] Lettera di Newton a Bentley del 25 febbraio 1693: ivi, p. 25. Sui problemi interpretativi suscitati da questo passo vedi la nota di Franco Giudice: Newton, *Principi matematici della filosofia naturale*, cit., pp. 212-14 (nota 50).

> sia che tale sforzo [*conatus*] avvenga come un risultato dell'azione dei corpi – o perché si cercano reciprocamente o perché si agitano reciprocamente tramite spiriti emessi – sia che si origini dall'azione dell'etere o dell'aria, o di qualsiasi altro mezzo, corporeo o incorporeo, che spinge in qualche modo gli uni verso gli altri i corpi che vi fluttuano dentro[89].

Nel problema irrisolto della causa della gravitazione poteva annidarsi il pericolo del materialismo, come confermava il passo appena citato dei *Principia* nel quale non si esclude una causa corporea dell'attrazione. Nella convinzione che la gravità fosse spiegabile solo con l'intervento divino, Locke poteva sentirsi corroborato non solo dalle idee attribuite a Newton da Bentley, ma forse anche da colloqui privati intrattenuti con lo stesso Newton[90].

Locke tornerà a discutere della gravità nella Terza Lettera a Stillingfleet, nella disputa sul problema della materia pensante. Locke sostiene che, fatto salvo il principio di non contraddizione, non possiamo escludere che l'onnipotenza divina abbia aggiunto alla materia una serie di proprietà la cui connessione con l'essenza della materia ci risulta incomprensibile. Negarlo implicherebbe restringere l'azione divina alla concezione limitata che il nostro intelletto ha dell'essenza della materia. Tra le proprietà aggiunte non ci sono solo le caratteristiche degli organismi vegetali e animali e l'attività del pensare; anche le traiettorie orbitali dei pianeti sono inspiegabili se non pensiamo che Dio aggiunga l'attrazione gravitazionale all'essenza della materia:

> For it is visible, that all the planets have revolutions about certain remote centres, which I would have any one explain, or make conceivable by the bare essence or natural powers depending on the essence of matter in general, without something added to that essence, which we cannot conceive: for the moving of matter in a crooked line, or the attraction of matter by matter, is all that can be said in the case; either of which it is above our reach to derive

89 Newton, *Principi matematici della filosofia naturale*, cit., lib. I, scolio alla prop. LXIX, p. 71. Cfr. Id., *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, cit., p. 191. Com'è noto, Locke recensì i *Principia* nel 1688 sulle pagine della *Bibliothèque Universelle et Historique*.

90 Sui rapporti tra Locke e Newton: J.L. Axtell, "Locke, Newton and the two cultures", in Yolton (ed.), *John Locke: Problems and Perspectives*, cit., pp. 174-80; Ducheyne, "The Flow of Influence", cit., pp. 245-46, 252-68. Sulla 'triangolazione' Newton, Bentley, Locke vedi Jacovides, *Locke's Image of the World*, cit., pp. 50-54. Vedi inoltre M. Stuart, "Locke on Superaddition and Mechanism", in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 6 (1998), 3: p. 358 s.: "even if Locke did not derive the view that God is the immediate cause of Gravity from the *Principia*, he may still have derived it from Newton. Newton was officially noncommittal about the cause of gravitation, but there is considerable evidence, that he was tempted to explain gravitation as the immediate result of divine agency".

> from the essence of matter, or body in general; though one of these two must unavoidably be allowed to be superadded in this instance to the essence of matter in general. The omnipotent Creator advised not with us in the making of the world, and his ways are not the less excellent, because they are past our finding out[91].

Non poter comprendere come la materia attragga altra materia a distanza non ci autorizza a negare che ciò accada, perché, se lo facessimo, negheremmo il dato di fatto della gravità, che Newton con metodi matematici ha dimostrato essere una proprietà universale dei corpi[92]. Locke sviluppa un parallelismo stretto tra la proprietà del pensiero e quella dell'automovimento: in entrambi i casi, non possiamo concepire come esse derivino dalla essenza delle sostanze, siano esse corporee o incorporee. Dio può aver creato due sostanze, l'una materiale e l'altra immateriale, mantenendole entrambe inattive perché il potere di agire è perfettamente distinguibile dalla mera esistenza; all'essenza delle due sostanze Dio è libero di aggiungere le operazioni che vuole, siano esse il pensiero o l'automovimento. Non possiamo comprendere come l'automovimento derivi dall'essenza di una sostanza materiale, allo stesso modo in cui non possiamo capire come derivi dall'essenza di una sostanza immateriale. In entrambi i casi occorre prendere atto che alle sostanze sono state aggiunte proprietà di cui sappiamo soltanto che non sono logicamente contradditorie con la loro natura, perché Dio non può violare il principio di non contraddizione; ma, per il resto, è nella libera facoltà divina attribuire il potere di automovimento a ognuna delle due sostanze:

> Now I would ask, why omnipotency cannot give to either of these substances, which are equally in a state of perfect inactivity, the same power that it can give to the other? Let it be, for example, that of spontaneous or self-motion, which is a power that it is supposed God can give to an unsolid substance, but denied that he can give to a solid substance. If it be asked, why they limit the omnipotency of God, in reference to the one rather than the other of these substances; all that can be said to it is, that they cannot conceive how the solid substance should ever be able to move itself. And as little, say I, are they able to conceive how a created unsolid substance should move itself; but there may be something in an immaterial substance, that you do not know. I grant it; and in a material one too: for example, gravitation of matter towards matter, and in the several proportions

[91] Locke, *Reply to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Worcester's Answer to his second Letter*, cit., p. 461.
[92] Ivi, p. 463.

> observable, inevitably shows, that there is something in matter that we do not understand, unless we can conceive self-motion in matter; or an inexplicable and inconceivable attraction in matter, at immense and almost incomprehensible distances: it must therefore be confessed, that there is something in solid, as well as unsolid, substances, that we do not understand. But this we know, that they may each of them have their distinct beings, without any activity superadded to them, unless you will deny, that God can take from any being its power of acting, which it is probable will be thought too presumptuous for any one to do; and, I say, it is as hard to conceive self-motion in a created immaterial, as in a material being, consider it how you will: and therefore this is no reason to deny omnipotency to be able to give a power of self-motion to a material substance, if he pleases, as well as to an immaterial; since neither of them can have it from themselves, nor can we conceive how it can be in either of them. [...] That omnipotency cannot make a substance to be solid and not solid at the same time, I think, with due reverence, we may say; but that a solid substance may not have qualities, perfections and powers, which have no natural or visibly necessary connexion with solidity and extension, is too much for us (who are but of yesterday, and know nothing) to be positive in[93].

Il ragionamento di Locke contro Stillingfleet è una combinazione di agnosticismo epistemologico e di volontarismo teologico (peraltro, già reperibili nell'*Essay*[94]), che gli permettono di accogliere la scoperta scientifica di Newton senza incorrere in pericoli materialistici. L'argomento si regge tutto sulla separazione tra essenza delle sostanze e loro operazioni, le quali risulterebbero tutte accidentali nel senso che non derivano, per quanto comprendiamo, dall'essenza. Constatiamo come dato di fatto risultante dalla scienza newtoniana che la

[93] Locke, *Reply to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Worcester's Answer to his second Letter*, cit., pp. 464-65. M.R. Ayers, "Mechanism, Superaddition, and the Proof of God's Existence in Locke's Essay", in *The Philosophical Review* 90 (1981), 2, p. 214, rifiuta l'accostamento di Locke a Bentley in quanto la posizione di Bentley, in merito alla gravità, implicherebbe "God's continuous and quasi-miraculous interference with the natural course of events which bears witness to his existence". Contro questa lettura osservo che né Bentley, né Newton né Locke affermano un'interferenza divina 'quasi-miracolistica': ciò che Bentley e Locke sostengono è semplicemente che la gravità non appartiene all'essenza della materia e che si richiede l'intervento divino perché la gravità sia aggiunta alla materia; la causa della gravità poteva comunque essere "an Agent acting costantly according to certain Laws", come afferma Newton nella lettera a Bentley del 25 febbraio 1693 (*Four Letters*, cit, p. 26). L'interpretazione di Ayers – che si sforzava di far rientrare in una concezione puramente meccanicistica anche i passi lockiani citati sulla gravità – è criticata da Stuart, "Locke on Superaddition and Mechanism", cit., per il quale "Locke's remarks about superaddition are incompatible with a thorough-going mechanism" (p. 352). Sulla discussa questione del significato della 'superaddition' in Locke vedi M. Stuart, *Locke's Metaphysics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2013, pp. 266-80; Brandt Bolton, "Locke on Thinking Matter", cit., pp. 349-51.

[94] Vedi *E* IV.iii.6, p. 541 (righe 25-30); IV.iii.29, pp. 559-60 (righe 34-4).

materia è dotata di automovimento, ma non siamo in grado di spiegare come questo derivi dalla mera essenza della materia, che Locke definisce come estensione solida inerte. L'aggiunta del movimento alla materia per opera di Dio ne spiega l'origine, ma non aggiunge nulla alla comprensione del moto e del suo rapporto con la materia. Se confrontiamo l'argomento contro Stillingfleet a quello, abbozzato nell'*Essay*, secondo il quale dobbiamo attribuire l'origine del movimento solo allo spirito e dunque, su scala universale, a Dio, ne risulta una palese incongruenza. Attribuiamo l'origine del moto a Dio per analogia con il rapporto mente/corpo nell'uomo, ma questa analogia si fonda solo sull'esperienza dei moti volontari alla quale si può ora opporre, come dato di esperienza universalmente dimostrato, l'automovimento dei corpi attestato dalla gravitazione universale. La dimostrazione che Dio sia all'origine del movimento presuppone un modello meccanicistico, secondo il quale i corpi trasmettono il moto senza generarlo, mentre l'automovimento apparterrebbe solo alla mente che con la sua volizione mette in moto il corpo; questo argomento non può più reggersi se si ammette una concezione dinamica come quella newtoniana, in cui la forza che genera il movimento è proporzionale alla quantità di materia e dunque i corpi, come riconosce lo stesso Locke nel luogo citato della Terza lettera a Stillingfleet, sono dotati di automovimento. L'argomento contro Stillingfleet dà per scontato che l'origine del moto dipenda da Dio e Locke non si preoccupa di dimostrarlo. Assumendo il teismo, Locke poteva accogliere la posizione newtoniana e ascrivere l'origine della forza gravitazionale a Dio, ma in tal caso veniva meno l'argomento per attribuire a Dio l'origine del moto, perché esso implicava una lettura meccanicistica cartesiana del moto. Il materialismo ateo non poteva essere sconfitto dall'interno.

6. *Conclusione*

Il principio metafisico tradizionale della teoria del moto (la sua origine nell'attività dello spirito) è confermato da Locke in base all'osservazione dell'esercizio dei moti volontari. La sua è una riduzione psicofisica di un assunto metafisico che aveva svolto un ruolo primario e di lunga durata nella storia della filosofia naturale. Insieme con le affermazioni scettiche sia sull'essenza della materia, sia sul nesso tra proprietà ed essenza delle sostanze corporee e incorporee, la trattazione di Locke indeboliva considerevolmente il principio tradizionale, aprendo la via all'esame critico dell'ipotesi metafisica di un

agente volontario come primo motore condotta da Hume nella parte VIII dei *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*[95]. La debolezza dell'analogia tra l'agire umano e divino (di cui già Descartes, Boyle e Barrow avevano mostrato consapevolezza) rendeva ancor più fragili quelle che Locke presentava come congetture probabili. Come ha osservato Anstey, nella teoria della conoscenza lockiana l'analogia consiste o nell'inferenza razionale dagli effetti alle cause in base alla somiglianza, oppure nell'inferire dalle relazioni fra le qualità degli oggetti osservabili le relazioni esistenti fra le qualità degli oggetti non osservabili[96]. In *E* IV.xvi.12, Locke afferma che un ragionamento di probabilità analogica è sempre usato nelle ipotesi della filosofia sperimentale: "and *a wary Reasoning* from Analogy leads us often into the discovery of Truths, and useful Productions, which would otherwise lie concealed"[97]. L'analogia è l'unico ausilio che ci permette di formulare ragionamenti probabili su ciò che non cade sotto l'osservazione sensibile, sia sulle cause naturali invisibili degli effetti visibili sia sulla natura e sulle operazioni di altri spiriti finiti immateriali diversi dall'uomo. In questo secondo caso, discostandosi dagli esempi di uso dell'analogia in sede fisica, Locke ricorre all'analogia per estendere dalle sostanze naturali agli spiriti il principio di continuità graduale: poiché nella varietà degli enti naturali osserviamo passaggi graduali da un tipo all'altro, la regola dell'analogia renderebbe probabile che vi siano al di sopra dell'uomo ordini di esseri intelligenti che, con differenze graduali minime, si elevano verso la "perfezione infinita del Creatore"[98]. Ma nel caso dell'origine prima del movimento, non si vede come Locke possa applicare né l'analogia fisica dalle cause agli effetti né questa sorta di analogia iperfisica dall'unico spirito noto per esperienza (e cioè la nostra mente) agli altri spiriti di cui si congettura l'esistenza. Locke aveva ricavato la congettura dell'origine cosmica del moto in Dio dalla sola osservazione dei moti volontari nell'uomo. Ma il passaggio al divino rompe ogni continuità graduale e l'analogia perde la sua cogenza per lo scarto incolmabile tra infinito e finito. Locke stesso, limitando il principio di continuità graduale, ne

95 D. Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, ed. with an Introd. by N. Kemp Smith, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1935, pp. 225-27.

96 Anstey, *John Locke and Natural Philosophy*, cit., p. 76: "In modern terms this is a form of inference to the best explanation – what some philosophers call ampliative inference or abduction".

97 *E* IV.xvi.12, p. 666 s. (corsivo mio).

98 Per la concezione lockiana che "in all the visible corporeal world we see no chasms or gaps" vedi E III.vi.12, p. 446 s. Cfr. Anstey, *John Locke and Natural Philosophy*, cit., p. 77, che accosta l'uso dell'analogia nel principio di continuità graduale all'argomento della 'grande catena degli esseri', come già indicato da A.O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being. A Study of the History of an Idea* [1936], Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.), 1964, p. 184.

è consapevole quando, dopo aver affermato che l'origine dell'idea dello spirito divino proviene dall'assumere al massimo grado di perfezione le proprietà che lo spirito umano osserva in sé stesso, conclude:

> who [sc. the first Being] yet, 'tis certain, is infinitely more remote in the real Excellency of his Nature, from the highest and perfectest of all created Beings, than the greatest Man, nay, purest Seraphim, is from the most contemptible part of Matter; and consequently must infinitely exceed what our narrow Understandings can conceive of him[99].

Altrove, trattando della durata e della espansione come proprietà degli esseri, riconosce il principio tradizionale dell'assenza di ogni proporzione tra il finito e l'infinito[100]. Inoltre, ammette i limiti dell'analogia per quanto riguarda la relazione degli spiriti con lo spazio:

> what Spirits have to do with Space, or how they communicate in it, we know not. All that we know is, that Bodies do each singly possess its proper Portion of it, according to the extent of its solid Parts; and thereby exclude all other Bodies from having any share in that particular portion of Space, whilst it remains there[101].

Sulla base di queste ammissioni agnostiche circa il rapporto tra lo spirito finito e lo spirito infinito, e circa la relazione degli spiriti con lo spazio (relazione implicata nella spiegazione dell'origine e trasmissione del moto), attribuire l'origine del moto alla sola sostanza incorporea, a partire dall'unica esperienza dei moti volontari, non appariva affatto un esempio di 'cauta analogia', anche a prescindere dalla riconsiderazione del moto dei corpi cui lo costringeva la dottrina newtoniana della gravitazione. In verità, Locke non poteva che riproporre la tesi metafisica comune al teismo cristiano, ma, nel farlo, la presentava in un contesto argomentativo e gnoseologico che la riduceva a una debolissima congettura. La sua esposizione dell'origine del moto ha però, al di là delle sue intenzioni, un considerevole pregio: essa manifesta la modesta genesi psicofisica e antropica di nozioni che nella metafisica tradizionale erano state assunte come presupposti ontologici fondamentali.

[99] *E* III.vi.11, p. 446.
[100] Ivi, II.xv.12, p. 204: "What I say of Man, I say of all finite Beings, who though they may far exceed Man in Knowledge and Power, yet are no more than the meanest Creature, in comparison with God himself. Finite of any Magnitude, holds not any proportion to infinite".
[101] Ivi, II.xv.11, p. 203 s.

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Inspirational Journeys and Trunks of Books: Initial Notes on Locke the Traveller

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Some to the warres, to try their fortune there;
Some, to discouer Islands farre away:
Some, to the studious Vniuersities;
For any, or for all these exercises,
He said, that Protheus, your sonne, was meet;
And did request me, to importune you
To let him spend his time no more at home.
Shakespeare, *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Folio 1, 1623)
Act 1, scene 3

Abstract: The aim of these initial notes is to focus on certain central aspects of John Locke's thought through a conceptual prism that can cast light on new interpretational pathways. The idea is to accompany the reader through Locke's intellectual evolution and the experiences connected with his sojourns in Europe: from his early education in London and at Oxford to his meeting with the First Earl of Shaftesbury, and the political and religious reflections that laid the foundations for the consolidation of his concept of tolerance, his political treatises and *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*.

All his travels were pertinent to Locke's intellectual development. Most of them took place on the Continent, where he encountered books, writers and living figures for the first time, or got to know them better. It was Locke's frequentation of these geographical and cultural areas that made him not simply an English philosopher but an intellectual of the Republic of Letters, a thinker who read and wrote, studied and argued and, ultimately, belonged to Europe as a whole.

Keywords: travels, Europe, Cleves, correspondence, toleration

Introduction

Why should we pause to reflect on the travels of John Locke? What he had in mind was not an *iter studiorum* of the kind that had been common practice since the Middle Ages, nor even to undertake a Grand Tour through southern

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Europe like the gentlemen of his time. Some of his journeys appear to be incidental, like his first trip to Cleves, while others – like his sojourns in Dutch cities – were made under threat of a conviction even worse than banishment. His travels through France were sparked by the curiosity of crossing borders or by the quest for inner peace and perhaps also for new existential stimuli – as appears to be the case of the second journey to Cleves. Finally there came the longed-for return to his homeland and, after a brief sojourn in the insalubrious climate of London, his last journey to Oates.

Locke shows himself to have been a modern traveller; his motivations did not stem from missionary literature or accounts aimed at arousing wonder through descriptions of distant worlds or exotic *naturalia*, but rather from that quest for the truth in which "Exactness is absolutely necessary in Enquiries after philosophical Knowledge". For Locke, this quest for the truth spanned all aspects of social and individual life: "Merchants and Lovers, Cooks and Taylors, have Words wherewithal to dispatch their ordinary Affairs; and so, I think, might Philosophers and Disputants too, if they had a Mind to understand, and to be clearly understood"[1].

Locke embarked upon his journeys – both those actually made and the ones that were only imagined – driven, like the virtuosos of his time, to discover and experience, to compare and exchange notes, to embellish his desk with scientific instruments and his library with books and manuscripts that were rare or hard to find. These experiences, the books and the objects that bear with them their own local history, the touch of the craftsman's hand, the discerning gaze of the merchant and, ultimately, the craving of the curious purchaser: all these elements constitute a cultural prism through which certain central aspects of Locke's thought can be further illuminated.

All these travels were pertinent to Locke's intellectual development. Most of them took place on the Continent, where he encountered books, writers and living figures for the first time, or got to know them better. It was Locke's frequentation of these geographical and cultural areas that made him not simply an English philosopher but an intellectual of the Republic of Letters, a thinker who read and wrote, studied and argued and, ultimately, belonged to Europe as a whole[2].

[1] J. Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. by P.H. Nidditch, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1979, III. xi. 10, pp. 513-14.

[2] See D. Soulard, "The Reception of Locke's Politics: Locke in the *République des Lettres*", in J. Champion, J. Coffey, T. Harris, J. Marshall (eds.), *Politics, Religion and Ideas in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Britain. Essays in Honour of Mark Goldie*, The Boydell Press, Rochester NY 2019,

1. *"Their course about the World, Ours a World make"*[3]

John Locke's first journey was made at the age of fourteen when he left his home in rural Somerset to attend the illustrious and very strict Westminster School in London. In the stiff leather suitcase, or in the more manageable duffel bag made of double canvas, Locke carried with him the book by George Abbot, *A Brief Description of the Whole World* published for the first time in 1599, the works of Lucan and of Thomas Godwin, as well as the documents required for his journey, some loose change, toiletries, probably a razor, scissors, needle and thread, medicine to ward off seasonal ailments, candles and a spare pair of shoes: the bare essentials for a long sojourn away from home[4]. Son of an attorney and clerk to the local Justices of the Peace, Locke travelled with the modest luggage of a young Puritan, but also the lively and curious mind of one who wanted to extend his gaze to the natural and the social world.

He was definitely attracted by travel literature and, as an impassioned and insatiable collector, he amassed many books on travel, geography and imaginary places: 275 titles in all. Of these 195 were travel books, including *The History of the Sevarites or Sevarambi*, a Utopian novel by Denis Vairasse that was published in London between 1675 and 1679. After acknowledging his personal pantheon – Plato's *Republic*, Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* and Sir Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* – Vairasse employs a common rhetorical device to tell how he had received from a Captain on the point of death a jumbled mass of papers written in various languages telling the fascinating story of the government, religions and customs of the peoples inhabiting the *Terræ australes incognitæ*. The dying captain entrusted Vairasse with the task of elucidating the contents of these precious pages, setting them in their natural order in the manner he himself would have wished had God not decided that he should die before doing so.

This seems almost like a metaphor for the insatiable love mixed with bitter wistfulness that Locke felt about books in general and was part and

pp. 201-17. The first presentation of this topic was made at the conference "Mobilità degli intellettuali e circolazione di culture" at the Dipartimento di Culture, Politica e Società of the University of Turin, 14-15 June 2012. My thanks to the students, the colleagues and to Bruno Mantelli, Dino Carpanetto and Massimo Firpo for their comments and suggestions. My research on Locke and the Continent will be presented in the forthcoming book: *Locke and the Inspirational melting Pot of Europe*.

3 J. Locke, "Verses on Cromwell and the Dutch war", in J.R. Milton (ed.), *John Locke: Literary and Historical Writings*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2019, p.192.

4 See R. Woolhouse, *Locke. A Biography*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge NY 2007, pp. 10-11.

parcel of his intellectual life, as the philosopher confessed just a few months before his death:

> Books seem to me to be pestilent things, and infect all that trade in them, i.e. all but one sort of men, with something very perverse and brutal. Printers, binders, sellers and others that make a trade and gain out of them have universally so odde a turne and corruption of mind that they have a way of dealeing peculiar to them selves, and not conformed to the good of Society, and that general fairness that cements man kind. Whether it be that these instruments of truth and knowledge will not bear being subjected to any thing but those noble ends, without revengeing them selves on those who medle with them to any other purpose, and prostitute them to mean and misbecomeing designs, I will not enquire[5].

As Peter Laslett tells us, when his father died in 1661 John Locke was his only living son, so that before the age of thirty he inherited a patrimony which, although not large, he was able to devote without excessive concern to the purchase of books. As Laslett clarifies: "since Locke never lived on his estate, never married, and never maintained his own establishment, the money was free for spending"[6]. These books that the philosopher collected during his education in London, and especially in Oxford, accompanied him on his travels, in the course of which he collected more as a result of his reading and the people he met. This meshing of books and journeys suggests a few initial notes that I should like to share with the reader.

The biographies of Locke by Cranston and Woolhouse, as well as other works by King, Lough, Aaron, Gibb and, more recently, Boisson and Rivet, Woolhouse, Milton and Goldie, take us through the reading and literary experiences that fascinated the young student and accompanied the mature intellectual[7]. The lines he penned in his youth, between the 1650s and the early 1660s reveal a certain melancholic hesitancy: "We think our selves the Shadows which do fade"[8]. John Locke definitely hesitated about his career.

[5] See Locke to A. Collins, 9 June 1704, in J. Locke, *Correspondence,* ed. by E.S. De Beer, vol. 8, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1989, p. 314.

[6] J.R. Harrison and P. Laslett (eds.), *The Library of John Locke*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1971, pp.1-2.

[7] For specific biographical essays and more detailed biographical references see the website edited by J.C. Attig, *John Locke Bibliography*, https://openpublishing.psu.edu/locke/bib/index.html.

[8] J. Locke, "Verses for John Greenhill", in Milton (ed.), *Locke*, *Literary and Historical Writings*, cit., p. 199. See also the letter to his father which Locke penned on 10 April 1660, in *Correspondence,* cit., vol. 1, p. 143; see also Locke to J.O., early August 1660, ibid., p. 152.

He was undecided about whether to become a clergyman – a path mapped out for a career within the college – or to pursue the more uncertain life of a layman. In November 1663 Locke requested advice from the distant relative and childhood friend John Strachey, who urged him not to force himself to a decision. Strachey suggested that he should indulge the versatility of his intellect and consider the prospect of an enriching sojourn abroad of one or two years: "a litle outlandish aire would doe mighty well if not for health yett for reputation"[9]. Locke appears to have taken this advice to heart as he frequented the Oxford circles and the entourage of Robert Boyle.

Between 1660 and 1662 Locke had composed the two pamphlets on the power of the Civill Magistrate in reference to Religious Worship, as well as making notes on the pages of the *Adversaria* dealing with political and religious issues and with the law of nature. His concern in these writings was not so much to critically analyse the magistrate's authority as to bring to the fore the danger posed to the system of government by those who mingled fanatical errors and religious fervour with subversive political projects. Despite his awareness of the importance of individual liberty and social tolerance, Locke consistently argued that such values and inner peace could not be claimed at the expense of the order and unity of the state.

While these stances appear to align Locke with a Hobbesian viewpoint and result in an unoriginal notion of the relationship between Church and State, the letter that he sent to Henry Stubbe, his companion of studies at Christ Church College, in September 1659 reveals the depth of his reflections. In it Locke significantly expresses his admiration for the treatise just published by Stubbe, *An Essay in Defence of the Good Old Cause: or a Discourse concerning the Rise and Extent of the power of the Civil Magistrate in reference to Spiritual Affairs* (London, 1659). Nevertheless, he bewails the fact that the author had not proceeded to supply an historical account of the regime of tolerance applied in the past or in more recent times in countries such as France, Poland and Holland. Such examples would effectively have persuaded contemporaries to follow in their tracks; they were convincing demonstrations, based on everyday experience, of the possibility that "men of different professions may quietly unite (antiquity the testimony) under the same government and unanimously cary the same civill intrest and hand in hand march to the same end of peace and mutuall society though they take different way towards heaven"[10].

[9] John Strachey to Locke, 18 November 1663, in Locke, *Correspondence,* vol. 1, cit., p. 216.
[10] Locke to S H, mid-September 1659, ibid., p. 110.

Despite his full agreement with Stubbe's tolerant position Locke remained prudent and staunchly expressed a reservation that was to remain a tenet of his thoughts on tolerance, even in their more mature form in the *Letter*: namely the denial of religious liberty for Catholics. To tolerate them would run counter to the safety of the nation. He expressed the fear of interference in social and political matters on the pretext of spiritual jurisdiction. To date this was an issue that he merely posited, but that he was to address later in order "to define exactly where on be gins and other ends"[11]. Henry Stubbe was, moreover, the protégé of the famous republican Henry Vane, the elder brother of the loyal royalist and diplomat Walter Vane, with whom Locke set off in the capacity of secretary for the diplomatic mission in Brandenburg in the autumn of 1665.

2. *On the diplomatic mission in Cleves*

"Monday 13 November 65 we took coach in Oxford for Germany"[12]. This was the opportunity for Locke's first visit to the Continent. In his capacity as secretary he accompanied Sir Walter Vane when they left Oxford to accomplish the diplomatic mission in Cleves, where the Great Elector Frederick William had been in residence for some weeks and would remain until October of the following year. The object of the diplomatic mission was to obtain the goodwill of the Great Elector and his support in the war against Holland that had begun just a few months earlier. It was a mission destined to failure, since Frederick William did not agree to the English requests. For reasons of political opportunity he maintained an attitude that was favourable to Holland – having always admired its social and economic model – while at the same time seeking to keep the war at a distance from his own borders.

Despite this, the journey was significant for the 33-year-old Locke. In addition to drafting the reports that Vane had to send regularly to Charles II on the progress of the negotiations with the Elector of Brandenburg, unofficially he also kept the diplomat William Godolphin up to date on the prevailing moods and political curiosities that he was able to observe in Cleves. Instead, to his childhood friend and neighbour John Strachey he willingly recounted

[11] Ibid., p.111.
[12] Woolhouse, *Locke. A Biography,* cit., p. 60.

the habits and religious customs of the town[13]. Among the relatively few personal letters sent by Locke during his stay in Cleves that have come down to us, the lengthy missive sent to Robert Boyle in mid-December 1665 is of particular interest. Locke expressed his appreciation of the air of cultivated antiquity that one breathed in the Brandenburg town, but also his concerns regarding the inadequacy of scientific, experimental and chemical research that he had observed there: "The rest of their physicians go the old road"[14]. But what struck Locke most profoundly was the social and religious organisation, and in the same letter to Boyle he wrote:

> The town is little, and not very strong or handsom; the buildings and streets irregular; nor is there a greater uniformity in their religion, three professions being publickly allowed: the Calvinists are more than the Lutherans, and the Catholicks more than both (but no papist bears any office) besides some few Anabaptists, who are not publickly tolerated. But yet this distance in their churches gets not into their houses. They quietly permit one another to choose their way to heaven; for I cannot observe any quarrels or animosities amongst them upon the account of religion. This good correspondence is owing partly to the power of the magistrate, and partly to the prudence and good nature of the people, who (as I find by enquiry) entertain different opinions, without any secret hatred or rancour[15].

A few days later, after having attended a religious service in a Lutheran church in the town, he wrote in greater detail to Strachey: "In this church I observd two pictures one a crucifix, the other I could not well discerne, but in the Calvinist church noe pictures at all. Here are besides Catholicks, Calvinists and Lutherans (which 3 are allowd) Jews Anabaptists and Quakers"[16].

Here the particular situation of the German territories needs to be stressed. Following the codification of a new political and confessional order in the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, and in order to maintain peace and security in the various states, the *Simultankirche* became legitimate and widespread. These were churches and chapels open to the religious observance of three or more confessions, with different hours allocated to worship and the churches equably divided to accommodate the prayers of each of the principal confessions: Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist.

[13] C.R. Sanders, "The Strachey Family, Sutton Court, and John Locke", in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 59 (1951), 3, pp. 275-96.

[14] Locke to Robert Boyle, 12 December 1665, in Locke, *Correspondence*, vol. 1, cit., p. 228.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Locke to John Strachey, 14 December 1665, ibid., p. 237.

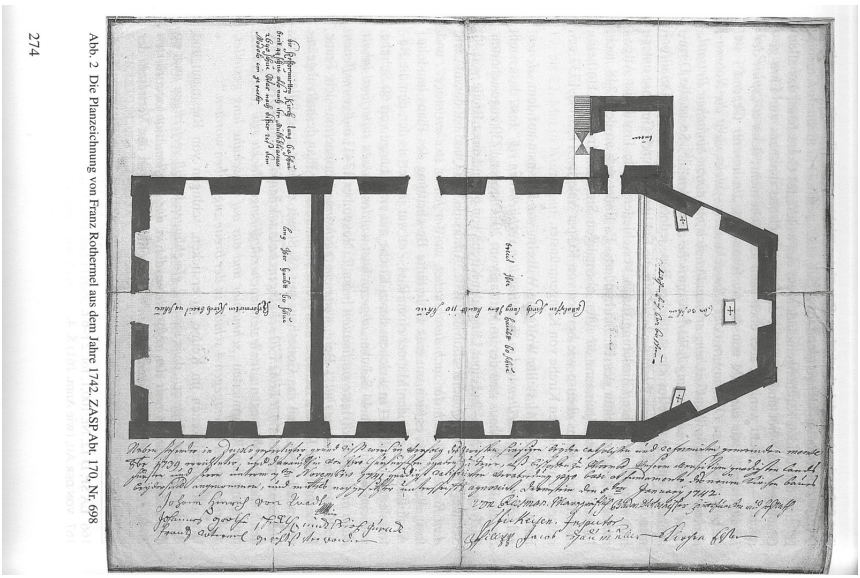

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Abb. 2 Die Planzeichnung von Franz Rothermel aus dem Jahre 1742. ZASP, Abt. 170, Nr. 698

M. Martin (ed.), *Dirmstein – Adel, Bauern und Bürger, Chronik der Gemeinde Dirmstein. Selbstverlag der Stiftung zur Förderung der pfälzischen Geschichtsforschung*, Neustadt an der Weinstraße 2005, p. 274.

This was also true for the Duchy of Cleves and the Counties of Mark and Ravensberg governed by the Elector Frederick William of Brandenburg, a staunch supporter of the simultaneous practice of religion inside and outside the churches for all religious groups.

> What was supposed to follow was a mutually satisfactory resolution of religious differences such that the congregations could be 'restored to a simultaneous exercise' (*restitutionem exercitii simultanei*) in the church or chapels in such places where both confessions resided, with an equal division of rents and goods[17].

This concrete experience of confessional coexistence and political-religious organisation very plausibly fuelled the reflections that the young Locke was

[17] M.E. Plummer and V. Christman (eds.), *Topographies of Tolerance and Intolerance: Responses to Religious Pluralism in Reformation Europe*, Brill, Leiden Boston 2018, pp. 241-42. See also D.M. Luebke, *Hometown Religion. Regimes of Coexistence in Early Modern Westphalia*, University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville VA 2016; H. Neumaier, "Simultaneum und Religionsfrieden im Alten Reich. Zu Phänomenologie und Typologie eines umkämpften Rechtsinstituts", in *Historisches Jahrbuch* 128 (2008), pp. 137-76.

engaged in at the time. Indeed, his days at Cleves were driven by a great intellectual curiosity. In the letters he sent to William Godolphin, Locke described the dynastic and matrimonial connections of the Elector and his court and the diplomatic advances that were being made to him and his counsellors. He also included information about the financial situation of the Duchy of Cleves and the County of Mark and the eventual costs of armed action, also mentioning the pro-Dutch and pro-French leanings of the Elector and part of his court due to the economic support received from these countries.

Instead, in the letters he sent to John Strachey, Locke preferred to describe the social and cultural life of the town, the visit to a monastery of Franciscan friars and their way of life and their religious ceremonies. He related the religious functions he had attended in a Lutheran church in the town, as well as the typical aspects of court life. In a letter to Strachey written around Christmastide he described in great detail the scene of "a stable, wherein was an ox, an asse, a cradle, the Virgin, the babe, Joseph, shepheards and angells" that he had seen in the Catholic church of Cleves[18].

As known, the diplomatic mission did not achieve the desired outcome, and by mid-February 1666 Locke and Walter Vane were already on their way home. In the letter sent from London on 22 February, Locke informed Strachey of the abandonment of neutrality by the Great Elector that had been evident for some time, and of how he had sent 12,000 men to swell the ranks of the Dutch army, adopting a position that was shared by the whole of Germany. He also told Strachey about the invitation he had just received to take part in another diplomatic mission to Spain in the retinue of the English ambassador[19]. A few months later he received a similar proposal for an embassy in Sweden[20], but Locke decided instead to return home and devote himself to the study of medicine. In the early days of 1666 he replied to the questions that his friend Strachey had probably put to him in his last letter:

> To what purpose this from Cleve? I'll tell you; if there be any such thing (as I can not vouch the contrary) certainly mine is an Academic goblin. When I left Oxford I thought for a while to take leave of all university affairs. And should have least expected to have found any thing of that nature here at Cleve of any part of the world. But doe what I can I am still kept in that tract[21].

18 Locke to John Strachey, *c.* 26 December 1665, in Locke, *Correspondence,* vol. 1, cit., p. 244.
19 Locke to John Strachey, 28 February 1666, ibid., p. 264.
20 M. Cranston, *John Locke. A Biography*, Oxford University Press, Oxford-New York 1957, p. 87.
21 Locke to John Strachey, early January 1666, in Locke, *Correspondence,* vol. 1, cit., p. 253.

Nevertheless, he did not abandon his reflections on the relation between political and religious power as regards the question of tolerance, and in the months following his Brandenburg experience – in the *Essay* of 1667 – he elaborated the thematic nucleus of his own conception of tolerance.

3. *Physician, political thinker and curious traveller*

At Christ Church Locke continued to pursue his advanced studies in medicine as well as acting as a tutor, until Lord Ashley, future First Earl of Shaftesbury, decided to visit Astrop in Oxfordshire to take the waters as treatment for a liver infection. The physician David Thomas, who was unable to attend his eminent patient, asked Locke for help. This meeting marked the start of a ten-year story that has been masterfully told by Locke's biographers. "That there had been a profound transformation in Locke's thoughts, and that this transformation coincided approximately with the beginning of his close association with Shaftesbury is evident"[22].

The correspondence of the late 1660s shows us a man engaged in physical experiments in the letters exchanged with Robert Boyle and immersed in medicine in the replies to the requests of friends and acquaintances. His dear physician friend David Thomas wrote to Locke in October 1669: "I glad you are returned to London and wish much joy to Mr Asley"[23]. Physician, political thinker and trusted secretary: these were the roles that Locke principally played following his casual and fateful encounter with Lord Ashley. Locke was also intensely engaged in other aspects of the life of the aristocratic dynasty; he negotiated the marriage of the Earl's second son and was tutor to his grandson, the third and most famous Earl of Shaftesbury.

In this article I will restrict myself to drawing attention to various cues connected primarily with the – possibly imaginary – trips to Carolina and Italy and the journeys which the philosopher definitely made through France and the Netherlands and to Cleves. In his capacity as secretary to one of the most eminent Lords Proprietors of the Province of Carolina, Locke assisted in drafting the Constitution of this new settlement. As stated in the preamble to the 120 detailed articles, the aim of this document was that of:

[22] John Locke, *Political Writings*, ed. by D. Wootton, Penguin Books, London 1993, pp. 36-37.
[23] Locke to David Thomas, 19 October 1669, in Locke, *Correspondence,* vol. 1, cit., p. 324.

> establishing the interest of the lords proprietors with equality, and without confusion; and that the government of this province may be made most agreeable to the monarchy under which we live, and of which this province is a part; and that we may avoid erecting a numerous democracy[24].

Even the emphasis on the relation between Church and State and the arguments in favour of tolerance, which Locke probably wished to be penned with greater openness towards all confessions, were composed in a prudential manner with a view to preventing social disorder[25]. Locke's contribution was appreciated by the Lords Proprietors, who had allocated him a title and estates of land in Carolina, but the project ran aground, possibly also due to the accentuation of Shaftesbury's political problems, and Locke never visited his possessions. Referring to Locke's planned voyage overseas – possibly with a certain irony – Nicolas Toinard envisaged his hypothetical plan to arrive in Carolina with a small group of Catholic refugees.

> Pour le voiage de la Caroline, je crois que vous y pensez comme a vous mariner. Quand vous serez prest a aler prendre possession de votre Isle, et que ce sera tout de bon que vous voudrez illustrer l'Amerique par votre presence, je chercheray un nombre sufizant de catholiques pour vous y suivre avec moy, car selon vos constitutions *quand on est sept d'une croiance on y peur avoir une eglise*[26].

Instead, in the course of the 1670s Locke did not cross the ocean, but did cross the Channel to France. The first time the trip lasted less than a month since he was precipitously summoned to return by his Lord, albeit desirous to recount to his friend Strachey in "the words of a gentleman and a traveller" his encounters with the Parisian *virtuosos* and the beauties that had enthralled him: the Louvre, the Seine and the Pont Neuf. "O the advantage of travel! You see what a blessing it is to visit foreign countries and improve in the knowledge of men and manners. When could you have found out this by living at Sutton Court and eating crammed capons and apple pies?"[27]

Several days later he wrote ardently in the same inspired vein to the physician and clergyman John Mapletoft[28]. But the real chance came several years

[24] Locke, *Political Writings*, cit., p. 211.
[25] Ibid., p. 41.
[26] Nicolas Toinard to Locke, 2 July 1679, in Locke, *Correspondence,* ed. by E.S. De Beer, vol. 2, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1976, p. 46. On the English political situation see the essays collected in Champion, Coffey, Harris, Marshall (eds.), *Politics, Religion and Ideas*, cit.
[27] Locke to John Strachey, mid October 1672, in Locke, *Correspondence,* vol. 1, cit., pp. 366-67.
[28] Locke to John Mapletoft, 19 October 1672, ibid, pp. 369-72.

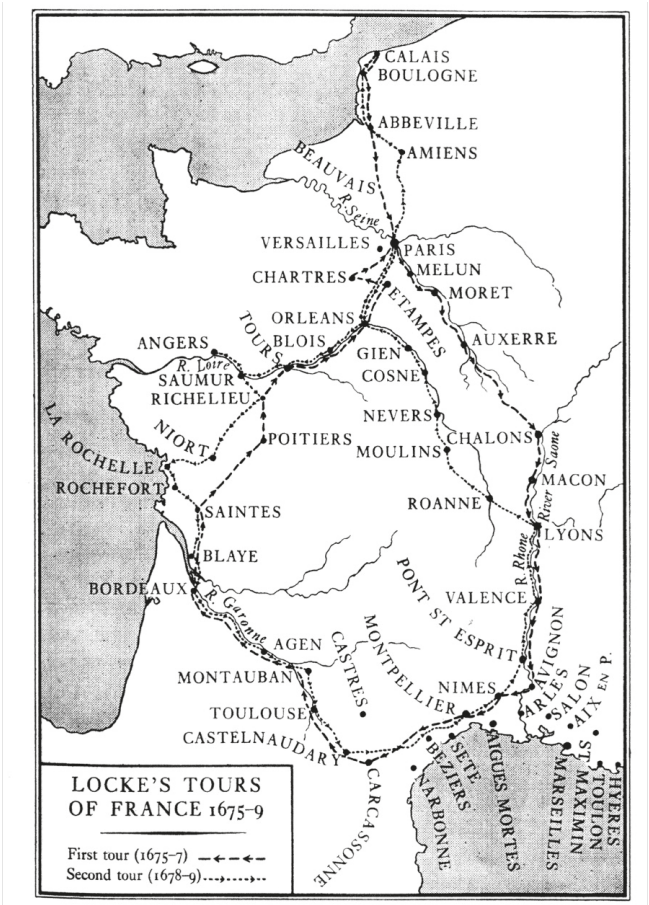
later when Locke was able to make a long visit, crossing France from Paris to Montpellier where he spent 15 months between 1675 and 1677, continuing on to Toulouse and then northwards towards Bordeaux and the Loire and on to Poitiers, Blois, Orleans and Chartres, finally stopping for almost a year in Paris. In the capital he frequented the circle of intellectuals gravitating around Henri Justell, including Pufendorf, Leibniz, Falconieri, Magalotti and many leading exponents of the Royal Society[29]. It was also in Paris that Locke took over the education of the young son of John Banks. The parents of the young scion had imagined for Caleb just a six-month tour of France, and Lady Banks would have preferred to see the return of her rather frail son, but the tutor was staunchly convinced of the educational value of getting to know shores beyond that of Dover.

> As to the improvements of travel I think they are all comprehended in these four - Knowledge, which is the proper ornament and perfection of the minde: Exercice, which belong to the body; Language and Conversation. [...] They who imagine that the improvements of forain conversation are to be sought by making acquaintance and friendship abroad, seeme to me wholy to mistake the matter, and it appears to me quite another thing. The great benefit to be found by travell is by constant changeing of company, and conversing every day with unknown strangers is to get a becoming confidence and not to be abashed at new faces – to accustome ones self to treat every body civilly, and to learne by experience that that which gets one credit and recommends one to others, is not the fortune one is borne to, but the riches of the minde and the good qualities one posseses[30].

Thus, in July 1678, Locke and his charge left Paris for the south, practically returning backwards over the stages of the previous journey, and also visiting new cities of evocative political and religious history, such as La Rochelle, Saumur and Angers. After this they spent the winter in Paris up to April 1679 and returned to England on the *Charlotte* on the morning of 8 May. Despite his entreaties, Lord Bank had to accept Locke's reasons for not wishing to accompany his charge on the tour of Italy.

[29] Cranston, *John Locke*, cit., p.172. In addition to the classic studies of J. Lough, "Locke's Reading during his Stay in France (1675-79)", in *The Library* 8 (1953), pp. 229-58, and Id., *Locke's Travels in France 1675-9. As Related in his Journals, Correspondence and other Papers*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1953, see J. Locke, *Carnet de voyage à Montpellier et dans le sud de la France, 1676-1679*, ed. by G. Boisson, trans. by M. Rivet, Les Presses du Languedoc, Montpellier 2005.

[30] Locke to Sir John Banks, 18 August 1677, in Locke, *Correspondence*, vol. 1, cit., p. 513.



Map taken from J. Lough, *Locke's travels in France*, Cambridge 1953

When he left Oxford in the early days of November 1675, Locke had left trunks filled with books, maps and scientific instruments in the charge of Samuel Thomas, the Christ Church chaplain. A few days later Thomas reassured him:

> Your goods are put into my custody. viz: 2 Large Trunkes. 2 little Leather-boxes, 7 Firre-boxes. A bundle of Papers. A chymicall Glasse. with 2 other Glasses. 4 Glasse-bottles. A Barometer. A Thermometer and a Large Mapp of France. All but the two large Truncks I can very well dispose of in my owne chamber and study[31].

[31] Samuel Thomas to Locke, 11 November 1675, ibid., pp. 430-31.

When he finally returned from France at the beginning of May 1679 we can assume that Locke found all his belongings. Several years later, when the turbulent political climate convinced him to leave Oxford again – this time in haste – heading for Rotterdam, Locke was once again concerned to leave his books and possessions in the care of Samuel Thomas, and this time also of Robert Pawling and James Tyrrell, who would take care of storing several boxes at Oakley. At the end of August 1683 Locke wrote to Edward Clarke: "Pray talk with Dr. Thomas about the best way of securing the books and goods in my chamber at Christ Church if there should be any danger. There is a pair of silver candlesticks, too, and silver standish of mine in Mr. Percivall's hands"[32]. Locke was in fact under surveillance by government spies who, in a report dated 13 July 1683, wrote: "It is taken notice of in Oxford that from Mr. Locke's chamber in Christ Church, [...] in a clandestine way several handbaskets of papers are carried to Mr. James Tyrrell's house at Oakely [...] or to Mr. Pawling's, the mercer's house in Oxford"[33].

So, these journeys are amply illustrated by the biographers and in Locke's own letters and journals. The lists of books, the manuscript catalogues of his library[34] and lists drawn up at different times of his life illustrate how profoundly the three and a half years he spent in France affected Locke's intellectual development; the same is true of the six years that he spent in Holland in the course of the 1680s.

Just browsing through the notes one comes across details of the careful readings he has already made or anticipates, books that he owns or has borrowed from his hosts or friends. Locke was a thinker very attentive to political and religious issues, the Huguenot question and the intolerance of the Catholics. His manuscripts contain notes on the political and administrative organisation of the cities and the ecclesiastical systems of the two religions, but his curiosity also extends to social practices and cultural experiences, ranging from the fields of medicine and the pharmacopoeias to medicinal plants and agricultural crops, and even the Mediterranean crops that could be transplanted to the other side of the world. This particular type of curiosity also materialised in the writings

32 Locke to Edward Clarke, 26 August 1683, in Locke, *Correspondence,* vol. 2, cit., p. 603. See also Locke to Edward Clarke, 21 November 1683, ibid., p. 605.

33 The passage is cited in Cranston, *John Locke*, cit., p. 228; see also J.W. Gough, "James Tyrrell. Whig, Historian and Friend of John Locke", in *The Historical Journal* 19 (1976), 3, pp. 581-610, p. 589; Woolhouse, *Locke,* cit., p. 193.

34 See Harrison and Laslett (eds.), *The Library of John Locke,* cit., pp. 14-15; see also J.C. Attig, *John Locke Bibliography*, cit.

that appeared after his death dealing with the cultivation of vines and olives[35], which led to the work on the history of navigation and the catalogue of travel books that appeared posthumously being attributed to Locke's hand[36].

Locke had known the works of the French philosophers Descartes and Gassendi since his university years at Christ Church: "The first books (as Mr. Locke himself has told me) which gave him a relish of philosophical studies were those of Descartes" wrote Lady Masham after the death of her friend[37]. But the list of his readings, his notes and the desire to learn French by challenging himself to the translation of Nicole's *Discourses*[38], his frequentation of the physicians of Montpellier, the doctor and astronomer Jolly, the Cartesian mathematician Pierre-Sylvain Régius and, above all, the intellectuals of Justell's entourage, introduced him to the works of Bernier and Malebranche, encounters that certainly provided lifeblood for the manuscript *De Intellectu* that he had with him during his travels through France and that he brought back to England when he left Paris in April 1679 and also took to Holland[39].

Returning from his French journey Locke certainly brought back his precious manuscripts and many of his books. However, even the most careful shipping was perilous, and probably constrained him to leave behind certain books and instruments at the time of departure. The English naturalist and collector William Charleton (the alias of William Courten), whom he met in Lyon and who became a friend for life, wrote to Locke in February 1679 that he had sent to Paris

> your bookes which are to the number of 18 and those seeds which I could procure are in the Box No: (1) the catalogue of both went Inclosed ans I hope they have reached your hands, in the letter of mine I mention'd to you (and againe desire) that if the books be in the least troublesome you will be pleased to sell them, for I shall meet with most of them in England if ever I retourne[40].

35 J. Locke, *Observations upon the Growth and Culture of Vines and Olives*, W. Sandby, London 1766. See Jean S. Yolton, *John Locke. A Descriptive Bibliography*, Thoemmes Press, Bristol 1998, pp. 373-74.

36 See Yolton, *John Locke,* cit., pp. 432-33.

37 See Cranston, *John Locke*, cit., p. 100.

38 See J.S. Yolton (ed.), *John Locke as Translator. Three of the "Essais" of Pierre Nicole in French and English,* Voltaire Foundation in association with Liverpool University Press, Liverpool 2000; L. Simonutti, "Locke traducteur de Nicole: *The Weaknesse of Man"*, in C. Le Blanc and L. Simonutti (eds.), *Le masque de l'écriture. Philosophie et traduction de la Renaissance aux Lumières*, Droz-Rome, CNR, Geneva 2015, pp. 627-39.

39 J.R. Milton, "The Genesis and Composition of the *Essay"*, in M. Stuart (ed.), *A Companion to Locke*, Wiley Blackwell, Chichester 2016, pp. 123-39 and 132-33.

40 William Charleton to Locke, 18 February 1679, in Locke, *Correspondence,* vol. 1, cit., p. 684.

Both parties to this correspondence display a striking interest in travel literature and in the cultures of other lands and continents. In September 1673, Locke received from William Allestree some pictures – probably coloured drawings – illustrating "The Lives and manners of the Laplanders"[41]. In August 1687 Locke wrote to his friend William Charleton from the important naval hub of the city of Amsterdam:

> I have already spoke to a friend of mine to get for you any raretys that he can light on in the East India fleet which is now here every day expected. I the last weeke put into the hands of Mr. Smith a bookseller living at the Princes Armes in Paulus Churchyard 26 Draughts of the inhabitants of several remote parts of the world espetially the East Indes they are marked thus .2.3.4.5.6.7.8.9.10 .11.14.15.16.17.18.19.20.21.22.24.25.26.27.28.29.30. and the names of most of them writ on the backside with my hand, those whose names are not writ if you know them not I will get explain here, the Brasilian Canibals (of which there are one or two) are easily known, but since there was not the name of the particular nation from which they were taken I would not adde them my self. For the excellency of the drawing I will not answer they being don by my boy who hath faithfully enough represented the originals they were copyed from, soe that one may see the habits and complexion of the people which was the main end they were designed for and therefore you must excuse them if they be not excellent pieces of painting[42].

41 William Allestree, "Notes on a picture showing Lapp life", 16 September 1673, ibid., pp. 390-91.

42 Locke to William Charleton, 2 August 1687, in Locke, *Correspondence,* ed. by E.S. De Beer, vol. 3, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1978, pp. 239-40. The study by Mariana de Campos Françozo describes and analyses the drawings listed in the letter, most of which have come down to us. The pictorial material reproduced for William Charleton by Locke's secretary and copyist Sylvester Brounower illustrates the philosopher's significant and constant interest in travel literature and exotic peoples and cultures. The author of the essay clarifies: "This article will expand the argument to show that the Locke drawings set were part and parcel of Locke's studies of the natural history of the non-European world, and therefore may have helped to inform his ideas on the natural man. While this article will not delve into the historical anthropology and the political philosophy of John Locke, it aims to bring the Locke drawings collection to light by contextualizing their production as a direct consequence of Locke's six-year stay in the Netherlands. As this article will show, Locke's frequent contacts with scholars, artists, travellers, and their accounts of the native peoples encountered in the Dutch commercial and colonial settlements in Asia, Africa, and South America were the direct source of inspiration for this collection of ethnographic images." M. de Campos Françozo, "'Inhabitants of Rustic Parts of the World': John Locke's Collection of Drawings and the Dutch Empire in Ethnographic Types", in *History and Anthropology* 28 (2017), 3, pp. 349-74, p. 351.

S. Brounower, *A Brasilian Cannibal*, c. 1683-1687. © British Library Board (Add MS 5253 n.26). The image is taken from M. de Campos Françozo, "Inhabitants of Rustic Parts of the World': John Locke's Collection of Drawings and the Dutch Empire in Ethnographic Types", in *History and Anthropology*, 28 (2017), 3, pp. 349-74.

4. *"Thus whither from sea or land our quiet flows". In Holland and again in Cleves*

Lady Damaris Masham, daughter of the Cambridge Neoplatonist Ralph Cudworth, was John Locke's friend for over twenty years. Reminiscing about the significant moments in the life of her late-lamented friend, she provided a glimpse into the climate that induced Locke to leave his own country for

Holland in 1683. In the letter she sent to the Remonstrant theologian and philologist Jean Le Clerc in Amsterdam in the early days of 1705, she consigned to posterity the first biographical and intellectual portrait of the great philosopher. Drawing on her personal memories, the impressions formed through her epistolary exchange with Locke during his Dutch years and the stories he told her in person when he returned to England, at the peaceful manor at Oates, she wrote:

> In the later end of the year 1683 he went into *Holland*, where injoying better health than he had of a long time done in *England* or even in the fine Air of Montpelier he had full leisure to prosecute his Thoughts on the Subject of *Humane Understanding:* a work which in probabilitie he never would have finish'd had he continu'd here. How he pass'd his time in this Retreat you can better tell than I. I have only heard say that he liv'd here very retir'dly: happy (whilst at Amsterdam) in your Conversation and that of the Excellent Monsr. Limborch, whom he often wish'd for in England after his return hither[43].

When Locke disembarked in Rotterdam, he was in the fifty-second year of his life. He left behind him an England and its Crown riven by mistrust, conspiracies of both Catholics and Protestants and the discovery of the Rye House Plot. Moreover, Locke was stricken by the recent death of his friend and protector, the First Earl of Shaftesbury. Shaftesbury had preceded him in voluntary exile in Holland to avoid being arrested on the charge of having plotted against the King. Denying his involvement in any subversive plan against the Crown or in support of the Duke of Monmouth, in a long letter to Lord Pembroke, Locke describes his first spell in Holland:

> My time was most spent alone, at home by my fires side, where I confesse I writ a good deale, I thinke I may say, more then ever I did in soe much time in my life, but noe libells, unlesse perhaps it may be a libell against all mankinde to give some account of the weaknesse and shortnesse of humane understanding, for upon that my old theme de Intellectu humano (on which your Lordship knows I have been a good while a hammering), has my head been beating, and my pen scribleing all the time I have been here except what I have spent in travelling about to see the country[44].

[43] J. Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, ed. by M.G. Sina and M. Sina, Olschki, Florence 1987-97, vol. 2, p. 505.
[44] Locke to Thomas Herbert, 28 November 1684, in Locke, *Correspondence,* vol. 2, cit., p. 664. See also C.D. van Strien, *British Travellers in Holland during the Stuart Period. Edward Browne and John Locke as Tourists in the United Provinces,* Brill, Leiden 1993.

During the late 1670s and early 80s Locke had been committed to political reflections while writing the *Two Treatises* and being involved with the activities of the Whig party. His contacts with medical and religious circles, especially in Amsterdam, Utrecht and Rotterdam, stimulated a greater interest in epistemology and theology, and his political reflections were joined by the study and discussion of exegetical-religious questions in addition to focus on the contemporary political-religious debate. Locke's friendship with Philippus van Limborch, Jean Le Clerc and, more generally, his contacts with the Remonstrant circle and with Benjamin Furly and the "De Lantaarn" club in Rotterdam were extremely influential at this time[45].

Locke devoted himself to reading the most representative works of Remonstrant thought and the Dutch authors committed to theological debate. On 20 March 1684 he noted in his journal his ownership of the second edition of the *Opera theologica* by Episcopius, which he then perused attentively. Appearing in the same list of books are the *Colloquia familiaria* by Erasmus – later also joined by the *Adagia* – as well as works of biblical exegesis, such as the edition of the New Testament by Jacob Cappel, and the *Ethica Aristotelica et Christiana* by John Crell, published in Amsterdam in 1681. He also read a number of minor works by Episcopius and the *Opera theologica* by Courcelles.

In the same years Locke also tackled the works of erudite Dutchmen, Gronovius and Senguerdius, one of Limborch's teachers, the numerous writings of Vossius, the works of theologians and controversists such as Coornhert, Wtenbogaert, Van der Waeyen, Van Dale and the *Opera posthuma* of Spinoza. He returned on several occasions to various writings by Velthuysen – friend and correspondent of Limborch – and by Grotius. In relation to the latter, in the early months of 1684 he procured the most recent editions of the *De veritate religionis Christianae* and the *De jure belli ac pacis* – both published in 1680 – and of the *De Imperio summarum potestatum circa sacra*, in the 1677 edition. Also present in the library of his Dutch period were the *Ecclesiarum Belgicarum confessio et catechesis* in the Utrecht edition of 1660, the *Storia del concilio tridentino* by Sarpi, the works of Calvin and that of Beza on the punishment of heretics. Also significant is the attention that Locke devoted to

[45] See L. Simonutti, "Locke and the Dutch," in W. van Bunge, H. Krop, B. Leeuwenburgh, H. van Ruler, P. Schuurman, M. Wielema (eds.), *The Dictionary of Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Dutch Philosophers*, Thoemmes, Bristol 2003, vol. 2, pp. 633-39; Ead., "Political Society and Religious Liberty. Locke at Cleves and in Holland", in *British Journal of the History of Philosophy* 14 (2006), 3, pp. 413-36.

the editions of the Old and New Testaments and the works of biblical exegesis by English and Dutch writers, as well as by authors such as Buxtorf, Spencer and especially Louis and Jacob Cappel. As well as the latter, the ethical and theological works of the two Crells, Johannes and Samuel – in addition to the works of other Socinians such as Volkelius, Schlichtingius and the *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum* – aroused Locke's interest.

During his sojourn in France Locke had read several political and religious treatises penned by Huguenots in response to mounting persecution by the Catholic Sun King, including the works of Pajon, D'Huisseau and Claude, as well as collections comprising the Edicts of Pacification. In Holland Locke returned to reading a rapidly growing pamphlet production, stimulated by the pressure of events, that had found a haven in the milieu of Dutch intellectuals and publishers. Locke's extensive and varied reading during these Dutch years – in theology, medicine, politics, philosophy, scholarship, natural sciences, geography, travel books, literature, etc. – is illustrated in the two inventories of his library, drawn up in 1686 and again shortly before he left Holland, and in the long lists of books that fill the pages of his journals, interspersed with brief comments, notes of lent and borrowed volumes, of works sent to friends, details of journeys, changes of address and payments made.

The significance of the collaboration between Locke and Le Clerc for the reception of the philosopher's works on the Continent is well known. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that for Locke it also provided insight into the culture of the Refuge and the political and religious debates of not only French, but Dutch and English liberal Protestantism, as well as connections with theologians, polemists, printers and intellectual émigrés in Holland, some of whom became translators of his works and close collaborators, such as Pierre Coste and Pierre Des Maizeaux.

During his time in Holland, most probably urged by the curiosity of his friend and correspondent Damaris Masham, while travelling in certain regions of the country Locke took the opportunity of visiting Wieuwerd, a village close to Leeuwarden, where a famous community of Labadists lived. Damaris Cudworth Masham had been reared in the Neoplatonic and Latitudinarian circles of Cambridge; she integrated the philosophical education received from her father with her interest in Locke's own philosophy. In the letters she sent him between 1684 and 1685 she stressed the legitimacy of the ethical and mystical component of philosophical and theological thought and questioned her friend about certain Protestant brethren, the Labadists since she had

heard great praise of their way of life, religious ideas and social organisation. While responding to Lady Masham's interest by sending her works by Labadist writers, Locke revealed his own scepticism about a confessional sect that granted too much space to zeal and submission and too little to the rationality and liberty of its adherents. On 22 August 1684, after having spent the day in the community of Wieuwerd, in his journal he wrote a detailed report on the rules of coexistence within the community in which private property was not allowed and the religious and social discipline of which was in the hands of the pastor Yvon. After acknowledging the purity of heart of these believers, Locke went on to stress the anomaly between their strong mystical-religious sentiment and the role of *dominus factotum* which their spiritual guide, the pastor Yvon, had taken upon himself.

In early 1687 Locke moved to the house of Benjamin Furly in Rotterdam, where he spent many happy months surrounded anew by the dissident friends, Quakers, Republicans and Huguenots that gathered at the learned merchant's house. But before this, his sojourn in Amsterdam was interrupted by other journeys. Induced by political events in the homeland and his frequentation of dissident circles, he stayed in Utrecht through the winter of 1684-85 and the autumn of 1686. In the autumn of 1685 he also spent several weeks in Cleves.

Once again we should stress here that Locke's first sojourn in Cleves must have played a significant role in his intellectual evolution since twenty years later – and against the advice of his best friends of the time, the Dutchmen Philippus van Limborch and Pieter Guenellon – he unexpectedly decided to return to visit the city, a journey on this occasion shrouded in secrecy. In answer to his friends' questions about the reasons for his departure, he explained it as a desire for rest from his travels and worries in the "calm and clear air" of the country town. But his assertions failed to dispel his friends' perplexity and a certain air of mystery, and the real motives for this visit are far from having been explained.

> Dans ce que vous avez eû la bonté de me dire sur la maniere dont nôtre Ami passoit son temp, lorsqu'il étoit hors de l'Angleterre il y a un endroit sur lequel j'aurois souhaité que vous vous fussiez expliqué d'avantage. Je veux dire que vous m'eussiez appris quelles étoient ces promesses qui l'engagerent à aller à Cleves et par qui elles lui furent faites: car je ne sai rien de tout de cela[46].

[46] Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham to Philippus van Limborch, 17 September 1705, Universiteit Bibliotheek-Amsterdam, MS. M.31c.

This was what Lady Damaris Masham wrote to Limborch in September 1705 when, after the death of the philosopher, she was requested by Jean Le Clerc and Pierre Coste to help reconstruct the various events of Locke's life for the purposes of a biography. Although the noblewoman had had Locke as her guest for over ten years, consolidating what was effectively a much longer intellectual association, not even this friendship had been able to elicit any revelation regarding the philosopher's mysterious sojourn in Cleves in the autumn of 1685.

With a tone of mild reproach, Limborch recalled that Locke had been persuaded to undertake this journey by a certain vainglorious individual, but that he very soon returned to Amsterdam since he had had been unable to find a position in which he felt secure[47]. Limborch provided Lady Masham with all the scant information in his possession regarding Locke's departure for Cleves. His philosopher friend had been induced to make this trip by an individual whose name Limborch does not reveal, although he knows it, while stressing his distinctly bragging character. He recalls how, along with Veen and Guenellon, he accompanied Locke to board the ferry for Utrecht, and remembers the reluctance with which he took leave of his friend.

Once he had reached the Brandenburg town Locke did not fail to forward news of himself, continues Limborch, who concludes his account to Lady Masham by recalling how in the space of a few weeks the philosopher became aware of the vanity and boastfulness of this mentor and returned to Amsterdam. Here he resumed his close frequentation of Limborch himself and his secret life under the pseudonym of Doctor van den Linden.

It emerges, then, that Locke had initially planned to spend the winter in this peaceful spot with its particularly healthy climate, to the extent that he had even invited his Amsterdam friends to visit him there[48]. Limborch's reply was that such a visit would have been possible in the late Spring of 1686, except naturally in the felicitous event of his friend's early return to Amsterdam. Before leaving for Cleves Locke had read the manuscript of the *Theologia Christiana*, Limborch's principal work which was to appear in 1686, the final four chapters of which were devoted to the question of toleration and the illegitimacy of coercion of heretics.

[47] Limborch to Lady Masham, 6 April 1706, Universiteit Bibliotheek-Amsterdam, MS. D.III.16, 55v.

[48] Locke to Philippus van Limborch, 18 September 1685, in Locke, *Correspondence,* vol. 2, cit., p. 740.

During the weeks of his sojourn in the Brandenburg duchy, and in the winter of 1685, Locke put the finishing touches to his *Epistola de tolerantia*, and it is very likely that he had planned to continue the drafting of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* during the peaceful months in Cleves[49].

He had brought with him Le Clerc's reply to the *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (Paris, 1678) written by Richard Simon, and so he applied himself to an attentive critical reading of the essay *Sentimens de quelques théologiens de Hollande sur l'Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (Amsterdam, 1685). It was possibly therefore with a view to working in peace that Locke chose a place which he already knew and which, twenty years earlier, had struck him on account of its economic and social organisation and the remarkable religious liberty which managed to thrive within a political context of a monarchic and absolutist stamp. At Cleves, still under cover of pseudonyms, Locke was the guest of Mayer, the Great Elector's secretary[50].

No less significant was the political and social context of Brandenburg at the time, and to an even greater extent that of the Duchy of Cleves, which enjoyed legislative privileges designed to protect the Catholic community and religious plurality in general. For Frederick William, the political ideal of a modern state based on a strong administrative centralisation, and consequently capable of safeguarding personal property and security, was founded on three principles that guaranteed its prosperity: to seek the welfare of the subjects without exclusion based on their religion, to develop commerce and to increase the population. At his explicit wish, and in line with the Great Elector's political – and, even more pointedly, economic – plan, the Duchy of Cleves became a place of refuge for exiles from all countries. It attracted Poles, Waldensians, Socinians and Mennonites, but also Germans with religious ideas that were opposed to those of their own prince. It welcomed Catholics from Holland and thousands of Huguenot refugees in flight from the persecutions and *dragonnades* of the France of the Sun King that culminated in the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes proclaimed in October 1685. Significantly, Frederick William replied to this in November of the same year with the Edict of Potsdam, which opened the frontiers to the French exiles, promising them free allocation of land and building materials and exemption from taxes for six years[51]. This was a religious

[49] Locke to Philippus van Limborch, 26 September 1685, ibid., pp. 747-49.

[50] R. Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics and Locke's "Two Treatises of Government"*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1986, p. 471.

[51] G. Dethan, "L'absolutisme en Prusse au XVIIe siècle: Le Grand Électeur Frédéric Guillaume", in *Revue d'histoire diplomatique* 76 (1962), pp. 267-73, 271-72.

freedom and political toleration which, far from thinning the ranks of the numerous religious communities and weakening the organisation of the state, on the contrary actually strengthened it and signified a crucial contribution to demographic growth and social and economic progress. The enactment of such a political programme could not fail to interest the author of the *Epistola de tolerantia*.

Locke's dialogue with the friends he had met during his travels and in Holland persisted through the following years, during his sojourn in Rotterdam and after his return to England. Limborch played a decisive role in publishing the *Epistola*, after which he was also an attentive reader of the subsequent replies by Proast, of the writings on Christian religion and of *The Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Even after Locke had left Amsterdam, the relations between the two authors were not weakened, even if the ethical-religious aspects of one's thought and the philosophical-gnoseological aspects of the other's progressively came to mark a divide in their cultural evolution.

Locke and Furly may have had the opportunity to meet when Locke disembarked in Rotterdam in September 1683, although it is more likely that the meeting took place in the course of Locke's journeys through Holland between May and June 1686, or that they were introduced by their common acquaintance, the radical writer and politician John Freke. In any case, from February 1687 Locke became an almost permanent guest at Furly's house and part of the wealthy merchant's circle of acquaintances and correspondents. Furly devoted himself to his commercial activities with such profit that he was recognised as one of the foremost businessmen of the city, and he devoted the same energy to his patronage of literature and free intellectual activity.

The principal arguments of the letters between Locke and Furly during the philosopher's sojourn in Holland were criticism of the political and religious organisation of the Labadists and the appearance of the *Essay* in abridged form. But above all they shared an intense interest in the mediaeval codex *Liber Sententiarum*, which Locke had been able to see during the months he spent in Montpellier. Furly had purchased the transcription and later acquired the codex itself, which was to become the rarest and most expensive item in his library. From March 1688 their mutual friend Limborch also became directly involved in this editorial scheme, which had its epilogue in 1692 when the *Historia Inquisitionis* was published, edited by the Amsterdam theologian. The volume constituted a highly incisive means for intervening in the political-

religious debate which in these very years was involving Locke, Limborch and Furly, as well as numerous English exiles and French refugees, the Huguenots and the liberal Protestants, the Latitudinarians, and the dissidents who had remained in their own country.

Locke must then have found himself at his ease at the "Lantaarn" both in terms of the cultural climate which, as we have observed, reigned there, and in terms of the individuals who gathered at the club during these years: Quakers such as Arent Sonneman, doctors such as Hermanus Lufneu (whose work on fermentation, on sympathetic operations and on hydrostatics was attentively reviewed in the pages of the *Nouvelles de la Republique des Lettres* and in Rabus's magazine), Tobias Ludwig Kohlhans, a doctor and defender of Quakerism in Germany, and Van Helmont. Then there were polygraphs including Peter Rabus – involved in a Dutch translation of Locke's *Essay*, albeit an edition that never saw the light of day – a friend of Bayle, Van Dale, and Balthasar Bekker, an individual of considerable importance as well as editor of the erudite journal *Boekzaal van Europe*, and theologians including Limborch and Le Clerc. There were also philosophers, among them Bayle and the Earl of Shaftesbury, as well as dissenters and refugees and eminent politicians such as the ambassador Adriaan van Paets, connected with the Rijnsburg Collegiants and the Remonstrants.

Locke's encounter with Furly's library – over 4,400 volumes representing the most brilliant and also the most polemic publications of the seventeenth century, as well as the ancient and Christian classics – must have been an extraordinary experience. Just a few days after his arrival in the merchant's house, on the first of March 1687, Locke borrowed from this library the works of Dirk Coornhert and of Camphuysen, a *Synopsis linguae latinae* and, more particularly, the work by the heretic and tolerant Caelius Secundus Curio, *De amplitudine beati regni Dei* (Basle, 1554). All of these, apart from those of Coornhert, are effectively works that do not appear in the inventory of Locke's library. But it was above all during 1688 that Locke in his journal made long lists of books in which he was interested, with their respective prices, which he occasionally purchased at auctions. In these extensive lists the notes for purchase of books for his own library are intermingled with those destined for Furly's. In fact, Locke in turn also lent books to Furly, such as the writings of Cingallus Hermannus, the pseudonym of Johannes Crellius, *Scriptura S. Trinitatis revelatrix* (Gouda, 1678) just as he acted as go-between in the loan to the Earl of Pembroke of Furly's volume of the work *Kabbala denudata* (Frankfurt, 1677).

An estimate of the precise effect of the influence of Limborch's and Furly's circles on the English philosopher is something which has yet to emerge with greater clarity[52]. What is certain is that his stay in the Low Countries was an experience that remained central in Locke's mind.

5. *The "Isabella". London and Oates*

It was a journey at once longed-for and tinged with sadness. In the early weeks of 1689 Locke went to Amsterdam to bid farewell to Limborch and his other dearest friends. On 15 February, through the good offices of Furly, he sent his luggage – 16 boxes and a small barrel[53] – back to England. Finally on 20 February 1689, accompanied to the gangway by his faithful friend, John Locke boarded the *Isabella* and left Holland for the last time[54]. This is how Elisabeth Thorson relates his journey home:

> Locke watched as the silhouette of Rotterdam steadily shrunk into a black dot on the horizon, until it was swallowed completely by the mist. He silently bid farewell to the continent, his friends in Amsterdam, and to 6 years in exile. A true sailor, he thought, experiences in life two chief joys: the first one when he departs, with the ocean's vastness and adventures before him, and the second; when he returns and sights his homeland, at last, with Neptune's trials behind him. Locke was not a sailor. What he felt, in that moment, was a mixture of hope, relief, bewildered uncertainty, and slight seasickness (possibly caused by the pickled herring he'd had for breakfast). His hope was for England, his relief for finally returning, and his uncertainty as to what he was returning *to*. He thought especially of Damaris Cudworth. And perhaps of the condition of his books, that he had left behind in Oxford[55].

[52] L. Simonutti, "Religion, Philosophy and Science: Locke and the Limborch's Circle", in J.E. Force, D.S. Katz (eds.), *Everything Connects: In Conference with Richard H. Popkin,* Brill, Leiden 1999, pp. 295-324; Ead., "English Guests at 'De Lantaarn': Sidney, Penn, Locke, Shaftesbury and Toland", in S. Hutton (ed.), *Benjamin Furly (1636-1714) a Quaker Merchant and his Milieu,* Olschki, Florence 2007, pp. 31-66.

[53] Cranston, *John Locke*, cit., p. 310, footnote 3, specifies that according to a note in the journal dated February 1689 "thirteen of these boxes (nine 'double boxes' and four 'rough deal boxes') contained books; one was a 'little deal box with old linen and woollen in it'; another was a 'little casque with iron furnace in it'".

[54] Ibid., pp. 310-11; Woolhouse, *Locke,* cit., pp. 264-65.

[55] E. Thorson, *John Locke and The Order of the Black Keys Or After Six Years in Exile*. Copyright © 2019 Dr. Elisabeth Thorson, pp. 1-8, [preprint]. I should like to thank the author for having let me read her short novel.

Locke returned to find a country that had changed under the rule of William of Orange, but the London climate and his burden of commitments made his asthma worse and convinced him to settle permanently in the welcoming manor house of the Mashams. The friendship between Lady Masham and Locke probably developed towards the end of 1681, after their first meeting. She had a preferential exchange with Locke for over a decade and was the inspiring muse of intellectual life at the manor of Oates[56]. Thus, the trunks and boxes of books that had accompanied him on the Continent, the objects he had gathered on his travels and his possessions stored by Tyrrell in his absence set off for their last journey:

> Locke entrusted Tyrrell with the storage of his furniture and books from Christ Church when he had to move abroad in 1683. Back in England seven years later under William III, by 1691 he was moving from London lodgings to a more permanent home with Sir Francis and Lady Masham at Oates in Essex and asked for his Oxford belongings to be returned to him. This took a long time, because of the problems of transporting safely furniture, household goods, and valuable items as well as numerous heavy books. Much was sent by the newly restored river-barge route between Oxford and London[57].

The shipping was carried out in several consignments, and with some difficulty on the part of Tyrrell in preparing the boxes of books and objects that he had kept in storage for years in the family homes at Shotover and Oakley. Some of the books had been borrowed by Tyrrell himself or his relatives to read and sometimes never returned[58]. "This consignment included six large boxes, two smaller and a trunk, plus a large bundle of linens, and a cane chair. Locke's goods from Christ Church included a very large number of books as well as items awkward to pack (two carpets were too big to go in the bundle)"[59].

[56] See L. Simonutti, "Lady Damaris Masham, Liberty, Reason and the Love of God", in *Laboratorio dell'ISPF - Rivista elettronica di testi, saggi e strumenti* 15 (2018), pp.1-14, http://www.ispf-lab.cnr.it/archive.

[57] E. Berris, "On the Lending and Losing of Books: 'how many more of your books I daily make use of'", Saturday, 15 June 2019, https://frozenink.blogspot.com/2019/06/on-lending-and-losing-of-books-how-many.html. For a more complete picture of the books and possessions that Locke had stored with friends and that he exerted himself to get back to Oates, see Woolhouse, *Locke,* cit., pp. 300-302.

[58] See James Tyrrell to Locke, 29 June 1691 and 15 October 1691, in Locke, *Correspondence*, ed. by E.S. De Beer, vol. 4, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1979, pp. 286-87 and 316-17. The letters contain a detailed list of the items stored in the chests at Oakley and of several books borrowed by Tyrrell to read.

[59] E. Berris, "On the Lending and Losing of Books", cit.

Together with the reserved and prudent Locke, Damaris Masham turned her house at Oates into a meeting place, a site designed for "Rational Conversation" between numerous overseas scholars and English friends. As she wrote to Leibniz in August 1704: "Rational conversation with mutual Good will, has the greatest charms that I know in life, and I have hitherto been very happy in respect of that enjoyment"[60].

This 'salon' was partially virtual, comprising not only the philosopher's visitors, but also the network of correspondents which Locke in particular, but Damaris too, succeeded in establishing with the intellectuals, politicians and cultured and curious individuals of their time. Pierre Des Maizeaux, Frans Limborch – son of the theologian from Amsterdam – Pierre Coste, friend, translator and tutor of Lady Masham's only son, as well as Edward Clarke, Peter King, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, William Popple, Lord Peterborough (later Marlborough) and Isaac Newton were among the most assiduous and famous visitors to the salon at Oates. But there were also a number of prominent figures, including personal friends, living on the Continent who would have liked to spend time with Locke and Lady Masham but were on various occasions prevented from doing so. Despite this, their ideas and their writings continued to chart the philosopher's boundless intellectual horizons.

Conclusion

Locke's intellectual evolution and the experiences connected with his sojourns on the Continent were charted in the numerous letters sent to friends, the official reports and the daily entries in a sort of travel journal. The details provided range from his early education in London and at Oxford to his meeting with the First Earl of Shaftesbury, to the political and religious reflections that laid the foundations for the consolidation of his concept of tolerance, his political treatises and *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*. The aim of these initial notes is to focus on certain central aspects of Locke's thought through a conceptual prism that can cast light on new interpretational pathways.

These encounters, readings and experiences made Locke an emblem of the new man conceived by Francis Bacon in 1601 in his brief essay "Of Travel".

[60] Lady Masham to Leibniz, 8 August 1704, in Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Die Philosophischen Schriften,* ed. by C.I. Gerhardt, vol. 3, Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, Berlin 1887, p. 361.

This travel was not simply the Renaissance ideal of education of the young aristocrat, comprising study, attendance at the university and the encounter with learned men from other countries, with other histories, religions and politics, so as to be able to adopt the role "wise man" in one's own country. For Bacon, travel represented a crucial component in the quest for true knowledge, not pursuant to *auctoritas* but pursuant to a new method and order. Travelling that fostered the acquisition of knowledge and experience, the selection of flowers with which to adorn national culture once one returned home, without neglecting to keep alive through correspondence the relations with the worthy people encountered.

Thirty years later, in the brief handbook *Profitable Instructions Describing what Speciall Observations are to be Taken by Travellers in All Nations, States and Countries*, which Locke had in his library, Benjamin Fisher – very plausibly the author of the *Preface* – described in more explicit terms the training of the "perfect Man", prefiguring an ideal that also surfaces recurrently in Locke's thoughts.

> For ability to treat with men of several humours, factions, and Countries; duly to comply with them, or stand off, as occasion shall require, is not gotten onely by reading of books, but rather by studying of men. Yet this ever holds true; The best scholler is fittest for a Traveller, as being able to make the most useful observation: Experience added to learning, makes a perfect Man[61].

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[61] [John Beale?] *Profitable Instructions Describing what Speciall Observations are to be Taken by Travellers in All Nations, States and Countries; Pleasant and Profitable. By the Three much Admired, Robert, late Earle of Essex, Sir Philip Sidney, and, Secretary Davison*, Beniamin Fisher, London 1633.

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Locke in Halle: A chapter of the 18th-century German reception of John Locke

Paola Rumore

Abstract: The paper focuses on Locke's presence in Germany in the central decades of the 18th century, i.e. in the period that goes from the rise to the fall of Wolff's philosophy. Halle, one of the most important centers of the *Aufklärung*, turns out to be the perfect venue of the early stage of his reception. Locke's ideas played a central role in Wolff's opposition to Thomasius, in his controversy with the Pietistic theologians and with the supporters of the Thomasian school, and in his later difficult relation to the cultural environment at the Academy of Sciences in Berlin. Wolff's opinion on Locke changes over the time, and exerts its influence on a relevant part of the German philosophical world. Locke is described as the inspiration for the degenerated form of Enlightenment promoted at the Prussian court, for atheists, deists, materialists, and skeptics. Short after the fall of Wolff's hegemony in Germany, Halle is once again the seat of an important reconsideration of Locke's image; Meier insists on aspects of his philosophy which will characterize his reception in the later decades, e.g. epistemic modesty, the suspicion about the omnipotence of reason, and a cautious attitude towards metaphysical claims. Certainly, the later and well-known image of Locke as the champion of empiricism, the physiologist of human mind, the refined connoisseur of human nature that can be found in Feder, in Tetens, and in Kant, is the outcome of the 'rediscovery' of Locke occurring after the posthumous publication of Leibniz' *Nouveaux Essais*, but it shows aspects that reveal the persistent influence of Meier's view. On this basis, the paper suggests a reconsideration of the still dominant image of 18th-century Germany and its relation to the cultural processes that were going on in the rest of Europe.

Keywords: Christian Wolff, Johann Franz Budde, Georg Friedrich Meier, Materialism, Skepticism, Empiricism.

The importance of John Locke in 18th-century German philosophy is widely recognized. Kant's project of a critical philosophy, in which the main issues of the long German Enlightenment come together, has notoriously one of its main sources of inspiration in Locke. This fact does not only concern

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his celebrated attempt to reconcile empiricism and rationalism, that Kant himself presents as the real 'historical' meaning of his philosophical enterprise, but even more the concern about the boundaries of reason and the conditions of the validity of its use, that constitute the genuine starting-point of Kant's epoch-making 'Revolution in thinking'. Important representatives of *Kant-Forschung*, from Ernst Cassirer to Alois Riehl, insisted on the debt assumed by the founder of transcendental philosophy towards the author of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*[1]. Beside the case of Kant, Locke played a central role even among less prominent figures of the *Aufklärung*, from Andreas Rüdiger to Johann Nicolaus Tetens, who soon earned the appellation of the 'German Locke', to the main representatives of the *Popularphilosophie*, from the empirical orientation of Johann Heinrich Feder's philosophical investigation, to the naturalism and materialism promoted by Christoph Meiners and Michael Hißmann in Göttingen during the two final decades of the 18th century[2]. Beside that, the long-lasting influence of Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity* on the deistic aspects of Johann Christoph Gottsched's and Lessing's investigations, and in general on the claims of the movement of the German neologians is an achievement on which the scholarship has been unanimous[3].

Episodes like the ones we have just mentioned are well known to the philosophical chronicles and contribute to shape a persuasive image of the massive and stable presence of John Locke's philosophy in 18th-century

[1] See A. Riehl, *Der philosophische Kritizismus. Geschichte und System*, vol. 1, Kröner, Leipzig 1924 (reprint of the 1908[2] edition), pp. 19-99. The title of the chapter on Locke in this edition is "Der Kritizismus in Lockes Essay über den menschlichen Verstand", whereas in the first edition (1876) it was "Locke als Begründer des psychologischen Kriticismus" (pp. 19-63). See also E. Cassirer, *Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit*, vol. 2, Bruno Cassirer, Berlin 1907, bk. 6, ch. 1; R. Brandt, "Locke und Kant", in M.P. Thompson (ed.), *John Locke und Immanuel Kant. Historische Rezeption und gegenwärtige Relevanz*, Duncker & Humblot, Berlin 1991, pp. 87-108.

[2] Regarding the presence of Locke in Göttingen see L. Marino, *Praeceptores Germaniae. Göttingen 1770-1820*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1995. On Tetens see U. Thiel, "Zwischen empirischer Psychologie und rationaler Seelenlehre. Tetens über das Selbstgefühl", in G. Stiening and U. Thiel (eds.), *Johann Nikolaus Tetens (1736-1807). Philosophie in der Tradition des europäischen Empirismus*, de Gruyter, Berlin 2014, pp. 89-102; Id., "Experience and Inner Sense: Feder - Lossius - Kant", in T. Prunea-Bretonnet and K. de Boer (eds.), *Conceptions of Experience in the German Enlightenment*, Routledge, London (in print); Id., "Hißmann und der Materialismus", in H.F. Klemme, G. Stiening, and F. Wunderlich (eds.), *Michael Hißmann (1752-1784). Ein materialistischer Philosoph der deutschen Aufklärung*, Akademie Verlag, Berlin 2013, pp. 25-41.

[3] See in particular G. Gawlick, "Der Deismus als Grundzug der Religionsphilosophie der Aufklärung", in AA.VV., *Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694-1768), ein "bekannter Unbekannter" der Aufklärung in Hamburg*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1973, pp. 15-43.

Germany[4]. A presence that was undoubtedly reinforced and somehow reshaped by the 'rediscovery of Locke' occasioned by the posthumous publication of Leibniz's *Nouveaux Essais sur l'entendement humain* in 1765, which undoubtedly brought about a far-reaching upheaval in the philosophical scene of the time[5].

Such well-established results of the philosophical-historical investigation notwithstanding, the present paper focusses on a less celebrated phase of the confrontation of the German world with Locke's philosophy; in particular it takes into account Locke's image and the role it assumed in the period from the early phase of the Enlightenment promoted by Christian Thomasius (1655-1728) at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries, to the establishment, during the 1720s, of a 'national German philosophy' thanks to Christian Wolff (1679-1754), whose influence was almost unchallenged until the end of the 1740s. The present paper aims at sketching, so to speak, the main but still uncertain lines of the prehistory of the well-known narrative we have mentioned above.

My guiding hypothesis is the following. Locke's philosophy – which was consonant in its main concerns with the claims that had inspired the cultural 'revolution' carried on by the young Thomasius – played an important role both in the establishment of the new model of philosophy promoted by Wolff in Halle during the first decades of the new century, and even in the later affair with the Piestistic theologians and with the supporters of the Thomasian school Wolff was involved in. The clear echo of the image Wolff developed of Locke's philosophy in those years will persist in the later defense of his own system that he took up as a reaction to the anti-Wolffian campaign at the Prussian court.

[4] On the presence of Locke in Germany see K. Pollok, "Die Locke-Rezeption in der deutschen Aufklärung: frühe lateinische und deutsche Übersetzungen von Lockes Werken (1701-61)", introduction to Id. (ed.), *Locke in Germany. Early German Translations of John Locke (1709-61)*, Thoemmes Continuum, Bristol 2004, pp. v-xxxiii; F.A. Brown, "German Interest in John Locke's 'Essay', 1668-1800", in *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 50 (1951), pp. 466-82. More in general, it is still useful to refer to G. Zart, *Einfluss der englischen Philosophen seit Bacon auf die deutsche Philosophie des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Dümmler, Berlin 1881. A different opinion may be found in K.P. Fischer, "John Locke in the German Enlightenment: An Interpretation", in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36 (1975), pp. 431-46.

[5] Regarding the effects of the publication of Leibniz' *Nouveaux Essais* on the German world see the pioneering work by G. Tonelli, "Leibniz on innate ideas and the early reactions to the publication of the *Nouveaux essais*", in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 12 (1974), pp. 437-54.

The focus on the first half of the 18th century – a stage of the German Enlightenment in which Locke's presence has not usually been considered especially relevant – allows us to shed light on the genesis of a 'shadow'[6] image of Locke as a skeptical supporter of deism and materialism, which will be very persistent at least until the publication of the *Nouveaux Essais*, when that image was replaced by the still nowadays more common one of Locke as the empiricist, the geographer and the physiologist of human understanding that one can find in authors like Tetens and Feder, but whose canonical formulation goes back to Kant[7]. Furthermore, the focus on the first decades of the century will allow a reconsideration of the still dominant image of 18th-century Germany, as a place where people were following from far away the cultural processes that were going on in the rest of Europe, being themselves engaged in their own battles in favor of a reformation of philosophy against the aridity and sophistries of the long tradition of scholastic philosophy[8].

1. *An early stage*

When in 1690 Thomasius left Leipzig for Halle the name of Locke was far from being unknown to the German philosophical world. In 1688, the same year as the publication of Thomasius' *Introductio ad philosophiam aulicam* (which was revolutionary in its own way), the Latin translation of the first book of Locke's *Essay on human understanding* begun to circulate. This, together with the *Abrégé d'un ouvrage intitulé "Essai philosophique touchant l'Entendement"* that Le Clerc had published in the same year in his "Bibliothèque universelle" (Amsterdam), represented the only access to Locke's ideas for all those who

[6] I refer here to the idea of the presence of 'shadow histories' in philosophy, a kind of outline of historical figures that can play a pivotal role in the reception of a specific author; this very interesting phenomenon is accurately described in R.A. Watson, "Shadow History in Philosophy", in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 31 (1993), pp. 95-109.

[7] On Kant's idea of Locke as physiologist of the understanding see P. Guyer, "Kant's transcendental idealism and the limits of knowledge: Kant's alternative to Locke's physiology", in D. Garber and B. Longuenesse (eds.), *Kant and the Early Moderns*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2008, pp. 79-99; C.T. Wolfe, "The 'Physiology of the Understanding' and the 'Mechanics of the Soul': Reflections on Some Phantom Philosophical Projects", in E. Pasini and P. Rumore (eds.), *Another 18th-century German Philosophy? Rethinking German Enlightenment*, special issue of the yearbook *Quaestio* 16 (2016), pp. 3-26.

[8] On the fortune and decline of the Aristotelian scholastic philosophy in Germany see P. Petersen, *Geschichte der aristotelischen Philosophie im protestantischen Deutschland*, Meiner, Leipzig 1921, esp. pp. 384-92.

could not read the original in English. But, if what J.G.A. Pocock claims about the history of reception is true, namely, that it "cannot really begin on the eighth day of creation, when a work leaves its author's desk and begins to be received by others"[9], it is also true that the announcement of the publication of the *Essay* in the issue of August 1690 of the "Acta eruditorum", the main organ of cultural information of the time, was impressively well timed[10].

Thomasius' philosophical investigation has its heyday in the years he spent in Halle; starting from 1691 he published a series of works in which, in a fresh and accessible German, he offered a reform in philosophy grounded on the reformulation of logic and morals[11]. In his writings Thomasius expresses questions and attitudes, which would have found a prolific convergence with Locke's ideas. Thomasius promoted an anti-scholastic, anti-speculative, anti-deductive, and anti-foundational ideal of philosophy, whose clear empirical orientation reflected both his cautious attitude towards the traditional metaphysical claims, and his concern about the main practical, even pragmatical engagement of any philosophical investigation. In his pioneering 1969 work, Lewis White Beck summarized the main features of Thomasius' philosophy by stressing a clear but never explicitly mentioned convergence with Locke's ideas: "Nominalism, a sensationistic theory of the origin of ideas, a recognition of the importance of probability in life, and a belief in a healthy common sense as a substitute for speculation and subtlety were recommended in a vigorous, though often awkward, German: and again there was attack on pedantry, speculation, sophistry and superstition"[12].

Thomasius' direct acquaintance with Locke's work in those years cannot be confirmed. It is very unlikely that Locke was a direct source of inspiration at the time of the publication of the *Einleitung zur Vernunftlehre* (1691), and it is uncertain whether Thomasius knew the *Abrégé* by Le Clerc, or not[13].

[9] J.G.A. Pocock, "Negative and Positive Aspects of Locke's Place in Eighteenth-Century Discourse", in M.P. Thompson (ed.), *John Locke und Immanuel Kant*, cit., p. 48.

[10] See *Acta eruditorum* 9 (Aug. 1690), p. 424.

[11] See Ch. Thomasius, *Einleitung zur Vernunftlehre*, Salfeld, Halle 1691; Id., *Ausübung der Vernunftlehre*, Salfeld, Halle 1691; Id., *Einleitung zur Sittenlehre*, Salfeld, Halle 1692; Id., *Ausübung der Sittenlehre*, Salfeld, Halle 1696 (reproduction: Olms, Hildesheim 1993-).

[12] L.W. Beck, *Early German Philosophy and his Predecessors*, Thoemmes, Bristol 1996 (1969[1]), p. 249.

[13] Regarding Thomasius' direct acquaintance with Locke the opinions are divergent. According to Brown, "Thomasius himself acknowledged that Locke's chapter on religious 'enthusiasm', which first appeared in the fourth edition of 1700 and in the French translation of the same year provided a powerful stimulus in turning him away from extreme Pietism". See Brown, "German Interest in John Locke's 'Essay'", cit., p. 468. Locke's chapter will be translated into German by G.M. Preu as an appendix to his *Geist der wahren aber falsch befundenen Inspiration*, Ulm 1720. R. Widmaier remarks that the

While renouncing to answer such a well-debated question, which is probably destined to remain unsolved, it is undeniable that Thomasius had prepared in Germany, and especially in Halle, a fertile soil for the blossoming of Locke's ideas. The cultural atmosphere was marked by discontent; both the religious and the philosophical milieu were engaging in a protest against orthodoxy and sectarism, against the formality of the cult as well as against the aridity of Scholasticism[14]. Thanks to Thomasius Halle would become a place where philosophy was understood and practiced in a way that had a natural affinity with that promoted by Locke[15].

Nicolaus Hieronymus Gundling, Thomasius' beloved disciple, published in 1713 a treatise on logic with the title *Ars recte ratiocinandi*[16], clearly inspired by Locke, whose presence is manifest in the criticism of innate ideas (where Gundling praises Locke explicitly), in the claim about the empirical origin of ideas (ch. i, §§ 15-16), in the rejection of syllogistic logic, in the conception of truth as agreement between ideas (ch. iii, § 17).

Actually, already a decade before the publication of the *Ars recte ratiocinandi* Johann Franz Budde – who was himself close to the Thomasian school during the years he spent in Halle, before he was appointed Professor of Theology in the University of Jena in 1705 – had introduced elements of indubitable Lockean origin in his *Institutiones philosophiae eclecticae* (1703)[17]. The general project of an

empiricist orientation of Thomasius' philosophy might be the outcome of his reading of Bacon: see R. Widmaier, "Alter und neuer Empirismus. Zur Erfahrungslehre von Locke und Thomasius", in W. Schneiders (ed.), *Christian Thomasius, 1655-1728. Interpretationen zu Werk und Wirkung*, Meiner, Hamburg 1989, pp. 95-114. Among those who suggest a direct influence of Locke on Thomasius see Zart, *Einfluss der englischen Philosophen*, cit., pp. 33-40.

14 Regarding Halle see W. Schrader, *Geschichte der Friedrichs-Universität zu Halle*, Dümmler, Berlin 1894, esp. vol. 1, bk. I, pp. 1-128. See also the essays collected in N. Hinske (ed.), *Zentren der Aufklärung I. Halle. Aufklärung und Pietismus*, Schneider, Heidelberg 1989.

15 See Brown, "German Interest in John Locke's 'Essay', 1668-1800", cit., p. 477; Pollok, "Die Locke-Rezeption in der deutschen Aufklärung", cit., § 1.

16 See N.H. Gundling, *Via ad veritatem*, vol. 1: *Ars recte ratiocinandi*, Renger, Halle 1713; reproduction: Olms, Hildesheim 2016. Gundling's work included the *Philosophia moralis*, vol. 2, Renger, Halle 1713, and the *Iurisprudentia naturalis*, vol. 3, Renger, Halle 1715. See also M. Wundt, *Die deutsche Schulphilosophie im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, Mohr, Tübingen 1945; reproduction: Olms, Hildesheim 1992, p. 62.

17 J.F. Budde, *Elementa philosophiae instrumentalis, seu institutionum philosophiae eclecticae*, Orphanotropheum, Halle 1703 (which contains a part devoted to logics, the *Elementa philosophiae instrumentalis*, and a part devoted to metaphysics or ontology, the *Elementa philosophiae theoreticae*). I quote from the 1706 edition, which is identical to the original. On Locke's influence on Budde see Wundt, *Die deutsche Schulphilosophie im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, cit., pp. 67-68. Regarding the attitude of the Thomasian circle towards metaphysics see C. Schwaiger, "Christian Wolffs Deutsche Metaphysik und die Thomasianer Nicolaus Hieronymus Gundling und Johann Franz Budde", in *Archivio di filosofia* 87 (2019), pp. 27-38.

'eclectic' philosophy he derived from Thomasius was the frame in which Budde placed a relevant number of considerations that are silent references to Locke, from the twofold empirical sources of ideas to the distinction between inner and outer sense (ch. i, § 8), to the classification of ideas as simple or complex, and of the latter as ideas of mode, substance and relation (ch. i, §§ 9-10).

Most importantly, Budde revealed his closeness to Locke's philosophy in the full awareness of the problem of the limits of human reason and of the consequences the empirical origin of knowledge had for metaphysical claims. In Budde as in Locke this kind of consideration led to a 'phenomenistic' approach in to the theory of knowledge, namely to the claim that ideas are mere perceptions not of external things as such, but of the way they appear to us or, as Budde put it, of what of them penetrates into our mind (ch. i, § 7). Even Budde's criticism of the knowability of substances clearly recalls Locke's claim; as Budde remarked

> if considered in a concrete sense, [substance] indicates the subject in which are grounded the properties we know of things; if someone believes that this subject can be conceived with clearness and distinctness, he makes a huge mistake, because for what concerns singular things we do not know anything clearly and perspicuously except for their accidents[18].

In the second part of his *Institutiones*, the one that deals with metaphysical issues, Budde is even more explicit: "I am deeply persuaded that no mortal being can know with certainty the essences of things or the principles that act [in them]"; besides what is testified by our perceptions we can have nothing but "plausible conjectures [*conjecturae verosimiles*]" (ch. v, § 26); "real essences of things are unknown to us [*essentiae rerum nobis [sunt] incognitae*]" (ch. v, § 28).

By following his reasoning to its extreme consequences Budde came to face one of the most controversial items in Locke's philosophy, namely the *vexata quaestio* of thinking matter. Even if Locke had discussed the problem of a *materia cogitans* in just a few lines in the fourth book of the *Essay*, the topic was destined to provoke one of the liveliest debates of 18th-century Europe[19]. Following Locke, Budde put forward an argument in favor of the hypothesis of thinking

[18] Budde, *Elementa philosophiae instrumentalis*, cit., ch. v, § 2.

[19] On the Lockean origin of the debate on the *materia cogitans* see J.W. Yolton, *Thinking Matter. Materialism in Eighteenth Century Britain*, Blackwell, Oxford 1982; A. Thomson, *Bodies of Thought. Science, Religion, and the Soul in the Early Enlightenment*, Oxford University Press, New York 2008. On Locke's alleged materialism see N. Jolley, *Locke's Touchy Subjects. Materialism and Immortality*, Oxford University Press, New York 2015.

matter that was based on the conceivability (i.e. on the non-contradictoriness) of the idea that God might have created a matter that can think ("nullam tandem involv[it] contradictionem, quo minus Deus substantiam corpoream cogitantem producere possit", ch. v, § 28). The real essence of things being unknowable, it is impossible to determine if the attributes of thought and extension cannot really coexist in the same essence; beside that, God's omnipotence could have made possible what a finite intellect is inclined to consider as impossible. Therefore, the question concerning the material or immaterial nature of the soul cannot find a reliable answer by means of philosophical investigation, requiring instead the intervention of the Scripture (ch. v, § 28).

2. *Locke's shadows in Wolff*

Just a few years later, precisely the kind of Lockean attitude towards the claims of metaphysics actively professed by Budde would attract the criticism of Wolff. In fact, once he entered the notorious dispute with the Pietists in Halle first and then with Budde on the fatalistic implications of his philosophical system, he recognized their closeness to Locke as the basis for their misunderstanding and the dangerous consequences of their philosophical claims[20].

However, that was not the first time Wolff addressed Locke's philosophy. In January 1708 he had written in the "Acta eruditorum" a review of Locke's posthumous works, that had been published in London two years before. Wolff devoted a significant part of the review to the writing *Of the Conduct of the Understanding*, originally conceived as a further chapter of the *Essay*. Wolff appreciated in particular the fact that the "celeberrimus Lockius" praised the importance of mathematics in making humans reasonable creatures (*creaturae rationales*), i.e. in developing their rational capacities by acquiring the habit of observing the connection of ideas and following their series[21]. Locke's concern

[20] On the notorious struggle between Wolff and the Pietists see the standard work by B. Bianco, "Libertà e fatalismo. Sulla polemica tra Joachim Lange e Christian Wolff", in Id., *Fede e sapere. La parabola dell'"Aufklärung" tra pietismo e idealismo*, Morano, Napoli 1992, pp. 31-84. See also A. Beutel, "*Causa Wolffiana*. Die Vertreibung Christian Wolffs aus Preußen 1723 als Kulminationspunkt des theologisch-politischen Konflikts zwischen halleschem Pietismus und Aufklärungsphilosophie", in Id., *Reflektierte Religion. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Protestantismus*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2007, pp. 125-69.

[21] See Ch. Wolff's review of Locke's *Posthumous Works*, in *Acta eruditorum* 27 (Jan. 1708), p. 40. Wolff wrote also a review of Locke's *Some familiar letters* (*Acta eruditorum* 30 (1711), pp. 474-80), and of *A collection of several pieces* (*Acta eruditorum* 40 (1721), pp. 376-81).

about the importance of mathematics as a useful way to train our minds to reason with thoroughness and method could not but receive Wolff's full approval because of its emphasizing the necessity of extending the mathematical way of reasoning onto further fields of knowledge, and of treating every kind of reasoning and every argument as a mathematical demonstration[22]. In his review Wolff almost literally quoted Locke's statements on the various advantages of solid knowledge in mathematics, especially in algebra:

> Primo scilicet in eo versantem convinci, ut ratio sit bona, non sufficere dari multos, quibus satisfaciat, quin facillime quenquam falli posse, nec omnium ubique momenta summa penetrare. Secundo per illud necessitatem manifestari, quae veris ratiociniis inest. Ostendit ulterius, quidnam peccetur per neglectum idearum abstractarum, quid praejudicia valeant adversus mentem[23].

Mathematics represented the most proper method of investigation in any realm of knowledge, ethics included[24], and the best antidote against prejudice and rash judgements since it accustomed the understanding to observe carefully the series and connections of ideas, to consider separately each passage of reasonings, and to follow the long chains of demonstrations.

Wolff's praise of Locke, the supporter of the mathematical method, reappeared some few years later, in 1713, in the preface to the first edition of the so-called *German Logic*. Wolff recognized the importance of Locke's work on the understanding, probably alluding to the *Essay* that he read in Burridge's Latin translation[25], but insisted once again on the instructions for a better use

[22] Locke, *Of the Conduct of the Understanding*, ed. by P. Schuurman, Doctoral Dissertation, Keele University 2000, § 7 p. 167: "I have mentioned mathematicks as a way to setle in the minde an habit of reasoning closely and in train: not that I thinke it necessary that all men should be deep mathematicians, but that having got the way of reasoning which that study necessarily brings the minde to they might be able to transfer it to other parts of knowledge as they shall have occasion. For in all sorts of reasoning every single argument should be managed as a mathematical demonstration, the connection and dependence of Ideas should be followed till the minde is brought to the sourse on which it bottoms and observes the coherence all along, though in proofs of probability one such train is not enough to setle the judgment as in demonstrative knowledg".

[23] See Wolff's review of Locke's *Posthumous Works*, cit., p. 41.

[24] Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedancken von den Kräfften des menschlichen Verstandes und ihrem richtigen Gebrauche in Erkänntnis der Wahrheit*, Renger, Halle 1713 ("Deutsche Logik"), ch. viii, § 2; reproduction of the 1754 ed.: Olms, Hildesheim 1965.

[25] Locke, *De intellectu humano in quatuor libris editio quarta aucta et emendata, nunc primum latine reddita*, transl. by R. Burridge, Churchill, London 1701; this translation was also published in Leipzig in 1709 and reprinted in Pollock, *Locke in Germany*, cit., vol. 2. In 1741 G.H. Thiele published in Leipzig another Latin translation of Locke's *Essay*, entitled *Libri 4 De Intellectu Humano denuo*

of the intellect presented in the posthumous work: "But to what, pray, does Locke himself ascribe his ability of understanding, and what means does he recommend, in order to the attainment thereof? On consulting his book on *the Conduct of the Understanding* [...], it will be found, that he attributes all his penetration to mathematical knowledge, particularly the algebraical"[26]. Locke's method – definition of terms, clarity of ideas, demonstration of every assumption, careful order in the series of what precedes and what follows – and the idea to extend it to every realm of human knowledge did not only perfectly match the method Wolff adopted in his own system[27], but confirmed in his eyes Locke's superiority over Descartes, who failed precisely there where he abandoned the purpose to follow the mathematical method, as it happened in the case of his demonstration of God's existence[28].

Above all, Wolff saw in Locke an important supporter of the project of a renewal of the actual philosophical situation in Germany, a situation he did not feel at his ease in. Indeed, in his memoirs he confessed, that when he arrived in Halle to teach Mathematics towards the end of 1706, he found himself in "a situation that was different from the one he had hoped for"[29], given the spreading of "deep-rooted prejudices" against mathematics[30]; in Halle then, "Mathematics was a completely unknown and unusual matter, there was no sense for thoroughness; for what concerned philosophy, Thomasius was dominant, but he practiced it with a *sentiment* and in a way that didn't

ex novissima editione idiomatis Anglicani, longe accuratiori in puriorem stylum Latinum translati. Preaefixae sunt huic editioni auctoris scripta et vita, nec non elenchus capitum, which was reviewed in the *Göttingische Zeitungen für gelehrte Sachen* (Sept 18, 1741), 75, p. 638. The German translation was published by H.E. Poley in Altenburg in 1757, with the title *Herrn Johann Lockens Versuch vom Menschlichen Verstande. Aus dem Englischen übersetzt und mit Anmerkungen versehen von Heinrich Engelhard Poleyen*, Richter, Altenburg 1757; Altenburg-Jena 1787. This included the translation of P. Coste, *Lettre à l'auteur de ces Nouvelles, à l'occasion de la mort de Monsieur Locke* (Amsterdam 1705), and of G. Gilbert, *An Abstract of the Essay on Human Understanding* (London 1709). It was reviewed in the *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* (Sept. 8, 1757), 108, pp. 1052-55. Only in 1795-97 W.G. Tennemann will publish a new translation of Locke's *Essay*.

26 Wolff, *Deutsche Logik*, cit., Vorrede (1713), p. 6*.

27 See Wolff, *Discursus praeliminaris de philosophia in genere*, in Id., *Philosophia rationalis sive Logica, methodo scientifica pertractata et ad usum scientiarum atque vitae aptata*, Renger, Frankfurt-Leipzig 1728; reproduction of the 1740 ed.: Olms, Hildesheim 1983, ch. iv. The critical edition of the *Discursus* is ed. by G. Gawlick and L. Kreimendahl, frommann-holzboog, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1996.

28 Wolff, *Deutsche Logik*, cit., Vorrede, pp. 6*-7*.

29 H. Wuttke (ed.), *Christian Wolffs eigene Lebensbeschreibung*, Weidmann, Leipzig 1841; reproduced in Wolff, *Biographien*, cit., p. 146.

30 Wolff recalls here the criticism he had raised in the Preface to his *Deutsche Logik*, cit., p. 8*.

match my own taste"[31]. During the first decade he spent in Halle, Wolff held Locke in high regard and considered him the promoter of an alternative path for philosophy instead of that indicated by Thomasius and his supporters. Locke was a respected ally in the campaign in favor of a new understanding of philosophy as a work of clarification of concepts and of their connections.

But if at this point Wolff was looking at Locke as at the advocate of the benefits of the mathematical method for philosophy, he didn't devote a single word to the clear declaration of empiricism Locke made at the very beginning of his *Essay*. At a closer look, the *Conduct of the Understanding*, which seems to be the work by Locke Wolff had in mind at this point, leaves the discussion on the empirical origin of ideas in the background, emphasizing rather the importance of what could be labelled as 'practical logic', i.e. a correct guidance in the operations of the mind, and a list of practical remedies in order to prevent logical fallacies and prejudices.

Indeed, the image of Locke Wolff presented in the *German Logic*, but even in the later so-called *German Metaphysics* (1719) is not in the first place the image of an empiricist. Wolff himself introduced some peculiar ideas of Locke's empirical philosophy in his own system – such as the importance of the inner sense as the primary source of the knowledge of the mind, the investigation of the role and usage of terms, the argument in favor of personal identity – but he rejected any basic statement of empiricism, namely the understanding of the mind as a "white Paper, void of all Characters, without any Ideas" (*Essay*, II.1.2), i.e. as a *tabula rasa* that comes to be furnished from experience, embracing instead a form of virtual innatism of Leibnizian origin[32]. In his *German Metaphysics* Wolff emphasized how important the two ways of obtaining knowledge, namely the senses and intellect, were (§ 372), and even more how necessary the cooperation of reason and experience was. If the latter provides reason with contents, reason itself allows a better degree of clarity and distinction in those

[31] Wuttke (ed.), *Christian Wolffs eigene Lebensbeschreibung*, cit., p. 146.

[32] Wolff, *Deutsche Logik*, cit., ch. i, § 6: "But whether our notions of external things are conveyed into the soul, as into an empty receptacle, or whether rather they lie not buried, as it were, in the essence of the soul, and are brought forth barely by her own power, on occasion of the changes produced in our bodies by external objects, is a question, at present, foreign to this place. In my *Thoughts on God and the Human Soul*, chap. v, I shall then only be able to shew, that the last opinion is more agreeable to truth". See the explicit reference to Locke in Id., *Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen überhaupt*, Renger, Halle 1719 ("Deutsche Metaphysik"); reproduction of the 1751 ed.: Olms, Hildesheim 1983, § 820. On this topic see H-W- Arndt, "Rationalismus und Empirismus in der Erkenntnislehre Christian Wolffs", in W. Schneiders (ed.), *Christian Wolff 1679-1754. Interpretationen zu seiner Philosophie und deren Wirkung*, Meiner, Hamburg 1983, p. 38.

ideas and a better sight of the grounds of their connections (§ 371). In other words, reason allows the progress from a merely *historical knowledge*, based on observation and experiments, to a proper *philosophical knowledge*, based on the reasons (*Gründe*) in virtue of which things are as they are[33]. Indeed, Wolff's philosophical or scientific method was based on the idea of an indispensable *connubium rationis et experientiae*, according to which experience is both the starting-point and the touchstone of any rational demonstrations[34].

In the preface of the second edition of the *German Logic*, which was published in 1719, the same year as the *German Metaphysics*, Wolff complained about the philosophical attitude of pure empiricists. There he claimed that even if it is true that "propositions are derived partly from experience and partly from definitions and from other already known propositions", science is built by means of *reason*; therefore, "if one aims at solid and thorough knowledge, he has to care first and foremost about distinct concepts and accurate demonstrations"; those who reject or despise those things, they move away from well-grounded knowledge and "are carried about with the wind of uncertainty, as it happens to those who want to follow their five senses instead of their intellect"[35].

Some years later Wolff would reaffirm his aversion against any form of empiricism, this time with an explicit reference to Locke, whose philosophy rests entirely on sensibility and is therefore "appreciated by those who depend exclusively on their senses and on their imagination, and have not trained sufficiently their intellect"[36]. In Wolff's eyes, Locke seemed to suffer from an immature attitude in his investigations, as if he had stopped at a phase of philosophical 'childhood'; Wolff presented this opinion in a sort of autobiographical reflection: "during my youth, when I had trained my intellect only slightly and I didn't know if there was a Locke in the world, I ran into

33 See Wolff, *Discursus praeliminaris*, cit., ch. i, §§ 3-7.

34 See Wolff, *Psychologia empirica, methodo scientifica pertractata, qua ea, quae de anima humana indubia experientiae fide constant, continentur et ad solidam universae philosophiae practicae ac theologiae naturalis tractationem via sternitur*, Renger, Frankfurt-Leipzig 1732; reproduction of the 1738 ed.: Olms, Hildesheim 1968, § 497; see also Id., *Logica*, cit., § 1232.

35 Wolff, *Deutsche Logik*, cit., Preface to the second edition ("Erinnerung wegen dieser neuen Auflage", 1719), p. 2*.

36 Wolff, *Der vernünfftigen Gedancken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen überhaupt, Anderer Theil, bestehend in ausführlichen Anmerckungen, und zu besserem Verstande und bequemerem Gebrauche derselben Herausgegeben*, Andreaischen Buchhandlung, Frankfurt 1724 ("Anmerkungen zur deutschen Metaphysik"); reproduction of the 1740 ed.: Olms, Hildesheim 1983, § 79. I quote from the 1740 edition.

the same concepts. Afterwards, once the intellect had matured, I purified them from what the imagination endows them with"[37]. The incapacity to distinguish in our concepts between what comes from sensation and what is introduced by imagination reveals an 'immaturity' of intellect, whose exercise has to be cultivated in order not to transform our ideas into mere subreptions. The criticism of Locke became at this point more and more explicit: "[in his posthumous work, Locke] leads back his capacity [of a clear investigation of the ideas] to the study of mathematics, and recommends this mean to other people too, but then he introduces limits such that in metaphysical issues by means of imagination he concedes more than he should"[38]. The limits Wolff hinted at concerned Locke's attempt to restrict knowledge to the realm of experience, i.e. what can be perceived by our senses, and thus to reject any attempt to push our knowledge to the metaphysical basis of things. And this is precisely the point of divergence between Wolff and Locke.

Not by chance, the image Wolff gave of Locke in the *German Metaphysics* appears mostly surrounded by a critical aura, that was absent in his previous logical work. Wolff's criticism is now directed not only to Locke's idea that the mind obtains the representation of outer things only by means of the body[39], or to Locke's understanding of miracles as unusual natural events[40], but above all to the claim we have already mentioned that God could bestow matter with the capacity of thinking[41]. This disagreement deserves special attention.

For sure, the hypothesis of thinking matter had pernicious implications for Wolff, concerning the foundations of morals and religion; but it allowed Wolff to shed light on the deep divergence between his metaphysical system and the metaphysical implications of Locke's modest attitude towards the speculative claims of reason. In particular, Wolff rejected the idea that the real essences of things fall out of the limits of human knowledge. Unlike Locke, Wolff thought that our capacity to reach a clear knowledge of essences represents the first condition of any complete knowledge, so that "who knows the essence of a thing knows at a time [what that thing is and] how it can be possible"[42]. According to him, essences being necessarily determined by the principle of sufficient reason, they contain the ground of the possibility for things to

37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
39 Wolff, *Deutsche Metaphysik*, cit., § 820.
40 Ibid., § 634 and § 642; see also Wolff's review of Locke's *Posthumous Works*, cit., pp. 43-44.
41 Wolff, *Deutsche Metaphysik*, cit., § 741.
42 Ibid., §§ 34-35.

be what they are; in other terms, since everything that happens must have a reason, even the properties of beings must have their own specific 'reason' or 'ground', and this ground is rooted in the essence of each peculiar being. The main consequence of this assumption is that a thing cannot enjoy properties, that do not belong necessarily to its essence, i.e. whose sufficient reason is not included in the essence itself[43]. It is then clear that a thing cannot be endowed with conflicting properties, since contradictory properties cannot be led back to the same sufficient reason, that is to say to the same essence. Therefore, Wolff affirmed that the real essence of a thing is *unchangeable*, unless the thing ceases to be what it is; that it is *necessary*, since it cannot be different from what it is, and that it is even *eternal*, since it is impossible for it not to be (anymore)[44]. Far from being at the mercy of God's free will and discretion, the essences of things are "something necessary which determine that particular thing in its sort"[45], and "include the reason (*Grund*) of anything that a thing can enjoy"[46].

In Wolff's view, those who deny the knowability of essence and oppose the basic assumption of his metaphysics are guilty of the same mistake Locke made by failing to take account of the usage of the understanding in discerning sense and imagination: "Those who claim that it is impossible to get to know the essence of a being expect to find in the imagination an image by means of which they can represent it [essence], and claim to see what should not fall in front of our eyes. In fact, every general concept that is defined in metaphysics can be grasped solely by means of the intellect, and not by means of the senses"[47]. In opposition to Locke's view, Wolff's theory of the necessity of essences rejects as a matter of principle the possibility of a being bestowed with conflicting properties, such as extension and thinking; therefore, it cancels out Locke's hypothesis of thinking matter.

In the first edition of the *German Metaphysics*, Wolff mentions Locke explicitly as the main source of such a philosophical absurdity: "It is well known that Locke together with someone else has the opinion that God could have communicated the power of thinking to the body, or as they unproperly say to matter" (§ 741). Starting from the second edition of the work (1722) and in every further edition Wolff removed the direct reference to Locke, and used a vaguer formulation: "It is well known that someone has the opinion that God [...]". It is hard to guess with some degree of certainty what could be

43 Ibid., § 43.
44 See ibid., §§ 39-42.
45 Ibid., § 32.
46 Ibid., § 33.
47 Wolff, *Anmerkungen zur deutschen Metaphysik*, cit., § 16.

the reason for such a choice; a plausible explanation could be that even if at that point it was pretty clear that Locke was the source of inspiration of that opinion, Wolff's criticism did not concern Locke but the German promoters of his threatening belief. This is at least what emerges in a meaningful passage of the later *Annotations* (1724):

> The opinion that God might have bestowed matter with the power of thinking [...] is dangerous since it damages the belief in the immateriality and immortality of the soul, and calls into question the idea that our soul is different from our body. Meanwhile, even in Germany it is promoted by a theologian, Budde, in a famous University; he shows his indignation about the theory of necessity of essence, because Locke's authority opened the way to such a bizarre claim that he considers so convincing that he assumes it without any demonstration and expects it to be taught as an evident truth. Moreover, following Locke he derives from it the impossibility to provide a rational demonstration of the immateriality and immortality of the soul[48].

According to Wolff, Locke represented the original source of such an aberration in philosophy, and Budde was his prophet on German soil. With this conviction Wolff entered the controversy that arose with Budde in the mid-1720s. At the time, Wolff had just arrived in Marburg, after King Frederick William I, persuaded by the Pietists, had banished him from Prussia in November 1723. Once in Marburg, Wolff had to deal with a new attack from the front of his opponents, this time launched by Budde himself who, siding with the Pietists, was reopening a controversy that Wolff thought had been concluded after his expulsion from Halle, and the prohibition to teach his philosophy in Prussian territories. First and foremost, Wolff thought he had provided in his *Annotations* abundant clarifications of his philosophical concern in order to secure his ideas from the accusations put forth by his opponents[49].

[48] Ibid., § 19. On this topic see M. Favaretti Camposampiero, "L'origine delle essenze. Wolff, Spinoza e i teologi", in F. Toto and A. Sangiacomo (eds.), *Essentia actuosa. Riletture dell'Ethica di Spinoza*, Mimesis, Milano-Udine 2016, pp. 93-116.

[49] See Wolff's remarks: "I would not have written anything else than the *Annotations* if a certain Mr. Budde from Jena had not entered the controversy, calling himself the judge or advocate of the opponents in Halle", and "repeating their hard accusations with a rush to judge, with great insistence [...], as if I [Wolff] purposely tried to mislead my readers with those mistakes that would put in danger any religion, morality, discipline and justice". *Ausführliche Nachricht von seinen eigenen Schrifften die er in deutscher Sprache von den verschiedenen Theilen der Welt-Weißheit herausgegeben, auf Verlangen ans Licht gestellet*, Andreaischen Buchhandlung, Frankfurt 1726; reproduction of the 1733 ed.: Olms, Hildesheim 1973, § 120.

The controversy concerned the alleged fatalistic implications of Wolff's metaphysical system; according to his adversaries, it concealed a *nexus rerum fatalis*, i.e. a necessary connection of beings guided by a *fatum physico-mechanicum* that made the universe a pure machine, or an automaton, where everything happens according to purely mechanical laws of movement and to its mechanical structure. In such a system, there was no place for freedom. Wolff replied to the accusations by introducing at the origin of the *nexus rerum* a principle of supreme contingency, namely God's free decision to choose this precise connection of beings rather than another one[50]. Nevertheless, Wolff's opponents didn't hesitate to point out the materialistic implications of such a mechanical idea of the universe, and found in the principle of pre-established harmony – that Wolff adopted as a hypothesis in the explanation of the *commercium psycho-physicum* – a confirmation of their suspicion[51]. The alleged independence of the series of modifications going on in the soul from those going on in the body, as well as the understanding of the soul as a *vis repraesentativa universi*, as a 'mirror' of the mechanical connections of the physical world, reduced the soul to a mere "clockwork [*Uhrwerk*]"[52], whose modifications are nothing but *movements* that occur *nexu mere mechanico*.

The charge of smuggling in a sort of 'psychological materialism' should sound pretty odd to Wolff, whose psychology rested on the very clear idea that the soul is a simple, immaterial, and immortal being[53]. Such an idea

[50] See Wolff, *Commentatio de differentia nexus rerum sapientis et fatalis necessitatis, nec non systematis harmoniae praestabilitae et hypothesium Spinosae luculenta commentatio*, Renger, Halle 1723; reproduction of the 1727 ed.: Olms, Hildesheim 1983.

[51] On the topic see Favaretti Camposampiero, "La chaîne des causes naturelles. Matérialisme et fatalisme chez Leibniz, Wolff et leurs adversaires", in *Dix-Huitième Siècle* 46 (2014), pp. 131-48.

[52] I quote Budde's *Bedencken* from Wolff, *Herrn D. Joh. Francisci Buddei [...] Bedencken über die Wolffianische Philosophie mit Anmerkungen erläutert von Christian Wolffen*, Andreaischen Buchhandlung, Frankfurt 1724; reproduced in Id., *Kleine Kontroversschriften mit Joachim Lange und Johann Franz Budde*, Olms, Hildesheim 1980, § 12, p. 102. For a detailed analysis of the controversy between Wolff and Budde see P. Rumore, "Between Spinozism and Materialism: Johann Franz Budde and the Early German Enlightenment", *Archivio di filosofia* 87 (2019), pp. 39-56.

[53] The definition goes back to A.G. Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, Hemmerde, Halle 1739; reproduction of the 1779 ed.: Olms, Hildesheim 1982; historical-critical edition by G. Gawlick and L. Kreimendahl, frommann-holzboog, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 2011, § 757. The definition reappears in G.F. Meier, *Metaphysik. Zweyter Theil. Die Cosmologie*, Gebauer, Halle 1757; reproduction: Olms, Hildesheim 2007, § 361. For Wolff's reaction to Budde's criticism on this topic see Id., *Bedencken über die Wolffianische Philosophie mit Anmerkungen erläutert von Christian Wolffen*, cit., pp. 86-101. On Wolff's arguments for the immortality of the soul, see Rumore, "Wolff on the immortality of the soul", *Aufklärung* 29 (2018), pp. 29-44.

should have dispelled any suspicion of materialism, since differently from Budde and from Locke, Wolff's ontology was based on the theory of the necessity, immutability, and eternity of real essences that ruled out any possibility of a thinking matter. On the contrary, by promoting a theory of the arbitrary nature of essence and of the arbitrary participation of the attributes Locke and Budde, his German counterpart, were in Wolff's eyes potential supporters of a materialistic theory of the soul, or at least accidental promoters of such a philosophical absurdity. In a detailed abridgment of his system from 1726, Wolff presented his opinion as follows: "It is well known that *Hobbes* promotes *materialism* in England, where it notoriously has its supporters. Some of them, like *Locke*, endorse it in a concealed way (*verdeckt*) and acknowledge that materialism is at least possible and that it is impossible to refute it by means of reason. Mr. *Budde* has the same opinion; he presents it in his philosophy, and in his *Theologia moralis* he reduces the soul to a mere slave of the body"[54]. For having adopted the view of "those who think that materialism is at least possible and that it cannot be rejected by reason"[55], Budde "winks at materialists"[56], and "provides them with theoretical weapons", "promoting" and even "patronizing" the idea of "the materiality and the mortality of the human soul"[57].

Locke's idea that materialism is at least conceivable, i.e. *possible* from a logical point of view, and that reason cannot but fail in refuting it are the basis of what Wolff would have called "skeptical materialism" in the later *Theologia naturalis* (1737); it is not a clear declaration of materialism, but the attempt to provide it with a theoretical line of argument:

> In England, Hobbes declared that he supported materialism, which still has many followers today, and Locke introduced skeptical materialism (*zweifelnde Materialisierey*) in the *Essay on Human Understanding* by denying that we can be sure of the immateriality of the soul, because we do not know whether God has bestowed even matter with the power of thinking. So, in his opinion, there is no contradiction in the fact that a certain matter has

[54] Wolff, *Ausführliche Nachricht*, cit., § 208, p. 588. On Wolff's explicit accusation of Budde about his being a promoter of materialism see ibid., § 129, p. 363.

[55] Ibid., § 208, p. 588.

[56] Wolff, *Nöthige Zugabe zu den Anmerkungen über Herrn D. Buddens Bedencken von der Wolffischen Philosophie auf Veranlassung der Buddeischen Antwort herausgegeben*, Andreaischen Buchhandlung, Frankfurt 1724; reprinted in Id., *Schutzschriften gegen Johann Franz Budde*, Olms, Hildesheim 1980, §§ 13-15.

[57] Ibid., § 15.

> in itself thoughts or feelings similar to the ones we have in our soul, and consequently it is not contradictory to think that God himself is material. This skeptical materialism has been propagated by Le Clerc, and in Germany it was disseminated by Budde, who was driven to it by the prestige of Locke and Clerckens[58].

Wolff understood Locke's epistemic modesty – the attitude that led him to deny the possibility of grasping the metaphysical structure i.e. the real essence of things (*Essay*, IV.viii.9) – as a form of dangerous skepticism that offered a basis for materialism, and even for atheism[59]. Wolff's praise of the "celeberrimus Lockius" in his early review of the *opera posthuma* had changed drastically. Locke being victim of an extreme, absurd form of empiricism, had not been capable to integrate the undeniable contribution of the intellect in the working of experience; hence, he believed real essences are beyond the boundaries of our understanding, and opened the way to a dramatic drift in philosophy. The image of a Locke as advocate of the mathematical method was then definitely replaced by the image of a Locke as promoter of a form of philosophical skepticism, and conniving with materialism. Wolff would never revise his judgement again.

Roughly fifteen years after the controversy with Budde, Wolff would reprise his view of Locke as the original source of the decline of German philosophy. But many things had changed in the meantime. Frederick the Great, who ascended the throne in 1740, was, to be sure, a sincere admirer of Wolff's philosophy, but also the promoter of a deep renewal in the German cultural scene. The Prussian court and the local Academy of Sciences became under his guidance a vital center of attraction of the leading figures of the scientific and philosophical debate, so that all at a sudden Berlin turned into a prolific international crossroad of the cultural world. The leading role and the hegemonic presence of Wolff's philosophy was destined to be drastically reduced.

An important source in order to look at this cultural and political process of marginalization of Wolff's influence from a privileged perspective is the extensive correspondence he had between 1738 and 1748 with his friend Ernst Christoph von Manteuffel (1676-1749), counselor at the Prussian court, former Saxon diplomat, and spy at the Habsburg Court. Manteuffel, surely the most prominent supporter of Wolffianism in the entourage of the

[58] Wolff, *Theologia naturalis: methodo scientifica pertractata. Pars posterior*, Renger, Frankfurt-Leipzig 1737; reproduction of the 1741 ed.: Olms, Hildesheim 1980, § 616.

[59] For Wolff's denounce of Locke's proximity to atheism see *Deutsche Metaphysik*, cit., § 642.

Prussian Crown Prince, was the one who mediated the contact between him and Wolff's philosophy, and who suggested that the sovereign should read the *German Metaphysics*, where he would find "all that a philosopher can say most convincingly about the most relevant topics in metaphysics"[60]. Beside that, Manteuffel was also the most prominent member of the *Societas Alethophilorum* in Leipzig, the society of "friends of Wolffian philosophy" he had founded with the aim of promoting Wolff's ideas more broadly in Prussia[61].

The decade in which his correspondence with Wolff took place was not an ordinary one. Despite Wolff's final triumph over the Pietists and his return to Halle firmly encouraged by Fredrick the Great (1740), the decade marked the conclusive phase of the relentless decline of the supremacy of his philosophy in Germany. Under Voltaire's gentle but firm pressure, the sovereign promptly abandoned his original idea of assigning Wolff the presidency of the Prussian Academy of Sciences[62], where the presence of anti-Wolffian tendencies became more and more powerful. Wolff himself looked with suspicion and indignation at the cultural drift almost unconsciously encouraged by Frederick's myopic attraction for everything coming from abroad.

The intense exchange between Wolff and Manteuffel is an incomparable source for grasping Wolff's reaction towards the increasing Franco-British contamination of German philosophy, his polemical response to the mixture of sensationist materialism, antimetaphysical Newtonianism, deism and atheism Frederick's friends were propagandizing for in Prussia. In Wolff's opinion, Locke was the leader of the *esprits forts*, who combining the weakness of their method in philosophy with a good dose of arrogance, provided a mixture of Pyrrhonism and deism which turned out to be a danger even for the natural religion they originally intended to safeguard. The Lockean-Newtonian philosophy was nothing but the disastrous attempt to translate Newton's mathematical genius in *philosophicis*:

[60] See Manteuffel's letter to Brühl, April 24 1736, quoted in H.-P. Neumann, "Der preußische Kronprinz Friedrich und die französische Übersetzung der Deutschen Metaphysik Christian Wolffs im Jahr 1736. Die Identifizierung der Krakauer Handschrift Ms. Gall. Fol. 140 in der Biblioteka Jagiellonska und der Berliner Handschrift p. 38 in der Bibliothek des Schlosses Charlottenburg", in *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen Geschichte* Neue Folge 24 (2014), footnote 44.

[61] On the *Societas Alethophilorum* and on the role of Manteuffel in the circulation of Wolffianism see J. Bronisch, *Der Mäzen der Aufklärung. Ernst Christoph von Manteuffel und das Netzwerk des Wolffianismus*, de Gruyter, Berlin 2010.

[62] See H.-P. Neumann, "Der preußische Kronprinz Friedrich und die französische Übersetzung der Deutschen Metaphysik", cit. On the vicissitudes between the King, Wolff, and Voltaire see the enjoyable booklet by Bronisch, *Der Kampf um Kronprinz Friedrich. Wolff gegen Voltaire*, Landt, Berlin 2011.

> The British were wrong in confusing the *imaginaria*, which are very useful in mathematics, and *realia* of metaphysics and physics, which should instead be carefully distinguished from the first ones. [...] Those are again the outcomes of Hobbes and of Locke, who [Locke] inculcated materialism in a pleasant way (*unter einem angenehmen vehiculo*) in those who want to be successful taking advantage of others, avoiding the hard work of the proper use of their understanding, and putting their imagination and senses at a disadvantage[63].

So far, Locke's responsibility for the dissemination of materialism was beyond any doubt. In fact, it should be mentioned that the involvement of Locke's name in the lively debate on materialism that was going on in Germany in those years had been drastically reinforced by the publication of the German translation of an anonymous version of Voltaire's *Letter on Locke*, namely a *Copie d'un manuscript ou l'on soutient que c'est la matière qui pense*. The translation was published as an appendix of a warm defense of Wolff's theory of the immortal soul produced by Johann Gustav Reinbeck, Berlin provost and himself a member of the *Societas Alethophilorum*[64]. The anonymous preface was written by Manteuffel[65], with the clear attempt to suggest Voltaire's authorship of the letter; the publication clearly organized by the supporters of the Wolffian party was definitely intended to politically discredit Voltaire and his companions at the Prussian court, but entailed also an explicit denunciation of the dangerous implications of Locke's philosophy.

As a promoter of the skeptical attitude in metaphysics, Locke – significantly enough paired with Huet – was described by Wolff as a "master of irreligion", the master of those who have lost the safe guide of the right method, and find themselves at the mercy of obscure concepts: "Huet with his opinion on the weakness of human understanding and Locke with his skepticism concerning

63 Wolff's letter to Manteuffel, April 19 1739, in *Historisch-kritische Edition des Briefwechsels zwischen Christian Wolff und Ernst Christoph Graf von Manteuffel*, ed. by K. Middell and H.-P. Neumann, URL = http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bsz:14-qucosa-106475, letter no. 22, p. 45. Wolff insists repeatedly on this mistake at the basis of the Lockean-Newtonian philosophy: see Wolff's letters to Manteuffel: August 21 1746 (no. 250, p. 172), May 17 1747 (no. 325, p. 18), and September 26 1748 (no. 477, p. 246). On the presence of Newtonianism at Frederick's court, see P. Casini, "Newton in Prussia", *Rivista di filosofia* 91 (2000), pp. 251-82.

64 J.G. Reinbeck, *Philosophische Gedancken über die vernünfftige Seele und derselben Unsterblichkeit. Nebst einigen Anmerckungen über ein Frantzösiches Schreiben, darin behauptet werden will, daß die Materie dencke*, Hauden, Berlin 1739; reproduction: Olms, Hildesheim 2002. On the debate on materialism in 18th-century Germany see Rumore, *Materia cogitans. L'Aufklärung di fronte al materialismo*, Olms, Hildesheim 2013.

65 Bronisch, *Der Mäzen der Aufklärung*, cit., p. 95.

the most important issues in metaphysics and his superficial concepts derived from the imagination and from the senses"[66].

In any case, in the beginning was Locke. Then the British plague spread over the Continent: "England corrupted France", and "that is why even in France philosophy is now in a very bad condition. Those who want to move some steps further stick to Descartes, whereas some others stay with Locke. In this way, skepticism and deism triumph among the learned people in Paris"[67]. British philosophy crossed the Channel, infected France, and France infected Germany; freethinkers set up swiftly in Germany, especially in Prussia, where they found their most impudent bulwark[68].

3. *A new Locke*

About ten years after Wolff's deprecation of the disastrous consequences of Locke's metaphysical skepticism on German philosophy, Georg Friedrich Meier (1718-1777), also a Professor of Philosophy in Halle, announced the first class on Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* in a German university. It was the summer semester of 1754 and Wolff had died just a few months before, on April 9 of that same year.

Meier had grown up in the most powerful center of Pietistic education, August Hermann Franke's Waisenhaus, and had completed his education at the University of Halle under the guidance of the Baumgarten siblings, Siegmund Jakob and Alexander Gottlieb, in an atmosphere permeated by Wolffian philosophy – even though in those years Wolff had left Halle for Marburg. Thanks to the influence of Thomasius's circle, Halle had been an important center of dissemination of Locke's ideas, that Meier might have encountered during the years he spent at the local university. In 1720, Friedrich Gladow had published in Halle the German translation of Le Clerc's *Eloge de feu Mr. Locke* with the title *Bericht von des Weltberühmten und Hochgelahrten Engelländers John Locke Leben und Schrifften*, with an interesting series of annotations and remarks that revealed his original Wolffian orientation in philosophy. The

66 Wolff's letter to Manteuffel, May 4 1745 (no. 221), p. 126.

67 Wolff's letter to Manteuffel, April 19 1739 (no. 22), pp. 45-46.

68 On the German reception of the French Enlightenment see P.-E. Knabe, *Die Rezeption der französischen Aufklärung in den "Göttingischen Gelehrten Anzeigen" (1739-1779)*, Klostermann, Frankfurt 1978.

same work would be republished, again in Halle, in 1755 with the title *Leben und Schriften des Weltberühmten und Hochgelahrten Engelländers John Locke* in 1755, one year after Meier's class on the *Essay*.

Meier's decision to give a class on Locke's philosophical masterpiece was not spontaneous; it followed rather the suggestion by none other than the sovereign Fredrick II himself, who thought it was convenient to acquaint German students with a figure that his advisor Voltaire considered one of the founding fathers of the *Lumières*[69]. In any case, Meier's was not the first class on Locke in German universities, but the first one on the *Essay*; indeed, in 1713 Johann Jacob Syrbius had taught a class on the French translation of Locke's *Of the conduct* at the University of Jena[70], where Locke was a renowned presence also thanks to Budde, who had been there since 1705 and had published in 1709 the German translation of Le Clerc's *Eloge de feu Mr. Locke* in the *Allgemeines historisches Lexikon*[71].

In the writing Meier prepared as an announcement of his class, he stressed the importance of Locke's work for those who had understood the difference between 'bread-and-butter' education (*Brotstudium*) and education as the "strain to free oneself from the prejudices and the mistakes of mankind"[72]. Locke's *Essay* was not "a mere logic, and even less a complete system of logic"; it was rather the instrument for a preliminary analysis of the limits of the understanding, which should teach to look at experience as the unique source of knowledge[73]. In Meier's eyes Locke was "a thoroughly honest man (*ein grundehrlicher Mann*), who has left all prejudices to the side, in particular those that arise inadvertently from the philosophical systems; a man, who moved in the footsteps of mere experience, and tried to find a secure way in the reign of truths"[74]. Far from Wolff's image of a Locke prisoner of his own confusion between sensations and imaginations, promoter of a metaphysical

69 See S.G. Lange, *Georg Friedrich Meier's Leben*, Gebauer, Halle 1778, p. 92.

70 See M. Wundt, *Die Philosophie an der Universität Jena*, Fischer, Jena 1932, p. 78; see Zart, *Einfluss der englischen Philosophen*, cit., p. 81-88.

71 See Budde, "Lock (Johann)", in *Allgemeines historisches Lexikon*, Fritsch, Leipzig 1709, vol. 4, app., pp. 18-24; a further translation was published some years later as "Lebens-Beschreibung Ioannis Lockii", *Acta philosophorum* 1 (1715-16), pp. 972-1031.

72 Meier, *Zuschrift an Seine Zuhörer, worin er Ihnen seinen Entschluß bekannt macht, ein Collegium über Locks Versuch vom menschlichen Verstand zu halten*, Hemmerde, Halle 1754, p. 5; ed. by D. Poggi in R. Pozzo *et al*. (eds.), *Philosophical academic programs of the German enlightenment: a literary genre recontextualized*, frommann-holzboog, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 2012, pp. 115-21.

73 Ibid., p. 7.

74 Ibid., p. 8.

skepticism, of materialism and deism, Meier's Locke is the philosopher who managed to lead reason back into the boundaries of its own possibilities, and who with modesty and honesty kept himself stuck to experience in order to find an orientation in what he called the reign of *truths*. Meier's step backwards from Wolff's optimistic attitude towards the claims of reason and from the pursuit of the *single* truth couldn't be clearer.

Meier's distancing from Wolff had begun long before his official rendezvous with Locke, but moved in the same direction indicated by Locke's philosophy. Indeed, if it is true that in the *Vernunftlehre* published just a couple of years before the class on Locke, in 1752, Meier recommended to his reader the study of Locke[75], Lockean themes seem to emerge already in his writings from the 1740s. Somehow concealed, under the Wolffian surface of Meier's 'didactic' works, one can perceive traces of the lesson he was taught during the early years of his education in the Pietistic Waisenhaus and of the Thomasian firm conviction about the practical scope of philosophy. The aversion against any form of Scholasticism (*Schulphilosophie*), the pragmatic orientation of any philosophical investigation, the understanding of philosophy in the sense of a mundane wisdom (*Weltweisheit*), the moderate skepticism about the capacities of reason, and about the applicability of the mathematical method were all peculiar features of Meier's philosophical commitment[76]. Just to mention some of the more significant expressions of his distancing from the Wolffian tradition, one should consider that in the mid-1740s, as soon as he was appointed extraordinary professor in Halle, Meier contested for instance Wolff's optimistic confidence in the potentiality of reason, and rejected the idea of a rational proof of the immortality of the soul[77]; in the following decade Meier published a series of works on happiness, on virtue and vice, on the role of good and bad luck in ethics, where he showed the weakness of a

75 Meier, *Vernunftlehre*, Gebauer, Halle 1752, Vorrede, p. 4.

76 See Rumore, "Un wolffiano diffidente: Georg Friedrich Meier e la sua dottrina dei pregiudizi" preface to Meier, *Contributi alla dottrina dei pregiudizi del genere umano / Beyträge zu der Lehre von den Vorurtheilen des menschlichen Geschlechts* (Hemmerde, Halle 1766), critical edition ed. by H.P. Delfosse, N. Hinske, Rumore, ETS, Pisa 2005, pp. v-xxxvi.

77 See Meier, *Gedancken von dem Zustande der Seele nach dem Tode*, Hemmerde, Halle 1746; reproduced in Id., *Über die Unsterblichkeit der Seele*, ed. by C.W. Dyck, Olms, Hildesheim 2018. Regarding this topic see Rumore, "Meiers Theorie der Unsterblichkeit der Seele im zeitgenössischen Kontext", in G. Stiening *et al.* (eds.), *Georg Friedrich Meier (1718-1777). Philosophie als "wahre Weltweisheit"*, de Gruyter, Berlin 2015, pp. 163-86, and Dyck, "G.F. Meier and Kant on the Belief in the Immortality of the Soul", in Dyck and F. Wunderlich (eds.), *Kant and his German contemporaries*, vol. I, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 76-93.

strong intellectualistic theory of morals such as Wolff's, and made important attempts to harmonize our human ambitions and our real capability to act morally in the concrete, often confusing dimension of our daily life[78]; one year after the class on Locke, in 1755, Meier would publish his *Betrachtungen über die Schranken der menschlichen Erkenntnis*, whose title reveals a clear hint at Locke's work, and where he presented an idea of philosophy as a concrete guide for the understanding and the will in the concrete dimension of life.

Nevertheless, it is in the later *Beyträge zu der Lehre von den Vorurtheilen des menschlichen Geschlechts* (1766), that the presence of Locke reveals its powerful influence, representing an alternative path to Leibniz' and Wolff's rationalism. In this short writing Meier introduced, beside the long list of well-known prejudices (of childhood, of authority, of the sect, of the system etc.), two more fundamental prejudices, that concern both the empirical, and the rational knowledge. The first one leads us to "believe that the object of our sensations is made exactly as the effect we perceive immediately in our sensations" (§ 15), and convinces us that "in our sensations we grasp the intimate nature of things" (§ 20). On the other hand, the fundamental prejudice of rational knowledge makes us believe that "what conforms with the complex of our previous knowledge, that we consider true, or what we can derive from it is therefore itself true" (§ 21). In the formulation of the first prejudice resounds Locke's adagio on the phenomenal nature of human knowledge. Indeed, ideas represent nothing but the effects the external objects produce on our senses; those effects are, in Meier's terms, a kind of "dividing wall" (*Scheidewand*) between our sense and the external things, so that by means of our senses we cannot even presume that behind that wall there might be something different from what we perceive. Without the cooperation of reason and experience we cannot but be victim of such a prejudice (§ 29). In the case of the prejudice of rational knowledge it is once again the cooperation of reason and experience that allows us to avoid the fallacy; following Locke, Meier acknowledges that the mathematical method can help us in checking the correctness of the long deductive series of philosophical reasonings, but its 'a priori' nature does not consent any real increase in knowledge, revealing the unavoidable contribution of experience (§ 35).

[78] I refer to Meier, *Gedanken vom Glück und Unglück*, Hemmerde, Halle 1753 (1762[2]); Id., *Untersuchung einiger Ursachen warum die Tugendhaften in diesem Leben ofte unglücklicher sind, als die Lasterhaften*, Franck, Halle, 1756. But see also Id., *Betrachtung über die menschliche Glückseligkeit*, Hemmerde, Halle 1764. See Rumore, "Virtù e buona sorte: il caso di Meier", in Ead. (ed.), *Momenti di felicità*, il Mulino, Bologna 2018, pp. 47-64.

The distance between Locke's alternate glory in Wolff's eyes – the praise as defender of the mathematical method, then his rapid downfall as promoter of metaphysical skepticism, materialism, and deism – and his celebration in Meier's works – that praises him as the honest connoisseur of human nature, as the philosopher who far from being at the mercy of his 'five senses' recognizes that sensibility should be guided by reason in its pursuit of true and concrete knowledge – could not be more radical. The importance of Meier in the diffusion of this image of Locke can hardly be overestimated. Even the translator of one of Locke's most influential works in Germany, namely *Of the Conduct*, seems to have come to Locke via Meier. In 1755 Georg David Kypke – Kant's friend and nephew of Johann David Kypke, the professor of Logic and Metaphysics at the Albertina during Kant's university years – published in Königsberg the first German translation of Locke's posthumous work from the original English version, a translation that had been initiated but never completed by another prominent representative of the Prussian philosophical world, Martin Knutzen[79]. According to Gottsched[80], Locke was well known in Königsberg; this notoriety had its origin in Halle, since the young Kypke, before becoming a student of Knutzen in Königsberg, had studied in Halle from 1743 to 1744 under the guidance of Siegmund Jakob Baumgarten. In Halle he might have met Meier, who at the time was the main celebrity in town, after Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten moved to Frankfurt an der Oder. Furthermore, Kypke's *Abhandlung von der Kürze und Weitläufigkeit im schriftliche Vorträge*, published in Königsberg in the same year of his translation of Locke, shows a clear Meierian taste in its topic and style. It is more than a likely hypothesis that Kypke attended Meier's class on Locke, and then followed his suggestion to translate *Of the conduct*[81].

[79] The German translation by Kypke is *Johann Lockens Anleitung des menschlichen Verstandes zur Erkäntniß der Wahrheit nebst desselben Abhandlung von den Wunderwerken*, Hartung, Königsberg 1755; reproduced in Locke, *Anleitung des menschlichen Verstandes. Eine Abhandlung von den Wunderwercken. In der Übersetzung Königsberg 1755 von G.D. Kypke*, ed. by T. Boswell, R. Pozzo, and C. Schwaiger, frommann-holzboog, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1996. On the influence of Locke's writing on Kant see I. Petrocchi, *Lockes Nachlaßschrift Of the Conduct of the Understanding und ihr Einfluß auf Kant*, Lang, Frankfurt 2004. On Knutzen and his acquaintance with Locke, see B. Erdmann, *Martin Knutzen und seine Zeit*, Voss, Leipzig 1876, pp. 110-14.

[80] J.Ch. Gottsched, *Historische Lobschrift des weiland hoch- und wohlgebohrnen Herrn Herrn Christians, des H.R.R. Freyherrn von Wolff*, Renger, Halle 1755; reproduced in Wolff, *Biographien*, Olms, Hildesheim 1980, p. 75. See also A. Winter, "Selbstdenken – Antinomien – Schranken. Zum Einfluß des späten Locke auf die Philosohie Kants", in Hinske (ed.), *Eklektik, Selbstdenken, Mündigkeit*, Meiner, special issue of the yearbook *Aufklärung* 1 (1986), pp. 27-66.

[81] See Meier, *Zuschrift an Seine Zuhörer*, cit., p. 13.

But this all happened after the mid-century, a decade before the publication of Leibniz' *Nouveaux Essais* (1765), that set the basis for the interpretation of Locke's philosophy in the sense of a clear form of empiricism. Leibniz' interpretation of Locke influenced the later reception of his work much more than any other. The image of Locke as the champion of empiricism, the physiologist of human understanding that is found in Tetens, in Feder, in Kant and in many other German philosophers of the time seems to come straight from Leibniz. But the image of Locke as the advocate of the modesty of reason, of the boundaries of the understanding, of the skepticism towards the claim of metaphysics that is also deeply rooted in the late German Enlightenment, seems to be rather the outcome of debates and controversies originated many decades before in the then-vital epicenter of the Prussian world.

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Notes

Il contenuto dei *journals* di Locke

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Abstract: John Locke wrote a large number of notes in his journals from 1675 to 1704, when he died. They covered such diverse topics as morals, politics, religion, physics and education. Several of these notes were the direct inspiration for *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*. Many scholars have insisted that Locke's journals represent an excellent source for investigating his intellectual development. Some of them were involved in the ambitious project to publish their entire content, a hard task which has not yet been fulfilled. The purpose of this contribution is to highlight how important this task is for a full comprehension of Locke's thought.

Keywords: journals, Locke's manuscripts, excerpta, method, shorthand

Introduzione

Sebbene ne siano state date alle stampe porzioni considerevoli, i *journals* di Locke non sono stati ancora pubblicati integralmente. Questi diari si rivelano uno strumento oltremodo importante non solo per conoscere la biografia del loro autore, ma soprattutto per accedere al suo laboratorio filosofico. Nelle pagine dei *journals* è possibile accostarsi direttamente ad una mole impressionante di appunti di vario genere stesi da Locke nel corso degli anni: si tratta non solo di contenuti di carattere biografico, ma anche di note di studio cruciali per comprendere pienamente il suo sviluppo intellettuale.

La stesura dei *journals* si estende per un arco di tempo considerevole, accompagnando la riflessione filosofica di Locke dagli anni della maturità fino alla sua morte. Si tratta quasi di un trentennio: la prima voce nei diari è datata 12 novembre 1675, mentre l'ultima risale al 24 ottobre 1704 ed anticipa di soli quattro giorni la morte del filosofo. A causa dell'ampia durata della loro redazione, i *journals* si presentano come un'opera di dimensioni monumentali:

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si tratta di dieci quaderni[1], una parte considerevole della Lovelace Collection che incorpora la maggior parte dei manoscritti lockiani. Ad essi si aggiunge un undicesimo quaderno, contenente il diario dell'anno 1679[2].

Un catalogo della Bodleian Library del 1959 consente di ricostruire la complessa storia dei *journals*[3]; ulteriori dettagli ci sono forniti da Richard Aaron[4]. Alla sua morte Locke, decise di lasciare gran parte dei suoi quaderni manoscritti al cugino Peter King, suo parente prossimo e unico esecutore testamentario. Per oltre due secoli, il *corpus* dei manoscritti rimase in possesso dei discendenti di King, divenuti poi conti di Lovelace. Nel 1935, Aaron s'imbatté nelle notizie relative alla collezione presenti negli scritti di Lord Peter King, settimo conte di Lovelace nonché nipote dell'omonimo parente di Locke. Nel pubblicare il suo *The Life of John Locke*[5], King aveva attinto alla grande quantità di materiale che gli era stata lasciata in eredità dal nonno; Aaron decise dunque di contattare il conte di Lovelace, per consultare la collezione. Lo supportava in questa iniziativa Jocelyn Gibb, detentore dei diritti legali del conte durante la permanenza di quest'ultimo in Africa.

Tra i manoscritti lockiani, Aaron e Gibb scoprirono il *Draft A* del *Saggio sull'intelletto umano*[6]; con ogni probabilità, fu proprio questo ritrovamento a convincere i discendenti di King di quanto materiale non pubblicato restasse ancora da identificare nell'eredità di Locke. Nel 1942, quando la Seconda guerra mondiale giungeva alle sue fasi conclusive, i conti di Lovelace spostarono la collezione nelle sale della Bodleian Library al fine di proteggerla. In questa occasione, proposero l'acquisto della collezione all'Università di Oxford, un'offerta che sarebbe stata accettata solo qualche anno più tardi ovvero nel 1947. I *journals* e gli altri manoscritti della Lovelace Collection vennero così depositati nella prestigiosa biblioteca di Oxford, dove sono ancora disponibili per la consultazione.

Ho diviso questa nota in tre parti: la prima si concentra su una breve descrizione del contenuto dei *journals*. Il suo scopo è esporre la loro fisionomia complessiva, che rivela un'importante evoluzione nel tempo. La seconda se-

1 Si tratta di Bodl. Lib. MSS Locke f. 1 (1675-76), f. 2 (1677), f. 3 (1678), f. 4 (1680), f. 5 (1681), f. 6 (1682), f. 7 (1683), f. 8 (1684-85), f. 9 (1686-88), f. 10 (1689-1704).

2 Brit. Lib. Addendum MS 15,642 (1679). Questo *journal* in origine faceva parte della Lovelace Collection, ma venne acquistato dal British Museum di Londra nel 1875.

3 Si veda P. Long, *A Summary Catalogue of the Lovelace Collection of the papers of John Locke in the Bodleian Library*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1959.

4 Si veda R.I. Aaron, *John Locke*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1971, pp. 309-12.

5 P. King, *The Life of John Locke: with Extracts from his Correspondence, Journals and Common-place books*, 2 voll., H. Colburn, London 1830.

6 J. Locke, *An Early Draft of Locke's Essay: Together with Excerpts from his Journals*, a c. di R.I. Aaron e J. Gibb, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1936.

zione contiene un'analisi del metodo di annotazione utilizzato da Locke nella redazione giornaliera dei suoi *journals*, e fa riferimento ad alcuni importanti contributi di John Milton e Richard Yeo. L'ultima parte si sofferma sulle pubblicazioni parziali del contenuto dei *journals*, da quella di Lord Peter King nel 1829 fino alle più recenti. L'obiettivo è quello di evidenziare l'importanza di questi materiali, che meriterebbero un'edizione completa.

1. *Il contenuto dei* journals

Il 12 novembre 1675, all'indomani della sua partenza per la Francia John Locke cominciava ad annotare su un taccuino il resoconto giornaliero del suo viaggio. Da allora proseguì ad inaugurare un nuovo quaderno per ciascuno degli anni successivi. La fisionomia di questi diari non è omogenea: la distribuzione delle oltre 3500 pagine che compongono la totalità dei *journals* all'interno dei singoli quaderni è molto varia. I primi otto (1675-83) si propongono come volumi annuali: nei primi giorni del mese di gennaio, Locke aveva l'abitudine di procurarsi un nuovo taccuino per i suoi appunti e rilegarlo all'interno di un almanacco dello stesso anno. Gli ultimi tre diari, invece, si estendono per un periodo più ampio di un anno. Inoltre, i volumi corrispondenti agli anni del soggiorno in Francia (1675-79) e dell'esilio in Olanda (1683-89) esibiscono una quantità di pagine duplice rispetto ai quaderni, decisamente più sottili, che Locke utilizzò in Inghilterra. Evidentemente, la diversa mole dei *journals* dipende dalle molteplici esperienze maturate dal filosofo durante i suoi viaggi: la lontananza da casa sembrerebbe averlo costretto a raccogliere tutte le sue note nei diari, piuttosto che smistarle in altri taccuini che aveva lasciato in Inghilterra[7].

Malgrado il racconto delle esperienze di viaggio costituisca il pretesto iniziale e il filo conduttore dei primi volumi dei *journals*, Locke non rimase ancorato alla forma narrativa del diario. Non passò infatti molto tempo prima che al resoconto dettagliato del soggiorno parigino si affiancassero note riguardanti la medicina, la numismatica e la teologia, appunti di lettura relativi allo studio dei testi biblici ed estratti ricavati da resoconti di viaggio[8]. Accanto a note di

[7] Come nota Milton, nei suoi viaggi in Francia e in Olanda Locke avrebbe lasciato i *commonplace books* in Inghilterra e tenuto traccia delle sue note di lettura su fogli sparsi. Si veda J. Locke, *Literary and Historical Writings*, a c. di J.R. Milton, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2019, p. 34. Ciò spiega anche perché in questi momenti il contenuto dei *journals* diventi particolarmente denso.

[8] La biblioteca di Locke includeva mappe, osservazioni geografiche e quasi duecento libri dedicati ai racconti di viaggio: si vedano J. Harrison e P. Laslett, *The Library of John Locke*, Oxford Bibliographical

spesa o riguardanti l'organizzazione della biblioteca personale, apparvero osservazioni meteorologiche[9] e lunghe trascrizioni di brani in francese, con le quali Locke forse intendeva mantenere viva la sua conoscenza di quella lingua.

La grande varietà di argomenti che caratterizza le note sembrerebbe dare ragione a Matthew Stuart, che definiva Locke "più una volpe che un riccio"[10]: Stuart si riferiva alla distinzione che Isaiah Berlin aveva operato tra due tipi di intellettuali, i "ricci", che fondano l'intera struttura del proprio sapere su un unico principio speculativo, e le "volpi", che colgono una grande quantità di idee senza tentare di collocarle in un sistema preciso e coerente. Locke rientrerebbe in quest'ultima categoria: la sua inclinazione intellettuale l'avrebbe portato a coltivare una grande quantità di interessi di ricerca e ad adottare un approccio non sistematico, come i *journals* evidenziano.

I primi quattro *journals*[11] riguardano gli anni 1675-79 e rivelano somiglianze importanti nel contenuto. Il primo è uno dei più corposi, con le sue 542 pagine; gli altri sono composti rispettivamente da 425, 402 e 189 pagine. In tutti Locke descrive dettagliatamente le esperienze relative al viaggio in Francia, inserendo note riguardanti pesi e misure locali, la numismatica, nonché il suo ricettario medico. Lunghe e frequenti sono le annotazioni che hanno a che fare con l'agricoltura (come quelle riguardanti la produzione dell'olio e del vino in Francia, o l'allevamento dei bachi da seta). Varie sono le note di argomento filosofico: alcune affrontano temi politici sui quali Locke aveva già riflettuto nei *Two Tracts of Government* e nel *Saggio sulla Tolleranza* ("Obligation of Penal Laws", "Lex Humana", "Toleration", "Peace", "Politica" e "Laws")[12], altre riguardano la morale ("Passions", "Pain", "Pleasure", "Will", "Love", "Desire", "Hope" e

Society Pubblications, Oxford 1965, pp. 18-19. Stando a quanto osserva Ann Talbot, l'interesse del filosofo si concentrava su racconti contenenti una descrizione del comportamento umano nelle differenti civiltà: il contenuto dei primi *journals*, che forniscono il resoconto del viaggio in Francia, corrobora questa tesi evidenziando l'interesse di Locke per i costumi e le usanze del popolo francese. Si veda A. Talbot, "*The Great Ocean of knowledge": the Influence of Travel Literature on the work of John Locke*, Brill, Leiden 2010.

9 Secondo Richard Yeo, nel 1666 Locke aveva inaugurato un registro di osservazioni meteoreologiche: si veda R. Yeo, "Thinking with Excerpts: John Locke (1632-1704) and his Notebooks", in *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte* 43 (2020), pp. 197-98. A partire dal 1675, queste osservazioni compaiono anche nelle pagine dei *journals*, accanto alle date delle singole note. Con ogni probabilità, Locke annotava le sue osservazioni meteoreologiche prima sui *journals* e poi le trascriveva nel registro.

10 Si veda M. Stuart, *Locke's Metaphysics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2013, p. ix.

11 Bodl. Lib. MSS Locke f. 1, f. 2, f. 3 e Brit. Lib. Add. MS 15,642.

12 Si veda MS Locke f.1, cit., pp. 123-26, 414-16, 469; Bodl. Lib. MS Locke f. 3 pp. 107, 111-12. In questo contributo farò riferimento quasi esclusivamente a contenuti dei *journals* che sono stati pubblicati e sono dunque ben noti agli studiosi di Locke. Relativamente alla loro pubblicazione si veda J. Attig, *John Locke Manuscripts*. https://openpublishing.psu.edu/locke/mss/ (visitato in data 12.09.2020).

"Lex na[tur]æ")[13]. Ad esse si aggiungono diverse note di argomento epistemologico, che anticipano temi che saranno affrontati nel *Saggio* ("Simple Ideas", "Understanding", "Knowledge. Its extent and measure", "End of Knowledge", "Modes Complex", "Space", "Extension", "Infinite", "Power" e "Unity")[14].

In ciascuno dei quattro volumi è possibile rintracciare alcune pagine che, prese insieme, sembrerebbero comporre un'unica opera: si tratta di "Atlantis", un'utopia affine alla *New Atlantis* di Françis Bacon[15]. Sono inoltre copiose le note sulla religione ("Episcopi", "Synod", "Ordination", "Protestants", "Canonization", "Excommunication", "Transubstantiation")[16]. Tra queste spicca una sostanziosa lista di passi tratti dal Nuovo Testamento, che riguardano lo studio della cronologia biblica; si tratta del risultato di uno studio approfondito di *The Harmony of the four Evangelists* di John Lightfoot[17].

Nel primo *journal* (1675-76) compaiono alcune note ("Essay morall", "A Deity", "God", "Atheisme", "Worship", etc.)[18] riguardanti gli *Essais de Morale* di Pierre Nicole, che Locke stava leggendo in Francia con l'intento di pubblicarne una traduzione in lingua inglese[19]. Ad esse se ne aggiungono altre ("Space" ed "Extension")[20] nelle quali si confronta con la fisica cartesiana.

Nel secondo *journal* (1677) sono presenti alcuni "Adversaria", ossia indici tematici da utilizzare per la compilazione di *commonplace books*[21]; tali indici sono seguiti da note di lettura su alcuni dei temi elencati[22]. Compaiono inoltre

[13] MS Locke f. 1, cit., pp. 318-19, 325-47; MS Locke f. 2, cit., pp. 41-53; MS Locke f. 3, cit., pp. 10-16, 200-2, 205-6.

[14] MS Locke f. 1, cit., pp. 290-95, 317, 392, 430-32; MS Locke f.2, cit., pp. 42-53; MS Locke f. 3, cit., p. 263; Add. MS 15,642, cit., pp. 108-11.

[15] MS Locke f.1, cit., p. 319; MS Locke f.2, cit., pp. 289, 296-98; MS Locke f.3, cit., pp. 92, 95, 143, 199-201; Add. MS 15,642, cit., pp. 13-14, 18-23. Si veda a riguardo L. Beltalla, *Atlantis: spunti e appunti su un inedito lockiano*, Maria Pacini Fazzi editore, Lucca 1983.

[16] MS Locke f. 1, cit., pp. 97-110, 116-17, 421-29.

[17] Si veda Harrison e Laslett, *The Library of John Locke*, cit., pp. 174-75 e J. Lightfoot, *The whole works of John Lightfoot*, a c. di J.R. Pitman, Londra 1822-25). Le note che contengono riferimenti a passi biblici compaiono frequentemente nei primi volumi dei *journals*.

[18] Si veda Harrison e Laslett, *The Library of John Locke*, cit., pp. 131, 195. MS Locke f. 1, cit., pp. 367-70.

[19] Locke tradurrà tre saggi di Pierre Nicole. Si veda J.S. Yolton, *John Locke as a Translator: Three of the Essais of Pierre Nicole in French and English*, Voltaire Foundation, Oxford 2000.

[20] MS Locke f. 1, cit., pp. 173-74, 289-95.

[21] MS Locke f. 2, cit., 247-60. Per maggiori informazioni sugli *Adversaria* del 1677 si veda G. Di Biase, "Theologia, Ethics and Natural Law in Locke's Classifications of Knowledge and Adversaria", in *Locke Studies* 14 (2014), pp. 177-237; Id., "*Physica* in John Locke's *Adversaria* and Classifications of the Branches of Knowledge", in *Locke Studies* 16 (2016), pp. 69-165.

[22] MS Locke f. 2, cit., pp. 247-60.

la celebre nota "Of Study"[23] e alcuni estratti di resoconti di viaggio ("Arabia", "Aegypt", "Africa" e "Indostan")[24], per lo più ricavati dall'opera di François Bernier. Il *journal* ospita anche il sistema di cifratura del cardinale Richelieu, che evidenzia l'interesse di Locke per la crittografia[25], e alcuni schizzi e annotazioni su una tecnica per delineare oggetti distanti mediante la prospettiva e i parallelogrammi stereografici[26].

Il ricettario medico diventa predominante nel terzo *journal* (1678), in cui compaiono anche note di algebra[27], una lista di libri[28] e alcuni riferimenti alle opere di Platone, Maimonide e Pascal[29]; di quest'ultimo Locke leggeva in Francia i *Pensieri*[30]. È presente inoltre un lungo estratto riguardante la filosofia di Descartes ("Cartesian Philosophie", "Cartesian", "Cartesianisme"), e alcune osservazioni sull'ordine da seguire nella lettura delle sue opere. Compare inoltre la lunga nota intitolata "Scrupulosity", che Locke compose per l'amico il *doctor of divinity* Denis Greenville[31].

Anche il quarto *journal* (1679), il più breve di tutti, contiene per lo più appunti di medicina. Ad essi si affiancano alcuni schemi relativi all'*Harmonia evangeliorum* dell'erudito francese Nicolas Thoynard, della quale Locke aveva ricevuto in dono una copia dall'autore[32]. Sono infine presenti alcuni passi di "Atlantis"[33].

Nei successivi quattro volumi, relativi al quadriennio 1680-83[34], i *journals* mutano forma e funzione: non solo la quantità di pagine dei singoli volumi è inferiore (rispettivamente 220, 174, 150 e 198 pagine), ma il contenuto stesso delle note è diverso. Locke sembra utilizzare progressivamente i suoi diari per

[23] Ivi, pp. 85-132. Per un approfondimento del contenuto di questa nota si consulti R. Yeo, "John Locke 'Of Study' (1677): Interpreting an Unpublished Essay", in *Locke Studies* 3 (2003), pp. 147-65.

[24] MS Locke f. 2, cit., pp. 1-2; 292. Numerose note manoscritte relative ai *journals* degli anni 1677-78 si soffermano sui viaggi di François Bernier (1620-88), medico, filosofo ed orientalista che Locke conobbe in Francia. Sul rapporto tra Locke e Bernier si veda M. Cranston, *John Locke. A Biography*, The Macmillan Company, New York 1957, p. 170; J. Lough, *Locke's Travels in France (1675-9). As related in his Journals, Correspondence and other Papers*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1953, p. 177.

[25] MS Locke f. 2, cit., pp. 164-65.

[26] Ivi, pp. 169-73.

[27] MS Locke f. 3, cit., pp. 36 e 39.

[28] Ivi, pp. 172-83. Si tratta di libri dei quali Locke era in possesso.

[29] Ivi, pp. 44, 187, 308.

[30] Si vedano Harrison e Laslett, *The Library of John Locke*, cit., p. 204.

[31] MS Locke f. 3, cit., pp. 69-79, 358-78. Si veda J. Locke, *The Correspondence of John Locke*, a c. di E.S. de Beer, vol. 2, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1977, pp. 555-56.

[32] Add. MS 15,642, cit., pp. 33-63. Per un approfondimento si veda G. Di Biase, *John Locke e Nicolas Thoynard. Un'amicizia ciceroniana*, Edizioni ETS, Pisa 2018, pp. 154-66.

[33] Add. MS 15,642, cit., pp. 13-14, 18-23.

[34] Bodl. Lib. MSS Locke f. 4, f. 5 e f. 6.

esigenze di natura prevalentemente pratica, soprattutto per la gestione del suo denaro e della sua biblioteca. Prosegue la raccolta di estratti ricavati dalla lettura di resoconti di viaggio[35] e soprattutto la stesura del ricettario medico, che sembra avere tenuto Locke particolarmente impegnato in questi anni.

Nel quinto *journal* (1680) compaiono lunghe trascrizioni di vario argomento, come *La maniere de faire le pain avec du levain* – una ricetta che Thoynard aveva procurato a Locke, spedendogliela dalla Francia[36]. In altri casi si tratta di ampi *excerpta* tratti da resoconti di viaggio[37]. È presente inoltre una lunga nota sull'idea di Dio[38], nella quale Locke si sofferma soprattutto sulla onnipotenza divina.

Nel sesto *journal* (1681) compaiono annotazioni relative alla differenza tra l'anno solare e il calendario giuliano in uso all'epoca in Inghilterra[39]; si tratta di un tema molto dibattuto nei circoli accademici del Seicento, sul quale Locke si confrontava con l'amico Thoynard[40]. Sono presenti inoltre un'importante nota che dettaglia lo stato di salute di una ultracentenaria[41], alcune osservazioni di argomento morale ("On reason, passion and superstition")[42] ed epistemologico ("Knowledge", "On ideas and knowledge")[43], che anticipano temi che saranno ripresi nel *Saggio*. Compare inoltre un commento all'opera di Richard Hooker *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie* (1594), la cui influenza su Locke è già evidente a partire dai *Two Tracts of Government*[44].

Una breve sezione del settimo diario (1682) contiene alcune riflessioni su importanti temi religiosi che verranno ripresi nel *Saggio* ("On Enthusiasm", "On the immortality of the soul", "Of knowledge of God")[45]. Ad esse si aggiungono una lista dei libri in possesso di Locke[46] e una nota riguardante la botanica (un

35 MS Locke f. 4, cit., p. 1; MS Locke f. 5, cit., pp. 19-22.
36 MS Locke f. 4, cit., pp. 50-61. Si veda Di Biase, *John Locke e Nicolas Thoynard*, cit., pp. 52-60.
37 MS Locke f.4, cit., pp. 70-81 e 81-95.
38 Ivi, pp. 145-51.
39 MS Locke f. 5, cit., pp. 18-19.
40 Si veda Di Biase, *John Locke e Nicolas Thoynard*, cit., pp. 252-54.
41 MS Locke f. 5, cit., pp. 19-23. Secondo Laslett, si tratta della più antica testimonianza di una visita medica effettuata da un medico su un paziente ultracentenario per comprendere le cause della sua longevità. Si veda P. Laslett, "The bewildering History of the History of Longevity", in B. Jeun, J.W. Vaupel, a c. di, *Validation of exceptional longevity*, Odense University Press, Odense 1999, pp. 23-40.
42 MS Locke f. 5, cit., p. 59.
43 Ivi, pp. 77-83 e 113-14.
44 Ivi, pp. 73-87. Si veda Locke, *Two Tracts on Government*, a c. di P. Abrams, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1967, pp. 69-72; Harrison e Laslett, *The Library of John Locke*, cit., p. 157.
45 MS Locke f. 6, cit., pp. 19-38.
46 Ivi, pp. 78-80.

argomento connesso con la pratica medica)[47]. È presente inoltre una citazione riguardante l'eccessiva indulgenza nell'educazione dei giovani tratta dalle *Epistulae ad Atticum* di Cicerone[48]: si tratta evidentemente di un tema sul quale Locke stava riflettendo nei primi anni ottanta, quando dalla corrispondenza con l'amico Edward Clarke cominciavano a prendere forma i *Pensieri sull'educazione*.

Nell'ottavo *journal* (1683) tornano a essere frequenti le note di lettura: si tratta di diversi brani tratti dal *De natura deorum* di Cicerone[49], a cui si aggiungono *excerpta* ricavati dal *De Oraculis veterum ethnicorum Dissertationes* di Anton van Dale[50]. I giudizi che tale autore esprime a proposito di Epicuro, Seneca e Marco Aurelio sembrerebbero aver attratto l'attenzione di Locke, che a proposito degli epicurei raccomanda cautela: "Cave igitur hoc in re ne iis nimium credas"[51]. È presente anche una nota sull'identità personale che sembrerebbe essere una bozza del capitolo 27 del secondo libro del *Saggio*, aggiunto alla seconda edizione dell'opera (1694)[52]. Sono inoltre presenti una nota di argomento botanico[53] e un'altra che fa riferimento ad un farmaco universale[54].

I due diari redatti durante i cinque anni di esilio in Olanda contengono una quantità considerevole di pagine, rispettivamente 358 e 370[55]. Come nei primi quattro *journal*, abbondano le note di lettura e quelle mediche; queste ultime costituiscono la parte preponderante del contenuto dei due diari.

Il nono *journal* (1684-85) si apre con un elenco di riferimenti inframezzati da note di lettura relative alle opere di vari autori, tra i quali Euclide, Aristotele, Tertulliano, Quintiliano, Seneca, Montaigne e Arnauld[56]. Compare inoltre una serie di note sulla morale che sono il risultato della lettura del *De officiis* di Cicerone ("Honestum", "Sapientia", "Bonus", "Persona", "Iustitia" e "Fides")[57]. Di particolare interesse è anche una nota di argomento teologico sulla dottrina dei *muggletonians*, una setta cristiana nata in Inghilterra nel XV secolo[58]. Il resto del volume è quasi interamente occupato da appunti riguardanti la medicina.

47 Ivi, pp. 38-43. In questa lunga nota Locke elenca una lista di semi provenienti dai Pirenei che gli erano stati mandati da Montpellier.
48 Ivi, p. 84.
49 MS Locke f. 7, cit., pp. 17-18.
50 Si veda Harrison e Laslett, *The Library of John Locke*, p. 118.
51 MS Locke f. 7, cit., pp. 148-52.
52 Ivi, p. 107.
53 Ivi, pp. 49-53.
54 Ivi, pp. 65-67.
55 Bodl. Lib. MSS Locke, f. 8 e f. 9.
56 MS Locke f. 8, cit., pp. 6-8, 33-34, 59-81.
57 Ivi, pp. 9-10, 26-27, 34-35.
58 Ivi, pp. 12-18.

Nel decimo *journal* (1686-88) compaiono note di argomento epistemologico su temi che saranno cruciali nel *Saggio* ("Veritas", "Falsitas" e "Intellectus")[59]; sono presenti inoltre lunghissime trascrizioni di brani tratti da opere riguardanti la lavorazione dei guanti nel XVII secolo[60], alle quali si inframmezzano pagine vuote probabilmente destinate in origine ad ospitare i commenti di Locke. Qui comincia a evidenziarsi il mutamento di funzione dei *journals*, che sembrano per lo più ospitare informazioni di natura pratica.

L'undicesimo *journal* (1689-1704) è sicuramente il più corposo, con le sue 608 pagine[61]. Molte di queste, tuttavia, sono vuote. L'inizio del *journal* coincide con il ritorno di Locke in Inghilterra nel 1689; il contenuto è scarsamente rilevante, se paragonato a quello degli altri volumi. Le note di lettura, il ricettario medico e i commenti sono del tutto assenti. Il *journal* ha la fisionomia di un libro mastro: al suo interno è possibile trovare un resoconto dettagliato delle spese di Locke e dei suoi movimenti di denaro, piuttosto che il racconto biografico che ci si aspetterebbe da un diario e la varietà di note alla quale ci avevano abituato i *journals* precedenti. Evidentemente, con il tempo l'ampio ventaglio di interessi di Locke si restringe.

2. *Il metodo per la stesura dei* journals

I *journals* sembrerebbero avere rappresentato, nelle intenzioni di Locke, il luogo dove depositare tutto ciò di cui avrebbe voluto conservare memoria, almeno nei primi anni; negli ultimi questa funzione si affievolisce. I primi *journals* sono il contenitore di note momentanee concepite come materiale da smistare, selezionare e trascrivere nelle pagine dei *commonplace books* e dei *pocket memorandum books*. Successivamente, Locke svolgerà a monte questo lavoro di smistamento, utilizzando altri quaderni ed evitando così il lavoro di copiatura.

Uno degli aspetti più interessanti dei *journals* è il metodo che Locke scelse per ordinare questa grande quantità di contenuti. Ricostruire questo metodo aiuta a comprendere il suo flusso di lavoro e la maniera in cui Locke registrava le note all'interno dei propri diari. Per la loro varietà, i *journals* si presentano come *commonplace books*, le raccolte dove Locke, come esplicitava all'amico Nicolas Thoynard, annotava tutto ciò che potesse "sopperire alla sua scarsa

[59] MS Locke f. 9, cit., p. 54.
[60] Ivi, pp. 105-7, 111-5, 127-47.
[61] Bodl. Lib. MS Locke f. 10.

memoria"[62]. Locke scelse di usare nella stesura dei *journals* lo stesso *modus operandi* che utilizzava nei *commonplace books*; i diari vennero "contaminati" da un genere letterario diverso, quello delle raccolte di citazioni (o *loci communes*) annotate durante la lettura.

I *commonplace books* rappresentavano uno strumento ampiamente diffuso tra gli studiosi del diciassettesimo secolo, che consentiva di ordinare le citazioni all'interno di categorie generali con l'ausilio di un sistema di indici e riferimenti[63]; la biblioteca di Locke conteneva una grande quantità di volumi con questa finalità[64]. La compilazione dei *commonplace books* richiedeva un metodo che Locke aveva in parte ereditato dagli studiosi dell'epoca: come rilevava Milton, tra i libri in possesso di Locke era presente *Of Education* di Obadiah Walker, in cui l'autore descriveva un procedimento ottimale mediante il quale ordinare gli appunti di lettura. Walker raccomandava di "scrivere in maniera confusa ciò che pensi che sia rilevante nella lettura [...] Lasciare nel tuo libro un margine considerevole; segnare ogni osservazione sulle pagine del quaderno"[65]. In seguito, secondo Walker, era importante contrassegnare ogni nota con un duplice riferimento. Lo scopo di questo procedimento era quello di sussumere quanto si era annotato sul quaderno all'interno della categoria più appropriata tra quelle presenti nell'indice. Accanto alla nota bisognava dunque segnare il numero della pagina dell'indice in cui compariva la categoria; viceversa, nell'indice andavano riportate le pagine delle note, sotto le rispettive categorie. Questo risultava particolarmente utile qualora si intendesse ripercorrere il quaderno dei *loci communes* in maniera ordinata, per argomenti.

Il sistema presentava tuttavia un limite fondamentale: esso richiedeva infatti che le note venissero classificate all'interno di categorie prestabilite, per cui i quaderni dovevano essere costruiti a partire da un indice generale di argomenti da decidere prima di cominciare la raccolta.

Locke elaborò un proprio sistema, con l'intento di superare questo limite e ottenere una maggiore libertà. Si tratta di una modifica fondamentale, che si

[62] Nelle parole di Locke: "descripsion of my way of makeing collections for the help of my bad memory". Si veda Locke, *Literary and Historical Writings*, cit., pp. 215-32; Yeo, "Thinking with Excerpts", cit., p. 181.

[63] Per uno studio dettagliato del metodo adottato da Locke si veda Yeo, "Thinking with Excerpts", cit. e M. Stolberg, "John Locke's 'New Method of making Commonplace Books': Tradition, Innovation and epistemic Effects", in *Early Science and Medicine*, Special Issue: *A Natural History of Early Modern Writing Technologies* 19 (2014), pp. 448-70.

[64] Si tratta di Bodl. Lib. MSS Locke e. 4, e. 6, f. 20, f. 18, f. 14, f. 19, d. 9. Si veda inoltre Harrison e Laslett, *The Library of John Locke*, cit., pp. 26, 178.

[65] O. Walker, *Of Education. Especially of Young Gentlemen*, Oxford 1673. Per approfondimenti, si veda Locke, *Literary and Historical Writings*, cit., p. 30.

basa sull'uso di un indice alfabetico piuttosto che di quello per categorie. Locke descrive questo nuovo metodo, da lui introdotto sia nei *commonplace books* che nei *journals*, in un articolo uscito anonimo sulla *Bibliotheque Universelle* di Jean Le Clerc, "Methode Nouvelle de Dresser des Recueuils"[66]. Come ha evidenziato Richard Yeo, il metodo di Locke costituisce un'evoluzione naturale dell'*ars excerpendi* tipica del XVII secolo[67]; Locke l'avrebbe rimodellata in modo da fare spazio alle proprie osservazioni. A differenza del dotto, che accumula informazioni senza comprenderle veramente[68], egli crea uno spazio critico tra se stesso e il testo. Il metodo di Locke presentava secondo Yeo due livelli fondamentali: da un lato, la pratica di raccogliere note permetteva di confrontare autori diversi sui medesimi argomenti, dall'altro lo spazio riservato al commento consentiva l'elaborazione del proprio pensiero. Nelle parole di Yeo, "Locke trasformava gli estratti trascritti in pacchetti di informazioni che davano luogo alla reminiscenza, guidavano i suoi progetti e stimolavano nuove indagini"[69].

Il metodo elaborato da Locke consisteva nel tracciare sulle prime due pagine di un quaderno una tabella, dove veniva collocato un elenco di lettere in ordine alfabetico. A ciascuna lettera erano affiancate cinque righe, ciascuna corrispondente ad una vocale. Ogniqualvolta una nota era aggiunta nel quaderno, bisognava trascrivere il numero della pagina all'interno dell'indice, in corrispondenza della riga che conteneva la combinazione delle prime lettere del titolo della nota. Questa pratica doveva assicurare, in linea generale, l'univocità di ciascun titolo all'interno dell'indice; in questa maniera, Locke poteva collezionare annotazioni su argomenti diversi nelle medesime pagine, senza preoccuparsi in fase di preparazione del quaderno delle categorie a cui esse si riferivano. Il suo metodo infatti permetteva di ritrovare le note in un secondo momento attraverso l'ordinamento alfabetico dell'indice[70].

66 Locke, *Literary and Historical Writings*, cit., pp. 251-76.

67 Yeo, "Thinking with Excerpts", cit., pp. 180-202.

68 Locke era molto critico verso coloro che accumulavano note di lettura senza comprendere il significato di ciò che leggevano. In "Some Thoughts concerning reading and study for a Gentleman" (1703), afferma che "Il prossimo passo verso un miglioramento della comprensione, deve essere l'osservazione della connessione di queste idee all'interno delle proposizioni che quei libri asseriscono e pretendono di insegnare come verità; fino a quando un uomo non riesca a giudicare se tali affermazioni possano essere vere o meno, la sua comprensione non è affatto migliorata ed egli pensa e parla in base ai libri che ha letto senza trarre da essi alcuna conoscenza. Per questo motivo, gli uomini che leggono molto sono molto istruiti, ma non hanno alcuna conoscenza". Si veda Locke, *Some Thoughts concerning Education*, a c. di J.W. e J.S. Yolton, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1989, p. 319.

69 Yeo, "Thinking with Excerpts", cit., p. 199.

70 Ibid.

Nelle pagine conclusive del primo *journal* compare l'indice che Locke descrive nel "Methode Nouvelle", che doveva aiutarlo nella stesura giornaliera delle note[71]. Nelle pagine immediatamente precedenti, Locke aveva compilato un ulteriore indice alfabetico, scrivendo per esteso i titoli delle singole note e le rispettive pagine[72]. Nei successivi *journals* è presente esclusivamente questo secondo indice, benché il metodo di annotazione rimanga quello alfabetico. Si potrebbe ipotizzare che l'indice alfabetico sia stato compilato da Locke anche per i *journals* successivi, ma sia andato perduto.

3. *Le edizioni dei* journals

Alla comprensione dei diari di Locke sicuramente non contribuisce lo *shorthand*, un sistema stenografico da lui inventato che aveva il duplice compito di cifrare le sue note e renderne più veloce la stesura. Questa scrittura era stata elaborata da Locke basandosi sul metodo Cartwright-Rich[73], di cui possedeva il manuale. Prima che il sistema di Locke fosse decifrato da Wolfgang von Leyden[74], l'utilizzo dello *shorthand* aveva precluso agli studiosi la comprensione di molti passaggi nei *journals*. Ancora oggi, alcuni brani non sono stati trascritti in una versione non stenografata. Come notava von Leyden, fu proprio questo problema a dissuadere alcuni editori dal pubblicare per intero il contenuto dei *journals*; per di più, il sistema di Locke appariva tutt'altro che impeccabile. Scriveva von Leyden: "alle volte Locke è negligente nella sua stenografia: omette sillabe e parole intere, e si confonde nel distinguere segni simili. Non usa neanche simboli per gli articoli, definiti o indefiniti, o la punteggiatura, ad eccezione dei punti, che sono indicati da tre puntini disposti a triangolo"[75].

La prima pubblicazione di alcuni dei contenuti dei *journals* risale al 1829, quando Lord Peter King diede alle stampe *The Life of John Locke*. King, nipote dell'esecutore testamentario di Locke, aveva a disposizione tutti i manoscritti di quella che oggi è nota come Lovelace Collection. Decise dunque di pubblicare

71 MS Locke f. 1, cit. pp. 539-48.

72 Ivi, pp. 427-32.

73 Jeremiah Rich fu uno stenografo inglese che a partire dal 1642 pubblicò diversi libri riguardanti il metodo stenografico insegnatogli dallo zio, William Cartwright. Si veda J. Rich, *Semography, or Short and Swift Writing, being the most easiest, exactest, and speediest Method of all others that have beene yet Extant*, Londra 1642.

74 Si veda Locke, *Essays on the Law of Nature*, cit., pp. 246-51.

75 Ivi, p. 251.

parte dei materiali in essa contenuti con un intento preciso: tracciare un resoconto dettagliato della biografia lockiana che prendesse le mosse dalle fonti primarie, in modo da ricostruire un quadro fedele della sua personalità. Le opere di Locke erano diffuse e ampiamente studiate all'epoca, ma l'individuo, secondo King, rimaneva per lo più sconosciuto. La monumentale biografia di King voleva proporsi come un'alternativa a quella che Le Clerc aveva scritto nel 1716, appena dodici anni dopo la morte del filosofo. King riteneva la biografia di Le Clerc riduttiva: soltanto la pubblicazione del contenuto dei diari e delle lettere poteva, a suo avviso, "aumentare, se possibile, la fama di quell'uomo davvero grande e buono"[76]. King non forniva un'interpretazione del contenuto dei *journals*, tuttavia nella prefazione rilevava che i manoscritti relativi agli anni 1675-88 avevano un duplice ruolo, quello di j*ournals* e quello di *commonplace books*. Oltre a tracciare i contorni della vita di Locke, essi si prestavano a contenere diverse "dissertazioni indubbiamente annotate nell'istante in cui comparivano nella sua mente"[77].

La seconda edizione di alcuni brani dei *journals* aveva uno scopo ben diverso da quella di King, concentrandosi sul loro contenuto filosofico. Si tratta del volume di Richard Aaron e Jocelyn Gibb, che include il *Draft A.* Insieme a quest'ultimo Aaron e Gibb pubblicarono alcuni estratti dei *journals* che, come evidenziavano John Rogers e Peter Nidditch, costituivano una fonte importante per la comprensione del contenuto del *Saggio*[78].

Il lavoro di Aaron e Gibb rappresentò una risorsa cruciale per la conoscenza del contenuto dei *drafts*; tuttavia, i brani dei *journals* non furono scelti con sistematicità. Von Leyden ne criticò aspramente la trascrizione imprecisa[79]: il lavoro condotto fino al 1952 sui *journals* gli sembrava a tal punto inadeguato da trarre in errore i lettori[80].

Il contenuto dei *journals* è senza dubbio difficile da gestire, come osservava John Lough nel volume *Locke's Travels in France*[81]. Il progetto di una pubblicazione integrale dei *journals* di Locke gli sembrava irto di difficoltà: "Al momento – scriveva Lough – qualsiasi editore sarebbe spaventato all'idea di dare alle stam-

76 King, *The Life of John Locke*, cit., vol. 1, p. iv.

77 Ivi, pp. v-vi.

78 Si veda Locke, *Drafts of the Essay Concerning Human Understanding and Other Philosophical Writings*, a c. di P.H. Nidditch e G.A.J. Rogers, vol. 1, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1980, p. 19.

79 Si veda W. von Leyden, "Notes concerning papers of John Locke in the Lovelace Collection", in *The Philosophical Quarterly* 6 (1952), pp. 63-69. I brani in questione si limitano all'arco temporale che va dal 27 marzo 1676 al 21 febbraio 1682.

80 Ibid.

81 Lough, *Locke's Travels in France*, cit., p. xxii.

pe un lavoro di tali dimensioni"[82]. Proprio per questo motivo, nella pubblicazione dei *journals* egli preferì concentrarsi esclusivamente sulle cronache del viaggio di Locke in Francia. L'opera di Lough contiene diversi passaggi trascritti dallo *shorthand*, il che contribusce ad accrescerne l'importanza; d'altra parte, Lough non era interessato al pensiero filosofico di Locke. Il suo unico scopo era tentare di ricostruire coerentemente il racconto del suo viaggio nelle terre di Luigi XIV. Sono dunque esclusi dall'edizione tutti i brani che non riguardano la biografia di Locke e quelli successivi al suo ritorno in Inghilterra. Lough si concentrò esclusivamente sui primi quattro anni della stesura dei *journals*, delegando la pubblicazione dei contenuti di carattere filosofico alle ricerche di von Leyden[83].

Di fatto, von Leyden pubblicò solo alcuni brani dei *journals* nella sua edizione degli *Essays on the law of nature*[84]. I brani scelti rimandano tutti al primo *journal*, il quaderno del 1675-76. Leyden lasciava così in eredità ai giovani studiosi del pensiero lockiano il compito di esaminare le note contenute negli altri dieci quaderni.

Alcuni anni dopo la pubblicazione di von Leyden, un sostanzioso insieme di passi tratti dai *journals* apparve in stampa nell'edizione curata da Kenneth Dewhurst, il cui intento era ricostruire la biografia del *physician* Locke[85]. La sua opera includeva una trascrizione completa del ricettario medico di Locke, una tappa importante per la comprensione delle conoscenze scientifiche del filosofo. Il lavoro di Dewhurst contribuì senz'altro a rivelare alcuni aspetti del pensiero di Locke adombrati dalla fama del *Saggio*; d'altra parte, molto lavoro resta ancora da fare.

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Carlo Augusto Viano on John Locke's Idea of Experience*

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Abstract: Carlo Agusto Viano devoted assiduous attention to Locke's work. This paper aims at exploring his interpretation of Locke's concept of experience, identifying two important stages. In the first one, represented by his book *John Locke. Dal razionalismo all'illuminismo* (1960), Viano mainly focused on the various meanings Locke attributed to experience, in particular his idea of a method for verifying our beliefs. In the second stage, including Viano's later contributions on Locke, he favoured an interpretation of Locke's empiricism as being deeply rooted in Aristotelianism, Scholasticism and Cartesianism. He especially insisted on Locke's ability to create an "empiricist version of Cartesianism", grounded in Scholasticism. The paper intends to highlight Viano's ability to thoroughly investigate Locke's philosophy.

Keywords: experience, method of verification, reason, procedure, Aristotelianism, Cartesianism

Introduction

Carlo Augusto Viano carried out extensive research into seventeenth-century British philosophy[1], especially on John Locke. In 1955, he authored the introduction to a new Italian edition of Locke's *Some Thoughts concerning*

* Carlo Augusto Viano died on 20 July 2019. This note aims to highlight the originality of his views on John Locke and their relevance.

1 See for inst. C.A. Viano, "Esperienza e natura nella filosofia di Francesco Bacone [Experience and Nature in Francis Bacon's Philosophy]", in *Rivista di filosofia* 45 (1954), 3, pp. 291-313; Id., "Socinianesimo e cultura filosofica nell'Inghilterra del Seicento [Socinianism and Philosophical Culture in Seventeenth-Century England]", in *Rivista di filosofia* 46 (1955), 4, pp. 460-69; Id., "Analisi della vita emotiva e tecnica politica nella filosofia di Hobbes [An Analysis of Emotional life and Political Tecnique in Hobbes' Philosophy]", in *Rivista critica di storia della filosofia* 17 (1962), 4, pp. 355-92. Viano's complete bibliography has recently been published by B. Miglio in Accademia delle Scienze di Torino, *Quaderni* 34 (2020), pp. 41-65.

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Education[2], and in 1958 he explored the crucial role played by Ashley Cooper, the first Earl of Shaftesbury and a prominent member of the English investing class, in stimulating Locke's interest in economics[3]. In 1961, six years before Philip Abrams, Viano published the first English transcription of Locke's *Two Tracts on Government*, which were written in 1660-62[4]. The book included the original English text and the Italian translation of *An Essay concerning Toleration*, which Locke had begun to write in 1667[5].

In 1968, Viano edited a new Italian edition of *Draft B* of *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*[6], following the one published by Armando Carlini in 1948[7]. In the introduction to his edition, Viano kept his distance not only from Carlini but also from Vittorio Sainati, who had published the first Italian translation of *Draft A* in 1951[8]. Viano criticized both for considering the drafts as merely preparatory writings, rather than as autonomous works[9]. To support this view, he undertook a detailed historical reconstruction of Locke's experiences during the composition of the drafts (1671-72).

2 J. Locke, *Pensieri sulla educazione*, It. trans. by F. Pivano, Paravia, Turin 1955. Beside the introduction, Viano wrote the bibliography and a comment. Viano's interest in Locke seems to date back to the early fifties, when he wrote a review of D.J. O'Connor, *John Locke*, in *Rivista di filosofia* 45 (1954), 3, p. 213, and another review of A. Klemmt, *John Locke. Theoretische Philosophie*, in *Rivista di filosofia* 45 (1954), 3, pp. 336-39.

3 C.A. Viano, "I rapporti tra Locke e Shaftesbury e le teorie economiche di Locke [Locke's relationship with Shaftesbury and his economical theories]", in *Rivista di filosofia* 49 (1958), 1, pp. 69-84.

4 J. Locke, *Scritti editi e inediti sulla tolleranza* [Published and Unpublished Writings on Toleration], ed. by C.A. Viano, Taylor, Turin 1961, pp. 20-61; Id., *Two Tracts on Government*, ed. by P. Abrams, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1967. Viano's book included the first Italian translation of the *Two Tracts*. It was reprinted by Laterza in 1989, with a new introduction but without the original text.

5 Locke, *Scritti editi e inediti sulla tolleranza*, cit., pp. 81-107 and 158-98. The following year Viano published "L'abbozzo originario e gli stadi di composizione di *An Essay concerning Toleration* e la nascita delle teorie politico-religiose di John Locke [The Original Draft and the Stages of Composition of *An Essay concerning Toleration* and the Birth of Locke's Political-Religious Doctrines]", in *Rivista di filosofia* 52 (1961), 3, 1961, pp. 285-311. Repr. in J. Dunn and I. Harris, *Locke*, E. Elger, Cheltenham, UK-Lyme, USA 1997, vol. 1, pp. 181-207.

6 J. Locke, *Saggio sull'intelligenza: secondo abbozzo* [Essay on the Understanding: Second Draft], ed. by C.A. Viano, Laterza, Bari 1968.

7 J. Locke, *La conoscenza umana* [Human Knowledge], ed. by A. Carlini, Laterza, Bari 1948.

8 J. Locke, *Saggio sulla intelligenza umana: primo abbozzo* [Essay on Human Understanding: First Draft], ed. by V. Sainati, Laterza, Bari 1951.

9 Viano attributed this reading to Richard Aaron e Jocelyn Gibb's edition of *Draft A*, the one used by Sainati. See J. Locke, *An Early Draft of Locke's* Essay *together with Excerpts from his Journals*, ed. by R.I. Aaron and J. Gibb, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1936; Viano, *Saggio sull'intelligenza umana*, cit., pp. 12-13, n. 9.

A few years before, in 1960 Viano had published *John Locke. Dal razionalismo all'illuminismo*, his major contribution to the understanding of the English philosopher[10]. The book proved to be a milestone for twentieth-century Italian historiography, and was much appreciated abroad by Peter Nidditch. In the introduction to the first critical edition of the *Essay*, which appeared in 1975, Nidditch defined Viano's book as "the most broadly erudite and instructive account, and [...] the most balanced and best organized in its coverage, among existing books on Locke's thought as a whole"[11]. Nidditch particularly praised Viano's analysis of Locke's treatment of reason, a key aspect within his theory of understanding. This analysis was carried out paying attention to the numerous Locke manuscripts collected in the Lovelace Collection, which had become accessible to the public a few decades earlier. At that time, several scholars were working steadily to advance the knowledge of this material. In 1931, long before the Lovelace Collection was purchased by the Bodleian Library, Benjamin Rand published the transcription of the manuscript containing *Draft B*, and a few years later, in 1936, *Draft A* along with some notes from Locke's journals appeared, edited by Richard Aaron and Jocelyn Gibb. In 1953, John Lough published a large portion of the journals dating back to Locke's stay in France (1675-79), and in 1954 the eight *quaestiones* on the law of nature written by Locke in 1664 were printed, edited by Wolfgang von Leyden. Viano's *Scritti editi e inediti sulla tolleranza* were published a few years later. In the meantime, other scholars had undertaken a careful examination of several central aspects of Locke's thought, in the light of the new evidence emerging from the Lovelace Collection. This was the case of William Yolton, whose analysis of Locke's anti-nativist arguments was praised by Viano[12], and Peter Laslett, who was repeatedly mentioned by Viano for his studies on the *Two Treatises*

[10] C.A. Viano, *John Locke. Dal razionalismo all'illuminismo* [John Locke. From Rationalism to the Enlightenment], Einaudi, Turin 1960.

[11] P.H. Nidditch (ed.), *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of John Locke: An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1975, Introduction, p. lix, n. 1. Regarding the scant attention paid to Viano's book abroad, due to his use of Italian, see C. Borghero, "Testi e leggende: il Locke di Viano", in *Rivista di filosofia* 3 (2019), p. 402.

[12] J.W. Yolton, *Locke and the Way of Ideas*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1956; Viano, *John Locke. Dal razionalismo all'illuminismo*, cit., p. 128, n.1. A review of Yolton's book written by Viano appeared in *Rivista di filosofia* 48 (1957), 3, pp. 308-15, together with a review of M. Cranston, *John Locke. A Biography*, in *Rivista di filosofia* 48 (1957), 4, pp. 457-58. The year before, Viano had written a review of G. Bonno, *Les relations intellectuelles de Locke avec la France*, in *Rivista di filosofia* 47 (1956), 3, pp. 358-59.

of Government[13]. This pioneering research was a novelty in Italy, as Carlo Borghero has recently affirmed: "among us there was nothing which might be compared with the renewal of studies abroad, where the familiarity with Locke's unpublished works served to put into question old historiographical mirages and to open up new interpretative paths"[14]. This was the situation in Italy when, in 1960, Viano's book was published. Its considerable length manifested his desire to undertake a large-scale reconstruction of Locke's thought: Viano examined the entire corpus of his works, from his juvenile *Two Tracts on Government* to *Of the Conduct of the Understanding*, which was published posthumously. He returned to Locke's idea of tolerance, which he had already examined in previous years, but he also contemplated Locke the promoter of a reasonable Christianity, the educator and the philosopher of nature. A thread runs through this vast agenda of themes, Locke's idea of experience. In the introduction, Viano declared that his basic aim was "to examine what Locke had meant by experience, and what its internal structures and function were"[15]. This aim was clarified by Viano's objections to nineteenth-century philosophical historiography, swinging between conflicting but equally critical interpretations of Locke's thought. On the one hand, the French historian Victor Cousin had hailed Locke as a sensist and labelled his theory of the intellect as inadequate – an assessment in keeping with the opinion of Hegelian historiography –, on the other hand, Alois Riehl and other German scholars had described the content of the *Essay* as an immature forerunner of Kantian criticism[16]. Even the comparison with Hume's empiricism was unfavourable; the net result was a general loss of interest in Locke's approach. Focusing on the meaning attributed to experience by Locke was the best way of avoiding misunderstandings, in Viano's opinion. In his words, it was necessary to "put aside assessments centred on sensism or intellectualism" in order to understand why Locke's idea of experience had "marked such an important moment in the history of philosophy"[17].

[13] Viano frequently referred to P. Laslett, "The English Revolution and Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*", in *The Cambridge Historical Journal* 12 (1956), 1, pp. 40-55. Viano also mentioned Laslett, *Patriarcha and Other Political Works of Sir Robert Filmer*, Blackwell, Oxford 1949. See Viano, *John Locke*, cit., p. 209, n.3. Laslett's edition of the *Two Treatises* appeared in 1960.

[14] Borghero, "Testi e leggende", cit., p. 396.

[15] Viano, *John Locke*, cit., p. 19.

[16] Ibid., pp. 14-15.

[17] Ibid., p. 19.

Viano's remarks reflected his conception of the work of historians, who should be able to reject authoritative historical narratives perceived as inadequate and to clarify how questions which are relevant today may be efficaciously dealt with through an enquiry into the history of the concepts underlying them. This conception also inspired Viano's later writings on Locke. In a 1990 article, he examined the crisis of the liberal interpretation of Locke's politics given by Whig historiography[18], and in a 2005 essay he questioned the historical reliability of individualistic and utilitarian readings[19], a controversial theme in the panorama of Locke studies[20]. In the meantime, Viano had returned to Locke's notion of experience, which was the thread running through his 1960 book. His views indicated a significant development in his thought, which is the topic of this paper. This development, attesting to Viano's ability to thoroughly investigate Locke's philosophy, favoured an interpretation of Locke's empiricism as being deeply rooted in Aristotelianism, Scholasticism and Cartesianism. In the first paragraph, I shall focus on Viano's treatment of Locke's concept of experience in 1960, in the second, I shall consider his later contributions.

1. *Experience as a method of verification*

John Locke. Dal razionalismo all'illuminismo begins with a detailed reconstruction of the historical, political and religious context in which Locke was educated and wrote his earlier works. His idea of experience comes to the fore when Viano considers the *Essays on the law of nature*, which contain the text of the eight lectures delivered by Locke as censor of moral philosophy at Christ Church, Oxford, in 1664. The main topic of this work is the law of nature, or moral law, which is that part of divine law that has not been revealed. Locke claimed that humans can discover the content of the precepts of natural law through reason, since reason, as Viano wrote, equates to the "set of practical

[18] C.A. Viano, "Chi ha paura di John Locke? [Who's afraid of John Locke?]", in *Materiali per una storia della cultura giuridica* 20 (1990), 1, pp. 3-33.

[19] C.A. Viano, "L'individualismo introvabile e la teoria lockiana della tolleranza [The Hard-to-find Individualism and Locke's Theory of Toleration]", in G.M. Chiodi e R. Gatti (eds.), *La filosofia politica di Locke*, Franco Angeli, Milan 2005, pp. 11-31.

[20] A reconstruction of this debate may be found in A.J. Simmons, *The Lockean Theory of Rights*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1992.

principles which conform to divine natural law"[21]. These principles are not to be intended as innate, but rather as accessible by rational research.

Given the lack of innate sources, reason can only begin with experience. Through experience, namely through the perception of the regularity and perfection of nature, reason can acknowledge that God exists and is the creator and legislator of the universe, the author of the law of nature. The senses and reason together are able to persuade humans that they exist as rational beings created by God: this is the ground of their obligation to conform to divine will[22].

After having highlighted Locke's rejection of innatism in the *Essays*, Viano moved on to analyse the conception of experience which first appeared in the drafts of the *Essay*. In *Draft A*, the ultimate origin, as well as the absolute limit of knowledge was said to lie in sensory experience, which represented "a set of conditions which are in part not modifiable"[23]. Experience and the reflection on the operations of the mind provided understanding with simple ideas, which were the bases of knowledge. The intellect worked on simple ideas, combining them and making comparisons which produced complex ideas. Without experience, this activity was entirely without foundation: there was no other source of knowledge beyond the senses[24]. Viano underlined the important consequences that ensued from this position, especially those concerning the relationship between facts and norms: by tracing the origins of all our ideas, including moral ideas, in sensory experience, Locke had intended to highlight the comprehensibility of moral norms, which was also the reason for his emphasizing the demonstrability of morality in the *Essay*[25].

Experience returned to the fore when Viano considered Locke's views about the relationship between faith and reason in *Draft A* and in a journal note he wrote in 1676[26]. Experience is the basis of all our beliefs, Locke claimed, including those beliefs which cannot be ascertained by ocular testimony. The content of a religious belief can be considered as part of divine revelation only if it does not contradict our knowledge, or, as Viano put it, "if it

[21] Viano, *John Locke*, cit., p. 91.

[22] Ibid., pp. 100-1. See Locke, *Essays on the Law of Nature and Associated Writings*, ed. by W. von Leyden, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1954, pp. 153-57.

[23] Viano, *John Locke*, cit., p. 113.

[24] Ibid., pp. 114-15. See Locke, "Draft A", §§ 1-2; "Draft B", § 94, in Id., *Drafts for the* Essay Concerning Human Understanding *and Other Philosophical Writings*, vol. 1: *Drafts A and B*, ed. by P. Nidditch and G.A.J. Rogers, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1990, pp.1-7 and p. 211.

[25] Viano, *John Locke*, cit., pp. 153-57.

[26] See J. Locke, "Faith and Reason", 25 August 1676, in Id., *Essays on the Law of Nature*, cit., pp. 275-77.

can be interpreted through those same fundamental categories which regulate available experience"[27]. The basic assumption underlying Locke's position, Viano affirmed, was the theory of probability formulated in *Draft A*: since the bases of our knowledge are in sensory experience, which is always singular, we cannot have certain knowledge of any universal proposition concerning things existing independently from us. These propositions are not self-evident but only probable[28]. Knowledge in this case "requires us to detect lines of uniformity through direct ascertainment, in order to create contexts of comparison which may help us to determine the index of probability and reliability"[29].

The analysis of Locke's theory of probability led Viano to emphasize a first important aspect of his conception of experience. Locke would call experience, he says, the uniformities provided by the contexts of comparison, which are the work of reason. The latter operates as a kind of procedure, arranging the evidence coming from the senses in "a complex of recurring uniformities"[30] that help direct our choices. Rational procedures "may be accepted by anyone – Viano wrote –, whatever their judgment of these uniformities"[31], since they do not depend upon our beliefs but upon experience, which provides reason with unbiased evidence. The indifference of simple ideas to their manners of composition ensures the independence of the basic ingredients of our reasoning from its outcome. Experience may therefore be described as the condition for the independence of knowledge, since it provides "a complex of requirements that need to be satisfied by a procedure which is to be considered as independent of its results"[32]. This would be the first meaning of experience in Locke's empiricism, for Viano.

A second meaning could be found, Viano continued, in Locke's conception of experience as the best instrument for freeing knowledge from Descartes' idea of a unique metaphysical order. Locke aimed at disentangling the sources of ideas from Cartesian assumptions. Descartes had traced the origin of ideas back to the relationship of a finite thinking substance with itself, with the infinite thinking substance and with the extended substance[33]; Locke removed the reference to substance from this picture, showing its irrelevance

27 Viano, *John Locke*, cit., p. 348. Locke, "Faith and Reason", cit., p. 276.
28 Viano, *John Locke*, cit., pp. 347-48; Locke, "Draft A", § 33, in Id., *Drafts for the Essay*, cit., p. 62.
29 Viano, *John Locke*, cit., p. 348.
30 Ibid., p. 350.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., pp. 555-56.

in forming simple ideas. In the *Essay*, the enquiry into the causes of simple ideas was said not to pertain "to the *Idea*, as it is in the Understanding", and the two actions, perceiving and searching for the causes of ideas, were carefully distinguished[34]. Since only the second action introduced the idea of substance, Viano concluded that Locke had radically changed the Cartesian conception of ideas. At the basis of Locke's empiricism there was the conviction that "an idea is such on the basis of what it testifies by itself, independently of our making it part of a certain view of substances"[35]. Thanks to their independence from beliefs about substances, simple ideas in Locke "are able to secure freedom to knowledge and neutralize any attempt to make a particular view the unique and necessary order of the human intellectual world"[36].

Finally, Viano highlighted a third meaning of experience in Locke, which, although it was more limited than the previous ones, was the most fundamental in his view, being their source. This meaning only concerned existential propositions. Experience in Locke depended on reason as far as its being organized into contexts of comparison was concerned, yet it was able to operate autonomously when intended as "a method of verification" distinct from rational procedures[37]. This was the method to be employed in our enquiries into substances: in this case, Locke affirmed, "the bare Contemplation of their abstract *Ideas*, will carry us but a very little way in the search of Truth and Certainty". Here we have

> to take a quite contrary Course, the want of *Ideas* of their real *Essences* sends us from our own Thoughts, to the Things themselves, as they exist. *Experience here must teach me*, what Reason cannot: and 'tis by trying alone, that I can certainly know, what other Qualities co-exist with those of my complex *Idea*[38].

Here experience is described, Viano continued, as "a method for verifying the coexistence of qualities", and therefore "as an element of proof in validating a general proposition concerning a certain substance"[39]. The existence of things may only be ascertained by experience, which begins when sensory knowledge is used in this way. This meaning of experience would be therefore the most important one, and the true essence of Locke's empiricism.

34 See Locke, *Essay*, cit., II.ii.8, pp. 132-33.
35 Viano, *John Locke*, cit., p. 555.
36 Ibid., p. 562.
37 Ibid, p. 582.
38 Locke, *Essay*, cit., IV.xii.9, p. 644.
39 Viano, *John Locke*, cit., p. 583.

Viano's reading of Locke in 1960 recalled what Nicola Abbagnano was writing about empiricism in those very same years, when he described the common trait shared by modern varieties of empiricism as a conception of experience based on "an appeal to the repeatability of certain situations intended as a means for verifying possible solutions"[40]. Keeping this meaning in mind, experience could be intended as objective and impersonal owing to its being independent of beliefs, which were placed under its control. Abbagnano attributed this notion of experience to Locke, highlighting its foundational nature and its significance as the absolute limit imposed upon human knowledge; Viano shared this interpretation. His adhesion to the "new Enlightenment", which linked him to Abbagnano, Bobbio and other Italian philosophers in the fifties, was the background to his reading of experience in Locke as a method of verification, an echo of the teaching of the Circle of Vienna clearly perceptible in the programme of that group[41]. Experience was to be intended as the origin of all human knowledge, but also as the best instrument for verifying rational procedures.

This background was also noticeable in the last chapters of Viano's book, where he insisted on the anti-metaphysical leanings implicit in Locke's empiricism: the critique of metaphysics intended as a dogmatic approach typical of omni-comprehensive systems, irreconcilable with the full awareness of the limits of human understanding and with a conception of reason as a concrete, pragmatic faculty, was another distinguishing mark of the programme of the "new Enlightenment". Viano attributed this critique to Locke, as a prominent opponent of Descartes' rationalism: Locke's concept of experience bolstered a critical and anti-metaphyisical view of reason, claimed Viano, stripped of those truth claims which characterized Cartesian reason and extraneous to dogmatism. The idea of reason emerging from the *Essay* was "enlightened", in the sense given to this term by the "new Enlightenment".

[40] See the voice "Esperienza" in N. Abbagnano, *Dizionario di filosofia* [Dictionary of Philosophy], UTET, Turin 1971, pp. 323-30.

[41] Regarding the contents of the "new Enlightenment", see Viano, *La filosofia italiana del Novecento* [Twentieth- century Italian Philosophy], Il Mulino, Bologna 2006, pp. 65-70; Borghero, "Testi e leggende", cit., pp. 403-7. Pietro Rossi briefly described this experience in these terms: "The intellectual education of Viano was strongly marked by the 'new Enlightenment' of Nicola Abbagnano, Norberto Bobbio and other younger scholars who were engaged, after the decline of Croce's and Gentile's idealism, in the search for new relationships with the most important philosophical orientations both in Europe and North America: from the philosophy of existence to Dewey's pragmatism, logical positivism and philosophy of science". P. Rossi, "Un lungo cammino", in *Rivista di filosofia* 3 (2019), p. 341.

This reading of Locke is attenuated in Viano's further writings. Arguably, his interest in the recent historiographical debate over the interpretation of Locke's political thought led him to reconsider some aspects of his approach. This would have important consequences on the way Viano viewed Locke's empiricism, as I shall argue in the following paragraph.

2. *Locke's "empiricist version of Cartesianism"*

In a 1990 contribution entitled "Chi ha paura di John Locke?", Viano wrote, "Perhaps we should get used to thinking that Locke might have been a relatively marginal author and that his theories were taken into consideration less often than a heroic historiographical tradition has led us to suppose"[42]. This assertion appeared almost at the end of his contribution, which focused on the decline of Whig historiography and its myth of Locke the father of liberalism and the theorist of the Glorious Revolution. Viano began by considering the origins of this myth in Locke's nineteenth-century biographers Lord King and Fox Bourne, and in historians such as Lord Macaulay and George Treveylan. He went on to examine Leo Strauss' radical critique of this tradition[43], and his agreement with Macpherson on Locke's "possessive individualism"[44]. Then Viano focused on John Dunn's criticism not only of the liberal interpretation but also of the Marxist interpretation, which made the *Two Treatises of Government* an apology for capitalism legitimizing the unlimited accumulation of capital. Dunn hailed Locke's social and political doctrine as an elaboration of Calvinist social values deeply rooted in the culture of his time[45]; Viano agreed with him. He emphasized that Locke belonged to the seventeenth century, a "culture permeated by religiosity"[46] extraneous to the kind of secularism which Strauss had imputed to it. Commenting on Dunn's work, Viano wrote,

[42] Viano, "Chi ha paura di John Locke?", cit., p. 32. A similar opinion had been expressed by Viano in "Locke", in V. Mathieu (ed.), *Questioni di storiografia filosofica*. I. *Dalle origini all'Ottocento* [Issues in Philosophical Historiography. From the Origins to the Eighteenth Century], vol. 2: *Dall'Umanesimo a Rousseau*, Editrice La Scuola, Brescia 1974, p. 442.

[43] L. Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London 1953.

[44] C.B. MacPherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*, Oxford University Press, New York 1962.

[45] J. Dunn, *The political Thought of John Locke*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1969.

[46] Viano, "Chi ha paura di John Locke?", cit., p. 30.

> The more Locke was seen as belonging to seventeenth-century culture, the more the interpretation itself of the seventeenth-century changed, being freed from the schemes of Whig historiography [...]. At the same time, eighteenth-century English society began to be viewed less as a liberal, bourgeois society transformed by the industrial revolution, and more as an aristocratic society based on an oligarchic political regime and a commercial economy, but far from the religious and ethical indifferentism which had been attributed to it[47].

Locke's "marginality" in the narrative construed by Whig historiography highlighted, in Viano's view, the irrelevance of secular readings of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English culture. The secular philosophical themes which Strauss and other scholars had found in Locke's thought were typical of that culture, insisted Viano, and had not contributed to the birth of a secularized society because "the existence of such a society in eighteenth-century England was another historiographical legend"[48]. Faced with the problem of finding an appropriate location for Locke, which did not penalize him for his ambiguous liberalism, Viano remarked how important it was to avoid "common historiographical habits" and accept Locke's "marginality" in the history of pre-capitalist and pre-bourgeois society[49]. If we want to introduce Locke into some "intellectual chain" linking him to the eighteenth century, Viano maintained, we can do so, but we should avoid giving too much credit to these chains, because they are "generally the result of a more or less deformed reading of texts, instrumental in detecting and deforming traits of societies different from those in which these texts were written"[50].

Deformed readings of Locke were those that neglected his cultural background. As Viano wrote,

> These views, as any view, were born from a selective reading of Locke's works: they tended to grasp what was *modern* in them. Therefore they neglected both the scholastic doctrine of the law of nature, which could already be found in the *Two Tracts on Government*, and the Aristotelian schemes in the *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, focusing instead on the theories of political liberty or on empiricist doctrines[51].

47 Ibid., p. 28.
48 Ibid., p. 31.
49 Ibid., p.32.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid., p.27.

The Aristotelian roots of Locke's empiricism and his debt to Scholasticism were one of the main themes of a later contribution by Viano, "La ragione e l'esperienza". In 1960, he had emphasized the novel aspect of Locke's theory of the intellect and his anti-dogmatic leanings; Locke's disagreement with the Aristotelian-scholastic model of science and knowledge had been brought into focus, although Viano also remarked that Locke's conception of the law of nature had its basis in Anglican Scholasticism. In "La ragione e l'esperienza", Aristotelianism came to the fore. Carlo Borghero has noticed this: several remarks in this later contribution by Viano concerned Aristotle's influence on Locke. The conception of sensory experience as the basis of knowledge, the metaphor of the *tabula rasa*, and even the view of things as separate substances rather than as the manifestation of a unique substance, were shared by Aristotle and Locke[52]. No doubt, Viano could clearly discern these resemblances, given his great familiarity with Aristotle[53].

In "La ragione e l'esperienza", Viano asserted that the Aristotelian-scholastic vocabulary was Locke's vocabulary from his early *Essays on the law of nature* onwards. The Anglican Scholasticism of Richard Hooker and Robert Sanderson provided Locke with the basic concepts of his theory of understanding, including his notion of opinion as assent given to the content of a probable proposition[54]. Scholasticism was also the source of Locke's idea of God as an infinite spiritual substance, and of his views about language[55]; this legacy took on a complex form in his doctrine, given the number of influences at work. Bacon, Boyle and Gassendi were no doubt in this number, yet the frame was Cartesianism. In 1960, Viano had mainly focused on the distance which separated Locke from Descartes: he had insisted that Locke had begun to reform Cartesianism in *Draft A* when he had introduced the theory of probability, and had continued on this path in his subsequent writings criticizing the Cartesian notions of substance and infinity[56]. Also Descartes had taken probable knowledge into consideration:

[52] C.A. Viano, "La ragione e l'esperienza [Reason and Experience]", in P. Rossi, C.A. Viano (eds.), *Storia della filosofia*, vol. 4: *Il Settecento*, Laterza, Rome-Bari 1996, pp. 37 and 45.

[53] C. Borghero, "Viano narratore di storie", in Accademia delle Scienze di Torino (ed.), *Quaderni*, cit., pp. 11-12; Id., "Testi e leggende", cit., p. 411. Aristotle and Locke were Viano's favourite authors. Viano published a book on Aristotle's logic (1955) and a complete translation both of the *Politics* and the *Constitution of Athens* (1955), as well as of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (1974).

[54] Viano, "La ragione e l'esperienza", cit., p. 36. Locke found this notion in Sanderson's *Logicae Artis Compendium* (1615).

[55] Ibid., p. 60.

[56] Viano, *John Locke*, cit., p. 345.

he had affirmed that those propositions which are neither self-evidently true nor false may be determined by the judgment of the will, which is different from knowledge. However, Descartes maintained that the essence of reality could be known without resorting to probable propositions, since human reason has access to universal propositions concerning things existing independently from us[57]. This, however, was not Locke's idea of reason, given his rejection of innatism. Reason in Locke was "neither a system of truths nor a collection of principles", but rather "a kind of procedure"[58] which might be used to determine both the necessary connections between ideas, which are the basis of certain knowledge, and their probable connections. The reform of Cartesianism Locke had undertaken in *Draft A* was aimed at introducing this idea of reason, which could afford "an orientation in those areas not determinable through a straight comparison between ideas or through direct ascertainment"[59].

In "La ragione e l'esperienza", Viano seemed to be more interested in the many points of agreement between Locke and Descartes, for instance the distinction between intuitive and demonstrative knowledge[60], the adhesion to mechanism[61] and metaphysical dualism[62], the scholastic arguments used to prove the existence of God[63] and, chiefly, the theory of ideas intended as "whatsoever is the Object of the Understanding when a Man thinks"[64]. Viano pointed out that Locke's main purpose had been to expand Descartes' representational theory: while the latter had denied that the content of sensory ideas comes from the senses, Locke attributed a sensory origin to all ideas. In doing so, he had "extended the interpretation which Cartesianism had given of several human notions [...] introducing the traditional theory of sensation in Cartesianism and reinterpreting some typically Cartesian concepts on this basis"[65].

57 Ibid., p. 349.
58 Ibid., p. 366.
59 Ibid., pp. 344, 348.
60 Viano, "La ragione e l'esperienza", cit., p. 43.
61 Ibid., pp. 38-39.
62 Ibid., p. 41.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid., p. 37. See Locke, *Essay*, cit., I.i.8, p. 47. In the introduction to J. Locke, *Saggio sull'intelligenza umana*, ed. by C.A. Viano, Laterza, Bari 1988², vol.1, p. xxi, Viano noticed that Locke's notion of mode, which indicated one of the varieties of complex ideas, could be traced back to Scholasticism and had also been employed by Descartes, who had referred to the modal distinction (an ingredient in the scholastic theory of substance).
65 Viano, "La ragione e l'esperienza", cit., p. 44.

In 1960, Viano had affirmed that the originality of Locke's empiricism was to be found in its freeing the sources of knowledge from certain metaphysical assumptions, whereas in "La ragione e l'esperienza" he insisted more on Locke's ability to embody and develop those assumptions within his theory. Viano maintained that Locke had been able to create a synthesis of the notion of experience typical of Aristotle, late Scholasticism, Bacon, Gassendi and Boyle with that "rewording of Cartesian philosophy in Scholastic terms which Descartes himself had begun, and that would become the main task of Cartesian *philosophers*"[66]. This is where the originality of Locke's empiricism was to be found: he had "crushed the scholastic-Cartesian synthesis", and replaced it with a new one. Locke's "empiricist version of Cartesianism"[67] was based on the separation between geometry and nature, and consequently destroyed the Cartesian project of geometrizing the extended substance, nevertheless, the common scholastic background guaranteed the possibility of a synthesis. In addition, Locke's theory was more akin to Cartesianism than to Spinozism, given Spinoza's rejection of dualism[68].

The kind of empiricism which Viano attributed to Locke in "La ragione e l'esperienza" was not "modern", in the sense he had highlighted in his 1990 article, but rather deeply rooted in the culture of his time. The same may be said of his view of Locke's treatment of reason. Viano remarked that, in Locke's opinion, the majority of people did not use reason as they should, a claim quite common in the seventeenth century. As a remedy against this, he had intended to provide a system of demonstrative morality – the equivalent of Spinoza's *Ethics* – yet he abandoned this project in his later years[69], when he

> seemed more and more to conceive of reason as a natural faculty, which does not produce systematic knowledge but is able to organize what can be known when mistakes and prejudices are put aside. Intended in this sense, reason can agree with traditional beliefs, rather than pretend to build alternative systems of beliefs[70].

Viano's interpretation of Locke in 1997 seems to be more attentive to the contradictions and ambiguities hidden in his thought than the one he had given

66 Ibid., p. 45.
67 Ibid., p. 46.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid., pp. 58-59.
70 Ibid., p. 59.

in his 1960 book. Once having considered the misunderstandings stemming from Locke's historiography, and highlighted the risk of the "modern" readings of his theory, Viano moves on to reconsider the sources of Locke's approach in depth, firmly anchoring it to the seventeenth century. The net result is a clarification of Locke's position in the history of philosophy, which is no doubt still very relevant today[71].

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Reviews

Victor Nuovo, *John Locke: The Philosopher as Christian Virtuoso*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2017, 263 pp.

Victor Nuovo is well known among Locke specialists for his groundbreaking essays on Locke's religious thought, interest in ancient philosophical traditions, and involvement with Enlightenment culture. In 2011, several of his essays were collected in the volume *Christianity, Antiquity, and Enlightenment: Interpretations of Locke* (Springer). More recently, Oxford University Press published his monograph *John Locke: The Philosopher as Christian Virtuoso*, which presents a novel interpretation and reassessment of Locke's oeuvre as the work of a Christian virtuoso. By this term, which was coined by Robert Boyle, is meant an "experimental natural philosopher, an empiricist and naturalist, who also professed Christianity of a sort that was infused with moral seriousness and with Platonic otherworldliness overlaid with Christian supernaturalism" (p. 1).

The vocation of a Christian virtuoso predated Locke. Thus, in order to better locate Locke's intellectual activity in the context of seventeenth-century philosophical, scientific, and religious thought, Nuovo devotes the first three chapters, which comprise Part 1 of the book, to the questions, themes, and challenges that shaped the development of Christian virtuosity. Chapter 1 makes the persuasive point that Francis Bacon, who lived and wrote in a context informed by theological meaning and purpose, was the first Christian virtuoso. Bacon followed a methodological rule that safeguarded the authority of scriptural revelation while pursuing natural philosophy and theology independently of each other. Later, as Chapter 2 points out, Boyle significantly elaborated this approach by combining natural philosophy with teleology. Boyle indeed maintained that empirical research provided evidence

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of God's existence, creation, and providence. As Nuovo argues in Chapter 3, this methodological approach played a primary role in Boyle's and other English scholars' struggle against the atheistic implications of the rediscovery of Epicureanism in the early modern period. In this regard, Nuovo accurately reassesses the reception of Epicureanism among several important yet oft-neglected figures, such as John Evelyn, Lucy Hutchinson, and John Wilmot, second Earl of Rochester. Briefly, Part 1 of this volume presents the first ever attempt at reconstructing, systematically and thoroughly, the genesis and development of Christian virtuosity, besides enabling the reader to better appreciate the relevance of the category of "Christian virtuoso" to Locke's work.

Part 2, which consists of five chapters, deals specifically with Locke. Nuovo aptly observes that Locke's religious interests permeated his production since his youth, and not only during his last decade, which he devoted mainly to theological writing. Chapter 4 shows that the questions, concerns, and methodological approach typical of a Christian virtuoso are evident in the drafts and notes that Locke wrote and revised, over around two decades, in preparation of *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690). Chapters 5, 6, and 7 examine the philosophy of Locke as a Christian virtuoso in its tripartite structure, which is explained in *Essay* IV.xxi – the last chapter of the *Essay* – and which consists of logic, physics, and ethics. Finally, Chapter 8 covers Locke's theology, with a focus on his biblical hermeneutics and soteriology.

In his analysis, Nuovo pays great attention to Locke's reflection on morality, which runs throughout his oeuvre and unites his thought. Locke saw ethics as "*the proper Science, and Business of Mankind in general*" (*Essay* IV.xii.11). He always regarded morality as demonstrable, but he failed to provide a rational demonstration of morality. Therefore, in *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695), he eventually had recourse to a Scripture-based ethics, which he judged to be coherent and cogent. He employed a historical method of exegesis, with the aim of rediscovering the true meaning of Scripture by considering the biblical texts in relation to both their respective contexts and the biblical discourse as a whole. He regarded the divinely given law of nature as eternally valid and universally binding. Though, he argued that only the Christian Law of Faith could effectively promote moral conduct and facilitate the pursuit of salvation, because Christ had complemented the law of nature with assurance of otherworldly rewards and sanctions and the promise of God's forgiveness of the repentant faithful. Even before the composition of the *Reasonableness*, however, Locke's views on morality were grounded in theism

and were supported by a Christian conception of life. Nuovo correctly notes that Locke's ethics is part of the modern natural law tradition beginning with Grotius, given that modern natural law theory combined empirical naturalism with natural theology (pp. 184-90). Nonetheless, in *De jure belli ac pacis* (1625), Grotius described the law of nature as objectively valid even if we were to suppose "that there is no God, or that he takes no care of human affairs". But this position, which entailed the possibility of a separation of natural law from theology, was foreign to Locke's thinking, since the theological foundation of natural law always occupied a prominent place in his moral, religious, and political thought.

Locke was both an experimental natural philosopher and a sincere Christian believer, "who was confident that the two vocations were not only compatible, but mutually sustaining, and who believed that they could be united in a single philosophical program to produce a system of philosophy, a Christian philosophy" (p. 247). He regarded natural reason and biblical revelation as complementary and mutually sustaining. Both natural theology and biblical theology play important, and complementary, roles in his thought. Thus, while Locke's writings in different fields represent different projects, these projects cohere in an organic whole, and the moral tension and the religious dimension pervading his intellectual effort are among the major factors determining this coherence. Nuovo's analysis emphasizes the internal coherence and unity of Locke's work, as it provides compelling evidence and arguments in support of a holistic consideration of Locke's corpus. This book convincingly revalues the religious background, aspects, and implications of Locke's philosophy and, hence, helps the reader to achieve a deeper understanding of his texts, context, and legacy. Therefore, this intelligently written book is to be recommended to all those interested in Locke's ideas and methods.

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Luisa Simonutti (ed.), *Locke and Biblical Hermeneutics: Conscience and Scripture*, Springer, Cham 2019, 266 pp.

Locke's religious concerns and interests pervade virtually all areas of his production. Not only his public as well as private writings on religion, but also his major works on philosophy and politics, including *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* and *Two Treatises of Government*, denote his preoccupation with theological and soteriological matters, which conditioned his philosophical, moral, and political inquiries. In these and other books, Locke frequently referred to Scripture in order to strengthen or even ground his arguments concerning several issues, such as the necessity to have recourse to divine revelation where unassisted reason does not reach, the existence of angels and other spiritual beings, and the theological foundation of natural law. Locke's reading of the Christian Scriptures actually played a central role in shaping his mentality and ideas. Therefore, Locke's Scripture-based religious views are attracting the attention of a growing number of scholars, including, among others, the contributors to this new collection of essays.

Locke's biblical interpretation is the topic of this volume, edited by Luisa Simonutti and presenting twelve essays by as many specialists in Locke's religious thought, besides an introduction by Simonutti. The volume is divided into three parts of different length. Part 1, "Comparison of the Hermeneutics", consists of three chapters. The first chapter, authored by the late Henning Graf Reventlow, examines the development of Locke's hermeneutics from the *Essay* of 1690 to *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695) and the unfinished *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St Paul*. Then, Agostino Lupoli's essay reassesses the impact of Boyle's religious thought on Locke's soteriology. Finally, Luisa Simonutti's chapter offers a detailed analysis of Locke's views on

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bodily resurrection, thus reconsidering an important aspect of his mortalism. Part 2 concentrates on hermeneutics as "a method for belief". In this section of the book, Victor Nuovo, Jean-Michel Vienne, Raffaele Russo, and the late Justin Champion focus on the role that Locke's biblical exegesis had, respectively, in the making of his original version of Protestant Christianity, in the formulation of his notion of religious belief as "reasonable", in the elaboration of his method of paraphrase, and in his consideration of Scripture and its divine authority. Finally, Part 3, "Interpretations of Locke's Biblical Hermeneutics", presents five essays that analyze the historical significance of Locke's scriptural exegesis. In this section, Kim Ian Parker draws several parallels between Spinoza's and Locke's hermeneutical methods while calling attention to their different backgrounds and aims. Concerning later religious writers' consideration of Locke's hermeneutics, the late Arthur Wainwright's essay sheds new light on Locke's influence on eighteenth-century Dissenting ministers such as James Peirce, Joseph Hallett, and George Benson, while Gian Mario Cazzaniga's chapter offers a fresh reassessment of the impact of Locke's Christology on Enlightenment views of Jesus. Finally, Giambattista Gori's and Maria-Cristina Pitassi's essays critically analyze Locke's scrutiny of the Pauline epistles in the *Paraphrase* and other texts.

Instead of giving a detailed evaluation of each of the twelve essays in this collection, I prefer to highlight the main merits of this much-needed volume. This is indeed an admirable book in that its chapters, when taken all together, provide a thorough explanation and a convincing reconsideration of Locke's interpretation of the Christian Scriptures. One of the key benefits of this volume is in its detailed and accurate investigation of the major aspects and implications of Locke's hermeneutics, which I have briefly mentioned above in this review. As a result, upon reading the whole volume, the reader will have a clear understanding of the crucial elements of Locke's hermeneutical method and ideas. Moreover, this volume enables the reader to properly comprehend Locke's relation to some contemporary biblical exegetes (*e.g.*, Spinoza, Boyle, and various "religious supernaturalists" of the seventeenth century), as well as the impact of his theological views on eighteenth-century intellectuals of different stripes – from Nonconformist divines to Enlightenment *philosophes*.

The contextualist approach adopted by the contributors to this volume facilitates a reappraisal of the intellectual context in which Locke composed his religious writings. The essays in this collection indeed take into account not only Locke's texts, but also the philosophical and theological disputes and the writers, books, and currents that most influenced his religious views. Thus,

another merit of this volume is in the fact that it relocates Locke's thought in the context of the seventeenth-century debates on subjects such as the divine inspiration of Scripture, the different levels of authority of various biblical texts, the relationship between morality and religious belief, the pursuit of salvation, the resurrection of the dead, and the Last Judgment. Accordingly, the reassessment of Locke's biblical hermeneutics in all the essays comprising this collection contributes to the rethinking of this philosopher as a markedly *Christian* thinker. In fact, Locke's religious concerns and interests played a primary role in shaping his mindset and, hence, his philosophical ideas and methods, too. This is the case, for instance, with the notions of "belief" and "faith", which Locke explained in the *Essay*, but which cannot be appreciated adequately without a proper understanding of his scriptural exegesis. Briefly, this volume accurately portrays Locke as a thinker belonging to both the late Reformation and the early Enlightenment (to use common historiographical categories).

Finally yet importantly, all the essays in this volume are written in a clear and simple style and are hence accessible not only to Locke specialists, but also to an educated lay audience. This is definitely a significant advantage, because both Locke experts and those willing to know more about this important philosopher will benefit from this book. For all the above reasons, this collection of essays edited by Luisa Simonutti is an indispensable tool for the study of Locke's biblical hermeneutics. This volume is likely to become a standard book in the field of Locke studies, since it enables a better understanding not only of Locke's religious ideas, but also of his mind, objectives, and oeuvre as a whole.

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