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ETHICS AND EPISTEMOLOGY
IN JOHN LOCKE'S ESSAY
CONCERNING HUMAN
UNDERSTANDING.

BY

ÅKE PETZÄLL

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I.

Locke and his Critics.

When, in 1932, the 300th anniversary of the birth of John Locke was celebrated, it was pointed out from various quarters that he was not one of those philosophers who attract attention by their originality or who create enthusiasm by new and radical systems. Far more attention was shown the Spinoza anniversary of the same year. One can easily understand that the personality of Spinoza and the monumental structure of his philosophical system are able to create much greater interest than the personality and work of Locke.

But the greater interest in Spinoza has another reason as well. When the philosophy of Spinoza at last really began to receive attention a hundred years after his death, Locke was already well known and to a large extent accepted. The Age of Enlightenment had absorbed the thoughts of Locke, and they had acquired something of the triviality of things universally accepted, when Spinoza's philosophy began to influence Goethe with the persuasive power and the freshness of a newly discovered system. To Hegel Locke's philosophy is »sehr begreiflich und trivial«. Thus the fact that Spinoza attracts our attention more than Locke may be partly due to the later assimilation of Spinoza's philosophy into our field of thought. It did not to the same extent as Locke's form a part of the thought of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Using a paradox, one may say that the greater historical importance of Locke has made him less interesting than Spinoza. This has had a rather unfavourable influence on the scientific study of Locke's philosophy. He has been considered exhausted as an object of study.

The writers on the history of philosophy of the last century who were largely given to schematic constructions were not qualified to do justice to Locke. He was regarded as the empiricist and sensualist and was described with one-sided consistency as an antipode of Des-

cartes. The works of Cousin and Fischer written in this spirit did not serve to create a true understanding of Locke's historical position. Nevertheless, the critical philosophy of Kant had made possible a truer view of Locke, although Kant himself shares the one-sided view of the English philosopher that was characteristic of his age. In time Locke came to be seen as the predecessor of Kant, and more and more attention has been paid to the non-empiristic aspects of his epistemology. From the middle of the nineteenth century it has been pointed out by various writers that Locke is not the one-sided empiricist or sensualist that earlier authors had portrayed. What has been emphasized instead is his intellectualism. Very often, however, too much stress has been laid upon this newly discovered characteristic. In their eagerness to refute the one-sidedness of the schematic view, philosophers have succumbed to the temptation of making Locke a rationalist. Their opposition to an one-sided extreme has itself been pushed to extremes and has also become one-sided.¹⁾ The practical aim of his philosophy has been neglected.

I do not mean to deny that the many varying interpretations of Locke have other grounds than mere one-sidedness and schematism in his interpreters. Reasons are also to be found in Locke himself. His terminology is often uncertain. In his principal work he desires to make the reader inquire into the subject himself. Therefore, Locke has not given it the fixed form of a definitive study but carries on a discussion between himself and the reader. Furthermore, Locke spent a very long time writing his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. A comprehensive work, finished only after 30 years, and created under the most varying circumstances, is not likely to be well-arranged, and repetitions cannot easily be avoided. In short, Locke's *Essay* is exceedingly heterogeneous as regards terminology, style and method of work.²⁾ It is therefore quite natural that he should be

¹⁾ Cf. H. O. Christophersen: *A Bibliographical Introduction to the Study of John Locke*, Oslo 1930; A. Tellkamp: *Das Verhältnis John Locke's zur Scholastik*, Münster 1927, *Einleitung*; and Åke Petzäll: *Begreppet medfödda idéer i 1600-talets filosofi*, Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift XXXIV, 1928:3, Göteborg 1928, p. 102 ff. and 130 ff. A summary of the latter work is included in a study of mine entitled: *Der Apriorismus Kants und die »philosophia pigrorum»*, Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift XXXIX, 1933: 3, Göteborg 1933.

²⁾ Compare H. O. Christophersen: *John Locke. En Filosofis Forberedelse og Grunnleggelse*. Oslo 1932. p. 27 f.

misunderstood and that instead of reading his great work thoroughly, people have taken the more comfortable way of accepting or completing the picture of him given by tradition.

In the following I shall lay special stress on a point of view that has hitherto been too little emphasized by interpreters of Locke's philosophy. One of the circumstances that have made his work too one-sidedly interpreted is that his criticism of knowledge is practically the only side of his philosophy that has been thoroughly studied. In most cases Locke's ethical views have been treated as a more or less uninteresting appendage to his theoretical philosophy. This has not only prevented a true appreciation of Locke's ethics and of his philosophy as a whole, but essential aspects of his theory of knowledge itself have been overlooked.

The character of an epistemological study is naturally determined by the purpose aimed at by the author. By slow degrees the historical importance of Locke's theory of knowledge has been discovered, and it has been regarded as a special merit of Locke's that he is the first to state the problem of knowledge for its own sake. According to Robert Reininger, Locke's great historical importance lies in the fact »dass er zum ersten Male das Erkenntnisproblem als solches in vollem Bewusstsein seiner fundamentalen Wichtigkeit in den Vordergrund gerückt hat, so dass ihm Ursprung und Tragweite des Erkennens auch ohne Vorblick auf bestimmte Anwendungsgebiete zum Problem um ihrer selbst willen wurden. Locke wurde damit zum Vorläufer Kants und zum *venerabilis inceptor* der Erkenntnistheorie der Gegenwart.«¹⁾ Reininger is without doubt right in attributing this importance to Locke's critique of knowledge. And it cannot be denied that he was the first to make a serious attempt to state the question of the limits and validity of knowledge as far as possible without preconceptions. But several points of Locke's philosophy are difficult to explain in their peculiar structure, if one does not take into consideration the fact that his critical analysis of knowledge has a definite purpose.

In descriptions of Locke's philosophy it is very often intimated that the founder of English empiricism was a man of a realistic bent and that his philosophy is closely connected with the needs and ex-

¹⁾ Robert Reininger: Locke, Berkeley, Hume. Geschichte der Philosophie in Einzeldarstellungen. Abt. V. Die Philosophie der neueren Zeit, II, München 1922. V 22/23, p. 20.

periences of practical life. A thorough study of his philosophy shows that this was the case, and that practical considerations have been incorporated into his system to a still larger extent than has been generally thought.¹⁾ In Locke the criticism of knowledge is so closely connected with his practical philosophy that it becomes essential to make a special simultaneous study of his epistemology and his ethics and of their interrelations with each other. The present short study of Locke's philosophy is above all intended to illustrate this fact. The author also hopes that the study may contribute to some small extent to throw light upon the general relation between the questions of ethics and the problem of knowledge.

¹⁾ A recent writer on the history of philosophy, Emile Bréhier, in his *Histoire de la Philosophie*, Paris 1934, T. II, 1, pp. 272 ff., is among those who have realized the importance of this point of view.

II.

The Starting-Point.

In seeking to understand the purpose and meaning of Locke's theory of knowledge, we must first of all examine his manner of stating the problem which his philosophy is intended to solve. After the publication of his *Essay*, when Locke defends himself against criticisms, he has several opportunities of explaining the aim and object of his work. In his controversy with the Bishop of Worcester, Stillingfleet, speaking of his epistemological researches, he declares: » . . . if I have done any thing new, it has been to describe to others more particularly than had been done before, what it is their minds do, when they perform that action which they call knowing; »¹⁾ Knowledge is the central point of Locke's study. It is the origin and the extent of knowledge that he wants to examine. » This, therefore, being my purpose — to inquire into the original, certainty, and extent of *human knowledge*, together with the grounds and degrees of *belief, opinion* and *assent*; . . . And I shall imagine I have not wholly misemployed myself in the thoughts I shall have on this occasion, if, in this historical, plain method, I can give any account of the ways whereby our understandings come to attain those notions of things we have; and can set down any measures of the certainty of our knowledge; or the grounds of those persuasions which are to be found amongst men, so various, different, and wholly contradictory. »²⁾ In these often quoted words, Locke states that he has in view a psychological investigation of the facts concerning the question how knowledge is actually acquired and

¹⁾ Mr. Locke's Reply to the Bishop of Worcester's Answer, Works (10th ed., London 1801), Vol. IV, p. 143 f.

²⁾ An Essay Concerning Human Understanding. Collated . . . by A. Campbell Fraser, London 1894, Introduction; 2: 1, p 26 f. References to the Essay in the following will give first the book, chapter and paragraph, before the semicolon, followed by the volume and page of Campbell Fraser's edition.

what it is worth. He wishes to find a means of distinguishing between knowledge on the one hand and all that does not deserve the name of knowledge on the other.

After having explained the »historical method», which, in his own opinion, he will be able to apply successfully to his material, Locke takes pains to emphasize strongly the practical importance of his enterprise. In an earlier work I have pointed out that the critique of knowledge in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* has a twofold object, one negative and one positive.¹⁾ This fact stands in direct connexion with the practical aim of Locke's study of human knowledge.

First of all Locke tells his readers in the preface of the book that in an age when mathematical science has made such great progress, it is »ambition enough to be employed as an under-labourer in clearing the ground a little, and removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge;».²⁾ This clearing seems to Locke to be very urgent as a necessary preliminary to a positive, purely theoretical understanding of the nature and value of knowledge. But this preparatory study is also of extraordinarily great practical importance as an aid to progress. The work of science is to be facilitated by removing useless rubbish: the terms are to be elucidated, dogmatic prejudices are to be removed, pseudo-problems to be done away with, all in order to make the means of knowledge that are actually at our disposal effective in acquiring knowledge that furthers the true ends of the individual in their entirety. »Temples have their sacred images, and we see what influence they have always had over a great part of mankind. But, in truth, the ideas and images in men's minds are the invisible powers, that constantly govern them; and to these they all universally pay a ready submission. It is, therefore, of the highest concernment, that great care should be taken of the understanding, to conduct it right, in the search of knowledge, and in the judgement it makes.»³⁾ As the life of action is dominated by the life of ideas we must come to know thoroughly the laws of the genesis of ideas. This study must also be carried on in such a way that the under-

¹⁾ Begreppet medfödda idéer i 1600-talets filosofi, esp. chap. VII, VIII, IX.

²⁾ *Essay*, The Epistle to the Reader, p. 14.

³⁾ *Of the Conduct of the Understanding*, Works, Vol. III, p. 187 f.

standing of the life of ideas transforms the latter and thereby benefits the life of action. No more succinct and lucid expression of Locke's philosophical ambition can be found than that given by the philosopher himself in his Essay: »Our business here is not to know all things, but those which concern our conduct.»¹⁾ It has been pointed out that these words might be placed as a motto above the Essay and that they may be regarded as the watchword of English empirical philosophy as a whole.

We shall now examine in what shape this epistemological-ethical problem presents itself to Locke, and it is of great importance to bear in mind that Locke started his comprehensive work with a certain fixed aim in view. During a discussion with some friends he found that it was not possible to discuss ethical and religious questions successfully until an analysis of our means of knowledge had been made in order to fix »what *objects* our understandings were, or were not fitted to deal with».²⁾ Locke thought that he would be able to solve this problem without too great difficulties and relate the result to his friends at their next meeting. But he very soon found that the task was far more difficult than he had thought from the beginning. His audience was also to be another than the little group of friends who had taken part in the original discussion. As the study becomes more and more extensive, Locke finds himself confronted by a very important educational task. At first he wanted to make clear certain ideas to himself and to his friends, but very soon he discovers that he and most of his contemporaries to a frighteningly large extent uncritically accept unproved maxims, which turn out not only to be completely valueless but also directly obstructive to real knowledge. People must be awakened from this uncritical attitude. Dogmatism in the form of scholasticism and uncritical rationalism is, according to Locke, a real danger to the science of the time, because people in general are not yet aware of the fact that they accept unthinkingly »truths» which undermine both knowledge and action. That is why Locke's critical study of knowledge is first and foremost an educational task. He wants to rouse people, because he has ex-

¹⁾ Essay, Introduction 6; I, p. 31.

²⁾ Ibid. The Epistle to the Reader, p. 9. Compare S. P. Lamprecht: The moral and political philosophy of John Locke, New York 1918, p. 3 f.

perienced that »some, (and those the most), taking things upon trust, misemploy their power of assent, by lazily enslaving their minds to the dictates and dominion of others, in doctrines which it is their duty carefully to examine, and not blindly, with an implicit faith, to swallow».¹)

Locke's detailed criticism of the assumption of innate ideas, the teaching of absolutely true maxims, principles that are evident in themselves, etc. is not only intended to open the way for more valuable knowledge. It is also meant to invite to independent examination. It is necessary to get rid of the self-assumed authority which with no vestige of right has ventured to act as »the dictator of principles and teacher of unquestionable truths»; for this authority cannot appeal to any other principle than »the principle of principles, — *that principles must not be questioned*».²) This must be considered destructive to all study of knowledge. There is nothing more dangerous than to base one's opinions uncritically upon unverified principles, »especially if they be such as concern morality, which influence men's lives, and give a bias to all their actions».³) The method of philosophical study that is based on the inherited conviction that all scientific reasoning comes »*ex praecognitis et praecconcessis*»⁴) is not only dangerous to scientific research as a whole: it is fatal also from a purely moral

¹) Essay, I, 3, 23; I, p. 113. »For, since the reasoning faculties of the soul, which are almost constantly, though not always warily nor wisely employed, would not know how to move, for want of a foundation and footing, in most men, who through laziness or avocation do not, or for want of time, or true helps, or for other causes, cannot penetrate into the principles of knowledge, and trace truth to its fountain and original, it is natural for them, and almost unavoidable, to take up with some borrowed principles; which being reputed and presumed to be evident proofs of other things, are thought not to need any other proof themselves. Whoever shall receive any of these into his mind, and entertain them there with the reverence usually paid to principles, never venturing to examine them, but accustoming himself to believe them, because they are to be believed, may take up, from his education and the fashions of his country, any absurdity for innate principles; and by long poring on the same objects, so dim his sight as to take monsters lodged in his own brain for the images of the Deity, and the workmanship of his hands.» Ibid. I, 2, 26; I, p. 89 f. Cf. also Some thoughts concerning Education, Works, III, p. 189, 195, 208 f.

²) Essay I, 3, 25; I, p. 116.

³) Ibid. IV, 12, 4; 2, p. 344 f.

⁴) Ibid. IV, 2, 8; 2, p. 182.

point of view, especially as it is very often combined with an inclination to make the more or less arbitrary maxims sacrosanct.¹⁾

Only when criticism has removed »the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge», only when the value of the universal truths is examined so as to make an independent judgement of them possible, then only are we enabled to realize our actual qualifications for knowledge and for action. »We are born with faculties and powers capable almost of any thing, such at least as would carry us farther than can easily be imagined: but it is only the exercise of those powers which gives us ability and skill in any thing, and leads us towards perfection.»²⁾ In the first place we must therefore find out what our faculties are and then try to find the right way of using and training them.

Locke's famous criticism of the theory of innate ideas has attracted so much attention that the study of his view of the original endowment of man has often been neglected. On February 8th, 1677, Locke put down the following note referring to the relation between reason and will: »We shall find that we are sent out into the world furnished with those faculties that are fit to obtain knowledge, and knowledge sufficient, if we will but confine it within those purposes, and direct it to those ends, which the constitution of our nature and the circumstances of our being point out to us.»³⁾ Therefore one must not draw any too hasty conclusions from the talk of »tabula rasa». From the very beginning Locke is particularly anxious to emphasize that while criticizing innate ideas he does not deny the assumption of a natural endowment in man. On the contrary, such an assumption forms the basis of operations in all his arguments against innate ideas. Arbitrarily accepted maxims, ideas that are passed off as innate, must

¹⁾ »For men, when they are grown up, reflecting upon their opinions, and finding those of this sort to be as ancient in their minds as their very memories, not having observed their early insinuation, nor by what means they got them, they are apt to reverence them as sacred things, and not to suffer them to be profaned, touched or questioned; they look on them as the Urim and Thummim set up in their minds immediately by God himself, to be the great and unerring deciders of truth and falsehood, and the judges to which they are to appeal in all manner of controversies.» Essay IV, 20, 9; 2, p. 449.

²⁾ Conduct of the Understanding, Works, III, p. 195.

³⁾ King, P.: The life and letters of John Locke, with extracts from his Journals and commonplace books, London 1895, V. I, p. 162.

be cleared away, so that we may really be able to see our innate dispositions and correctly judge their practical importance.

In order to understand Locke's criticism of knowledge it is necessary that we should make it clear from the very beginning which conception of the natural faculties of man forms the basis of his way of reasoning. »Every man carries about him a touchstone, if he will make use of it, to distinguish substantial gold from superficial glitterings, truth from appearances.» This touchstone may be spoilt, if it is not used properly. Locke calls it »natural reason»¹⁾ and makes it a very important part indeed of the natural endowment of man. This »natural reason» is a faculty that distinguishes man from brutes.²⁾ According to Locke natural reason is »natural revelation»,³⁾ but it must not be considered as a stock of maxims and principles, the truth of which is proved through their origin. It is simply every man's power of combining ideas. An uneducated countrywoman can without difficulty combine a series of perceptions, which indicate bad weather, and draw certain conclusions from them: »she clearly sees the probable connexion of all these, viz. south-west wind, and clouds, rain, wetting, taking cold, relapse and danger of death, without tying them together in those artificial and cumbersome fetters of several syllogisms, that clog and hinder the mind, which proceeds from one part to another quicker and clearer without them . . .»⁴⁾ Every deduction, every logical reasoning which can be expressed in the fixed form of syllogisms presupposes an immediate grasp of a certain connexion between the perceptions.

In the existence of this natural reason Locke sees a guarantee of every man's power to gain the knowledge which it is necessary for him to have. Locke often speaks of this knowledge which everybody can and must provide for himself, and which lies »within the reach of their natural faculties».⁵⁾ In the Introduction to his Essay Locke emphasizes strongly what this knowledge, attainable by the natural reason or native faculties, is: it is the knowledge of God and of moral

¹⁾ Conduct of the Understanding, Works, III, p. 193. Essay, II, 11, 10; I, p. 207 f.

²⁾ Essay, IV, 17, 1; 2, p. 386.

³⁾ Ibid. IV, 19, 4; 2, p. 431.

⁴⁾ Ibid. IV, 17, 4; 2, p. 392.

⁵⁾ Ibid. IV, 19, 4; 2, p. 431.

duty. A critical study of our power of knowledge shows us that the knowledge within our reach is rather small in extent and that it is not by any means calculated to inspire us with unlimited faith in the power of human reason. The same critical reason shows, however, that the knowledge within our reach is all that we need. »Men have reason to be well satisfied with what God hath thought fit for them, since he hath given them . . . whatsoever is necessary for the conveniences of life and information of virtue; and has put within the reach of their discovery, the comfortable provision for this life, and the way that leads to a better. How short soever their knowledge may come of an universal or perfect comprehension of whatsoever is, it yet secures their great concernments, that they have light enough to lead them to the knowledge of their Maker, and the sight of their own duties». All the last paragraphs of his »Introduction» contain variations on this theme. The words give expression not only to a simple faith in the faculties given to every man by Providence, but also to a rather severe criticism of the high-flying ambition and unjust claims of the dogmatic advocates of ideas. They are like the servant who would not »attend his business by candle light, to plead that he had not broad sunshine».¹⁾

In trying to describe man's natural endowment, its origin and value, Locke has recourse to a metaphor very often used by the Cambridge Platonists. In conformity to a passage in the Proverbs he calls the innate faculties »the Candle of the Lord». By this expression Locke does not intend to represent the natural means of knowledge as an immediate knowledge of divine truths. »The candle that is set up in us shines bright enough for all our purposes. The discoveries we can make with this ought to satisfy us; and we shall then use our understandings right, when we entertain all objects in that way and proportion that they are suited to our faculties, and upon those grounds they are capable of being proposed to us.»²⁾

It has been necessary to give in Locke's own words the conception of man's natural means of knowledge, upon which the study in the Essay Concerning Human Understanding is based. A systematic exposition would not do justice to Locke's declarations, which are by

¹⁾ Ibid. Introduction, 5; 1, p. 30.

²⁾ Ibid. Introduction, 5, 6, 7; 1, p. 29 ff. Compare IV, 2, 1; 2, p. 177, IV, 3, 20; 2, p. 211.

no means strictly theoretically formulated, and which form a basis for his own thinking which to him is self-evident and needs no further discussion. In order to understand the import of Locke's study it is necessary to have an idea of this *fundamental attitude* of his. If we wish to summarize what we have found to be its content, we may consider first its negative and then its positive elements.¹⁾ A critical examination, according to Locke, is essential in order to make scientific studies effective, and their effectiveness will be revealed above all by their power to further the aims of men in their practical activity. This will be an educational task, in so far as the belief in authorities must be checked by awakening men from the »dogmatic slumber» into which the uncritical way of thinking, that creates truths »ex praecognitis et praeconcessis», has thrown them. The positive result of this is that the human faculties can appear as they are in reality, in order that their appropriate use may be studied. These faculties turn out not to be adjusted to such high ends as the dogmatists imagine. But if we abandon the wrong view uncritically held by dogmatism, we shall find that the natural faculties contain exactly what is absolutely necessary for the welfare of men. We are endowed with a natural reason, which has in itself power enough to enable us, firstly to reach absolutely true knowledge about those things of which such knowledge is necessary, and secondly to reach satisfactory, if not absolutely true, knowledge about things for which knowledge of this kind is sufficient. »When we know our own strength, we shall the better know what to undertake with hopes of success; and when we have well surveyed the *powers* of our own minds, and made some estimate what we may expect from them, we shall not be inclined either to sit still, and not set our thoughts on work at all, in despair of knowing anything; nor on the other side, question everything, and disclaim all knowledge, because some things are not to be understood. It is of great use to the sailor to know the length of his line, though he cannot with it fathom all the depths of the ocean. It is well he knows that it is long enough to reach the bottom, at such places as are necessary to direct his voyage, and caution him against running upon shoals that may ruin him. Our business here is not to know all things, but those which concern our conduct.»²⁾

¹⁾ See above, p. 10.

²⁾ Ibid. Introduction, 6; 1, p. 30 f.

III.

Locke's Problem and Seventeenth-Century Philosophy.

Before proceeding to an exposition of Locke's theory of knowledge and its relation to his ethical views, some attention should be given to certain aspects of the philosophical background in which Locke's work was performed.

The century in which Locke lived is the philosophical century above all others. One of the main features of its philosophical outlook is what Windelband and Dilthey call the strong self-confidence of reason. Human reason has become conscious of its own power and now wants this power to be respected in every region of its activity. This claim asserts itself throughout the whole century, and at last culminates in the philosophy of enlightenment. This culmination, however, is not the result of a gradually and calmly proceeding development of ideas: it ensues from a violent intellectual, social and religious struggle. Nothing like a complete survey of the intellectual content of this period can be given here: we must content ourselves by taking in view those factors which are of particular importance for the understanding of Locke's problem and the manner of its solution.

This confidence in human reason does not mean that the earlier part of the 17th century was a time of free, critical thinking. During this period of intolerance and religious wars *dogmatism* predominated in a way that at once checked and stimulated philosophical research. If we accept Kant's view of »dogmatism» as a philosophy which uncritically presumes certain principles to be absolutely true and tries to demonstrate everything from these principles,¹⁾ we can maintain that

¹⁾ Kant defines »Dogmatism» as the »Anmassung, mit einer reinen Erkenntnis aus Begriffen. . . , nach Prinzipien, so wie sie die Vernunft längst im Gebrauche hat, ohne Erkundigung der Art und des Rechts, womit sie dazu gelangt, allein fortzukommen. Dogmatism ist also das dogmatische Verfahren der reinen Vernunft, ohne vorangehende Kritik ihres eigenen Vermögens». Kritik der reinen Ver-

such dogmatism is upon the whole common to the philosophical and the theological outlook of the beginning of the 17th century.

The scholastic method still predominated in the universities, and therefore the Aristotelian view of knowledge played a very important rôle. The uncritical acceptance of universal principles was connected with the syllogistic method. In England, however, not only the peripatetic philosophy was of importance. Platonism had also energetic supporters, especially at Cambridge. Their philosophy had a decidedly dogmatic character, due especially to the fact that, following certain neo-platonic models, a conception of knowledge was taught, according to which the criterion of the validity of knowledge is given by its imagined ontological origin in the principle of being. As this way of thinking automatically excludes criticism of knowledge giving instead a possibility of verifying arbitrarily chosen principles, it is a view dangerous to true philosophy.

The gradual development of modern science only slowly leads to a conscious epistemological examination of the principles of dogmatism. Professor Ernst Cassirer has recently shown in a very interesting way the importance of the new conception of nature — defended by Galilei against the opposition of the clerical tradition — for the creation of a new scientific way of thinking and a new method of research. The action brought against Galilei did not only concern the question of the view of the universe accepted by the church as unquestionable. The problem is: ought the kingdom of grace to have any influence on the scientific understanding of the kingdom of nature? Should authority be entitled to decide questions concerning scientific research?¹⁾

But even if the demand for a revision of the scientific method independently of tradition is carried out in various fields of science, the empirical-mathematical method does not necessarily imply a criticism of dogmatism. On the contrary, the mathematical method is to a large extent a new support for such uncritical dogmatism.

Philosophical life in the 17th century, complicated as it is and cha-

nunft, Vorrede zur zweiten Ausgabe, p. 35 f. (Ed. Reymond Schmidt, Leipzig 1924). Of the »Dogmatiker« Kant tells us with the same irony as Locke, that he »ohne ein Misstrauen auf seine ursprüngliche objektive Prinzipien zu setzen, d. i. ohne Kritik gravitatisch seinen Gang fortsetzt. . . » Op. cit. p. 784 f.

¹⁾ Ernst Cassirer: Wahrheitsbegriff und Wahrheitsproblem bei Galilei. Scientia 1937 (read in manuscript).

racterised by many different conflicts, may to a certain extent be regarded as a continuous struggle between a conservative and a radical type of dogmatism.

In the former we find the peripatetic philosophy combined with the authority of grace, while the latter uses the mathematical method connected with a secularized conception of nature.

The tension between the different elements contained in the two opposite forms of dogmatism forms an interesting study. In the theoretical field, the mathematical method very soon comes off victorious, but the application of that method outside the field of observation is not questioned, and thus it opens a way to rationalistic, metaphysical systems, in which old and new dogmatism meet in the ontological idea of God. In the field of practical philosophy this means that the secularized conception of nature takes the part formerly played by the idea of grace alone. But the character given to the conception of nature after the secularization is still that of a dogmatic idea, which is used without a critical examination.

Such is the background of the philosophical systems of Descartes and Locke, which have been of such importance that their originators may without exaggeration be stated to be the founders of the new philosophy. The more or less uncritically accepted notions that are to be found in the general ideas of the time, are subjected to a systematic critical examination. But, again, this does not mean that Descartes and Locke themselves have overcome dogmatism in all its forms. Their epistemology is not unprejudiced in the sense that the question of knowledge is there stated and solved for its own sake. For both of them a certain solution is foreshadowed in advance, and they both use certain fixed preconceptions, the validity of which they never question.

To Descartes radical doubt is first and foremost a means of finding the theoretically unassailable foundations of a scientific philosophy in conformity with the mathematical ideal. To Locke «the plain historical method» is an attempt to lay bare the natural faculties of man, in order to throw light upon his theoretical and moral mission. Descartes immediately proceeds to rationalistic deduction. Locke tries to carry through his method of empirical observation, though retaining all the time the dogmatic prejudices of rationalism. His final solution of the problem of knowledge takes its character from the practical

purpose at which he aims in his study: to establish the possibility of mathematical proof of the idea of God and of the moral truths.

From what has now been said it is obvious that Locke's criticism is a task that quite naturally presented itself to him as a result of the general philosophical situation of his age. Clearer than Descartes he realizes the dangers of dogmatism, and he struggles against it far more consistently than Descartes,¹⁾ but he is still, no less than Descartes, under its sway.

Let us now devote a closer study to some of the *direct* influences upon Locke's philosophy. Locke's manner of «clearing the ground» to make room for a more useful and effective philosophy is intimately connected with his profound interest in experimental science. In the preface of the *Essay* he writes: »The commonwealth of learning is not at this time without master-builders, whose mighty designs, in advancing the sciences, will leave lasting monuments to the admiration of posterity: but everyone must not hope to be a Boyle or a Sydenham. . .»²⁾ These two scientists are the objects of Locke's unbounded admiration. As H. O. Christophersen has pointed out,³⁾ through them he has come in touch with empirical research in a way that determined his scientific outlook and his philosophical method.

Locke and Boyle had in common their interest in scientific experiments, which, as a matter of fact, were in fashion after the Restoration. Probably it was Boyle who led Locke's first physical, chemical and medical experiments. From their correspondence it is well known that Locke devoted himself with great eagerness to systematic observations of different kinds.

Locke's cooperation with Boyle had a great influence on his epistemological method. He applies the principles of the exact sciences to

¹⁾ With regard to the difference between the epistemological task in Descartes and in Locke, see James Gibson: *Locke's Theory of Knowledge and its historical relations*, Cambridge 1917, p. 205 ff. esp. 210. Cf. also Åke Petzäll: *Op. cit.* p. 35 ff. A predecessor of Locke's who is too little known and who in his criticism is rather free from dogmatism and clearly sees the limited reach of Descartes' criticism, is Samuel Parker. He finds Descartes' method dogmatic in its statement of the fundamental principles upon which his whole philosophy is built. (A relatively detailed account of Parker's criticism is to be found in my above-mentioned work, chap. 5, pp. 84—96.

²⁾ *Essay*, Epistle to the Reader, p. 14.

³⁾ *Op. cit.* p. 137 ff.

epistemology. »Both to Boyle and to Locke the first thing to be done was to reject all abstract ideas which pretended to be real truths. Their next task was to take away the idea of supernatural interference in the system of nature. These were negative principles. The first step towards a positive knowledge of nature was the observation of the phenomena as they appear to human consciousness. The observation was followed by the scientist's positive action: that of examining the qualities of things and resolving the phenomena into their simple elements. The last step was to state the hypothesis after a satisfactory investigation of all conjunct causes. It was this method that Locke called »the historical plain method» and that he used later on in his *Essay*.»¹⁾

The many points of agreement between Locke and Boyle do not appear only in questions of method. A comparison between Boyle's work, »*The Origin of Forms and Qualities*», (1655) and Locke's *Essay* shows a close correspondence in their views regarding problems such as that of substance, primary and secondary qualities, etc. Further, they agree in regarding the certainty of religious and moral knowledge as superior to that of the natural sciences, which, according to their opinion, can never provide absolute knowledge. Typical is also the fact that the practical utility of experimental science plays the most important rôle for both of them.²⁾ Even in this respect we find in Locke a conformity between his epistemological method and the direction of his scientific interest.

Sydenham writes in a letter to Boyle that Locke assists him in his experiments, and in the third edition of *Methodus curandi Febres* he mentions Locke with the greatest respect and expresses his satisfaction at Locke's approval of his methods. When the scholastic medical science was at a loss how to check the ravages of the plague in London, Sydenham plunged into a thorough study, by observation and induction, of the symptoms of the disease. The detailed description of the disease excludes all scholastic constructing of ideas. With this description as the

¹⁾ Christophersen: *Op. cit.* p. 141.

²⁾ *Ibid.* Christophersen points out as a proof of Boyle's religious fervour that he bequeathed a legacy which was to pay for annual lectures to be given in order to prove the truths of the Christian religion. Furthermore, Christophersen emphasizes that it was the common religious interest that united Boyle, Locke and Newton personally.

starting point, the methods of curing the plague should be sought, and the healing power of nature itself should all the time be taken into consideration. The task of the physician is to assist nature in its natural course of healing. In *De Arte Medica*, a fragment written by Locke, he appears to have the same principles as Sydenham. Medical science has taken a wrong course, when it considers it necessary to search for the mysterious natural causes that are thought to give rise to the diseases. This method has led to the formulation of hypotheses and maxims, which are of a purely speculative character and are dangerous in practice. It is not intricate speculations over the nature of the elements that have taught the cook the art of cooking. Nor is it subtle meditations on the nature of fire and water that have taught him that the same boiling water makes the egg hard and the hen tender. The art of cooking cannot be learnt by abstract speculation, nor can the healing art be acquired in this way. Diligence and observation have created and improved upon all useful knowledge,¹⁾ a fact which has not been realized by the scholastic dogmatists. »Man, still affecting something of a deity, laboured to make his imagination supply what his observation failed him in; and when he could not discover the principles and causes and methods of nature's workmanship, he would needs fashion all those out of his own thought, and make a world to himself, framed and governed by his own intelligence.»²⁾ As a contrast to this Locke describes his own method, thereby proving that his way of treating the problem of knowledge was clear to him twenty years before he published the *Essay*. For the method outlined in *De Arte Medica* is practically the same as that of his epistemological *Essay*.

But even if Locke in his empirical research reacts against rationalistic speculation, he remains in many respects within the rationalistic way of thinking. He never emancipates himself from scholasticism. And after all a complete breach with the peripatetic way of reasoning would have been historically unthinkable. The character of the ideas of substance, essence and relation in the *Essay* have their roots in the scholastic determination of these ideas. He makes use of the general philosophical ideas of this time, unconscious of the difficulties of incorpo-

¹⁾ *Ibid.* pp. 204—215.

²⁾ *De Arte Medica*, quoted from Christophersen, *Op. cit.* p. 211 f.

rating them in the empirical epistemology. It goes without saying that the idea of God, which to Locke is of the highest importance, receives its character from the scholastic tradition, which was predominating in this respect.¹⁾

Locke himself has told us the fact that he is greatly indebted to Descartes. He tells us that he has Descartes to thank for » deliverance from the unintelligible way of talking of the philosophy in use in the schools«. ²⁾ Without doubt it is the mathematical method that has brought about this deliverance. Like Descartes, he applied the mathematical method in such a wide field that, although it seemed to him to be a deliverance from the subtle reasoning of scholasticism, it bound him in certain respects to rationalistic dogmatism.³⁾

His enthusiasm for the mathematical method was combined with the belief that he held in common with his contemporaries, that nature was rational.

It is very difficult to systematize and survey the various forms of this mode of thought called by Dilthey »the natural system«. The variety becomes still greater through the fact that this system in part stands in opposition to medieval tradition, and partly forms a direct continuation of certain essential aspects of Christian thought. A reference to nature and to man's natural moral and rational faculties was a necessary and very important part of the whole Christian doctrine, Man's natural susceptibility to grace was a necessary part of this system. Theoretically this is expressed in the conception of natural law and *synthesis*, the indestructible good inherent in the nature of man. The term of »natural law« was borrowed from classical philosophy and Roman jurisprudence. Through the further development of the ideas of the Christian faith it became evident that the theory of the natural faculties of man could not be retained among the doctrines of the church. It became the starting-point for a secularization of ethics. The »natural system« forms a very important element in this process. Many of the adherents in natural religion, natural law etc. believe themselves to be in opposition to the church, while, as a matter of fact, they carry on

1) Cf. James Gibson: *Op. cit.* p. 182 f. A. Tellkamp: *Das Verhältnis John Locke's zur Scholastik*, p. 34 ff., 117.

2) First letter to Stillingfleet, *Works*, IV, p. 48.

3) Regarding Locke's relations to Descartes see further Gibson: *Op. cit.* p. 205 ff., Christophersen: *Op. cit.* p. 119 ff., Åke Petzäll: *Op. cit.* p. 116 ff.

a tradition, the origin of which is to be found in the church itself. Besides, during the 16th and 17th centuries the new interest in the science of Roman law and in classical philosophy revives those ideas and terms which had earlier become embodied in religious speculation. These facts throw light upon the curious confusion of ideas in the »natural system». They also explain its way of referring to terms and ideas, the real meaning of which was not by any means clear to those who used them.

In this connection attention will be paid only to those points of this »philosophy» that are of particular importance for the understanding of Locke's position.¹⁾

In a detailed criticism Locke combats the theory of innate ideas. At the same time, however, he finds it self-evident that man should be equipped by nature in a certain way so as to be fitted for his theoretical and practical task. This view of Locke's has its origin in the general speculative position which is due to the above-mentioned scholastic tradition. However, in trying to examine more closely Locke's relation to the concept of »nature» of his time, one encounters certain difficulties. Locke informs us only very scantily about the relation of his views to those of others, and the conception of nature is so vague in Locke and his contemporaries that it is very difficult to prove any direct influence.

Among the many writers studied in Locke's time and who refer to »natural» knowledge as the last resort of all truth, there is only one to whom Locke gives a detailed study, namely Herbert of Cherbury. He is a typical representative of that form of the »natural system» which Locke could not accept. According to Herbert of Cherbury, a fixed store of innate knowledge, consisting of certain theses and maxims, is part of man's natural endowment, and that is to Locke a »*philosophia pigrorum*» which in his opinion leads to the crassest forms of dogmatism.

In other writers, however, Locke finds a reference to »nature» which does not seem to him to imply any dogmatic risks. We have already seen that he accepts without hesitation the Cambridge Platonists' term »the Candle of the Lord» as an expression of the innate divine light. It must

¹⁾ Regarding the conditions of the above-mentioned process of development within ethics I take the liberty of referring to my work entitled: *Etikens sekularisering*, Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift XLI, 1935: 2, Göteborg 1935. The further development of the ethical principles in the process of secularization will be set forth in a work to be published later.

have been a well-known fact to Locke that all the Platonists used this term in a sense that made the difference between themselves and Herbert of Cherbury rather small.

Although Culverwell emphatically denies the assumption of innate ideas, »the Candle of the Lord» or »the Light of Reason» is thought to be a faculty which enables man to discover the moral commands »printed upon being of man» by the natural law. A characteristic of these commands contained in the natural law is also their uniformity in all peoples, which fact Locke does not recognize as a criterion of »natural knowledge». ¹⁾ It is probable that Locke has given to the formula only the sense of innate reason, without examining what this really meant. And he makes use of this vague idea without realizing its dogmatic consequences. Its legitimacy must have been so evident to him that the Cambridge Platonists' use of it did not prevent him from accepting it.

Evidently Locke's conception of man's original natural faculties is to be considered as the result of his uncritical acceptance of a view which was widespread in his time. In conformity to the view generally held by his contemporaries, he starts from the thought that the Creator has endowed man in a special way to enable him to fulfil his task. He wants to remove the obstacles created by dogmatism that prevent us from judging properly the natural faculties. He does not, however, give us any systematic description of these faculties. It seems to him sufficient to have shown in an epistemological study that they really can be utilized in such a way that they can give us the knowledge necessary for our temporal and eternal welfare.

In order to understand the conviction that underlies Locke's study of human knowledge, it is important to have an idea of how his contemporaries looked upon »rational human nature». Their view might be illustrated by a study of Hooker, Grotius and Pufendorf, whom Locke held in high esteem. They give us an idea of the development of the conception of natural faculties and natural law during Locke's lifetime. ²⁾

¹⁾ Åke Petzäll: *Läran om de medfödda idéerna*, p. 77 ff.

²⁾ It should be emphasized that any such choice must be more or less arbitrary. To judge fully of Locke's relation to the opinion of his contemporaries regarding these matters, it would first and foremost be necessary to take into consideration still more the scholastic tradition, especially the teachers of natural law of later scholasticism, among others the Spaniards Suarez and Vitoria. Further it would be of great importance to consider the debate carried on in England and on the

At the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century Richard Hooker's book »Of the laws of ecclesiastical polity» drew great attention as the most important contribution to the debate in defence of the Church of England on the one hand and Rome and Calvin on the other. Hooker's book was widely read and often quoted in Locke's youth, and its author was honoured by the title of »the judicious». When mentioning him Locke respectfully uses that title.¹⁾

It is obvious that this influential attempt made by Hooker to fix the idea of law and the relation between human nature and the laws is to a large extent biased by the traditional way of thinking accepted by Christian dogmatism. And though he endeavours to work in a logical and unprejudiced way, he has not succeeded in escaping certain severe dialectical contradictions.

The fundamental principle of Hooker's general exposition of the nature of law and man's duty and power to follow it, may be summed up in the following manner: An action is initiated only when a purpose, which seems good to us, stimulates the appetite. Man has been endowed with reason in order to be able to decide what is really good for him. The appetite is the motive force, the will is the quality, governed by reason, through which man can freely make his actions correspond to a certain law. Man, however, very often makes mistakes, his »instruments being weakened» by »divine malediction»!²⁾

The natural disposition means to Hooker both instinctive conation and natural deliberative reason. »The object of appetite is whatsoever

Continent between the different philosophical and political views, which, fighting against each other and against the Catholic Church, tried to give theoretical expression to the revolution caused by the Reformation within the province of faith.

¹⁾ Essay IV, 17, 7; 2, p. 402 ff., Of Government, B. II, ch. 2, § 5. Works, V, p. 34 f. Ibid. § 15, p. 346; ch. 6, § 60, p. 372, § 74, p. 380; ch. 7, §§ 90, 91, p. 390, § 94, p. 393; ch. 8, § 111, p. 404; ch. 10, §§ 134, 135, 136, pp. 417—419. Cf. Dictionary of national Biography, Vol. XXVII, p. 289 ff.

²⁾ Of the Laws Of Ecclesiasticall Politie, Eight Books. The first Booke: Concerning Lawes, and their severall kindes *in generall*, § 7, p. 59. The first four books of Hooker's work were probably published in 1594. According to his own statement (B. IV, p. 208,) they form a general introduction to the special questions of »ecclesiastical polity», which are treated in the later books. The fifth book appeared in 1597. I have utilized the second edition (1604) of the first four books and the first edition of the fifth one. My quotations are from these editions. The sixth and eighth books were not published until 1648. The seventh appeared in 1662. The problem whether the three last ones are genuine is at present undecided,

sensible good may be wished for; the object of will is that good which reason doth lead vs to seeke.»¹⁾ Man tries to reach different degrees of »godnesse», influenced by natural instinct, *and* natural reason. The lowest degree is that which all beings endeavour to reach, »the continuance of their being». The highest degree is man's most important duty, the end of his existence, namely »being like God».²⁾ Natural reason has been given to man in order that he may be able to pass from the primary stage where the senses are rulers to the highest stage. It is our duty to develop this natural reason. Unless it is properly used, no moral knowledge can be acquired, the soul being from the beginning like a book, in which nothing has been written.³⁾ »Education and instruction are the means, the one by use, the other by precept, to make our naturall faculty of reason, both the better and the sooner able to iudge rightly between truth and error, good and euill.»⁴⁾

It is true that God created man with a compelling desire to seek his own »felicitee» (». . . we cannot choose but wish and couet it . . .»), but owing to a curse fallen on humanity reason can make mistakes.⁵⁾ An error is always due to our mistaking a lesser good for a greater one.⁶⁾ The important thing is to use the natural reason, »the light of reason,⁷⁾ wherewith God illuminateth euery one which cometh into the world»,⁷⁾ so as to be able to choose what is really good. There are certain criterions of the good, through which we recognize it. There is a conformity between the life of those who have chosen the good and the divine, rational order of nature. Further, right action is recognized by its being universally approved. Lastly, its norms are fixed by reason without any help from revelation.⁸⁾

Hooker states the relation between reason and will by saying that without free-will there is no responsibility, but that the will is ruled by the reason, its »director». Only those actions which are the result of a deliberate choice, that is to say voluntary actions, are in the true sense of the word carried out by man. If the reason has not fully

¹⁾ Ibid. B. I, § 7, p. 58.

²⁾ B. I, § 5, p. 55.

³⁾ B. I, § 6, p. 56.

⁴⁾ B. I, § 5, p. 57.

⁵⁾ B. I, § 8, p. 60.

⁶⁾ B. I, § 7, p. 59.

⁷⁾ B. I, § 8, p. 57.

⁸⁾ B. I, § 8, p. 64 and p. 61.

convinced the will, »still there is place left for the will to take or leaue».¹⁾

Hooker's definition of the idea of law must be seen against the background of these ideas of the natural conditions of moral action. He defines law in the following manner: »That which doth assigne vnto each thing the kinde, that which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the forme and measure of working, the same we tearme a *Lawe*.» All laws in the last resort refer to the being of God. »The being of God, is a kinde of lawe to his working: for that perfection which God is, giuith perfection to that hee doth.»²⁾ According to Hooker every voluntary action is carried out for a certain fixed purpose, which is stated by God. In the being of God, purpose, will and law are one. Therefore the being of God is the eternal law for everything. »This law therefore we may name eternal, *being that order which God before al ages hath set down with himself, for himself to do all things by.*»³⁾

The regular uniformity of nature as a whole is a reflection of this law of the divine being itself, or in Hooker's words, it is the divine law that »keepeth nature in obedience to her owne lawe».⁴⁾ Those to whom the law of nature is valid are divided by Hooker into two classes: »naturall agents» and »voluntary agents». For both of these agents the natural law means an inner teleological principle which stands in conformity to Hooker's general conception of the nature of law. For non-voluntary agents the principle of law is valid automatically. Thanks to the reason, voluntary agents can choose between different purposes. »The rule of voluntary agents is the sentence that reason giueth concerning the goodnes of those things which they are to do.»⁵⁾

Thus »natural law» accordingly means to Hooker a primary knowledge of what is good. Man is able to distinguish between evil and good actions, just as he immediately sees the difference between »straitnesse» and its opposite in things.⁶⁾ The natural law comprises

¹⁾ B. I, § 9, p. 67. Cf. § 7, pp. 57 ff.

²⁾ B. I, § 2, p. 47. Cf. § 1, pp. 45 ff.

³⁾ B. I, § 2, p. 49.

⁴⁾ B. I, § 2, p. 49. Cf. p. 47.

⁵⁾ B. I, § 3, p. 51.

⁶⁾ B. I, § 8, p. 60.

all that man has realized to be really good, through his natural reason, and therefore binding for his actions. »Law rationally therefore, which men commonly vse to call the law of nature, meaning thereby the law which humane nature knoweth it selfe in reason vniuersally bound unto, which also for that cause may be termed most fitly the lawe of reason; this law, I say, comprehendeth all those things which men by the light of their naturall understanding evidently know, or at leastwise may know, to be beseeeming or unbeseeeming, vertuous or vitious, good or euill for them to do.»¹⁾ This intellectual view on the natural law as a knowledge of good and evil does not seem to be consistent with Hooker's above-mentioned general definition of law. If the law of reason in conformity to the divine law is to be understood as that »which doth assigne vnto each thing the kinde», it is a mistake to identify natural law as inherent in man, with the knowledge of good and evil. Like many others who appeal to the natural law, Hooker has not been able to distinguish between »what is and what ought to be». This is most evident when he declares obedience to the natural law to be »the natural Righteousnesse».²⁾ Evidently Hooker meant that the inner law of our being is revealed to us by our natural reason, and that the natural law is binding for men, »euen as they are men».³⁾

In order to explain natural duty and responsibility Hooker strongly emphasizes the great importance of reason for human actions. But he explains the deviations from the way of natural righteousness by referring to the fall of man, and in doing so shows clearly that this conception is incompatible with the conception of the law as a necessary inner teleological principle, which in the last resort is based on the eternal, divine world-order. The fact that, equipped with free will and reason, man chooses evil can only be explained by »the singular disgrace of nature, & the utter disturbance of . . . diuine order . . .» Again, the fact that in spite of all this we seek for the good, is due to »a naturall thirst after knowledge» by the wise arrangement of God »ingrafted in us».⁴⁾

Hooker has not succeeded in maintaining clearly the intellectualistic

¹⁾ B. I, § 8, p. 65. Cf. Ibid. p. 64, B. III, § 10, p. 149, B. V, § 2, p. 5 f.

²⁾ B. I, § 9, p. 67.

³⁾ B. I, § 12, p. 81. Cf. B. I, § 10, p. 68., B. I, § 16, p. 89.

⁴⁾ B. I, § 7, p. 59.

view of natural law. We have seen that he regards the instinct of self-preservation as part of our natural faculties. When trying to explain the origin of the community he assumes without further explanation »a natural inclination» to create society.¹⁾

To those who want to acquire »true notions of laws in general» Locke recommends warmly the first book of this work by Hooker.²⁾ According to Locke's opinion the questions treated in the book have been »so bandied amongst us, for these sixty years backward, that one can hardly miss books of this kind».³⁾ But he does not find it necessary to talk very much about handbooks of ethics, though he regards knowledge of moral questions to be necessary for the study of social problems. He contents himself by referring to the New Testament and to Cicero.⁴⁾ In »Some Thoughts concerning Education» he says that those who have well digested Cicero's »De Officiis» may continue by reading »De officio hominis et civis» by Pufendorf, and »De jure belli ac Pacis» by Grotius, »or, which is perhaps the better of the two», Pufendorf's »De jure naturae et gentium».⁵⁾

We must not regard this merely as general advice given by Locke concerning education and studies. Without doubt they correspond to his main interest in his own study of moral and social problems. Our task is now to find out what he has found in the great teachers of natural law, in addition to what he learnt from Hooker.

Grotius emphasizes that it is often difficult to distinguish between divine and natural law.⁶⁾ As a special common characteristic of the divine law and the law created by man, he states that they are voluntary. They must consequently be considered as a manifestation of will. »Ius voluntarium divinum . . . ex voluntate divina ortum habet . . .» The old question as to whether a thing is good because

¹⁾ B. I, § 10, p. 68.

²⁾ A Letter to the Reverend Mr. Richard King, Works X, p. 308, where the book is recommended to be »thoroughly studied». See also Some Thoughts concerning Reading and Study, Works, III, p. 272, where the book is mentioned among those, »which I think are most talked of in English».

³⁾ Some Thoughts concerning Reading, *ibid.*

⁴⁾ *Ibid.* p. 271 f.

⁵⁾ Works, IX, p. 176.

⁶⁾ De jure belli ac pacis libri tres. II, ch. 20, § 42, p. 239. The classics of international law [3], Reproduction of the edition of 1646. Washington 1913. Cf. I, ch. 2, § 5, p. 19.

it is the will of God or whether it is the will of God because it is good, seems irrelevant to Grotius.¹⁾ He only states the fact that God has announced his will three times to mankind: after the Creation, after the Flood and finally »in sublimiori reparatione per Christum».²⁾

Now natural law is to be sharply distinguished from divine and human law. »Primum mihi cura haec fuit, ut eorum quae ad jus naturae pertinent probationes referrem notiones quasdam tam certas ut eas nemo negare possit, nisi sibi vim inferat. Principia enim ejus juris, si modo animum recte advertas, per se patent atque evidentiæ sunt, ferme ad modum eorum quae sensibus externis percipimus; qui & ipsi bene conformatis sentiendi instrumentis, & si cetera necessaria adsint, non fallunt.»³⁾ Since he emphasizes so strongly the independence of the natural law from the divine law, Grotius might be expected to fix in detail the character of natural law and its relation to human nature. And it is a fact that Grotius always, throughout his whole comprehensive work, refers to the natural law in his treatment of the juridical problems discussed by him. He generally uses the method of discussing every single question from the point of view of each law, the natural law being the most important one. Then follow exhaustive analyses of the relation of civil and divine law to the case in question, Grotius being particularly anxious to state satisfactorily the commandments of the Mosaic law and of the Gospel and their relation to natural and divine law. In doing so he makes the natural law a kind of final court of appeal, to which all difficult questions may be submitted. It is the ultimate touch-stone of right.⁴⁾

Grotius' well-known definition of natural right runs as follows:

¹⁾ A discussion about the question as to whether the will of God is above the natural law, is, according to Grotius, completely meaningless. To ask oneself if there is anything above the omnipotence, is to pass the limits fixed by the law of identity. I, ch. I, § 10, p. 4.

²⁾ I, ch. I, § 15, p. 7.

³⁾ Prolegomena, [p. 8].

⁴⁾ A typical example of Grotius's way of distinguishing between natural and civil law is the discussion of the question of the legal obligation of a promise. According to the natural law such a promise is legally valid only when given by a person who is fully responsible in the legal sense. There are, however, certain civil laws in some societies, according to which such promises are valid also in other cases. Grotius points out that these exceptions from the natural law are nevertheless valid according to the natural law, because they are generally accepted stipulations. II, ch. 11, § 5, p. 222. Cf. II, ch. 2, pp. 112—115.

»Jus naturale est dictatum rectae rationis indicans, actui alicui, ex ejus convenientia, cum ipsa natura rationali, inesse moralem turpitudinem aut necessitatem moralem, ac consequenter ab auctore naturae Deo talem actum aut vaetari aut praecipere.»¹⁾ Most stress is laid upon right reason and rational nature. The authority of God is referred to, partly to express the conformity of divine and natural law, partly to intimate a sanction for the latter. The natural law would be valid even if the absurd presumption was made that God does not exist, or »non curari ab eo negotia humana».²⁾

Instead of giving a more detailed interpretation of his definition, Grotius only states the validity and the scope of the natural law from the point of view of its application. This is in accordance with the use made of the idea of natural law in his study of the justice of war and of peace. On the other hand, very little is said of the nature and the reason he appeals to. The idea of nature has been freely used, but has not been clearly defined.

Grotius only vaguely states the primary instincts upon which human life is based »in naturae statu». Referring to Cicero (*De finibus*), he declares the instinct of self-preservation to be »primum officium».³⁾ But besides that man is also influenced by »appetitus societatis» and by nature he possesses »facultatem sciendi, agendique, secundum generalia praecepta». This quality is also called »recta ratio», and is characterized as a power of understanding what is in accordance with human nature.⁴⁾ Besides the earlier quoted definition this is all that Grotius gives us; and he says himself that it is expressed »rudi modo».

Thus Grotius may be said to postulate a general idea: »rational nature», as a kind of ultimate touch-stone for the validity of laws. But his definition of this idea is only a vague rendering of general terms, inherited from classical and scholastic speculation. Locke recommends Pufendorf's chief work more warmly than that of Grotius, and this is certainly not only for pedagogical reasons. Certain ways of thinking that are of importance to Locke are more clearly presented

¹⁾ I, ch. I, § 10, p. 4.

²⁾ Prolegomena, [p. 3]

³⁾ I, ch. 2, § 3, p. 15.

⁴⁾ Prolegomena, [p. 2] Cf. I, ch. 2, § 3, p. 14. Cf. what Johann Sauter has pointed out, namely that Grotius's definition of natural right is taken from Vasquez and Suarez. *Die philosophischen Grundlagen des Naturrechts*, Wien 1932, p. 93.

in Pufendorf's book than in »De jure belli ac pacis». It also appeals to him that Pufendorf emphasizes the practical aim of his work at the same time as he tries to use the mathematical method. According to Pufendorf man is not born first and foremost to ponder over metaphysical things but to do practical work. Therefore his nature is so wisely arranged that it is far easier for him to acquire knowledge of things belonging to the sphere of his practical task than to solve speculative questions. The duty of man can be derived with mathematical clearness from a few principles.¹⁾

Those who are of the opinion that »disciplinae moraliae» do not possess the same truth as other sciences are mistaken. For a deduction to be true the subject of demonstration need not be »ens necessario existens.» If we start from clear axioms we can deduce true maxims regarding moral things in the same way in ethics as in mathematics. To moral science the real existence of its ideas is as unimportant as the actual existence of a triangle is to geometry.²⁾

Pufendorf agrees with the above-mentioned definition made by Grotius of the natural law as »dictatum rectae rationis», which sees the moral value of an action from the point of view of its accordance with or contrariety to »rational nature». But those who define natural law in that way neglect to state »quodnam sit fundamentum congruentiae & discongruentiae illorum cum natura rationali».³⁾ Pufendorf

¹⁾ *Elementorum jurisprudentiae universalis libri duo*. B. II, Axioma 1, § 1, p. 244. The classics of international law, [15]. A photographic reproduction of the edition of 1672. Oxford and London 1931.

²⁾ *De jure naturae et gentium libri octo*, B. I, ch. 2, § 2, p. 15. The classics of international law, [17] A photographic reproduction of the edition of 1688. Oxford and London 1934. In this connection (§ 3, p. 16) Pufendorf points out that he tries to apply the method he has learnt from his teacher of mathematics, Eberhard Weigel. The same is said in the Praefatio of *Elementa*. In this earlier work the mathematical method, at any rate as to the exterior form, is more obvious than in *De jure*. Pufendorf's conviction of the exact demonstrability of moral science is, however, quite as strong in the latter work. He points out, for instance, that the difference between mathematical and moral knowledge chiefly lies in the fact that we can use numbers and measurements in mathematics, which is not possible in moral science. Otherwise there is no difference. B. I, ch. 2, §§ 23—24, p. 24.

³⁾ *Elementa*, B. I, Definitio 13, § 14, p. 181. Cf. *De jure*, B. II, ch. 3, § 1, p. 122. All the time Pufendorf speaks in the plural about the believers in the view which is expressed in Grotius's definition. Evidently he has known the Spanish school but has not systematically taken any definite attitude towards it.

now regards it as his task to state more definitely the principle of the conformity or disagreement of these actions with the rational nature. »Id vero nos esse statuimus, quod homo à Creatore factus sit animal sociale.»¹⁾ This is the theme of Pufendorf's three chief systematic works, a theme which gives him an opportunity of analyzing the moral faculties of human nature.²⁾

In »De jure» Pufendorf starts with a general definition of »entia moralia». From the very beginning *reason* is given as the basis for the determination of moral phenomena. Entia moralia are defined as »modi quidam rebus aut motibus physicis superadditi ab entibus intelligentibus». Moral valuations do not come into existence by creatio but by impositio. They are not inherent in things, but are imposed on them »per potentiam intelligentem». Pufendorf does not mean that these qualities are arbitrarily created by man. He only emphasizes the fact that moral valuation would be impossible without the help of reason.³⁾

The objectivity of the moral valuation is guaranteed by the natural character of our reason. In the intellect there are two qualities, which are both of such a character that they enable us to reach absolute knowledge. On the one hand our reason registers things and their qualities »velut in speculo», on the other we are able to deliberate and compare. In this latter power is inherent a »naturalis rectitudo» which is a warrant for its objective truth. »Porro cum intellectus velut facem praeferat nostris actionibus, eoque non recte praelucente non possimus non in devia aberrare; pro certo statuendum est, & in ipsa facultate adprehensiva, & in iudicio naturalem inesse rectitudinem, quae debita adhibita attentione nos decipi circa res morales non patiat nec utrumque ita depravari, ut circa easdem non possimus non decipi.» Unless we consider »intellectum hominis naturaliter esse rectum», all moral responsibility will be a mere illusion. No mature person fully

¹⁾ Ibid.

²⁾ »De officio hominis et civis juxta legem naturalem», the work which is recommended by Locke, is only a popular extract from De jure. (Cf. the words quoted above from De jure with De officio, B. I, ch. 3, §§ 5—9, pp. 20 ff. The classics of international law, [10]. A photographic reproduction of the edition of 1682. New York-London 1927.)

³⁾ De jure, B. I, ch. 1, §§ 1—5, pp. 1—4.

endowed with reason is so depraved that he does not know »generalia juris naturalis praecepta».¹⁾

This does not mean, however, that the precept of nature should be »animis hominum ab ipsa nativitate congenita, & velut impressa. . . » so that we might be able to acquire true knowledge of them »citra ulteriorem informationem». Nobody has a right to refer to natural principles without examination. This examination ought to include observation of nature in its actual shape and a logical investigation of the connection between the principles. The assertion that the general moral rules could be said »à rerum natura imprimi», only means that the truth of these rules can be examined by anybody. Nature is an infallible source of knowledge accessible to everybody. It imparts knowledge only about things that really exist, and it is the reason of that »in quo nihil unquam est falsi.» Mistakes regarding the moral rules are due to the fact that men separate things that ought naturally to be kept together and bring together what nature has separated. But the fact that, through our reason, we can always appeal to nature, removes the danger that some may give their incorrect observations and conclusions the appearance of natural law.²⁾

According to Pufendorf there is no better way of acquiring knowledge of the natural laws »quam ipsam hominis naturam conditionemque, & inclinationes contemplari. . . »³⁾ In this connection he uses the common term »status naturalis» with a certain caution. It is a constructed, hypothetical concept to which no reality corresponds. Hobbes's description of the natural state as »bellum omnium contra omnes» must

¹⁾ De jure, B. I, ch. 3, §§ 1—4, pp. 26—28. Cf. *ibid.* ch. 4, § 2, p. 37. *Elementa*, B. II, *Observatio* 1, § 3, p. 259, *Ob.* 2, § 4, pp. 270—271. Here Pufendorf gives expression to certain ways of thinking which have received their character from Christian speculation and which have found expression especially in the idea of synthesis.

²⁾ De jure, B. II, ch. 3, § 13, pp. 138—140. Cf. *Elementa*, B. II, *Ob.* 4, § 1, pp. 280—281.

³⁾ Pufendorf has not laid clear systematically how he looks upon the relation between the study of nature itself, which he recommends here and the logical deduction from basic principles. One of the difficulties in understanding his method is that he does not distinguish clearly between the method used by moral science to find the true basis of validity of the laws, and the method by which each single person acquires knowledge about the right rules for his actions. A typical example of this confusion is to be seen in *Elementa*, B. II, *Ax.* 1, § 1, pp. 244—245.

be interpreted as a symbolical expression of the fact that before the existence of society the actions of man were governed by the instinct of self-preservation.¹⁾ According to Pufendorf this instinct is predominant in man. » Habet hoc commune homo cum omnibus animantibus. . . ut se maxime amat. . . »²⁾ But left to himself man is helpless, and his reason makes him realize that he must ask his fellow-creatures for help. Even in the state of nature man is aware of what serves him best. Hobbes neglected the fact that, in contradistinction to animals, man is equipped with reason. Therefore the natural state cannot be »such a war as is of every man against every man»; as a matter of fact the power of the natural reason has been felt from the very beginning.³⁾

When considering man's natural qualities, Pufendorf accordingly does not only refer to the instinct of self-preservation and the inclination towards the formation of society. He cannot agree with the Roman jurists when they assert that the natural law might be based only on the instinct of self-preservation, which instinct is common to all living beings. Nor can he share the point of view of Grotius, according to which »recta ratio» should form a sufficient basis even if the idea of God is left out of account. To those who want to base the natural duty on instinct alone Pufendorf replies that in certain cases this instinct makes us act in accordance with nature, but because it is blind it can never be regarded as the foundation of a duty. Only when, aided by reason, we have realized *why* something is really valid, does it become binding.⁴⁾ That is why it is impossible to explain the validity of the natural law, if one makes the absurd experiment of eliminating the idea of God. It is the knowledge of its divine origin that gives the law its sanction. If our natural reason did not tell us that God demands obedience to the natural law, the latter would not be valid to us. »Igitur omnino statuendum est, obligationem legis naturalis esse ab ipso Deo Creatore, ac summo generis humani moderatore, qui homines creaturas suas ad istam observandam pro imperio adstrinxit. Atque hoc ipsum ex lumine rationis demonstrari potest.»⁵⁾ To Pufendorf

1) De jure, B. II, ch. 2, § 3, p. 109.

2) Elementa, B. II, Ob. 3, § 1, p. 273.

3) De jure, B. II, ch. 3, §§ 4—12, pp. 11—121. Cf. Elementa, B. I, Def. 3, §§ 1—12, pp. 7—18. De officio, B. II, ch. 1, pp. 98—103.

4) Elementa, B. II, Ob. 4, § 19, p. 290.

5) De jure, B. II, ch. 3, § 20, p. 149 f.

it is self-evident that a law is not valid and cannot be regarded as a law without being supported by a sanction. »*Lex est decretum, quo superior sibi subjectum obligat, ut ad istius praescriptum actiones suas dirigat.*»¹⁾ His classification of the laws is based upon the authority on which they rest. The main groups are divine law and human law. There are two different kinds of divine law, the natural or general and the positive or special. Human law is always »*civilis*».²⁾

Like Locke, Pufendorf does not by any means maintain that the idea of God is innate, but he regards our natural reason as being of such a character that it gives us knowledge of the will of God revealed in natural law.³⁾ Again, this does not mean that we must set out from metaphysical speculations on the relation between the being of God and that of man, or that we should be forced to assume that certain things are good in themselves.⁴⁾ It is sufficient to know that the Creator »*hominem vellet creare, animal per leges gubernandum*».⁵⁾ Therefore he has conferred upon human nature the right of choice and a natural reason which through experience leads us to the true knowledge of our duty. »*Etsi, quando in lucem homo prodit, nulla rerum cognitione animus ipsiusprehendatur imbutus; ita tamen dispositum ipsius intellectum formavit Deus, ut postquam cum aetate ipsius se vires exserere coeperint, ex inspectione rerum naturalium notiones quasdam concipiat, uberiorescientiae post superstruendae inservientes; ex contemplatione sui agnoscat, quas actiones ipsum tanquam naturae suae congruentes Creator obire voluit, & quas vitare, tanquam eidem repugnantes.*»⁶⁾

As has just been intimated, Pufendorf's fundamental principle is

¹⁾ *Elementa*, B. I, Def. 13, § 1, p. 168. Cf. *De jure*, B. I, ch. 6, § 4, p. 62.

²⁾ *De jure*, *ibid.* § 18, pp. 77—78. *Elementa*, B. I, Def. 13, § 13, p. 179.

³⁾ *De jure*, B. II, ch. 3, § 20, pp. 149—150. Cf. *ibid.* B. I, ch. 2, § 6, pp. 18—19.

⁴⁾ *De jure*, B. I, ch. 2, § 6, p. 18. It seems almost as if he was thinking of Hooker when he rejects the thought that the character of things themselves should be the reason of the knowledge of good and evil. »*Nec multum profecit, qui norit, rectitudinem esse privationem curvitatıs, & curvıtatem rectitudinis*». Speculations of that kind have arisen in connection with an inept desire of discharging God from the responsibility for sin. They may be rejected by simply remembering that anyone who prohibits and punishes an action, cannot be the cause of the action. *De jure*, B. I, ch. 7, § 5, p. 80. Cf. *ibid.* B. II, ch. 3, § 12, pp. 157—158. *Elementa*, B. I, Def. 13, §§ 5—6, pp. 170—172.

⁵⁾ *De jure*, B. I, ch. 5, § 1, p. 36. Cf. *Elementa*, B. II, Ob. 2, § 1, p. 265.

⁶⁾ *Elementa*, B. II, Ob. 4, § 1, p. 280.

that man is an »animal sociale» or — which is the same thing to him — that man is »animal per leges gubernandum». His exposition of the qualities of human nature is meant to support this opinion, and so is his exposition of imputability and free-will, which has been of great importance to jurisprudence. Before a choice is made the will must be completely indifferent; the action is given a moral character because it is free and can be subsumed under a certain norm.¹⁾

In the preceding chapter we tried in accordance with Locke's own words to illustrate the purpose of his investigation, and the general conditions which seem to have influenced his method. The historical facts intimated here will have shown that problem and method are greatly influenced by his philosophical background.

Locke's philosophical life-work reflects the tension between widely different opinions, which is characteristic of the 17th century as a whole. The general fundamental truths of the Christian doctrine are still considered as the self-evident bases of every attempt at understanding the inmost significance of human knowledge and actions. The method of the new science is applied within a domain fixed by old tradition, without the contrasts becoming apparent. When, by an empirical and mathematical method, Locke wants to explain the character and end of human nature, he follows a tendency common in his time. But he does not even dream of a transvaluation of all values. Unprejudiced study and mathematical stringency shall serve to illustrate and explain a »nature», the origin and purpose of which are self-evident to him. Like Hooker, Grotius and Pufendorf, he is convinced of the »natural rationality» of all that God has created. By using Boyle's and Sydenham's method he wants to remove the difficulties which an uncritical dogmatism placed as a hindrance in the way of true knowledge of the realities upon which man's temporal and eternal welfare depends. In the spirit of Hooker, Grotius, and Pufendorf he says: »We are furnished with faculties (dull and weak as they are) to discover enough in the creatures to lead us to the knowledge of the Creator, and the knowledge of our duty; and we are fitted well enough with abilities to provide for the conveniences of living; these are our busi-

¹⁾ De jure, B. I, ch. 4, §§ 1—10, pp. 36—44. Elementa, B. II, Ob. 2, §§ 1—9, pp. 265—271. De officio, B. I, ch. 1, § 17, p. 8.

ness in this world.»¹⁾ The ideals of the mathematical method which, thanks to Descartes, have for Locke taken the place of the scholastic method, are found by him in Pufendorf, together with the conviction of the sufficiency of the natural endowment of man. But at the same time he is convinced that the »plain historical method«, which he has learnt in the school of Boyle and Sydenham, is the most effective way of illustrating the practical efficiency of the natural endowment.

Thus Locke's epistemology is conditioned by tradition and milieu. The contrasts that appear in the philosophy of the 17th century between dogmatism and criticism, between rationalistic deduction and empiric investigation are also to be found in the »Essay concerning Human Understanding«. This fact will be illustrated in the following chapters.

IV.

»Clearing the Ground».

The relation between ethics and epistemology in Locke will appear most clearly if we follow his own exposition, examining carefully those passages where the ethical aims of his epistemology are most clearly to be seen.

It is then necessary first to give some attention to the ethical views underlying Locke's criticism of the doctrine of innate ideas. And it is from a special point of view that we are going to study this criticism. We shall try to find out what Locke wants to throw light upon by removing a theory which to him appears as an obstacle to the knowledge of man's true end. And we shall see the outlines of Locke's moral philosophy appear in his epistemological attack against the bulwark of dogmatism.

Locke's fundamental argumentation is well-known. It is very detailed, as he anticipates a stubborn resistance. He knows that his criticism will seem »absurd . . . to the masters of demonstration. And probably it will hardly go down with anybody at first hearing». There is no reason for giving an account of his whole argumentation here. It will be sufficient to relate briefly its chief points.¹⁾

According to Locke universal consent has generally been stated to be the criterion of innate truth. But it is an unsatisfactory criterion. Since many human beings are not conscious of any universal truths, there cannot be any general consent. To the objection that these truths may be valid though they are not consciously known, Locke replies that these original ideas would naturally be most clear in *primitive* individuals, and that these are the people who do *not* have them. Locke considers it necessary that man should be aware of these ideas, if their existence is to be asserted. If they must first be disco-

¹⁾ A detailed account of the arguments in Locke's criticism is to be found in Åke Petzäll: *Läran om de medfödda idéerna*. . . p. 104 ff.

vered by logical investigation, then they cannot be distinguished from other truths known to us by a similar investigation, and the talk of innate knowledge becomes meaningless. Moral truths cannot be innate, for men's moral ideas vary greatly. Again, to say that only the mature intellect possesses such ideas and that this possession proves their truth and special origin, is to argue in a circle. It has been stated as a characteristic of innate knowledge that everybody immediately realizes its truth. But this leads to rather awkward consequences, making us »plentifully stored with innate principles». We cannot fix any limit, and thus at last all our ideas are innate. Locke systematizes his argumentation, turning especially against the ideas in question being considered as real knowledge always present in our minds. But he also discusses other conceptions. It has been maintained that innate knowledge may exist implicitly, as subconscious virtual knowledge. Locke asks how this statement is to be interpreted and finds that it can only mean that the soul has the capacity of understanding this knowledge and of realizing its truth.

But then it becomes absolutely impossible to distinguish it from other knowledge. Where is the limit to be fixed, as all our knowledge depends upon our faculties? Locke arrives at the following result: *Either* innate knowledge is regarded as fully conscious from birth, which is absurd and contrary to all experience, *or* it is regarded as a capacity for knowledge, and consequently cannot be distinguished from other kinds of knowledge, which makes the name of innate completely meaningless.

Even at the beginning Locke points out that this detailed argumentation would be unnecessary, if he had to do only with »unprejudiced readers.» These would realize at once that the criticized theory is superfluous, if it was explained to them »how men, barely by the use of their natural faculties, may attain to all the knowledge they have, without the help of any innate impressions.» They would understand that the talk of innate knowledge is as senseless as the assertion that the idea of colour is innate although we have the power of seeing. But as the readers are not unprejudiced, a detailed explanation is necessary.¹⁾

Although in Locke's reasoning the most conspicuous arguments are the destructive ones, turned against the believers in the theory, he

¹⁾ Essay, I, 1, 1; 1, pp. 37 f.

does not forget to emphasize the positive facts that are likely to persuade the unprejudiced reader. He tells him what he himself regards as innate, what he means by the »power of sight». In the first place there are the instinctive dominant principles of the life of action. »Nature, I confess, has put into man a desire of happiness and an aversion to misery: these indeed are innate practical principles which (as practical principles ought) *do* continue constantly to operate and influence all our actions without ceasing: these may be observed in all persons and all ages, steady and universal; but these are *inclinations of the appetite* to good, not impressions of truth on the understanding.» The fact that these natural inclinations, innate instincts, or, as Locke also calls them, »natural tendencies imprinted on the minds of men», really exist is no argument *for* the presumption of innate ideas. On the contrary, it is an argument against such a supposition. For the natural tendencies »never cease to be the constant springs and motives of all our actions», while the innate principles cannot be proved to influence the actions of men.¹⁾

According to Locke it is far more difficult for the upholders of the »philosophia pigrorum» to prove the existence of practical innate principles than that of speculative ones. Not that the truth of the practical maxims should be doubtful. But the fact is that, speaking of these principles, people always ask »why». »Moral principles require reasoning and discourse, and some exercise of the mind, to discover the certainty of their truth.» If the rules were innate, everybody would immediately realize their truth. Locke states with satisfaction that that is not the case. Men do not in practice accept the maxims dictated to them by the wise, who have the privilege of knowing the innate ideas. Instinctively people ask themselves in virtue of their natural reason, why these principles really are valid. In spite of the authoritative power of those who state the principles, man looks for another basis of validity» . . . »I think *there cannot any one moral rule be proposed whereof a man may not justly demand a reason:*».²⁾

Against the theory of innate ideas Locke asserts the human privilege of asking »why». According to his opinion it is possible and necessary for everybody to understand why the moral maxims are binding. The validity of the moral principles must be deduced from some-

¹⁾ Ibid. I, 2, 3; 1, pp. 67 f.

²⁾ Ibid. I, 2, 1—4; 1, pp. 64—69.

thing that cannot be questioned.¹⁾ This is not possible until the worthlessness of any other method has been realized. For if a basis of validity common to all of these principles is not sought before the different maxims are laid down, one is confronted by complete subjectivism. If a Christian is asked why a certain moral law is valid to him, he answers that it is the will of God. A classical philosopher would probably answer that he obeys the rule because it is beneath his dignity as human being not to act as it bids him. A »Hobbit» would answer to the same question: »Because the public requires it, and the Leviathan will punish you if you do not.»²⁾

Such different bases of validity make the relativity complete. Systematic ethics cannot exist if one chooses certain rules and calls them innate without knowing from which basis they are deduced. Nothing prevents purely subjective interest from turning the balance in such a choice: »since we find that self-interest, and the conveniences of this life, make many men own an outward profession and approbation of them, whose actions sufficiently prove that they very little consider the Lawgiver that prescribed these rules;»³⁾ Even if it is not necessary to go so far as to regard the choice of sacrosanct principles as founded on egoistic self-interest, we have a right to suspect, says Locke, that the different lists of innate ideas have their content decided by the self-chosen hypotheses which serve as starting-points. »It is easy to foresee, that if different men of different sects should go about to give us a list of those innate practical principles, they would set down only such as suited their distinct hypotheses, and were fit to support the doctrines of their particular schools or churches;»⁴⁾

This variety is the more dangerous as people too easily submit to authorities. Locke gives a detailed account of the process of acquiring unproved moral maxims. The veneration for truths given by tradition and education is very great. Even those who do not take the trouble of searching for a conviction themselves, must have »some foundation or principle to rest their thoughts on.»⁵⁾

Against the arbitrariness which is necessarily connected with the

1) Ibid.

2) Ibid. I, 2, 5; I, p. 69.

3) Ibid. I, 2, 6; I, pp. 70 f.

4) Ibid. I, 2, 14; I, p. 79. Cf. Ibid. I, 2, 20; I, p. 85.

5) Ibid. I, 2, 24; I, p. 88. Cf. Ibid. 21—27, pp. 36—91.

theory of innate ideas, Locke, according to his own opinion, puts the only *safe* basis of validity. »Without a notion of a law-maker, it is impossible to have a notion of a law, and an obligation to observe it.»¹⁾ To our natural reason nothing is so self-evident as the idea of God, and this is its main characteristic as an absolute basis of validity. No idea is so »agreeable to the common light of reason, and naturally deducible from every part of our knowledge, as that of a God is.»²⁾ Here the intellectual character of Locke's ethics appears clearly. He is of the opinion that the idea of God arises in us if only the natural reason is allowed to work freely and in conformity with its own laws. He is optimistic enough to believe that the right use of the natural reason is bound to lead us to the idea of God. »For the visible marks of extraordinary wisdom and power appear so plainly in all the works of the creation, that a rational creature, who will but seriously reflect on them, cannot miss the discovery of a Deity.»³⁾ Suppose that a »colony of children» were left quite alone on an island. The notion of a God would not appear in their minds at once, it is true. For as it is not innate, they would not know anything about it, »till some one amongst them had employed his thoughts to inquire into the constitution and causes of things, which would easily lead him to the notion of a God; which having once taught to others, reason, and the natural propensity of their own thoughts, would afterwards propagate, and continue amongst them.»⁴⁾

But it is not only the fact that the idea of God comes quite naturally to us through our natural reason, that makes it the most valuable of all basic principles. Only the idea of God can make a rule valid, as the thought of reward and punishment is its main characteristic. »Ignorance or doubt of the law, hopes to escape the knowledge or power of the law-maker or the like, may make men give away to a present appetite; but let any one see the fault, and the rod by it, and with the transgression, a fire ready to punish it; a pleasure tempting, and the hand of the Almighty visibly held up and prepared to take vengeance, for this must be the case, where any duty is imprinted on the mind, and tell me whether it be possible for people

¹⁾ Ibid. I, 3, 8; I, p. 96.

²⁾ Ibid. I, 3, 9; I, p. 99.

³⁾ Ibid.

⁴⁾ Ibid. I, 3, 11; I, p. 101. Cf. Ibid. 12, 16, 17, 22, 23, 25, pp. 101 ff.

with such a prospect, such a certain knowledge as this, wantonly, and without scruple, to offend against a law which they carry about them . . . » If a moral law is not supported by the idea of the consequences of breaking it, it has no force, even if it is supposed to be innate. The mere fact that it is declared to be so, is not sufficient to give it power over the natural instincts. There can be no moral law »but by rewards and punishments that will overbalance the satisfaction any one shall propose to himself in the breach of the law».¹⁾

In the first book of Locke's *Essay* we find the main features of his ethics in the criticism which is intended to prepare the way for his positive study of the origin and validity of knowledge. His criticism is directed against dogmatism as it appears in the theory of innate ideas. Locke rejects this theory partly because it solves the problem of knowledge before really stating the question, partly because this method of »solution» prevents the formation of a scientifically tenable and practically applicable moral law. For epistemological and ethical reasons he rejects dogmatism in its crassest form. But he does not pave the way for an unprejudiced epistemology in the spirit of empiricism, because a non-theoretical view of life lies at the root of what he wants to retain and uphold at all costs instead of the thoughts his critical analysis removes. What he shows up is nothing but his own view on the character of human nature, and this view is influenced by scholastic-dogmatic tradition. Thus we notice in the first book of the *Essay* both agreement and tension between theory of knowledge and ethics. The epistemology is intended to prepare the way for the ethics, but it is kept within certain limits, because of a prejudiced view regarding the only possible ethics. It goes without saying that this must create theoretically incompatible contrasts in the foundations of Locke's philosophy. In the following, when the empirical method is to be further applied, the fact that Locke does not fix the character of the natural faculties gives rise to the peculiar contrast between the idea of »*tabula rasa*» and the belief in natural faculties. The study carried out in the first book also shows the difference between the instinctive and the rational sides of the natural disposition of man, as well as the tension between the rational truth of the ethical maxims and the need of a non-theoretical sanction.

¹⁾ Ibid. I, 2, 13; I, p. 77.

Ethics and the Theory of Ideas.

In conformity with »the historical, plain method», based upon the methodical ideals common to Locke, Boyle and Sydenham, the purging criticism is followed by a thorough investigation of the phenomena. The second book of the Essay is an attempt to describe the »ideas»¹⁾ such as they appear in the process of acquiring knowledge.

Locke begins by answering the question as to whence these ideas come into our soul, which without them must be regarded as »white paper, void of all characters.» Locke's answer is well-known and is usually cited as an example of the starting-point of typical empiricism. The source of all ideas is experience acquired by sensation and reflection. But no further explanation is given of these two parts of experience. His actual meaning has been very much discussed. The main thing to Locke is to state that sensation and reflection are receptive qualities, which provide the soul with ideas that maintain their objective character and do not change in being received. Reflection, like sensation, gives a photographic reproduction, and therefore all our ideas are immediately pictured. This objective character of the ideas is what has the greatest interest to Locke. So he gives no exact description of the nature of sensation and reflection, nor of any other faculties which he mentions in his study.

The complicated variety of ideas which forms the content of our knowledge arises when the primary material, acquired by experience, is worked upon by a series of different faculties. These faculties (besides sensation and reflection Locke mentions among others »reten-

¹⁾ Locke says about the use of the term »idea»: »It being that term which, I think, serves best to stand for whatsoever is the *object* of the understanding when a man thinks, I have used it to express whatever is meant by *phantasm, notion, species, or whatever it is which the mind can be employed about in thinking.*». Essay, Introduction, I, p. 32.

tion», «contemplation», «memory» or «secondary perception», «the faculty of discerning and distinguishing», «comparing», «compounding», «abstracting», «naming») are described only through their activity. Nothing is told us about their character and their relation to each other. This is the more curious as Locke always refers to our «natural faculties», which we must know in order to understand the character and value of our knowledge and our moral task. The criticism of the theory of innate ideas was intended to pave the way for an unprejudiced study of these natural faculties. Locke was evidently of the opinion that he acted in the spirit of empirical observation, when he made the nature of these faculties appear only in the process of acquiring knowledge, without trying to state what they really are. This, too, is an example of the ambiguousness of Locke's attitude to dogmatism. He wants to escape all inquiries regarding the nature of the faculties of our mind: but still he presumes dogmatically that the notion of natural faculties is legitimate.

The consequent difficulty of interpreting the second book of the Essay is considerable, especially when it comes to understanding the passages treating of ideas and faculties which have to do with ethics.

The «complex ideas» are formed by an activity of the mind, «wherein it exerts its power over its simple ideas». ¹⁾ There are three kinds of complex ideas: «modes», «substances» and «relations». «Modes» are ideas which cannot exist independently but are always attributes of something else. They are inherent in «substances» which are regarded as self-existent. «Relations», on the other hand, are neither inherent, like «modes», nor independent, like «substances»; they always have reference to a comparison between ideas. ²⁾

Among the many different kinds of relations there is one «which . . . may be called *moral relation*, as being that which denominates our moral actions, and deserves well to be examined; there being no part of knowledge wherein we should be more careful to get determined ideas, and avoid, as much as may be, obscurity and confusion». ³⁾ These moral relations are defined as consisting of the agreement or disagreement existing between men's voluntary actions and «a *rule* to which they are referred, and by which they are judged of . . .»; ³⁾ Human actions,

¹⁾ Essay, II, 12, 1; I, p. 213.

²⁾ Ibid. II, 12, 3; I, p. 215 f.

³⁾ Ibid. II, 28, 4; I, p. 473.

on the contrary, belong to another group of complex ideas, which forms a subdivision of »modes», namely the so-called »mixed modes». They are ideas of a quality in a thing or an action, and they consist of simple ideas of *different* kinds (cf. »simple modes», consisting only of simple ideas of one kind.) In forming the group of mixed modes Locke has evidently especially had in mind moral actions, for the examples he gives are taken from the life of action: »theft»,¹⁾ »obligation», »drunkenness», »lie»,²⁾ »sacrilege», »adultery», »murder», »incest», »stabbing», etc.³⁾ The above-mentioned moral ideas thus belong to the groups of »relations» and »modes», while certain other ideas of moral importance are placed among the simple ideas. So are »pleasure», »delight», »pain», »uneasiness» and »power», the latter having particularly great importance, since Locke discusses the will in connection with it. These ideas belong to the group of simple ideas that reach consciousness both through sensation and reflection.⁴⁾

From the plan outlined here it is evident that Locke's treatment of the ethical questions is completely determined by the method he has chosen for his study of the origin of knowledge.

Moral good and evil are placed among the »relation-ideas». *»Moral good and evil . . . is only the conformity or disagreement of our voluntary actions to some law, whereby good or evil is drawn on us, from the will and power of the law-maker; which good and evil, pleasure or pain, attending our observance or breach of the law by the decree of the law-maker, is that we call reward and punishment.»*⁵⁾

This programme, which he has outlined in the criticism of the theory of innate ideas, Locke tries to realize in his account of the natural history of the ideas. In connection with the above-mentioned conception of moral good and evil as a relation between our actions and a law, Locke gives a more detailed description of what is meant by moral law. There are three different kinds of laws and as many sanctions. »The laws that men generally refer their actions to, to judge of their rectitude or obliquity, seem to me to be these

¹⁾ Ibid. II, 12, 5; I, p. 216.

²⁾ Ibid. II, 22, 1; I, p. 381.

³⁾ Essay, III, 5, 5—6; 2, p. 45 f. Cf. Ibid. III, 5, 12; 2, p. 51, III, 5, 15; 2, p. 53, III, 9, 8; 2, p. 108, III, 10, 33; 2, p. 145, III, 11, 9; I, p. 153.

⁴⁾ Ibid. II, 7, 1; I, p. 160. Cf. Ibid. II, 21; I, p. 311.

⁵⁾ Ibid. II, 28, 5; I, p. 474.

three: 1. The *divine* law. 2. The *civil* law. 3. The law of *opinion* or *reputation*, if I may so call it. By the relation they bear to the first of these, men judge whether their actions are sins or duties; by the second, whether they be criminal or innocent; and by the third, whether they be virtues or vices.»¹⁾ Either »the light of nature» or revelation gives man knowledge of the first of these laws. Nobody can be so »brutish» as to deny this law. The sanction which supports the divine law is stronger than all others, as it is here a question of reward and punishment, »of infinite weight and duration in another life.» This law is »the only true touchstone.» For thanks to that law men can judge »the most considerable good and evil», because it has more power than any other law.²⁾ As this divine law agrees with the natural reason, it is reflected in the two other laws. Their positive content varies considerably in different communities, it is true, but everywhere virtue is considered praiseworthy and its opposite condemnable. This is a proof of the fact that the divine law is valid everywhere in spite of the differences. Men learn by experience that nothing furthers common welfare more than obedience to the commands of the law of God. That is why all yield obedience to it, even the most wicked.

Thanks to the sanctions connected with these three laws they are all so clear to everybody that there is no difficulty at all in comparing different actions with the laws and then judging of good and evil. The comparison between the action and the law is possible in every single case, the »rule being nothing but a collection of several simple ideas, the conformity thereto is but so ordering the action, that the simple ideas belonging to it may correspond to those which the law requires. And thus we see how moral beings and notions are founded on, and terminated in, these simple ideas we have received from sensation or reflection.»³⁾ He illustrates this very mechanistic epistemological view of the moral law by an example. In my mind the conception of »murder» is connected with a series of simple ideas which I have acquired partly by reflection (will, intention, life etc.), partly by sensation (ideas created by observing a man and his actions, etc.) If I want to judge this idea from a moral point of view I have to compare it with the con-

¹⁾ Ibid. II, 28, 5; I, p. 475.

²⁾ Essay, II, 28, 8; I, p. 475.

³⁾ Ibid. II, 28, 14; I, p. 480.

tent of »the esteem of the country», »the rule made by the legislative power» or with »the will of the supreme . . . Lawgiver». If, in doing so, I find that the same combinations of simple ideas are contained there as in my idea of murder, I have created such a relation between the simple ideas and the law, that I can positively and in conformity with the law condemn murder as a crime.¹⁾ Locke sums up his argumentation in the following manner: »To conceive rightly of moral actions, we must take notice of them under this two-fold consideration. First, as they are in themselves, each made up of such a collection of simple ideas . . . which I call mixed modes: . . . Secondly, our actions are considered as good, bad or indifferent; and in this respect they are *relative*, it being their conformity to, or disagreement with, some rule that makes them to be regular or irregular, good or bad; . . .»²⁾

This manner of reasoning is typical of the method of the second book. Locke does not take the trouble to state what ideas the law contains. It goes without saying that the content of the law cannot be derived from the idea of law. From a systematic point of view we have a right to demand a statement of the combinations of ideas that are contained in the law. As regards the comparison itself, we meet in Locke again and again the mixture of criticism and dogmatism. He holds the view that the moral valuation is added to the idea as a new part of it, when a relation is stated. This is an attempt to include the moral judgement in the mechanical dynamics of the ideas. But Locke realizes that the mere transition from one group of ideas to another cannot explain moral approval or disapproval. The sanction, then, serves as basis of validity for the valuation, but there is no room for it in the mechanical interaction of the ideas. However, Locke finds that the sanction is included in the system of ideas, against the background of which he sees the moral valuation, because he has introduced the ideas constituting the sanction, namely pleasure and pain, into this system.

As I have already pointed out, pleasure and pain belong to the group of simple ideas which, according to Locke, come into our mind by sensation and reflection. »Delight or uneasiness, one or other of them, join themselves to almost all our ideas both of sensation and reflection: and there is scarce any affection of our senses from without, any retired

¹⁾ Essay, II, 28, 14; I, p. 480 f.

²⁾ Ibid. II, 28, 15; I, p. 481.

thought of our mind within, which is not able to produce in us pleasure or pain.» If the Creator in his wisdom had not associated the experience of pleasure and pain with certain thoughts and certain sensations, all action on our part would be impossible. There would be no reason for us to prefer one action to another, one thought to another. We should remain inactive »in a lazy, lethargic dream». Two purposes are served by the fact that pain is connected with other ideas: firstly the avoidance of harmful ideas, secondly the striving for full happiness without pain »in the enjoyment of him with whom there is fullness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore.» Locke adds that this statement does not make »the ideas of pleasure and pain clearer to us than our own experience does.»¹⁾ But if the character of these ideas is not described in detail, by pointing out their function in the Creator's designs with man, »yet the consideration of the reason why they are annexed to . . . other ideas . . . may not be unsuitable to the main end of these inquiries: the knowledge and veneration of him being the chief end of all our thoughts, and the proper business of all understandings».²⁾ This quotation is not merely an empty rhetorical statement. It gives expression not only to the fundamental outlook always to be taken into consideration when judging Locke's philosophy, but also to the rôle of pleasure and pain in his ethics. They are introduced to explain the sanction of the divine law.

Good and evil become not merely conformity or the opposite between the law and the idea of an action. Together with this purely formal conception a psychological one is introduced. »That we call *good*, which is apt to cause or increase pleasure or diminish pain in us; . . . And, on the contrary we name that *evil* which is apt to produce or increase any pain, or diminish any pleasure in us: . . .»³⁾ With the help of these ideas Locke then constructs »the ideas of our passions», The thought of the satisfaction a thing can give creates love of the thing, the opposite calls forth hate. The dissatisfaction we feel when missing something, »whose present enjoyment carries the idea of delight with it, is that we call *desire*». Besides desire Locke mentions *uneasiness*. He distinguishes between desire and uneasiness only by intimating that the former may vary in »size», while the latter »is more or less ve-

¹⁾ Essay II, 7 1—6: 1, p. 160 ff.

²⁾ Cf. Essay, II, 20, 1; 1, p. 302.

³⁾ Ibid. II, 20, 2; 1, p. 303.

hement».¹⁾ He mentions incidentally that uneasiness is »the chief, if not only spur to human industry and action».

The ideas of desire and uneasiness lead us directly to the most difficult passage of the epistemological study in the second book of the Essay. Several times in his detailed exposition of the problem of free will, Locke emphasizes the importance of uneasiness for the life of action. »Good and evil, present and absent, it is true, work upon the mind. But that which *immediately* determines the will, from time to time, to every voluntary action, is the *uneasiness of desire*, fixed on some absent good: . . .».²⁾ »Locke expresses this even more strongly: »nothing setting us upon the change of state, or upon any new action, but some uneasiness».³⁾ He gives two reasons why he must assume that uneasiness alone influences will. In order to do justice to his peculiar way of thinking the argumentation must be given in his own words. »If we inquire into the reason of what experience makes so evident in fact, and examine, why it is uneasiness alone operates on the will, and determines it in its choice, we shall find that, we being capable but of one determination of the will to one action at once, the present uneasiness that we are under does *naturally* determine the will, in order to that happiness which we all aim at in all our actions . . . Another reason why it is uneasiness alone determines the will, is this: because that alone is present and, it is against the nature of things, that what is absent should operate where it is not.»⁴⁾ Locke probably means that our will can be influenced only by what is at hand at the very moment of decision. This can only be the form of desire which he calls uneasiness, and it can have only one object at a time. By comparing the above-mentioned reasoning with the following, we can see whether Locke himself succeeded in carrying out this peculiar line of thought consistently: »The first . . . and great use of liberty is to hinder blind precipitancy; the principal exercise of freedom is to stand still, open the eyes, look about, and take a view of the consequence of what we are going to do, as much as the weight of the matter requires.»⁵⁾ It goes without saying that the last

¹⁾ Ibid. II, 20, 6; I, p. 304.

²⁾ Ibid. II, 21, 33; I, p. 334.

³⁾ Ibid., II, 21, 29; I, p. 331.

⁴⁾ Ibid. II, 21, 36—37; I, p. 336.

⁵⁾ Ibid. II, 21, 69; I, p. 361.

passage is absolutely incompatible with Locke's conception of uneasiness as the only factor determining will.

The explanation of this remarkable contradiction is partly to be found in the fact that Locke, not being satisfied with the solution given in the first edition of the *Essay*, changed his mind at an essential point. So he threw away what he no longer regarded as true. But in undertaking this revision of the text he left things which ought to have been taken away. In later editions the matter has been made still more complicated.¹⁾

A comparison between the above-mentioned passages shows clearly the character of the change in Locke. He has reduced the original rôle of uneasiness and asserts that we can »stand still». He does not consider the desire existing at the moment as the only determinant. »For, the mind having in most cases, as is evident in experience, a power to *suspend* the execution and satisfaction of any of its desires; . . . This seems to me the source of all liberty; in this seems to consist that which is (as I think improperly) called *free-will*. For, during this suspension of any desire, before the will be determined to action, and the action (which follows that determination) done, we have opportunity to examine, view, and judge of the good or evil of what we are going to do; and when, upon due examination, we have judged, we have done our duty, all that we can, or ought to do, in pursuit of our happiness; and it is not a fault, but a perfection of our nature, to desire, will and act according to the last result of a fair examination.»²⁾

In order to understand the chaotic 21st chapter of the second book about will, it is necessary to know *why* Locke has changed his opinion.

At the beginning of the chapter he warns his readers not to regard the will as a »facultie», as a kind of »real being».³⁾ For in doing so we are apt to make the discussion on free-will take a course that only leads to confusion of ideas. According to Locke freedom cannot be

¹⁾ Regarding Locke's own opinion of the change, see *Essay* II, 21, 73; I, p. 367. Cf. also the correspondence between himself and Molyneux and finally the note in the edition of Campbell Fraser, p. 379.

²⁾ *Essay* II, 21, 48; I, p. 345. Cf. *Ibid.* 53; I, p. 348., *Ibid.* 57; I, pp. 352, 353, *Ibid.* 73:1, p. 367.

³⁾ *Ibid.* 6: I, p. 314.

part of the idea of will. The will is a power, and freedom does not form any part of such a simple idea. Thus the question as to whether the will is free is meaningless. It is the soul, if anything, that is free.¹⁾

Locke arrives at this distinction through his schema of ideas. His argumentation is founded on the idea of will. But he is not able to avoid the danger of which he has warned others. In the course of his reasoning he again and again refers to the will as a «facultie». When he wants to define what determines the will, he tries to go on applying «the historical, plain method», and to show empirically how the will is determined. Pleasure and pain must be used for such an explanation. And because uneasiness to Locke has a more «dynamic» character than desire, it is the dominating factor in his exposition. Uneasiness is the only one among our «natural faculties» that can possibly influence the will. Locke's eagerness to show this is due to the fact that it is part of the method of the natural history of ideas to resolve everything into simple ideas. This is the background against which we must see the curious proof of the fact that uneasiness is the only determinant of the will.

Now, however, Locke's «plain historical method» carries him on to a point, where a collision with the dogmatic view of ethics is unavoidable. If uneasiness is the only operative factor, then the basis of validity which Locke has stated for morals, cannot be vindicated. For even if pleasure and pain form part of the sanction of the divine law, this has no relevance, when only the desire existing at the moment decides the action. The sanction is made impossible, and then the role of the natural reason and the responsibility disappear. Locke's change of opinion, and the contrasts that still exist in spite of his revision of the 21st chapter, are explained by the fact that the empiric method of the theory of knowledge proved unable to fill the demands made upon it by his basic ethical convictions. And the conflict is all the more fundamental and confusing to Locke, since he believes that his method is the only right way of showing that the idea of God is the only possible basis of validity for the ethics.

It is easy to show that the contrasts existing in the epistemology of the second book of the Essay reflect the contending tendencies of the philosophy of the 17th century as a whole. The divine law

¹⁾ Ibid. I, 29; 1, pp. 308 ff.

and its special sanction are dogmatically assumed, and, in agreement with Pufendorf, moral good is said to be »the conformity of our voluntary actions with a law«. The sanction of the law lies in the fear of punishment. When this is to be included in Locke's general system of ideas, it appears that the purely empirical examination of the genesis of the ideas cannot explain the objective validity of the law. In the discussion of the will, the conflict between the historical, plain method on the one hand, and the demand of the believers in the natural system for free decision on the part of natural reason, is especially apparent.

VI.

Ethics and the Theory of Knowledge.

In accordance with the method for which Locke had become enthusiastic through his interest in the experimental investigation of nature, he has given »an account of the original, sorts, and extent of our ideas . . .», as he himself points out at the end of the second book of the Essay. He has attempted to describe the phenomena as they actually appear. He has tried to analyze the contents of the mind into their simplest constituents, to determine the properties of ideas as »objects in the mind», and on the foundation laid by this observation and analysis to describe their actual interrelations, their »conditions of existence». It now remains for him to proceed to the most important investigation, to »proceed to show, what use the understanding makes of them [the ideas], and what *knowledge* we have by them». ¹⁾

The elaborate analysis in the second book, like the critique in the first book and the investigation of the relation of language to knowledge in the third book, is only a preparatory study. But it cannot be said without qualifications that Locke still utilizes the method of objective observation in the fourth book of the Essay in such a way that, supported only by the facts he has brought to light, he frames a hypothesis or draws conclusions from his observations. The method of approach is changed. Up to now he has studied the contents of consciousness as something actually presented. But in the following he does not confine himself to establishing by means of induction the general laws of the actual process of knowledge. He turns from the *quaestio facti* to the *quaestio juris*. The fourth book discusses above all the problem of the validity of knowledge. It is not only a ques-

¹⁾ Essay, II, 33, 19; I, p. 535. Cf. Introduction, 2; I, p. 26 ff.

tion of »what use the understanding makes of» the ideas, but also of the *justification* for this.¹⁾

Locke himself, however, believes that he still remains in the same methodological sphere. In his own opinion he is still occupied in elucidating the actual process through which the natural faculties work up the materials furnished in our ideas. He now concentrates his attention on the faculty, the actual activity of which is such that it explains not only the unity of the process of knowledge but also the objective validity of the contents of knowledge. The natural faculty, to which Locke refers in his criticism of innate ideas as the self-evident and necessary foundation for the indispensable human knowledge of God and duty, is the principal theme in the investigation in the fourth book. His solution of the problem of knowledge is based on *natural reason* as the ultimate tribunal of all knowledge. For this reason the kind of knowledge for which natural reason is especially adapted is also the most dependable and most important kind. »For it is rational to conclude, that our proper employment lies in those inquiries, and in that sort of knowledge which is most suited to our natural capacities, and carries in it our greatest interest, i. e. the condition of our eternal estate. Hence I think I may conclude, that *morality is the proper science and business of mankind in general*, (who are both concerned and fitted to search out their *summum bonum*); . . .»²⁾

Locke concludes his Essay with a primitive sketch of a division of the sciences, which, it is true, by no means is on a level with other systems produced during the middle ages and by modern philosophers before him, but which nevertheless throws light on his method of

¹⁾ The relation between the question of method and the general statement of the problems in the second and fourth books has been the subject of considerable controversy. We shall here touch upon these points only in so far as they affect our principal theme. However, we should perhaps mention in passing that it must not be supposed that Locke *first* investigated the natural history of ideas and afterwards took up the study of the validity of knowledge. As has often been pointed out, there is much to be said for the view that Locke first of all worked out the reflections on which the fourth book is founded. The investigation of the validity and extent of knowledge and its relation to probability and faith in the fourth book is the central field of Locke's thinking, around which everything else is grouped. The other investigations all lead up to this central point and receive their significance through their connection with it.

²⁾ Essay, IV, 12, 11; 2, p. 351.

working and on the view of the value of scientific research that underlies his investigation of knowledge. »All that can fall within the compass of human understanding, being either, *First*, the nature of things, as they are in themselves, their relations, and their manner of operation: or, *Secondly*, that which man himself ought to do, as a rational and voluntary agent, for the attainment of any end, especially happiness: or, *Thirdly*, the ways and means whereby the knowledge of both the one and the other of these is attained and communicated;»¹⁾ The third group of subjects for scientific investigation is accordingly of such a nature that such knowledge is a necessary precondition for the correct treatment of the other two groups. The science that deals with the phenomena belonging to the third group is by Locke called »*Σημειωτική*», or *the doctrine of signs*».²⁾ The things themselves are not present to the understanding. It is therefore necessary »that something else, as a sign or representation of the thing it considers, should be present to it: and these are *ideas*».³⁾ Furthermore, since the ideas within an individual consciousness cannot be immediately viewed by another, the ideas, as signs for things, must in turn be represented by new signs, i. e. by words. It is this »consideration . . . of *ideas* and *words* as the great instruments of knowledge»,⁴⁾ which Locke has carried out in detail in the second and third books and which he concludes and applies in the fourth. The extent of its application coincides with the two first groups of scientific subjects of investigation. The question is to determine the result of the investigation of »the signs» with regard to the possibility of acquiring knowledge of »things, as they are in their own proper beings. . . .» The science of things is by Locke called »*Φυσική*», or *natural philosophy*». According to his own definition, this includes not only knowledge of physical objects but also of God, angels, spirits, etc. The truth reached regarding these matters is of a purely speculative kind.⁵⁾ The second science, for which the way is to be prepared by the »doctrine of signs», is »*Πρακτική*», the skill of right applying our own powers and actions, for the attainment of things good and useful. The most considerable

¹⁾ Ibid. IV, 21, 1; 2, p. 460.

²⁾ Ibid. 4; 2, p. 461.

³⁾ Ibid. p. 461 f.

⁴⁾ Ibid.

⁵⁾ Ibid. 2, p. 461.

under this head is *ethics*, which is the seeking out those rules and measures of human actions, which lead to happiness, and the means to practise them. The end of this is not bare speculation and the knowledge of truth; but right, and a conduct suitable to it.¹⁾

Locke has himself not made any distinction between his analyses of signs in the first three books of the Essay and the application of the results in the fourth book. In rejecting speculative natural philosophy and upholding the absolute validity of natural religion and ethics, this attitude is to him a consequence of »the doctrine of signs» according to the historical, plain method. However, as a result of the new statement of the problem, the tension between dogmatism and empiricism, already contained in »the doctrine of signs» itself, becomes more plainly evident in the fourth book. The rationalistic and dogmatic tendency takes the lead in the question of the validity of religious and ethical knowledge.

It has often been pointed out that Locke in the Essay Concerning Human Understanding is concerned with two different types of knowledge.²⁾ On the one hand we have knowledge through sense-experience, which is absolutely valid, but which cannot be generalized, because every judgment concerning existence must be particular. On the other hand we have rational knowledge, also absolutely valid, but concerned solely with abstract ideas. Empirical knowledge has its basis of validity in the fact that it represents an outer world depicted in the simple ideas. But just because we are dealing with a representation of something, the inner structure of which is unknown to us, because knowledge of the substance itself is not granted to us, we cannot possess any true knowledge of the world of things. Concerning the abstract ideas, on the other hand, we can attain to knowledge with general validity, just because they are abstract. Since they do not represent anything in the outer world they have their validity in themselves, and it is possible for our faculties to grasp their inter-

¹⁾ Ibid. p., 461.

²⁾ Among the many expositions that touch upon this, see James Gibson: Locke's theory of knowledge and its historical relations, especially pp. 176 ff. A summary of the discussion is given in Åke Petzäll, Op. cit. pp. 130—142. (A purely epistemological estimate of the relations in principle between the different kinds of knowledge is to be found *ibid.* pp. 142—162, 209 ff., and in Åke Petzäll, *Der Apriorismus Kants und die »Philosophia Pigrorum»* p. 14 ff.).

relations clearly.¹⁾ The basic defect in Locke's philosophy, according to Ernst Cassirer, is »dass er das rationale und das empirische Wissen, das er aufs bestimmteste zu *sondern* weiss, nicht wiederum *verknüpft* und wechselseitig aufeinander bezieht». ²⁾

The tension between dogmatic rationalism and empirical observation makes itself felt throughout the whole Essay. It is true that Locke does not succeed in finding any bridge between the two kinds of knowledge. The contrast between idea and concept, between impulse and rational choice, are good illustrations of the contrasts within the part of his ethics that we have examined in connection with the theory of ideas. The various definitions of the notion of cause, for instance, in the dogmatic rationalistic proof of God's existence in the fourth book,³⁾ and the empirical description of the origin of the idea of cause in the second book,⁴⁾ show plainly this tension between opposites.

To us it seems difficult to explain this, unless one takes into account that Locke throughout his entire investigation is permeated by a conviction which he never questions, that the process of knowledge in the last resort is determined by innate faculties of such a nature that just the knowledge that is decisive for the well-being of man can be attained with the necessary certainty and scope. Although he is unsuccessful in finding a point of contact between empirical and rational knowledge with the aid of the doctrine of signs, nevertheless in his own view there is true continuity between the different varieties of knowledge, since natural reason in the shape of intuition gives us with absolute certainty the selection from experiential knowledge that is necessary for the existence of man as a thinking and acting being. The doctrine of intuition and the proof of the existence of God in the fourth book are by Locke deliberately opposed to dogmatic speculation concerning the nature of things, just as in the criticism of innate

1) »Wahrhafte Erkenntnis gibt es nur vom — Nicht Wirklichen, während uns über die Wirklichkeit der Dinge nur der flüchtige und wechselnde Sinneseindruck belehrt, der sich nirgends fassen und in strenge allgemeingültige Regeln bannen lässt.» E. Cassirer: Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit. 2. Aufl., Berlin 1911, B. II, p. 260 f.

2) Ibid., p. 272 f.

3) Essay, IV, 10, 3; 2, p. 307 f.

4) Ibid. II, 21, 1 and 2; 1, p. 433 ff. Cf. II, 21, 1; 1, p. 308 ff. See also Campbell Fraser's Ed., Vol. 2, p. 307, note 2.

ideas the natural propensities are to be liberated from the arbitrary maxims of pretentious scholasticism. His object is all the time the same, and he does not realize that the means utilized by him must lead to different results in fulfilling his purpose. Not until the theory of knowledge inaugurated by him is further developed by his successors does it lead to the discovery that a natural religion and natural ethics cannot be vindicated through »the doctrine of signs».

As early as in the Introduction to the Essay and in the criticism of the doctrine of innate ideas, as we have pointed out, Locke refers expressly to natural reason, »the candle of the Lord», as the natural faculty which is the precondition for the knowledge necessary to man. Now we must above all study the relation between natural reason and intuition, the decisive faculty in Locke's application of the doctrine of signs.

Locke points out that the word »reason» has several different meanings. It sometimes means »true and clear principles», sometimes »deductions from those principles», sometimes the cause, »particularly the final cause». His own definition is different from all of these, for by reason he means »a faculty in man». It is the faculty through which man differs from brutes.¹⁾ He now raises the question of the function of this faculty, and his question is so formulated that it gives a short summary of the main contents of the previous investigation in the fourth book. »If general knowledge, as has been shown, consists in a perception of the agreement or disagreement of our own ideas, and the knowledge of the existence of all things without us (except only of a God, whose existence every man may certainly know and demonstrate to himself from his own existence), be had only by our senses, what room is there for the exercise of any other faculty, but *outward sense* and *inward perception*? What need is there of *reason*?»²⁾

Before discussing Locke's answer to this question it is of interest to examine the question itself. As the author points out, he has determined the nature and scope of generally valid knowledge and has contrasted it with knowledge obtained through the senses.

After having defined knowledge as *the perception of the connexion of and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our ideas*³⁾,

¹⁾ Essay, IV, 17, 1; 2, p. 385 f.

²⁾ Ibid. 2; 2, p. 386.

³⁾ Ibid. IV, 1, 2; 2, p. 167.

Locke points out that the agreement or disagreement is of four different kinds: 1. Identity or diversity, 2. Relation, 3. Co-existence or necessary connexion, and 4. Real existence.¹⁾ He then states that »the different clearness of our knowledge» lies in »the different way of perception the mind has of the agreement or disagreement of any of its ideas».²⁾ In speaking of different ways of regarding the inter-relations of ideas, Locke therefore has in mind different degrees of clarity in this perception. Immediate perception or intuition has the highest degree of clarity. When Locke defines intuition he does not mention that this is quite a special faculty differing in nature from »inward perception» in general. He does not set about to determine the nature of intuition as such, in order to separate it from the other faculties of the soul by showing its special attributes. He refers only to the fact of experience, that in certain cases we apprehend with immediate self-evidence a real relation between the ideas entering into consciousness. »For if we will reflect on our own ways of thinking, we will find that sometimes the mind perceives the agreement or disagreement of two ideas *immediately by themselves*, without the intervention of any other: and this I think we may call *intuitive knowledge*.» In what follows, Locke does not give a definition of this immediate knowledge, but instead a kind of psychological description. In intuition, man apprehends truth »as the eye does light». Certainty arises »at the first sight of the ideas together». »This part of knowledge is irresistible, and, like bright sunshine, forces itself immediately to be perceived, as soon as ever the mind turns its view that way; and leaves no room for hesitation, doubt or examination, but the mind is presently filled with the clear light of it.»³⁾

It is manifest that this »description» of intuition as a psychological fact leaves much to be desired. Locke has furthermore viewed intuition both psychologically and epistemologically, for immediately after the description cited he adds: »*It is on this intuition that depends all the certainty and evidence of all our knowledge*». He is so intent on emphasizing that intuition is nothing but a registration of the actual properties and relations of the ideas, that he entirely omits to state the relation between the ideas and intuition. This leads him also to

¹⁾ Ibid. 3—7; 2, pp. 168 ff.

²⁾ Ibid. IV, 2, 1; 2, p. 176.

³⁾ Ibid. 2, p. 176 f.

such a statement as that in all cases where we have intuitive knowledge, »the ideas themselves, by an immediate view, discover their agreement or disagreement one with another».¹⁾

Locke is clearer in his demarcation when he states the extent of intuitive knowledge. This is done in connection with the topic of the four above-cited kinds of agreement or the opposite among our ideas. With regard to identity and diversity »our intuitive knowledge is as far extended as our ideas themselves».²⁾ Regarding the other groups we have intuitive knowledge only concerning the last, and this only in one special case, that of »our own existence».³⁾ However, this limitation of the extent of intuitive knowledge is only relative. In the first place, the simple establishment of identity is not in itself knowledge.⁴⁾ In the second place, the boundary between intuitive and demonstrative knowledge is vague. For in treating of the scope of intuition with regard to the kind of agreement and difference that he calls relation, he expressly maintains that the connection that we can establish here between the ideas cannot really be directly discovered by comparing two ideas, but only through the introduction of a third as an intermediary. But the demonstration thus created is nevertheless based on the intuitive apprehension of the relation between the pairs of ideas themselves. »Now in every step reason makes in demonstrative knowledge, there is an intuitive knowledge of that agreement or disagreement it seeks with the next intermediate idea which it uses as a proof. . . . By which it is plain, that every step in reasoning that produces knowledge, has intuitive certainty ; . . .»⁵⁾ Demonstrative knowledge is thus a series of intuitions. That demonstrative knowledge in itself has not the same truth value as intuition is not due to any difference of type, but only to certain »technical» circumstances. The degree of »sagacity in finding intermediate ideas» plays a very important part, and also the power of retaining the intermediate ideas in the memory, etc.⁶⁾

But if it is thus impossible to draw a definite boundary between in-

¹⁾ Ibid. IV, 1, 9; 2, p. 172 f. Cf. Åke Petzäll: Op. cit., pp. 155 ff.

²⁾ Essay, IV, 3, 8; 2, p. 199; Cf. IV, 2, 1; 2, p. 177.

³⁾ Ibid. IV, 3, 21; 2, p. 212; Cf. IV, 10, 2; 2, p. 307.

⁴⁾ Ibid. IV, 8, 2 ff.; 2, pp. 292 ff.

⁵⁾ Ibid. IV, 2, 7; 2, p. 180 ff.

⁶⁾ Ibid. IV, 3, 18; 2, p. 207. Cf. IV, 2, 3—6; 2, pp. 179 ff.

tuition and reason or reasoning with regard to identity and relation, intuition seems, however, to find quite a special function in Locke's exposition with regard to the kind of agreement or disagreement mentioned by him under the title of »real existence»¹⁾ or »real actual, existence of things».²⁾ Here intuitive knowledge includes, as mentioned above, only one idea, that of our own existence. In his use of the notion of intuition, Locke now goes entirely outside the scope of his own definition, according to which intuition was to mean the apprehension of »the agreement or disagreement of two ideas immediately by themselves». He does not state which ideas are immediately apprehended with regard to their agreement in the intuitive knowledge of the existence of the self. Instead he refers to immediate experience. »As for *our own existence*, we perceive it so plainly and so certainly, that it neither needs nor is capable of any proof.» In close agreement with Descartes, Locke maintains that in the manifestations of consciousness we immediately experience the existence of consciousness itself. »Experience then convinces us, that we have an *intuitive knowledge* of our own existence, and an internal infallible perception that we are. In every act of sensation, reasoning or thinking, we are conscious to ourselves of our own being; and, in this matter, come not short of the highest degree of certainty.»³⁾ Locke accordingly states plainly that it is our experience that convinces us that we have intuitive knowledge of our own existence. It is not sufficient to interpret the place here given to intuition with the help of his earlier description of the ideas of »self» and of »existence». In the second book he defines self as »that conscious thinking thing, . . . which is sensible or conscious of pleasure and pain, capable of happiness or misery, and so is concerned for itself, as far as that consciousness extends».⁴⁾ Existence is a simple idea, which reaches us both through sensation and reflection.⁵⁾ The intuitive certainty of the existence of the ego is however something more than an immediate apprehension of agreement between these two ideas. For it is not a question of the existence of the *idea* of the self. It is the self as an existing thing which is apprehended by in-

1) Ibid. IV, 1, 3; 2, p. 168.

2) Ibid. IV, 3, 21; 2, p. 212.

3) Ibid. IV, 9, 3; 2, p. 304 f.

4) Ibid. II, 27, 17; 1, p. 458 ff.

5) Ibid. II, 7, 7; 1, p. 163.

tuition. The idea of the self on which the proof of God's existence is founded is the idea of »something that actually exists». ¹⁾ But other properties of the self must be added to the real existence, which is necessary for the vindication of God as a real cause. The immediate experience of the self includes its apprehension as a rational entity, and from this is derived the infinite wisdom of God. ²⁾ The starting-point for the proof of God's existence is a kind of immediate experience by the self of its own rational nature.

»Though God has given us no innate ideas of himself; though he has stamped no original characters on our minds, wherein we may read his being; yet having furnished us with those faculties our minds are endowed with, he hath not left himself without witness: since we have sense, perception, and reason, and cannot want a clear proof of him, as long as we carry *ourselves* about us.» ³⁾ When Locke bases his demonstration on the idea of self, »the idea of ourselves, as understanding, rational creatures», ⁴⁾ the basic dogmatic view of innate rationality of our nature breaks through »the doctrine of signs». Intuition becomes a direct perception of ourselves as rational creatures. Reason becomes aware of its own existence through the clear light of intuition.

Returning now to the question in Locke from which we started, namely the relation between reason and »inward perception», we have now thrown light on Locke's method of approach, by examining the import of the summary of the main investigation of the fourth book contained in his question. We have seen that Locke does not make any clear distinction between intuition and reason. Intuition has in Locke's exposition the character of a marginal instance. It is the highest degree of clarity in reason. The latter is the wider term, in-

¹⁾ IV, 10, 2; 2, p. 307.

²⁾ IV, 10, 5, 6; 2, pp. 308 ff.

³⁾ IV, 10, 1: 2, p. 306. This passage in Locke shows the necessity of a correction of the often-recurring »distinction» between Locke's and Leibniz' views on the natural endowment of man, based on the famous passage of the latter: »Nihil est in intellectu, quod non fuerit in sensu, excipe: nisi ipse intellectus», or the passages where Leibniz summarizes his diverging opinion in the phrase »l'âme est innée à elle-même». G. W. Leibniz: Die philosophischen Schriften. Herausgg. von C. J. Gerhardt. Berlin 1875—1890. B. V. p. 100, B. III, p. 479; B. VII, pp. 488, 490, B. V, p. 45.

⁴⁾ Essay, IV, 3, 18; 2., p. 208.

tuition the narrower. Locke's reply to the question concerning the function of reason in the process of knowledge also gives expression to this view. Intuition reaches »but a little way». It is therefore necessary for us with the aid of reason to make intuitive knowledge useful for demonstration, and further to investigate with its help the probable connection between the ideas, when intuitive knowledge is absent. »For, as reason perceives the necessary and indubitable connexion of all the ideas or proofs one to another, in each step of any demonstration that produces knowledge; so it likewise perceives the probable connexion of all the ideas or proofs one to another, in every step of a discourse, to which it will think assent due.»¹⁾ With regard to the first kind of knowledge, Locke accordingly lets reason take the place of intuition.²⁾ In accordance with this view, reason is subdivided into four degrees, which are illustrated in connection with the method of mathematical demonstration. The highest degree is the »finding-out of truths», the second »the regular and methodical disposition of them . . . the third is the perceiving their connexion; and the fourth, a making a right conclusion».³⁾

It is to the third moment, the third degree of reason, that Locke always appeals. It is not only the necessary precondition for every logical demonstration but also the primary faculty, upon which theoretical and practical activity in every being endowed with reason depends in the last resort. Natural reason is all the time assumed by Locke to be the self-evident expression of the purpose of God with man. In the application of the doctrine of signs, intuition stands as the highest expression of natural reason. Locke's aim was to show that our faculties are sufficient for the only really important knowledge, and in the fourth book intuition is the virtual proof of the sufficiency of the faculties. In the proof of the existence of God, which from the point of view of Locke's own aim with the *Essay* is its central point, intuition receives the character of an immediate experience of the rational character of human nature.

¹⁾ IV, 17, 2; 2, p. 387.

²⁾ In this connection he also gives special names to reason to denote its function. »Sagacity» is the power of finding intermediate ideas. »Illation» or »inference» consists in nothing but the perception of the connexion there is between the ideas, in each step of the deduction. Ibid. Cf. IV, 2, 3; 2, p. 179. IV, 3, 18; 2, p. 207.

³⁾ IV, 17, 3; 2, p. 388.

It is on this natural reason that Locke in the following builds his criticism of the syllogism and the schoolmen's system of proof *ex praecognitis et praeconcessis*. The innate power of common sense to see immediately the connection between ideas is the natural precondition for all logical reasoning both in science and in practical life. The Schools have created a pretentious superstructure over natural knowledge, a hindrance for true insight in their syllogistic proofs from maxims.¹⁾ Locke illustrates his contention by an example of a deduction, here as often elsewhere taken from the province of ethics. If from the proposition »Men shall be punished in another world» it is concluded: »Then men can determine themselves», this reasoning can be carried out and expressed in the form of syllogism, but it does not obtain its evidence by and through the syllogism. For the ideas »must be both found out, and the connexion everywhere perceived, before they can rationally be made use of in syllogism . . . ». The true relation between these two propositions is clear to us through our power of apprehending the connection between the ideas entering into these propositions. We are dealing with a »chain of ideas» in which each intermediate idea agrees »on each side with those two it is immediately placed between . . . ».²⁾ It is only through this series of combinations that the ideas of man's punishment and self-determination are bound together. »For here the mind, seeing the connexion there is between the *idea of men's punishment in the other world* and the *idea of God punishing*; between *God punishing* and the *justice of the punishment*; between *justice of punishment* and *guilt*; between *guilt* and a *power to do otherwise*; between a *power to do otherwise* and *freedom*; and between *freedom* and *self-determination*, sees the connexion between *men* and *self-determination*. »³⁾ The maxims or propositions from which all demonstration starts are not revealed through any other faculty than the same natural reason. The maxims, like the syllogisms, can be useful »to silence wranglers», especially concerning religious and moral truths. But nobody can therefore maintain that the Christian religion is built on or derived from such maxims. Religion, which is the most certain of all truths of reason, is founded on a double revelation. »When we find out an idea by whose inter-

¹⁾ IV, 17, 4—8; 2, pp. 388 ff. Cf. IV, 8, 1—20; 2, pp. 266 ff.

²⁾ IV, 17, 4; 2, p. 394.

³⁾ Ibid.

vention we discover the connexion of two others, this is a revelation from God to us by the voice of reason: for we then come to know a truth that we did not know before. When God declares any truth to us, this is a revelation to us by the voice of his Spirit, and we are advanced in our knowledge. But in neither of these do we receive our light or knowledge from maxims. But in the one, the things themselves afford it: and we see the truth in them by perceiving their agreement or disagreement. In the other, God himself affords it immediately to us: and we see the truth of what he says in his unerring veracity.»¹⁾ This is the basic theme which entirely determines Locke's apology for the religion of natural reason. The natural reason of man can and must judge in religious matters, for the revelation and natural reason are from the same source. »*Credo, quia impossibile est . . .* would prove a very ill rule for men to choose their opinions or religion by.»²⁾ He who blindly believes in authority does not show »the obedience due to his Maker, who would have him use those discerning faculties he has given him, to keep him out of mistake and error.»³⁾ Natural reason places each man in a position to find the truth necessary to him, and it is also the ultimate tribunal in all the highest questions. »*Reason must be our last judge and guide in everything.*»⁴⁾ Traditional revelation cannot be placed above reason as an authority. Locke stresses this with obstinate consistency. It is true that revelation is »*natural reason enlarged*»,⁵⁾ but nevertheless it belongs to natural reason to decide whether the immediate divine revelation really is divine.⁶⁾ By raising natural reason to the position of ultimate judge of all knowledge, Locke makes this reason a guardian of natural religion, its defender against sectarian dogmatism. His own rationalistic dogmatism is opposed to the dogmatism of his time which he combats, and his long defence of common sense culminates in an emphatic profession of faith in reason: »*Nothing that is contrary to, and inconsistent with, the clear and self-evident dictates of reason, has a right to*

¹⁾ IV, 8, 11; 2, p. 279.

²⁾ IV, 18, 11; 2, p. 427.

³⁾ IV, 17, 24; 2, p. 413.

⁴⁾ IV, 19, 14; 2, p. 438.

⁵⁾ IV, 19, 4; 2, p. 431.

⁶⁾ IV, 18, 10; 2, p. 425.

be urged or assented to as a matter of faith, wherein reason hath nothing to do.»¹⁾

In the application of the doctrine of signs, in the fourth book, Locke has accordingly raised the natural faculty from which he started out to the position of highest judge in demonstrative science as well as in natural religion and practical morals. The basic theme that found expression in the introduction and that played a part in the criticism of the doctrine of innate ideas, dominates the entire exposition in the fourth book. The doctrine of signs is transformed into a vindication of natural reason as the basis for *«the proper science and business of mankind in general».*²⁾ Locke endeavours to eliminate the opposition between what is empirical and what is rational by referring to an immediate experience of the actual existence of natural reason. On this dogmatically maintained intuitive experience he bases the *πρακτική*, to which the doctrine of signs was intended as a preliminary.

Up to the present we have in this chapter examined principally the relation between theory of knowledge and practical philosophy in the Essay from the point of view of the faculties. We shall now look at the same subject from the point of view of the truth value of ideas.

As we have seen, the contents of the moral consciousness of man are by Locke arranged in three different groups of ideas. Firstly, we have the simple ideas acquired by us through sensation and reflection, e. g. pleasure and pain. Moral good and evil are ideas of relation. Human actions are referred to the group called mixed modes.³⁾ In his application of *«the doctrine of signs»* Locke is concerned above all with the third group of ideas. He returns again and again to the necessity of thoroughly investigating and defining the ideas that represent human actions: *«For action being the great business of mankind, and the whole matter about which all laws are conversant, . . . »* etc. Unless these ideas are rightly defined and named, *«laws could*

¹⁾ Ibid. pp. 425 ff.

²⁾ See above, p. 57.

³⁾ See above, p. 47 f.

be but ill made, or vice and disorders repressed.»¹⁾ Locke finds a triple process in the genesis of the complex ideas that he calls mixed modes. They arise »(1) By experience and *observation* of things themselves: thus, by seeing two men wrestle or fence, we get the idea of wrestling and fencing. (2) By *invention*, or voluntary putting together of several simple ideas in our own minds: so he that first invented printing or etching, had an idea of it in his mind before it ever existed. (3) Which is the most usual way, by *explaining the names* of actions we never saw, or motions we cannot see; and by enumerating, and thereby, as it were, setting before our imaginations all those ideas which go to the making them up, and are the constituent parts of them.»²⁾ Locke places considerable emphasis on the view that these complex ideas consist solely of simple ideas acquired by us through sensation and reflection. A closer investigation of what binds such a group of simple ideas together in a unit reveals that the name here plays a decisive part. The combination of ideas »has its unity from an act of the mind, combining those several simple ideas together, and considering them as one complex one, consisting of those parts; and the mark of this union, or that which is looked on generally to complete it, is one *name* given to that combination».³⁾

A subject to which Locke often recurs is the distinction between the ideas of mixed modes and the ideas of substances, with regard to their relation to extra-mental reality. Into the latter there enters an element that is not present in the former. The idea of substance is not only a combination of simple ideas, but entails in itself a reference to a certain something, a substratum, of which we however have no idea. »The idea then we have, to which we give the *general* name substance, being nothing but the supposed, but unknown, support of those qualities we find existing, which we imagine cannot subsist *sine re substante*, without something to support them, we call that support *substantia*; . . .».⁴⁾

When Locke endeavours to elucidate the distinction between ideas of mixed modes and ideas of substances, he has recourse to a procedure which he himself calls a »scholastic way» and for which he

¹⁾ Essay, II, 22, 10; I, p. 387.

²⁾ II, 22, 9; I, p. 385.

³⁾ II, 22, 4; I, p. 383.

⁴⁾ II, 23, 2; I, p. 392. See also the whole of Ch. 23, and III, 6; 2, pp. 56 ff.

apologizes, but which seems to him appropriate, since the terms utilized by him are in general use. In speaking of substances one presupposes a *real essence*, which determines the *species*. In other words, it is presupposed that the properties belonging to a thing are determined by the essence of the thing itself. »But in substances, wherein a real essence, distinct from the nominal, is supposed to constitute, determine, and bound the species, the extent of the general word is very uncertain; because, not knowing this real essence, we cannot know what is, or what is not of that species; and consequently, what may or what may not with certainty be affirmed of it.»¹⁾ It is therefore plain, »that substances afford matter of very little *general knowledge*». . . Here we must confine ourselves to the observation of the actual connection between the simple ideas, but we cannot draw absolutely valid general conclusions from such observations, since we can never reach that which in the last resort determines the combination of the ideas. »*Experience here must teach me what reason cannot: . . .*»²⁾ It is possible that by a consistent experimental method we shall be able to penetrate deeper in our knowledge of nature. We must, however, remain content with probable knowledge in this field, and this fact, says Locke, »makes me suspect that *natural philosophy is not capable of being made a science*».³⁾ Instead, the knowledge natural to man is the kind which is built up from ideas lying entirely within the province of ideas themselves.⁴⁾ It is the knowledge »where the nominal essence is kept to, as the boundary of each species»,⁵⁾ where accordingly nominal and real essence coincide. »All our complex ideas, *except those of substances*, being archetypes of the mind's own making, not intended to be the copies of anything, nor referred to the existence of anything, as to their originals, cannot want any conformity necessary to real knowledge.»⁶⁾ Real and general knowledge can be attained through these ideas, because they do not refer to anything lying absolutely outside of the reach of our faculties. If the ideas »that are the real as well as nominal essences of their species» are

¹⁾ IV, 6, 4; 2, pp. 253 ff.

²⁾ IV, 12, 9; 2, p. 348. Cf. *ibid.* 12; 2, p. 352.

³⁾ IV, 12, 10; 2, p. 350.

⁴⁾ See above, p. 000.

⁵⁾ IV, 6, 4; 2, p. 253.

⁶⁾ IV, 4, 5; 2, p. 230.

treated with the method known to us from mathematics, then we can extend our demonstrative knowledge far beyond the boundaries that are ordinarily conceived to limit such knowledge.¹⁾ »This gave me the confidence to advance that conjecture . . . that *morality* is capable of demonstration as well as mathematics.»²⁾

This favourite theme of Locke's is thoroughly discussed in the third and fourth books of the Essay. In the third book the subject is brought up in connection with the problem of language.

The question of the office of language in the formation of concepts and the process of acquiring knowledge has forced itself upon Locke in the course of his investigations. He himself tells us that he had no idea that a study of words would be necessary, when he started to work on his Essay.³⁾ He requests the reader to have patience with him, if his treatment should seem altogether too elaborate, but that he had found it necessary to examine the subject thoroughly, since this line of thought seemed to be »new and a little out of the way . . .».⁴⁾ He has two principal objects in view. Firstly, he wishes to stress the necessity of defining the exact meaning of the words as signs, especially of words standing for ideas within the province of morals. Secondly, he wishes to determine the actual function of words in the creation of ideas. He regards himself as having good reasons for censuring those »who make not their discourses about *moral* things very clear and distinct. For since the precise signification of the names of mixed modes, or, which is all one, the real essence of each species is to be known, they being not of nature's, but man's making, it is a great negligence and perverseness to discourse of moral things with uncertainty and obscurity; . . .»⁵⁾ The current confusion with regard to moral ideas is accordingly not due to our dealing with objects lying outside the scope of knowledge. The many conflicting opinions must be referred to other causes. Words are used without knowledge of their meaning, the same word is associated with various complexes of ideas, through artificial definitions, words are given meanings that make them useless as signs of ideas, etc. All this calls forth

¹⁾ IV, 12, 7; 2, p. 347.

²⁾ IV, 12, 8; 2, p. 347.

³⁾ III, 9, 21; 2, p. 118.

⁴⁾ III, 5, 16; 2, p. 54.

⁵⁾ III, 11, 15; 2, p. 156.

from Locke very bitter criticisms of the moral speculation of his time. He points out that »the Schoolmen and Metaphysicians (under which I think the disputing natural and moral philosophers of these latter ages may be comprehended)»¹⁾ should bear a considerable part of the blame for having caused the sound judgment of reason to be replaced by empty playing with words, which has »if not destroyed, yet in a great measure rendered useless, these two great rules, religion and justice».²⁾ The scholastic speculation would seem to be the immediate object of this rather vague criticism. But his own attempt to cure the confusion shows clearly that he himself had not succeeded in emancipating himself from this speculation. For one finds that, although he attempts to apply the method of empirical observation, yet he finds place for a dogmatic nominalism very similar to that of the »natural philosophers» of his age, and in doing so is found to be dependent on scholastic tradition.

The names of mixed modes and of relations are treated by Locke in the same way, and he shows that this is possible because the relation between name and idea is fairly similar in both cases. A more detailed explanation would naturally have been in order here, but Locke is so absorbed by the mixed modes that the ideas of relations are not taken into account.³⁾ And it is not always clear whether Locke really makes any distinction between abstract and concrete, between notion and idea. In spite of all these obscurities, however, the meaning and the aim of the investigation are quite clear.

According to Locke, language has a double function. In the first place, with words as signs it should clarify and arrange the contents of our consciousness for our own use, and in the second place, using words as signs it shall »communicate our thoughts to others».⁴⁾ Words are signs for signs. As such they have different functions, according to the nature of the ideas which they represent. Locke sees this function from the above-mentioned standpoint of the *essence*. The introductory definitions are of a scholastic character. »Between the *nominal essence* and the *name* there is so near a connexion, that the name

¹⁾ III, 10, 2; 2, p. 123.

²⁾ III, 10, 12; 2, p. 131. Cf. III, 9, 9; 2, pp. 108 ff. III, 10, 4; 2, pp. 124 ff. III, 10, 3—13; 2, pp. 123 ff.

³⁾ III, 5, 16; 2, pp. 53 ff.

⁴⁾ III, 10, 1; 2, p. 104. Cf. III, 10, 2; 2, pp. 1—13.

of any sort of things cannot be attributed to any particular being but what has this essence, whereby it answers that abstract idea whereof that name is the sign.»¹⁾ We have seen that Locke by *real essence* means the individual nature of the substances, which in a manner inaccessible to our knowledge determines the properties of things. Now the nominal essence is placed in opposition to the real essence. Locke maintains that the term *essence* was originally used in the sense in which he himself uses the term *real essence*. This original meaning has gradually been shifted in so far as the word has in scholastic terminology been associated with the expressions *genus* and *species*.²⁾ These latter terms have also been made to stand for something really existing. General notions themselves have been given real existence by uniting them with the notion of essence. Through this, the meaning of the original concept of essence has become too wide. All essence has become real essence. According to Locke, this kind of realism of universals can be removed by considering how the general concepts are acquired. They are formed by and by through abstraction from concrete ideas. Our 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 existence. By this way of abstraction they are made capable of representing more individuals than one; each of which having in it a conformity to that abstract idea, is (as we call it) of that sort».³⁾

Locke attempts to show by a number of examples⁴⁾ that all of our abstract ideas are created through a process of this kind. When we speak of an *essence* in connection with general notions, with *genus* and *species*, this can mean nothing except that the term essence here stands for the abstract idea that is denoted by the general name, »the essence of each *genus*, or sort, comes to be nothing but that abstract idea which the general, or sortal . . . name stands for».⁵⁾ By the *no-*

¹⁾ III, 3, 16; 2, p. 27.

²⁾ III, 3, 15; 2, p. 26. Locke's criticism of scholasticism is here, as often, rather superficial, and he does not on the whole penetrate beyond the terminological outwork. A purely historical estimate of his criticism of scholasticism would be of considerable interest, but would here take us too far afield.

³⁾ III, 3, 6; 2, p. 16 f.

⁴⁾ III, 3, 7—15; 2, pp. 17 ff.

⁵⁾ III, 3, 15; 2, p. 27.

nominal essence of a species Locke accordingly means the general idea gained through abstraction, which is joined to the name of the species.¹⁾

This definition of the nominal essence plays an important part in the determination of the nature of mixed modes and their function in the formation of ethical concepts. Locke emphasizes above all that »the abstract ideas, or, if you please, the essences, of the several species of mixed modes, are *made by the understanding . . .*».²⁾ It is also emphasized that these essences are »*made very arbitrarily, made without patterns, or reference to any real existence*».³⁾ Ideas such as adultery, sacrilege, incest, etc. arise through a voluntary collection of ideas. Three different phases enter into their genesis: »First, It [the mind] chooses a certain number [of ideas]; Secondly, It gives them connexion, and makes them into one idea; Thirdly, It ties them together by a name.»⁴⁾ But even if it is true that the mind makes these combinations arbitrarily, still this procedure is not entirely capricious. When Locke insists so strongly on the factor of freedom, the »free choice» of the mind, he does so in order to make it plain that the combination of ideas does not depend on the actually observed reality.⁵⁾ Complex ideas or essences of mixed modes »are not made at random». They are »always suited to the end for which abstract ideas are made», i. e. »they are always made for the convenience of communication, which is the chief end of language». Therefore there are not created a random number of mixed modes with varying contents. A natural selection takes place, which is determined by the needs of practical life. Only such ideas are formed and named as men find »they have occasion to have names for, in the ordinary occurrence of their affairs».⁶⁾ This

1) »To conclude. This is that which in short I would say, viz. that all the great business of *genera* and *species*, and their *essences*, amounts to no more but this: — That men making abstract ideas, and settling them in their minds with names annexed to them, do thereby enable themselves to consider things, and discourse of them, as it were in bundles, for the easier and readier improvement and communication of their knowledge, which would advance but slowly were their words and thoughts confined only to particulars.» III, 3, 20; 2, p. 31.

2) III, 5, 2; 2, p. 43.

3) III, 5, 3; 2, p. 43 f.

4) III, 5, 4; 2, p. 44.

5) III, 5, 6; 2, p. 46. III, 6, 8; 2, p. 63, III, 6, 31; 2, p. 82., III, 6, 35; 2, p. 85., III, 9, 7; 2, p. 107., III, 10, 33; 2, p. 145., III, 11, 9; 2, p. 152.

6) III, 5, 6 och 7; 2, pp. 45—48.

is illustrated by examples taken from the province of the formation of moral concepts. Another proof of his contention is found by Locke in the fact that a certain people can for special reasons create a concept represented by a word, for which there is no corresponding word in the language of another people.¹⁾

To the word itself as the sign for the ideas, as the name of the complex of ideas, is ascribed a very important function. »The near relation there is between *species*, *essences*, and their *general name*, at least in mixed modes, will further appear when we consider, that it is the name that seems to preserve those essences, and give them their lasting duration.» Since these ideas have no prototypes, no constant objects of observation which could serve to perpetuate them, it must be the name that holds the combination together. »Though therefore it be the mind that makes the collection, it is the name which is as it were the knot that ties them fast together.»²⁾ Since we have seen that the essence of these ideas is nominal, it lies close at hand for him to see in the word not only the knot that keeps the combination together, but also something more important. The name is given not only a preserving but also a *constitutive* function. In accordance with the purpose of names, that of making communication possible regarding the ideas that further the life of men in societies, certain words are formed as signs for these ideas. When the combination of word and idea is finished, »then is the essence, as it were, established, and the species looked on as complete».³⁾ In certain instances, according to Locke, the name has directly *created* the essence of the idea. Such is the case with moral names, after they have been unequivocally *defined*. In connection with the necessity of defining the words used in the discussion of moral subjects, he emphasizes »That where God or any other law-maker, hath defined any moral names, there they have made the essence of that species to which that name belongs . . .».⁴⁾

Mixed modes, or the ideas we deal with in morality, are accordingly characterized by the fact that they are created by the mind in accordance with our practical needs. They are not dependent on reality

¹⁾ III, 5, 8; 2, p. 48 f.

²⁾ III, 5, 10; 2, p. 50.

³⁾ III, 5, 11; 2, p. 51.

⁴⁾ IV, 4, 10; 2, p. 235.

lying outside of the mind. The name represents their essence so definitively that Locke seems inclined in certain cases to let the name, in so far as it can be clearly defined, be of decisive importance for the nature of the idea. The result of all this is, that although he rejects the realism of universals in the sense in which concepts are regarded as entities existing in themselves, he nevertheless ascribes to mixed modes a certain form of existence by giving the nominal essence such a predominant place. They exist *de facto* as contents of consciousness constant in type. Their nominal essence *becomes* a real essence. This line of thought is fundamental for Locke in his vindication of the demonstrative certainty of ethics. »For the ideas that ethics are conversant about, being all real essences, and such as I imagine have a discoverable connexion and agreement one with another; so far as we can find their habitudes and relations, so far we shall be possessed of certain, real, and general truths; and I doubt not but, if a right method were taken, a great part of morality might be made out with that clearness, that could leave, to a considering man, no more reason to doubt, than he could have to doubt of the truth of propositions in mathematics, which have been demonstrated to him.»¹⁾ In vindicating the demonstrative character of ethics, he treats mixed modes as though they were clearly defined and constant concepts. The nominal essence is without hesitation called real. It is, however, evident that the description of the genesis of mixed modes given by Locke in his investigation of the relation between words and ideas cannot explain this reference to concepts that are unequivocal in themselves.

Locke attempts to find a transition between the description given by him of the origin of the concrete moral concepts and the application made by him of the abstract moral concepts as units of meaning in a demonstrative moral science. That which brings the two together is the *definition*. After having spoken extensively of the confusion of notions in the province of morals he points to the remedies for this condition. He emphasizes that »definition is the only way whereby the precise meaning of moral words can be known; and yet a way whereby their meaning may be known certainly, and without leaving any room for any contest about it.»²⁾ This possibility of defining mo-

¹⁾ IV, 12, 8; 2, p. 347.

²⁾ III, 11, 17; 2, p. 157.

ral words is in Locke's view supported by the fact that they are signs for combinations of ideas that have in their entirety been created within consciousness itself. It is possible for man to attain *exact* knowledge of the ideas belonging to a certain group. »For they being combinations of several ideas that the mind of man has arbitrarily put together, without reference to any archetypes, men may, if they please, exactly know the ideas that go to each composition, and so both use these words in a certain and undoubted signification, and perfectly declare, when there is occasion, what they stand for.»¹⁾ The circumstance that these ideas have no outer archetypes leads Locke to the conclusion that they are *archetypes in the mind*, and on this he builds his supposition that they can be defined with perfect exactness. The prior condition for the definition is that the nominal essence of the ideas becomes a real essence in our consciousness. They are constant things in consciousness. The knowledge concerning them is real and general, they can be objectively determined in the definition, because they are objects in the mind. »Upon this ground it is that I am bold to think that morality is capable of demonstration, as well as mathematics: since the precise real essence of the things moral words stand for may be perfectly known, and so the congruity and incongruity of the things themselves be certainly discovered; in which consists perfect knowledge.»²⁾

When Locke desires to explain how the definition shall be made, he always points to mathematics. This science is the model of all demonstrative sciences, since the concepts used have been exactly defined, and the interrelations of the concepts are understood with perfect evidence. This, according to Locke, is by no means »the privilege of the ideas of number, extension, and figure alone», for by a thorough testing of the ideas entering into our complex moral concepts we can know their necessary characteristics with the same degree of clarity as in the case of a geometrical concept, and we can therefore judge of the connections between the concepts with the same degree of self-evidence as in geometry.³⁾ The reason for the sharp

¹⁾ III, 11, 15; 2, p. 156.

²⁾ III, 11, 16; 2, p. 156.

³⁾ IV, 2, 9; 2, p. 182. IV, 3, 18; 2, p. 208, IV, 4, 7; 2, p. 232. IV, 12, 8; 2, p. 347. As a typical example of Locke's way of thinking, the following may be cited: »Where there is no property there is no injustice, is a proposition as

division that has commonly been drawn between mathematics and ethics is that the former has certain technical advantages in its method, which seem to give it a special place among the sciences. Mathematics has a system of symbols which give expression to the meaning of the concepts far more adequately than words. Numbers, figures and diagrams are direct sensible representations far superior to words. The mathematical symbols have also in their representative function a constancy denied to words. A geometrical proof can be varied and repeated with the aid of diagrams and numbers without any change in the character of the symbols. »This cannot be thus done in moral ideas: . . . we have nothing but words to express them by; which, though when written they remain the same, yet the ideas they stand for may change in the same man; and it is very seldom that they are not different in different persons.»¹⁾ Another circumstance that seems to impede the use of the mathematical method in ethics is that moral ideas as a rule are more complex than those of mathematics, from which it follows, firstly that more difficulties are encountered in the attempt to determine »the precise collection of simple ideas», and secondly that it is by no means easy to »retain those precise combinations so exactly and perfectly as is necessary . . .».²⁾ The remarkable fact is that Locke admits all these difficulties, that he is also conscious that »wrong names in moral discourses breed usually more disorder, because they are not so easily rectified as in mathematics».³⁾ but that he nevertheless upholds the applicability of the mathematical method. Locke has not attempted to show how moral ideas and their names shall be treated in order that they may be handled

certain as any demonstration in Euclid: for the idea of property being a right to anything, and the idea to which the name 'injustice' is given being the invasion or violation of that right, it is evident that these ideas, being thus established, and these names annexed to them, I can as certainly know this proposition to be true, as that a triangle has three angles equal to two right ones. Again: 'No government allows absolute liberty', » The idea of government being the establishment of society upon certain rules or laws which require conformity to them; and the idea of absolute liberty being for any one to do whatever he pleases; I am as capable of being certain of the truth of this proposition as of any in the mathematics. IV, 3, 18; 2, p. 208 ff.

¹⁾ IV, 3, 19; 2, p. 209. Cf. IV, 2, 10; 2, p. 183.

²⁾ IV, 3, 19; 2, pp. 209 ff.

³⁾ IV, 4, 9; 2, p. 234.

in the same methodical way as the mathematical ideas. He contents himself with the assertion that the moral and the geometrical ideas are both »archetypes of the mind's own making», but neglects to explain how moral ideas can attain the self-evident character of mathematical knowledge. This is connected with the fact that Locke had no desire to make a clear distinction between theoretical ethics and practical morals. Although he intimates that »the truth and certainty of moral discourses abstracts from the lives of men, and the existence of those virtues in the world whereof they treat;»¹⁾ and he is anxious to establish the fact that real truth is only founded »in the habitudes and relation of *abstract ideas*»,²⁾ still the abstraction Locke has in mind here is not the exact determination of concepts through definitions. He gives expression in these phrases to the principal thought on which the special position of the mixed modes and the demonstrability of ethics are based. Abstract means independent of things in the outer world. What joins concrete and abstract together, practical morals and ethical demonstration, is here as always intuition, the expression of the rationality of human nature. In order to attain an adequate idea of what is called justice, men »need but know the combination of ideas that are put together in their own minds».³⁾ This putting together is the power of combination of natural reason. He therefore includes among the prior conditions for the demonstrability of morals the primary objects of knowledge of natural reason, the idea of God and the idea of self, which »afford such foundations of our duty and rules of action as might place *morality* amongst the *sciences capable of demonstration*: wherein . . . from self-evident propositions . . . the measures of right and wrong may be made out . . .».⁴⁾ These self-evident propositions are not innate ideas or maxims found through the niceties of abstract speculation, which demand recognition on the ground that they cannot be questioned. »But wheresoever we can suppose such a creature as man is, endowed with such faculties, and thereby furnished with such ideas as we have, we must conclude, he must needs, when he applies his thoughts to the consideration of his ideas, know the truth of certain propositions that will arise from

¹⁾ IV, 4, 8; 2, p. 233.

²⁾ IV, 12, 7; 2, p. 346.

³⁾ III, 11, 17; 2, p. 158.

⁴⁾ IV, 3, 18; 2, p. 208.

the agreement or disagreement which he will perceive in his own ideas.»¹⁾

In conclusion, we may now summarize in a few words the content of this chapter, seen in its connection with what has preceded it.

We ended our exposition with an account of Locke's treatment of his favourite theme — the mathematical demonstrability of ethics.

Locke has, however, not written a treatise on ethics *more geometrico*. When his friend and admirer Molyneux urged him pressingly to take up this work, he avoids giving a definite answer.²⁾ He has contented himself with showing, by and through a critical study of knowledge, that the ethical knowledge that is indispensable to every man must satisfy the highest demands for certainty.

We have attempted to throw light on the relation between epistemology and ethics in Locke's effort to achieve this purpose. If we now glance back at the survey given here, we must above all note that the statement of the epistemological question from the very beginning was determined by the author's interest in moral philosophy. Locke's inquiry concerns the scope and validity of a certain definite kind of knowledge. He asks himself what kind of knowledge corresponds to our natural faculties, i. e. natural reason as an expression for the purpose of God with man.

This starting-point can be fully understood only if it is seen against the background of the general philosophic views and the ideals of method prevalent in his time. The dogmatic belief in natural reason and in the possibility of applying the mathematical method in moral science is expressed in a manner that seems to have been inspired by his contemporaries. Locke finds in Pufendorf the most acceptable expressions for the view he shares. In opposition to the doctrine of innate ideas and to metaphysical speculation concerning what is good in itself, Pufendorf appeals to the right of critical examination on the part of natural reason, and maintains at the same time the applicability of the mathematical method to morality with expressions that seem to have served directly as models for Locke. To Pufendorf as to

¹⁾ IV, 11, 14; 2, p. 339 ff. Cf. IV, 4, 7; 2, p. 232., IV, 5, 11; 2, p. 249.

²⁾ Campbell Fraser has in his edition collated the most important passages in Locke's and Molyneux' correspondence concerning this matter. Vol. 1, p. 65, note 2.

Locke, the divine sanction of the natural moral precepts are a necessary condition for their validity.

With regard to the question of method, however, Locke has received stronger influences from another quarter in the scientific life of his time, namely from experimental science. It is with the aid of the procedure he has learnt in the school of Boyle and Sydenham that he proposes to show what our natural faculties really can accomplish. Through observation and analysis of the actual constituents of the contents of consciousness and of its modes of reaction, he aims at proving that the true end of our natural faculties is the knowledge of God and of duty.

Influenced principally by these trends, Locke attempts to vindicate a dogmatically rationalistic type of ethics through an empirical critique of knowledge. For this reason, even the introductory »clearing of the ground» in the criticism of the doctrine of innate ideas is not a radical refutation of traditional dogmatism, but an indirect appeal to the only basis of validity of knowledge, namely the notion of God, which is the object of knowledge that above all others corresponds to our natural faculties.

In what follows it becomes evident that the task assigned by Locke to the »historical, plain method» in the epistemological attempt to demonstrate the ethics based on the notion of God cannot be completed. In the empirical analysis of the contents of consciousness, the notion of God and its sanction find no room. Moral valuation and rational voluntary decision are lost from sight in the attempt to base morality on the simple ideas pleasure and pain. This becomes most plain in the unsurmounted antinomies in Locke's doctrine of will.

But for Locke himself the contradictions lose their force through his belief that a connection between what is empirical and what is rational is to be found in the intuition of self. In intuition, the ego becomes aware of itself as a rational existing being. Intuition is natural reason clarified to the highest degree.

Locke has expounded »the doctrine of signs» with the help of »the historical, plain method». Afterwards, when he applies the doctrine in the manner studied by us in this last chapter, the dogmatical tendency breaks through completely. The reason for this is that he now carries out the principal aim of his epistemology — that of demonstrating the special disposition of the faculties for the kind of knowledge that in his view is of supreme importance. Reason is here given the

central place, but Locke believes that he remains within the boundaries indicated for him by his method. The classification made by him of ideas with regard to their relation to reality and general validity, and which we have seen to be a condition for the rational demonstrability of ethics, is in his view a consequence of the »doctrine of signs«. The starting-point of the empirical investigation was that all our ideas are acquired by us through sensation and reflection. And the aim of the author was to show that our faculties make the selection from this material given by experience and elaborate it in a manner that guarantees absolute knowledge of God and duty. In natural reason, in the power to grasp the connection between the ideas, we possess a guarantee for the correctness of the selection and elaboration. Locke starts from experience and attempts to prove by an empirical method that such experience must lead to rational knowledge of general validity concerning the abstract and unambiguous notions of normative ethics.

