

LOCKE'S DISGUISED SPINOZISM*

Wim Klever

Emeritus Professor Erasmus University Rotterdam

A torrent of textual evidence is adduced in this article by which it is indisputably demonstrated that Locke was not only much influenced by Spinoza's works, but that he also adopted and processed all the main items of his physics, epistemology, ethics and political theory. He was already fascinated by Spinoza's renewal of Descartes' philosophy when he was still an intimate and collaborator of Boyle in Oxford. Placed next to the source text the great number of his quotations and crypto-quotations from Spinoza's text not only bring about a new and even revolutionary interpretation of his work, but lead also to a better understanding of the physical position of the Dutch philosopher. Like Van den Enden must be considered (since the discovery of his political writings in 1990) as the philosophical master of Spinoza, so we have from now on to consider Spinoza as the real philosophical master of Locke who, fearing for his life, so ably covered and disingenuously denied his roots, that apart from a few clairvoyant contemporaries not one scholar of the three past centuries remarked his bloodline.

Secondary literature sees no influence of Spinoza's revolutionary philosophy on John Locke and does not even discuss the absence of such a relation. Symptomatic is the recent comprehensive and voluminous biography of Roger Woolhouse, in which Spinoza's name does not appear in the text or in the index of names.¹ In its half-a-century-old forerunner, Maurice Cranston's biography, the name 'Spinoza' is only once mentioned, but in a rather accidental way.² Apart from this author's contribution to a conference on *Spinoza around 1700* and abstracting from the customary surveys and superficial comparisons in academic textbooks of the history of philosophy, there doesn't exist any systematical treatment that discusses the philosophical relationship between the two or tries to explain their eventual opposition.³

This fact is rather curious, because it is not unknown among scholars that Locke, Spinoza's exact contemporary,⁴ was already in 1664 fascinated by his unorthodox work *Principia Philosophiae Renati des Cartes more geometrico demonstrata* (1663). He wrote in his notebook: "*Spinoza / Quid ab eo scriptum praeter partem 1 & 2 principiorum Cartesii. 4o. 63. Meyer / Ludovicus. Quid ab eo scriptum*".⁵ When Meyer's *Philosophia S. Scripturae Intepres. Exercitatio Paradoxda* appeared three years later (1666), it was bought by Locke. It is well established that Spinoza's other works, *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (1670) and *Opera Posthuma* (1677), were acquired immediately after their publication. And they were not only obligatory ornaments of his rich library. He thoroughly studied them as is testified by his summary of an important passage in TTP ch.1 and his annotations to a couple of propositions

¹ Roger Woolhouse, *Locke. A Biography* (Cambridge UP 2007). * I wish to thank Jonathan Israel, Victor Nuovo, Emanuela Scribano, Paul Schuurman, J. R. Milton, Matthew Stewart, Rebecca Goldstein, John Attig and my wife Marianne for their invaluable assistance, advice and moral support on the long way to this article.

² Maurice Cranston, *John Locke. A Biography* (Oxford UP 1957, reprint 1985). "Political refugees were accepted as willingly in Amsterdam as religious nonconformists; and although it is true that Locke's exact contemporary Spinoza was driven from the city, his persecutors were his fellow Jews and not the city burghers" (231-232).

³ Wim Klever, "Slocke, alias Locke in Spinozistic Profile", in Wiep van Bunge and Wim Klever (eds), *Disguised and overt Spinozism around 1700* (Leiden: Brill 1986) 235-261. Jonathan Israel's *Radical Enlightenment. Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford 2001) is no exception, since in this work the opposition between Spinoza and Locke (radical enlightenment versus moderate enlightenment) is, though frequently stated, more comparatively touched upon than systematically discussed.

⁴ Both were born in 1632.

⁵ Bodl. MSS Locke f. 27, p. 5: "Spinoza, what else did he write apart from parts I & II of the Principles of Descartes, 4o. 63; Lodewijk Meyer: is there anything written by him?" Meyer, Spinoza's friend and cooperator, wrote the introduction to this work on Spinoza's special request. He explained therein that Spinoza disagreed with Descartes on many points and also mentioned three of them. I thank the scholars J.R. Milton and P. Schurrman for bringing the manuscript under my attention. The passage is also quoted by R. Klibansky and J. Gough in their edition of John Locke, *Epistola de Tolerantia / A Letter on Toleration* (Oxford 1968), p. xxxi. Their remark to this quote is telling: "Considering how profoundly different Locke's approach to philosophical problems was from that of Spinoza, his manifest interest in Spinoza's writings is somewhat surprising. [...] He expressed his intention of finding out what other works there were by this author".

in *Ethica* I.⁶ He defended himself against bishop Stillingfleet's accusation of his 'Spinozism' by the well known phrase: "I am not so well read in Hobbes or Spinoza to be able to say what were their opinions in this matter" [of how to think about Revelation as imagination], but he had reason enough for a disingenuous rejection of any relation whatsoever with this 'decried name'!

The early reception of Locke's work was not so unambiguous about the sincerity of his denial as the later assessments of his position in the history of philosophy up to this day. William Carroll, a competent linguist and philosopher, published in 1706 *A Dissertation upon the Tenth Chapter of the Fourth Book of Mr. Locke's Essay Concerning Humane Understanding*, in which

he charges Locke with teaching 'Spinoza's Doctrine' throughout the *Essay*, but of 'finally and completely' establishing Spinoza's 'Hypothesis' in the chapter entitled 'Of our knowledge of the Existence of a God'. The hypothesis in question is "the Eternal Existence of one only Cogitative and Extended Material Substance, differently modified in the whole World, that is, the Eternal Existence of the whole World itself".⁷

Being convinced of the correctness of Carroll's judgment by personal study of his dissertation, I was, on my turn, surprised by Brown's argument *ex auctoritate* for dismissing it, while not being in line with the main stream: "Locke and Spinoza have been so long represented as diametrically opposites that scholars in the twentieth century have found it difficult to take Carroll's charge seriously".⁸ Carroll was in good company. A famous professor at the Frisian university, Ruard Andala, made his students publicly defend the thesis that "*non pauca etiam Lockii [...] Spinozistica fundamenta*" (Locke's philosophy is built on many Spinozistic foundations).⁹ For Leibniz Locke is really just a feeble imitation of Spinoza. "Leibniz's unstated intuition that Locke was something of Spinozist, incidentally, is probably more insightful than is generally allowed in modern interpretations of the great empiricist's work".¹⁰ And did Locke not closely 'collaborate', in the late nineties, with Van Limborch and the Spinozist De Volder in order to fabricate for Spinoza's friend, the Amsterdam burgomaster Johannes Hudde, an adequate formula for the question of God's uniqueness, that is the unity of thinking and extension, mind and matter? On the strict condition that it would be kept secret Locke subscribed to De Volder's paraphrase of Spinoza's theory that God is the infinite thinking thing or substance (*rem vel substantiam cogitantem eamque [...] infinitam*), because "it is impossible that thinking is not thinking of matter".¹¹ Rebecca Newberger

⁶The following abbreviations are used in this article. TTP for *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, PPC/CM for *Principia Philosophica Renati des Cartes* with its appendix *Cogitata Metaphysica*. TP for *Tractatus Politicus*, TIE for *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione*, KV for *Korte Verhandelng*, TTG for *Two Treatises of Government*, RC for *Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in Scriptures*. Places from Spinoza's work are recognizable by a slash between the numbers. Titles are not unnecessarily repeated.

⁷ Stuart Brown, "Locke as secret 'Spinozist': the Perspective of William Carroll" in Van Bunge / Klever, *Disguised and overt Spinozism around 1700*, o.c. p. 213-225. Quote on p.230.

⁸ O.c. p. 216.

⁹ Franeker 1748, p. 6. The unique copy of this book is conserved in the Provincial Library of Friesland at Leeuwarden under the signature Pb 18254. Andala joined Locke to the crypto-Spinozists De Volder and Boerhaave, Cf. Wim Klever, "Burchard De Volder (1643-1709). A Crypto-spinozist on a Leiden Cathedral", in *LIAS* 15 (1988) 191-241 and Idem, *Boerhaave sequax Spinozae* (Vrijstad 2006).

¹⁰ Matthew Stewart, *The Courtier and the Heretic. Leibniz. Spinoza, and the Fate of God in the Modern World* (Yale 2005) p. 268.

¹¹ See the letter of Philippus van Limborch to Locke of 2/12 September 1698, no. 2485 (and previous correspondence) in E. S. de Beer, *The Correspondence of John Locke edited in 8 volumes* (Oxford 1981). See also Wim Klever, "Een curieuze kwestie. Hudde in discussie met Spinoza, Van Limborch, Locke en De Volder" (forthcoming).

Goldstein, author of *Betraying Spinoza* (2006), was not far of the mark when she wrote, as a lonely prophet calling in the desert, that

Locke had himself been influenced by Spinoza's ideas on tolerance, freedom and democracy [...] Locke met in Amsterdam men who almost certainly spoke of Spinoza. Locke's library not only included all of Spinoza's important works, but also works in which Spinoza had been discussed and condemned. It's worth noting that Locke emerged from his years in Amsterdam a far more egalitarian thinker, having decisively moved in the direction of Spinoza. He now accepted, as he had not before, the fundamental egalitarian claim that the legitimacy of the state's power derives from the consent of the governed, a phrase that would prominently find its way into the Declaration.¹²

One wonders what is wrong with the current history of philosophy, that she does not want to pay attention to the substantial evidence of Locke's own remarks, his well tested correspondence with many sympathizers with Spinoza and the unmistakable praise or critique of contemporaries on account of his sources (Stillingfleet, Carroll, De Volder, Andala, Leibniz).¹³ And why were so many eighteenth century French and Italian philosophers under his ban?¹⁴ Are we so prejudiced about this major figure of the European Enlightenment and his great originality that we don't allow predecessors who are partly responsible for the frame of his mind?

In this article I will demonstrate that Spinoza was more than an influential predecessor. Locke's philosophy, so is my claim, is in all its foundational concepts and its headlines a kind of reproduction of Spinoza's work. Locke was, as Carroll baptized Samuel Clark, a '*Spinoza rev'ved*',¹⁵ Spinoza in a new form and expression, whose original blueprint was, as history has shown, well kept secret and hardly recognizable in the remake. I hope, that my affluence of arguments, mainly crypto-quotations, will convince the reader, that he has to rethink the scheme of the current historiography, in which Locke was only on a loose par with his Dutch compeer without having any relation to or affinity with him.

Let us start with Locke's 'virtual' (epistolary) acquaintance with Spinoza in his Oxford time (1661-1665). J. R. Milton surveys Locke's activities in this period.

At some time around 1660 Locke met Robert Boyle [...] Boyle had been working on natural philosophy for more than a decade and was about to start sending the results of his investigations to the press. For the next few years Locke took detailed notes on nearly all his works as they came out [...] He also starts reading the works of the earlier mechanical philosophers, in particular those of Descartes and Gassendi. Whether Gassendi had much influence on Locke is disputed [...] Descartes' influence was by contrast immense [...] An analysis of his notes reveals a marked bias towards Descartes' writings on physics [...] Locke at this stage of his life had little interest in first philosophy.¹⁶

¹² Under the title 'Reasonable Doubt' published in *The New York Times* 29 July 2006. As will be claimed further on, Goldstein's chronology is defective. Locke had already appropriated for personal account Spinoza's political theory before his emigration to Holland. And as regards his epistemological position: this dates from a much earlier period, his time in Oxford. Concerning the presence in his library of the books written by Spinoza's friends cf. P. Harrison & P. Laslett, *The Library of John Locke* (Oxford 1965).

¹³ It is here the right place to mention an other striking exception in the historiography. In an article about "Spinoza et les Lumières radicales" (in C. Secrétan, Tristan Dagron, Laurent Bove, eds, *Qu'est-ce que les Lumières 'radicales'?* Paris 2007, 299-309) the German Spinozist Manfred Walther writes in a section about "Spinoza: un chaînon manquant de l'histoire britannique des idées": "que la philosophie de Locke est fécondée par Spinoza bien plus en profondeur que ne pourrait le laisser croire la simple juxtaposition de l'empiriste et du rationaliste", qui "repose sur une base bien fragile" (p. 306-307).

¹⁴ See the rich documentation of J. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, o.c. for 'Lockean empiricism' in France and 'Lochisti' in Italy. Cf. also J.W. Yolton, "French materialist disciples of Locke" in *Journal for the History of Philosophy* 25 (1987) 83-104, and his *Thinking Matter* (London 1984).

¹⁵ In two works: London 1705 and 1709.

¹⁶ "Locke, Medicine and Mechanical Philosophy" in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 9 (2001) p. 226.

Locke's relationship with Boyle was rather close, if not familiar. He not only met him now and then, as is assumed by many scholars, but is also described by his biographer as 'Boyle's pupil' and 'close friend', who was "admitted to the charmed circle of Boyle's High Street rooms". "Locke showed an early if not a lasting enthusiasm for [Boyle's] experiments" and studied all his writings.¹⁷ Can we imagine that Locke would not have shared the things that pressed on Boyle's heart, that there would have been no discussion between master and privileged friend about principles, discoveries and international correspondence in their new mechanical science? Well, in this period Boyle was, via Heinrich Oldenburg, in frequent epistolary contact with a Dutch fellow scientist, equally interested in mechanical philosophy and likewise busy with chemical experiments. Oldenburg had visited him in Rijnsburg in 1661 and was much attracted by his new ideas, which were critical about Descartes' speculative physics. Already before the foundation of the Royal Society in 1662 he acted as the personal secretary of Robert Boyle for the exchange with Spinoza. The letters written by Spinoza to Oldenburg must have been read in Boyle's '*privatissimum*', in which Locke participated.

In Letter 1 (16/26 August 1661) Oldenburg asked Spinoza further explanation of what were precisely, according to him, Descartes' *errores*, about which they had discussed in Rijnsburg. Traces of Spinoza's answer in Letter 2 appear in Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690).¹⁸

<p>They [Bacon and Descartes] would easily have seen this for themselves, had they but given consideration to the fact that the will differs from this or that volition in the same way as whiteness differs from this or that white object, or as humanity differs from this or that human being. So to conceive the will to be the cause of this or that volition is as impossible as to conceive humanity to be the cause of Peter and Paul. Since, then, the will is nothing more than a mental construction (<i>ens rationis</i>), it can in no way be said to be the cause of this or that volition. Particular volitions (<i>volitiones</i>), since they need a cause to exist, cannot be said to be free; rather they are necessarily determined to be such as they are by their own causes (<i>Letter 2</i>).¹⁹</p>	<p>Yet I suspect, I say, that this way of speaking of <i>faculties</i> has mislead many into a confused notion of so many distinct agents in us (<i>Essay 2.21.6</i>).</p> <p>Viz. <i>whether man's will be free or no</i>. For if I mistake not, it follows from what I have said that the question itself is altogether improper; and it is insignificant to ask whether man's will be free [...], liberty [...] only belongs to agents (2.21.14).</p> <p>But the fault has been that faculties have been spoken of and represented as so many distinct agents [...] A man in respect of willing or the act of volition [...] cannot be free (2.21.20).²⁰</p>
---	--

In his second letter to Spinoza (*Letter 3* in the editions of Spinoza's correspondence) Oldenburg had objected against one of his axioms ('things which have nothing in common cannot be each other's cause'), because God, though creator of the world, would have nothing in common with created things.

<p>As for your contention that God has nothing formally in common with created things, etc., I have maintained the exact opposite (<i>prorsus contrarium</i>) in my definition [...] As to your objection to my first</p>	<p>When the thing is wholly made new, so that no part thereof did ever exist before, as when a new particle of matter doth begin to exist <i>in rerum natura</i>, which had before no being, [we call this] <i>creation</i> [...] When a</p>
---	--

¹⁷ Cranston, *John Locke* o.c. p. 75-76.

¹⁸ Quotes are from John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Edited with a foreword by Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford 1975).

¹⁹ Spinoza, *The Letters*. Translated by Samuel Shirley. Introduction and Notes by St. Barbone, Lee Rice, and J. Adler (Indianapolis 1995) p. 62. Cf. KV 2/16/4: "Because the will is not a thing in Nature but only a fiction, one needs not to ask whether the will is free or not". When Locke was in Amsterdam, the *Korte Verhandeling* circulated as a manuscript among friends of Spinoza.

²⁰ Italics in Locke's fragments are always introduced by the author of this article in order to accentuate certain words of phrases in correlation with quotes from Spinoza.

<p>proposition, I beg you, my friend, to consider that men are not created, but only <i>generated</i> (<i>hominess non creari, sed tantum generari</i>), and that their bodies already existed, but in a different form. However, the conclusion is this, as I am quite willing to admit, that if one part of matter were to be annihilated, the whole of Extension would also vanish at the same time (<i>Letter 4</i>, October 1661).</p>	<p>thing is made up of particles which did all of them before exist[...] we call <i>generation</i> [...] Thus a man is generated, a picture made (<i>Essay 2.26.2</i>).²¹ Things in this our mansion would put on quite another face and ceased to be what they are, if some one of the stars or great bodies incomprehensibly remote from us should cease to be or move as it does (<i>Essay 4.6.11</i>).</p>
---	---

The latter parts of this comparison may only be associative; the first parts are literally parallel.

That Locke followed closely the correspondence between Spinoza and Oldenburg / Boyle may also be concluded from his acceptance of Spinoza's critique on the defects in Boyle's mechanicism, explained in the long *Letter 6*, his requested 'expert report' on the Latin version of Boyle's *Certain Physiological Essays* (1661). In *Letter 3* Oldenburg had boasted about Boyle's mechanicism in explaining natural phenomena:

In our Philosophical Society we are engaged in making experiments and observations as energetically as our abilities allow, and we are occupied in composing a History of the Mechanical Arts, being convinced that the forms and qualities of things can best be explained by the principles of mechanics, that all Nature's effects are produced by motion, figure, texture and their various combinations and that there is no need to have recourse to inexplicable forms and occult qualities, the refuge of ignorance.

Spinoza had to put his finger on a couple of painful inconsistencies. So he remarks: "In section 25 the esteemed author seems to intend to prove that the alkaline parts are driven hither and thither by the impact of the salt particles, whereas the salt particles ascend into the air by their own force" (*proprio impulsu seipsas in aerem tollere*). In his own explanation, however, of the motion of the particles of the Spirit of Niter Spinoza stipulated that "they must necessarily be encompassed by some subtle matter, and are thereby driven upwards (*et ab eadem sursum pelli*) as are particles of wood by fire". Likewise Boyle renounced according to him his principles, when he wrote in *De Fluiditate* 19 about animals that "Nature has designed them both for flying and swimming", whereupon Spinoza sneered "He seeks the cause from purpose" (*causam a fine petit*), a mortal sin in the new science. Oldenburg tried to smooth over Boyle's shortcomings by referring in his name to Epicurism, a pseudo-explanation, which Locke later on remembered as reprehensible nonsense.

<p>With regard to your comments on section 25 he replies that he has made use of the Epicurean principles, which hold that there is an innate motion in particles; for he needed to make use of some hypothesis to explain the phenomenon (<i>Letter 11</i>, from Oldenburg to Spinoza, 3rd April 1663).</p>	<p>Another great <i>abuse of words</i> is the taking them for things. The <i>Platonists</i> have their <i>soul of the world</i>, and the <i>Epicureans</i> their <i>endeavor towards motion</i> in their atoms when at rest. There is scarce any sect in philosophy has not a distinct set of terms that others understand not (<i>Essay 3.10.14</i>).</p>
--	--

Contrary to Boyle's failures but completely in line with Spinoza's *radical mechanicism* Locke rejects the possibility of the motion of a body by itself.

<p>A body moves only through the impulse of another body (<i>corpus movetur [...] tantum ex alterius impulsu</i>) (PPC 2/8s).</p>	<p>Impulse, the only way which we can conceive bodies operate in (<i>Essay 2.8.11</i>).</p>
---	---

²¹ There exists a more extended passage about the couple 'creation – generation' in *Draft A*, § 16. See P. H. Nidditch & G. A. J. Rogers (eds), *Drafts for the Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Oxford 1990) p. 31-32.

Locke not only subscribed to Spinoza's drastic rejection of the possibility of an Epicurean (and Boylean) connate motion of particles as he also declared in *Essay* 2.21.4 ("Neither have we from body any idea of the beginning of motion. A body at rest affords us no idea of any active power to mover [...], [...] only to transfer, not to produce any motion"), he also joined him in his more radical claim that like all types of motion (including that of falling) also the rest of a body is the effect of external material causes.²²

<p>A body in motion or at rest must be determined to motion or rest by some other body, which, likewise, was determined for motion or rest by some other body, and this by a third, and so on to infinity (<i>Ethica</i> 1/13, lemma 3).²³</p>	<p>A tennis ball, whether in motion by the stroke of a racket, or lying still at rest, is not by anyone taken to be a free agent [...] All its both motion and rest come under our idea of <i>necessary</i> (<i>Essay</i> 2.21.9). He is perpetually dancing; he is not at liberty in this action but under as much necessity of moving as a stone that falls or a tennis ball struck with a racket (11).</p>
---	---

One can also signalize another revealing trace that Letter 13 left in Locke's text. It concerns the experiment, which Spinoza designed in order to measure an eventual difference between horizontal and vertical air pressure. It is as if Locke has in his memory Spinoza's drawing and explanation when he writes in *Essay* 2.23.24: "For such a pressure [of surrounding air particles] may hinder the avulsion of two polished superficies one from another in a line perpendicular to them, as in the experiment of two polished marbles, yet it can never in the least hinder the separation by a motion in a line parallel to those surfaces".

It is not at all improbable, then, that Locke was already well informed about Spinoza's anti-Cartesian position when there came finally the opportunity to study the PPC/CM that he must have devoured on account of his manifest interest in Descartes' physics. We know already the effect of his reading experience. He was really fascinated and expressed his deep wish to study more writings of this author and of the friend Lodewijk Meyer who in his introduction to the work uncovered only a part of Spinoza's own philosophy, i.e. his 'reformed Cartesianism'. We can imagine how pleasantly he must have been affected upon the rash fulfilling of his wish, when in his last year in Oxford (1665) the circle around Boyle had succeeded in triggering Spinoza to summarize in a small treatise the substance of his worldview. How did this come about? On April 28th 1665 Oldenburg lets Spinoza know that he was much discussed in Oxford: "Mr. Boyle and I often talk about you, your learning and your profound reflections" (*meditationibus*).²⁴ According to the biographers and historians Locke is included in this philosophical club. Half a year later curiosity and impatience have become stronger. There was a good occasion for a further request. Spinoza had written, probably early September, not to be upset by the cruelties of the Dutch-English sea war, "reflecting that men, like all else, are only a part of nature, and that I do not know how each part of nature harmonizes with the whole, and how it coheres with other parts".²⁵ That looks like a kind of resignation, which according to Oxford does not befit a minute philosopher: "[we] urge you to pursue your philosophizing with energy and rigor. Above all, if you have any light to cast on the difficult question as how each part of Nature accords with its whole and the manner of its coherence with other parts, please do us the favor of letting us know your views" (Letter 31).

²² Cf. Wim Klever, "Inertia as an effect in Spinoza's physics", forthcoming in the Richard Popkin memorial volumes, to be edited by Luisa Simonutti; Idem, "Spinoza's principle. The history of the 17th century critique of the Cartesian hypothesis about inertia as a property of matter", in Wim Klever, *The Sphinx. Spinoza reconsidered in three essays* (Vrijstad 2000).

²³ Translation by G. H. R. Parkinson in Spinoza, *Ethics* (London 1989).

²⁴ Letter 25.

²⁵ Letter 30.

Spinoza's formidable answer (Letter 32) presents the outline of his philosophy. Since he has already confessed his ignorance about *how* things cohere with each other and with the whole, he takes it for granted that the Oxford people ask for the reasons why he is forced to maintain the world's harmony. He does not ascertain that nature is beautiful or well ordered; these are only confused ideas of our imagination. Nature's coherence is, then, defined as the mutual accommodation of the laws and nature of its various parts in such wise that there is the least possible opposition between them. One has to realize, Spinoza continues, that the word 'part' is hardly correct, while nothing is on itself and independent. So are we, humans, in the universe like the a worm (*vermiculum*) in the blood,²⁶ which perceives other elements of the blood as parts but does not know how its being is constituted by the whole fluid and the parts of that fluid are forced to accommodate itself to each other (*vicissim*). After having used in this example twice '*vicissim*' and once its equivalent '*ad invicem*' in order to explain, as it were, the method by which the whole fluid realizes itself, Spinoza comes finally to what we could name his 'theory of everything', in which, again, the word '*vicissim*' has a prominent position. And it is exactly this 'theory of everything, which had thus a strong impact on Locke's mind, that it seduced him to his own fully parallel formulation of Spinoza's theory in *Essay* 4.6.11. But let us first read what Oldenburg told about the reception of Letter 32 in Oxford. The impression was overwhelming. '*Perplacent*' is the very first word of the Letter 33 (3 pages), which was written on 8th December. "The things you have philosophized for us *charm us uttermost*". The addressees were especially pleased with Spinoza's acknowledgement that "all bodies are surrounded by others and are reciprocally (*ab invicem*) determined (*determinari*) to exist and act in a definite and regular manner". They had well understood the hard core of Spinoza's universal physics. Were all members of the circle equally content with the formidable treatise? Certainly not Oldenburg himself, who was, as it appeared ten years later, a stiff opponent of Spinoza's determinism and 'atheism'. In his answering letter he also immediately formulated an objection: how, then, can we defeat the order and symmetry that you seem to adhere to, when the relation between motion and rest remain constant? Nature's adamant order would, of course, exclude interventions of Gods arbitrary directive superpower? Can we, on the other hand, imagine that the pious or even bigot Boyle with his idiosyncratic theological ideas and his defense of the possibility of miracles against the *virtuosi*, may have been enthusiastic about Spinoza's radical ideas? Spinoza is greeted '*perhumaniter*', very kindly. Was this not foremost in the name of the young and most progressive John Locke? It is time to show the correlated 'universal propositions'.²⁷

<p>Now all the bodies in Nature can and should be conceived in the same way as we have here conceived the blood; for all bodies are surrounded by others and are reciprocally (<i>ab invicem</i>) determined <i>to exist and to act</i> in a fixed and determinate way, the same ratio of motion to rest being preserved in them taken all together, that is, in the <i>universe</i> as a whole. Hence it follows that every body, in so far as it exists as <i>modified</i> in a definite way, must be considered as a part of the whole universe, and as agreeing with the whole and cohering with the other parts. Now since the nature of the universe, unlike the nature of the blood, is not</p>	<p>We are then quite out of the way when we think that things contain within themselves the qualities that appear to us in them For which perhaps to understand them right, we ought to look not only beyond this our earth and atmosphere, but even beyond the sun or remotest star our eyes have yet discovered. For how much the <i>being and operation</i> of particular substances in this our globe depend on causes utterly beyond our view is <i>impossible for us to determine</i>. We see and perceive some of the motions and grosser operations of things here about us, but whence the streams come that keep all these curious machines in</p>
--	---

²⁶ Locke later changed Spinoza's worm into a woodworm and transposed it in a cabinet: "as a worm shut up in one drawer of a cabinet has of the senses or understanding of a man" (*Essay* 2.2.3). Really, it is the same example for the same purpose!

²⁷ Cf. in *Essay* 4.3.29 Locke's short reference to the whole thing: "the coherence and continuity of the parts of matter".

<p>limited, but is absolutely infinite, its <i>parts</i> are controlled by the nature of this infinite potency <i>in infinite ways</i>, and are compelled to undergo infinite variations (<i>Letter 32</i>, November 1665)</p>	<p>motion and repair, how <i>conveyed and modified</i> is beyond our notice and apprehension. And the great <i>parts</i> and wheels ... of this stupendous structure of the <i>universe</i>, may, for aught we know, have such a <i>connexion and dependance in their influences and operations one upon another</i>, that perhaps things in this our mansion would put on quite another face and cease to be what they are, if some one of the stars or great bodies incomprehensibly remote from us should cease to be or move as it does. This is certain: things ... are but retainers to other parts of nature for that which they are most taken notice of by us (<i>Essay</i> 4.6.11, Of universal propositions)</p>
--	---

“Being’ and ‘operations’ of things as constituted by their connexion and dependance *one upon another*; and this in infinite and indeterminable ways, in the invisible fluids of the *universe*, by which they are so and so ‘*modified*’, well, this is an explosion of pure Spinozism chez Locke. The long passage is undoubtedly a free and richly illustrated paraphrase of Spinoza’s Letter 32.²⁸ It emphasizes also Locke’s radical mechanicism. As the universe must be conceived as a stupendous, but inscrutable, structure, so are all its ‘parts’ likewise ‘admirable machines’ whose causes we know not. But we do know that they are what they are as an effect of infinite causes far away, which are responsible for their being and operations. So is *weight* not a property of bodies, but the effect an ‘invisible fluid’, say the downward air pressure.²⁹ Things always depend ‘wholly on extrinsical causes’, have ‘their source far beyond the confines of [their] body’, ‘beyond the sun or remotest star’; they are ‘but retainers of other parts of nature’, in ‘the universe’. All this can best be understood on the background of the principal proposition of the *Ethica*, namely 1/28: “Every particular thing, or whatever thing that is finite and has a determinate existence, cannot exist nor be determined for action unless it is determined for action and existence by another cause which is also finite and has a determinate existence; and again, this cause also cannot exist nor be determined for action unless it be determined for existence and action by another cause which also is finite and has a determinate existence: and so on to infinity”.

That Locke learned already this lesson from the PPC/CM, that is before his dazzling amazement about Letter 32 in 1665, may be shown by the (also linguistic) affinity between the following two places.

<p>Present time has no connection with future time (<i>tempus praesens nullam habet connexionem cum tempore futuro</i>) (CM 2/11/1). The parts of a duration have no interconnection (<i>nullama inter se connectionem</i>) (CM 2.11.2).</p>	<p>I cannot be certain that the same man exists now, since there is no necessary <i>connexion</i> of his existence a minute since with his existence now: by a thousand ways he may cease to be since I had the testimony of my senses for his existence (<i>Essay</i> 4.11.9).</p>
--	---

²⁸ Spinoza’s explanation of the world order by reciprocal causality of all its so-called parts was not new for Locke when he read it in Letter 32 (1665). He certainly discovered it already 1663-1664 in CM 2/11/2: “all things in nature are in turn determined to action by one another”.

²⁹ Cf. Spinoza’s remark ‘by air pressure’ (*ab aëris pressione*) in Letter 11 and what he writes in Letter 75 on occasion of Oldenburg’s belief in Christ’s Ascension: “that the frame of the human body is restrained within its proper limits only by the weight of the air”. As concerns his radical mechanicism compare Letter 13 to Oldenburg / Boyle, in which he says to subscribe to “the principles of mechanical philosophy, implying that all variations of bodies come about according to the laws of mechanics”. Locke’s taking the side of Spinoza against Boyle’s half-hearted mechanicism is not discussed in recent research papers. Cf. Lisa Downing, “The Status of Mechanism in Locke’s *Essay*” in *The Philosophical Review* 107 (1998) 381-414; Matthew Stuart, “Locke on Superaddition and Mechanism” in *BJHP* 6 (1998) 351-379; J. R. Milton, “Locke, Medicine ..., o.c..

1666 Locke migrates to London and starts a new period of his life in the service of Anthony Ashley Cooper, earl of Shaftesbury. Apart from his administrative and political duties or activities he manages to continue his medical studies and to cooperate in this field with doctor Sydenham. But the lessons of the Dutch philosopher are deeply entrenched in his mind and keep him on the outlook for his new publications. 1670 is a year of major importance for his development as a philosopher. The anonymously published *Tractatus theologico-politicus* unchained in that year in Holland, France, Germany and England a storm of indignation as well as admiration and was everywhere hotly discussed. Apart from Spinoza's intimate friends nobody, even not in Holland, was so much prepared for a positive reception of this revolutionary work as Locke, who perfectly knew the early correspondence and had intensively studied the PPC/CM. The TTP was a vindication of the *libertas philosophandi* via a rebuttal of the prejudices of the theologians concerning (Christian) religion.³⁰ The book realized this target by means of a scientific analysis of the Bible. The upshot of this analysis is that the Prophets, Christ included, admonish us to nothing else but serving God by practicing justice and charity. In the second part (chapter 16 onwards) Spinoza deduced rationally from physical principles that the only way to realize justice and charity is political organization and consequently obedience to the highest authority of the state. That is how we according to the so-called Revelation as well as according to the precepts of reason serve God or practice charity; that is, therefore, what true Christianity or religion in general properly means.

Locke is deeply impressed by the TTP. This can be demonstrated by the many traces, which his lecture left in all his later works, mainly however RC and TTG. We shall quote a couple of them here, each time after a short introduction. First they both emphasize that churches should not be transformed in academies for polemics.

<p>I am consequently lost in wonder at the ingenuity of those whom I have already mentioned, who detect in the Bible mysteries so profound that they cannot be explained in human language, and who have introduced so many philosophic speculations into religion that the <i>church</i> seems like an <i>academy</i>, and religion like a science or rather a dispute (TP 13/4, Elwes p. 175-176).³¹</p>	<p>The writers and wranglers in religion fill it with niceties, and dress it up with notions, which they make necessary and fundamental parts of it; as if there were no way into the <i>church</i>, but through the <i>academy</i> or lyceum. The greatest part of mankind have not leisure for learning and logic, and superfine distinctions of the schools (RC p. 175).³²</p>
---	--

The *theologians who follow Plato and Aristotle* are the target of both philosophers.

<p>I grant that they are never tired of professing their wonder at the profound mysteries of Holy Writ; still I cannot discover that they teach anything but speculations of <i>Platonists</i> and <i>Aristotelians</i>, to which (in order to save their credit for Christianity) they have made Holy Writ conform (TTP Preface, Elwes p. 7)). If one inquires what these mysteries lurking in Scripture may be, one is confronted with nothing but the <i>reflections of Plato or Aristotle</i>, or the like, which it would often be easier for an ignorant man to dream than for the most accomplished scholar to wrest out of the Bible (TTP 13/5, Elwes p. 176).</p>	<p>He that shall attentively read the Christian writers, after the age of the apostles, will easily find how much the philosophy they were tinctured with influenced them in their understanding of the books of the Old and New Testament. In the ages wherein <i>Platonism</i> prevailed, the converts to Christianity of that school on all occasions, interpreted holy writ according to the notions they had imbibed from that philosophy. <i>Aristotle's doctrine</i> had the same effect in its turn; and when it degenerated into the peripateticism of the schools, that too brought its notions and distinctions into divinity, and affixed them to the terms of the</p>
--	--

³⁰ Cf. the announcement to Oldenburg / Boyle / Locke in Letter 30 (autumn 1665): "I am now writing a treatise on my views regarding Scripture. The reasons that move me to do so are ...".

³¹ Text according to Spinoza, *A theologico-political Treatise and a political Treatise. Translated by R.H.M. Elwes* (New York 1951).

³² According to its reprint in *Works*, volume VII (Aalen 1963).

	sacred Scripture (<i>Paraphrase Epistles St. Paul</i> , in <i>Works VIII</i> (Aalen 1963), p. xx-xxi).
--	---

According to both, Spinoza and Locke, there are *two kinds of persuading* people or let them perceive the things they ought to know for their moral salvation.

<p>If anyone wishes to persuade his fellows for or against anything which is not self-evident, he must deduce his contention from their admissions, and convince them <i>either by experience or by ratiocination; either by appealing to the <u>facts of natural experience</u>, or to self-evident intellectual axioms</i>. Now unless the experience be of such a kind as to be clearly and distinctly understood, though it may convince a man, it will not have the same effect on his mind and disperse the clouds of his doubt so completely as when the doctrine taught is deduced entirely from intellectual axioms – that is, by the mere power of understanding and logical order, and this is especially the case in spiritual matters which have nothing to do with the senses. But the deduction of conclusions from intellectual concepts usually requires <i>a long chain of arguments</i>, and, moreover, very great caution, acuteness, and self-restraint – qualities which are not often met with. Therefore people prefer to be taught by experience rather than deduce their conclusion from a few axioms, and set them out in logical order. Whence it follows, that if anyone wishes <i>to teach a doctrine to a whole nation (not to speak of the whole human race)</i> and to be understood by all men in every particular, he will seek to support his teaching with experience ... Because all Scripture was written primarily for an entire people and secondarily for the whole human race; therefore its contents had necessarily to be adapted as far as possible to the understanding of the masses ... All this is proved in Scripture entirely through experience – that is, through the narratives there related (<i>iis quae narrat historiis</i>)(TTP 5/35, Elwes p. 76-77).</p>	<p>And it is at least a surer and shorter way, to the apprehensions of the vulgar, and <i>mass of mankind</i>, that one manifestly sent from God, and coming with visible authority from him, should, as a king and lawmaker, tell them their duties; and require their obedience; than leave it to the long and sometimes <i>intricate deductions of reason</i>, to be made out to them. Such <i>trains of reasoning</i> the greatest part of mankind have neither leisure to weigh; nor, for want of education and use, skill to judge of (RC p. 139)</p> <p>He, that any one will pretend to set up in this kind, and have his rules pass for authentic directions, must show, that <i>either</i> he builds his doctrine upon principles of reason, self-evident in themselves; and that he deduces all the parts of it from hence, by clear and evident demonstration; <i>or</i> must show his commission from heaven, that he comes with authority from God, to deliver his will and commands to the world (RC p. 142).</p> <p>I conclude, when well considered, that method of teaching men their duties would be thought proper only for a few, who had much leisure, improved understandings and were used to abstract reasonings. But the <i>instruction of the people</i> were best still to be left to the precepts and principles of the gospel. The healing of the sick, the restoring sight to the blind by a word, the raising and being raised from the dead, are <i>matters of fact</i>, which they can without difficulty conceive ... These things lie level to the ordinary apprehension ... And here I appeal, whether this be not the surest, fastest and most effectual way of teaching (RC p 146).</p>
--	--

It is clear that Locke follows closely Spinoza's strong disjunction (either – or) and his exposition of the relative advantages, depending on the audience, of the logical concatenation of concepts (only for logically trained scholars) and of telling miraculous and edifying stories (persuasive only for common people). The underlined words (facts of natural experience / matters of fact), indicating the miracles of the gospel, do not imply that Spinoza and Locke accepted the physical possibility of miracles.

<p>Miracles are only intelligible as in relation to human opinions (<i>respective ad hominum opiniones</i>), and merely mean events of which the natural cause cannot be explained by a reference to any ordinary occurrence, either by us, or at any rate by the writer and narrator of the miracle (TTP 6/13, Elwes p. 84)</p>	<p>A miracle then I take to be a sensible operation, which being <i>above the comprehension of the spectator</i>, and <i>in his Opinion</i> contrary to the establish'd Course of Nature, is taken by him to be Divine (<i>A Discourse of Miracles</i>).³³</p>
--	--

³³ Quoted from Locke, *Writings on religion*. Ed. By Victor Nuovo (Oxford 2002) p. 44. I shall touch the subject later on again.

When common people can only be persuaded of how they ought to behave by telling simple stories and appealing to their experience, one must conclude that a kind of Revelation is necessary for their salvation.

It evidently follows from what has been said, that the knowledge and belief in them [the narratives of Scripture] are particularly <i>necessary to the masses</i> whose intellect is incapable of perceiving things clearly and distinctly ... We do not mean the knowledge of absolutely all the narratives in the Bible, but only of the principal ones (TTP 5/40-41, Elwes p. 78).	It was not without need, that he (Jesus the Messiah) was sent into the world (RC p. 135). Where was there any such code, that mankind might have recourse to, as their unerring rule, before our Saviour's time? It is plain <i>there was need</i> of one to give us such morality, such a law, which might be the sure guide of those who had a desire to go right (RC p. 135-136).
---	--

Another point is the *conformity* of the lessons of Scripture and the teachings of reason.

[Scripture] thus understood, if we regard its precepts or <i>rules of life</i> , will be found in accordance with reason (<i>cum ratione convenire</i>); and if we look to its aim and object, will be seen to be in nowise repugnant thereto (TTP 15/24, Elwes p. 195).	Such a law of morality Jesus Christ has given us in the New Testament [...] We have from him a full and sufficient <i>rule for our direction</i> , and <i>conformable to that of reason</i> (RC p. 143). The <i>same truths</i> may be discovered and conveyed down from revelation, which are discoverable to us by reason (<i>Essay</i> 4.18.4).
--	--

On account of the conformity of the moral lessons of Scripture (if well understood) with the precepts of reason Spinoza and Locke can both confess the truth of the bible. Having underlined in CM 2/8/5 that “Scripture teaches nothing that is opposed to the natural light” Spinoza even sets a further step with his claim “that Scripture can *not* teach the *nonsense* (*nugas*) that is commonly supposed”. Locke follows: “These holy writers, inspired from above, writ nothing but truth” (RC p. 154); “Scripture speaks *not nonsense*” (TTG 1.4.31); “Though everything said in the text be infallible true, yet the reader may be, nay, cannot choose but be very fallible in the understanding of it” (*Essay* 3.9.23).³⁴ In spite of their identical content reason and faith are different mind sets or incommensurable types of knowledge, ‘two provinces’ according to the title of *Essay* 4.18, a chapter that reminds the reader of the titles of TTP 14 “The definition of faith ... which is once for all *separated* from philosophy” and TTP 15 “Theology is shown not to be subservient to reason, nor reason to theology”. Faith and reason are non- adjacent territories or different ‘kinds of knowledge’, which do not touch each other, as will be shown later.

Locke and Spinoza also fully agree about the right *method for the interpretation of Scripture*.

The true method of interpreting Scripture does not differ from the method of interpreting nature but is totally the same. For as the interpretation of nature consists in conceiving a general survey of nature, from which we, as if from certain data, derive clear concepts, so it is also for Scriptural interpretation necessary to make first a correct inventory (<i>historiam</i>), by which we afterwards may , as if from certain data and principles, derive right conclusions concerning <i>the mind of its authors</i> . <i>All our knowledge of Scripture, then, must be drawn only from Scripture</i> . [The <i>historia</i>] must comprise 1. The nature and properties of the language in which the books of the Bible were written, and in	Of [scriptural] words the <i>Scripture itself is the best interpreter</i> (TTG 1.4.25) The Epistles [of the Apostles] are written upon several occasions: and he that will read them as he ought, must observe what it is in them, which is principally aimed at; find what is the argument in hand, and how managed; if he will understand them right, and profit by them. The observing of this will best help us to the <i>true meaning and mind of the writer</i> : for that is the truth which is to be received and believed; and not scattered sentences in scripture-language, accommodated to our notions and prejudices. We must look into the drift of the discourse, observe the
---	---

³⁴ This point is also heavily stressed by Spinoza’s ‘collaborator’ Lodewijk Meyer in his *Philosophia S. Scripturae Interpres* (Amsterdam 1666), a work that was owned by Locke.

<p>which their authors were accustomed to speak. We shall thus be able to investigate every expression by comparison with common conversational usages [...] Although the New Testament was published in other languages [than Hebrew], yet its characteristics are Hebrew (<i>hebraizant tamen</i>). 2. We must collect the sentences of each book and reduce these contents to their headlines [...] Whatever is found obscure or ambiguous in Scripture, has to be explained and determined by means of the universal doctrine of Scripture (TTP 7/6-7 & 15 & 29).³⁵</p>	<p>coherence and connexion of the parts, and <i>see how it is consistent with itself and other parts of scripture</i>. We must not cull out, as best suits our system, here and there a period or verse as if they were all distinct and independent aphorisms (RC p. 152). The terms are Greek, but the idiom, or turn of the phrases, may be truly said to be Hebrew or Syriac (<i>Paraphrase Epistles St. Paul</i>, p. vi.)</p>
--	--

This brings us to the very unique quote from Spinoza's TTP we find in Locke's annotated interleaved James bible.³⁶ The remark is to find already on the first inserted leaf of his impressive folio³⁷ and sounds: "*In more est apud Judaios religionis sive devotionis causa omnia ad deum referre omissa causarum mediarum mentione. Spinosa. p 3 1670*".³⁸ The corresponding text in the TTP is to find on the third page (as indicated by Locke) of its first chapter: "*Sed hic apprime notandum, quod Judaei numquam causarum mediarum sive particularium faciunt mentionem, nec eas curant, sed religionis ac pietatis, sive (ut vulgo dici solet) devotionis causa ad Deum semper recurrunt* » (But here I must above all premise that the Jews never make any mention or account of secondary, or particular causes, but in a spirit of religion, piety, and what is commonly called godliness, refer all things directly to the Deity)³⁹ That this Spinozistic insight was shared by Locke in his interpretation of Scripture is not only demonstrated by his actual procedure, but also by his clear but implicit reference to this very same passage of Spinoza in one of his manuscripts:

But I imagine the originall of this mistake from not rightly considering the language of Scripture. Tis evident that the Jewish nation who as they derive all the originall of all things from the great god they worshipped that made the heavens & the earth soe they attributed all things to him in a more immediate manner & so it became the ordinary idiom of their language to ascribe to the Spirit of God som things that were brought about in the ordinary course of providence. Such a way of speaking is not only not unusuall but very consistent with the notions of a deity in whom we live move & have our being & has noe impropriety in it but when straind to some extraordinary & immediate influences where the effect requires noe such supernatural cause & the end might be obtieind without it.⁴⁰

The relation of this passage to Spinoza's statement about the language of Scripture is undeniable.

Prophecy is another common subject, to which both our authors dedicate a chapter (Spinoza TTP 2: *De Prophetis*; Locke *Essay* 4.19: *Of Enthousiasm*).

³⁵ My own translation, because Elwes is wrong on this place.

³⁶ Bodleian Library, LL 309. According to Dr. J. R. Milton the annotations "were probably made in the early 1670s" (e-mail 11-1-2006). The TTP must have been published in January 1670.

³⁷ As I could persuade myself locally.

³⁸ The source was mentioned by Locke himself, who also changed the 'z' into an 's' in Spinoza's name. I thank Victor Nuovo for communicating to me beforehand his findings in this bible. Locke made a second annotation to 1. *Sam.* 3.21: "Appeared & revealed him self by the word &c. i.e. Shamuel deum audivit loquentem. Spinosa c. 1 p. 3, 70".

³⁹ Elwes, o.c. p. 15.

⁴⁰ See John Locke, *Writings on religion*. Ed. by Victor Nuovo (Oxford 2002), p. 37-38. The quote is from a manuscript (MS Locke c. 27, fo. 73) titled "Immediate Inspiration". I owe the knowledge of this appropriation of Spinoza's dictum by Locke to Victor Nuovo, who was so kind to inform me about this remarkable fact. The text, which was never published during Locke's life, is a very important testimony of his 'secret philosophy'. It testifies not only to his 'double language' practice, but shows moreover also that Locke is addicted to Spinoza's 'pantheism' as demonstrated in his *Ethica* 1/15 ("*Quicquid est in Deo est ...*"), a proposition that is on its turn a reflection of St. Paul's preaching on the Areopagus (Acts 17/22-29).

<p>Because <i>imagination</i> on itself and by its nature does not involve certainty, such as is given with every clear and distinct idea, but one needs some reasoning in order to become assured of the thing we imagine, therefore it follows that prophecy does not include on itself certainty, while as already shown, it depends on imagination alone. Accordingly the prophets became not certain about <i>Gods revelation</i> by the revelation itself, but by some sign (<i>signum</i>) [...] <i>Gideon</i> [...] <i>Mozes</i>. God uses the good as instruments of his goodness (<i>Deus utitur piis tamquam suae pietatis instrumentis</i>) (TTP 2/4 & 8).</p>	<p>Thus the holy men of old, who had <i>revelations from God</i>, had something else besides that internal light of assurance in their own minds to testify to them that it was from God. They were not left to their own <i>persuasions</i> alone that these persuasions were from God, but had outward <i>signs</i> to convince them of the author of those revelations. And when they were to convince others, they had a power given them to justify the truth of their commission from heaven, and by visible signs to assert the divine authority of a message they were sent with. <i>Moses</i> [...] <i>Gideon</i> [...]</p> <p>Where the truth embraced is consonant to the dictates of right reason or holy Writ, we may be assured that we run no risk (<i>Essay</i> 4.19.15 & 8).</p>
--	---

Locke and Spinoza (!) accustom themselves mostly to the normal, popular or ‘theological’, way of speaking about God *as if* he would be a kind of superhuman person and spell his name with a capital. But they incidentally deviate from this usage and write consciously in *double language*, alternating the words ‘God’, ‘creator’, ‘maker’ etc. with words like ‘universe’, ‘world’, ‘nature’. Spinoza is well known and was in his time already much decried on account of his blasphemous dictum ‘*Deus sive Natura*’.⁴¹ As it is said, he identified God with Nature⁴² Is Locke’s position different, as it is commonly claimed?⁴³ That this view has to be given up must be concluded from the following table.⁴⁴

<p>That eternal and infinite being we call <i>God or nature</i> (<i>Ethica</i>, preface to part 4). The power with which particular things, and consequently man, preserves his being is the very power of <i>God or nature</i> (<i>Ethica</i> 4/4d). So that to say that everything happens according to natural laws, and to say that everything is ordained by the decree and ordinance of God, is the same thing (<i>idem dicimus</i>) [...] For since no one can do anything save by the predetermined order of nature, that is, by God’s eternal ordinance and decree (TTP 3/7, Elwes p. 45). The order of the whole nature, that is (<i>hoc est</i>) God’s eternal decree (TTP 16/59, Elwes p. 211)</p>	<p>By the course of nature / by appointment of God himself / as Nature requires they should / nature appoints (TTG 1.9.89). There was a natural or divine right of primogeniture (TTG 1.9.91). <i>God or Nature</i> has not anywhere, that I know placed [...] but we find not anywhere that <i>naturally, or by ‘God’s institution’</i> (TTG 1.11.111). By the law of <i>God or Nature</i> (TTG 1.11.116). Wisely ordered by nature (<i>Essay</i> 2.10.3). Admiring the wisdom and goodness of our Maker / Which is wisely and favourably so ordered by nature (<i>Essay</i> 2.7.4). All sorts of animals ... provided by nature / the wisdom and goodness of the Maker plainly appear in all the parts of this stupendous fabric (<i>Essay</i> 2.9.12).</p>
--	---

Sometimes Locke’s text shows, with only a minor variation, a literal quote from Spinoza, of course without any reference of the source. Today we would call this plagiarism. A good example, which demonstrates, by the way, Spinoza’s agreement with his thesis of *Essay I* about man being born as ‘a white paper void of all characters’,⁴⁵ is the following sentence.

⁴¹ Which in this nominative form is not to find in his text.

⁴² Not with matter, as he remarked in a footnote, a N.B., to TTP 7: “Remark that I do not understand by *nature* only matter and its affections, but besides matter infinite other attributes”.

⁴³ See among others Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment* (Oxford 2001) passim.

⁴⁴ In his otherwise fine article “Locke, Law and the Laws of Nature” (reprinted in J. Dunn & J. Harris, eds, *Locke, vol. I*, Cheltenham 1997) G. A. J. Rogers does not touch the relation or identity between Gods Laws and the Law(s) of Nature.

⁴⁵ *Essay 2.1.2*. A current objection to this view is that Spinoza writes in TIE 32 about the intellect’s ‘native power’ to make for itself intellectual instruments in order to acquire higher knowledge. But in a marginal note to this passage he emphasizes that he understands by ‘*vim nativam*’ “*quod in nobis a causis externis causatur*”

All men are born ignorant of everything (<i>omnes ignari omnium rerum nascuntur</i>) (TTP 16/7).	We are borne ignorant of every thing (<i>On the Conduct of Understanding</i> , no. 71). ⁴⁶
--	--

Another striking example is the description of the relation between the infinite (God) and the finite creatures of God or Nature:

This I do know, that between the finite and the infinite there is no relation (<i>inter finitum et infinitum nullam esse proportionem</i>), so that the difference between God and the greatest and most excellent creature is no other than that between God and the least creature (<i>minimam creaturam</i>) (Letter 54).	What I say of man, I say of all finite beings, who, though they may far exceed man in knowledge and power, yet are no more than the <i>meanest creature</i> in comparison with God himself. <i>Finite of any magnitude holds not any proportion to infinite</i> (Essay 2.15.12).
--	--

We might now continue our comparison of Spinoza and Locke by analyzing and developing the deep and undeniable affinity between Locke's political theory in TTG and Spinoza's in the TTP, but since this subject has to be discussed also in relation to *Ethica* 4 and the *Tractatus Politicus*, both published in the 1677-*Opera Posthuma*, it seems advisable to postpone it and to treat first the epistemological and anthropological position of both our philosophers, which logically, though not chronologically, antecedes the political theory. I shall now defend the claim that the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* is a kind of 'duplicate' of *Ethics* 2 (*De natura et origine mentis* / On nature and origin of the mind), as regards all its main affirmations, among which, of course, empiricism and the capital theory of knowledge.

J. R. Milton asserts that Locke in his Oxford time in Boyle's company (1661-1665) "apparently ignored the metaphysical and epistemological material [of Descartes' *Principia Philosophiae*] which has been the subject of so much recent discussion".⁴⁷ Further is it the current view upon his life that after his 'bookish and academic' period he took a completely different course and sojourned gentlemanlike in the harsh world: as a medical assistant to Sydenham, who was 'markedly non-academic', and for twenty years as a confidential agent to Shaftesbury, who "was a brilliant exponent of practical politics, not a political theorist".⁴⁸ Between the years 1667 and 1689 there were, of course, written some minor papers and drafts on various more or less philosophical subjects,⁴⁹ but all by all no important work and not judged good enough for publication. And then, unexpected as a thunderclap in a clear sky, appeared in 1689 brand-new from the press *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, a work so original and illuminating, sometimes also too loosely ordered and even contradictory, that it would occupy hundreds and hundreds of scholars in the three following centuries to determine its meaning and solve its problems. It seemed to have no essential connection with all he and other people had done before. Milton's sees the *Essay* as a rather 'isolated work'.⁵⁰

(what is produced in us by external causes). Text editors and translators have spoiled this remark by introducing a negation (*non*) in the sentence. See e.g. Edwin Curley in *The Collected Works of Spinoza* (Princeton 1985) p. 17: "By inborn power I understand what is *not* [!] caused in us by external causes. I shall explain this afterwards in my Philosophy". This, I claim, is totally against everything of Spinoza's philosophy. – Of all persons also Locke himself, albeit a fervent opponent of Descartes' innatism, does not hesitate to use the word '*native*' for the same natural equipment: "The mind has a *native* faculty to perceive the coherence or incoherence of its ideas" (*Essay* 4.17.4).

⁴⁶ Quoted from John Locke, *Of the Conduct of the Understanding*. Edited by P. Schuurman (Keele dissertation 2000) p. 224.

⁴⁷ See J. R. Milton, "Locke at Oxford" in G. A. J. Rogers (ed. *Locke's Philosophy, Content and Context* (Oxford 1994) p. 38.

⁴⁸ Milton, o.c., p. 45.

⁴⁹ Among which the well known *drafts* (A, B and C) we mentioned already.

⁵⁰ O.c. p. 45.

Apart from the fact that an extremely rich work as the *Essay* must necessarily have had a long period of gestation, the reader of this article will by now be convinced that the ‘lack of philosophical interests’ (as Milton calls it) in Locke’s life up till 1689, was only apparent and that he must have *continuously* meditated the stuff offered him by Spinoza’s letters (1661-1665), the PPC/CM (1663) and his fascinating and revolutionary *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (1670), as is broadly demonstrated by the manifest traces in the later works we have discussed. That the *Ethica* (1677), devastating for the traditional ways of theological and philosophical thinking, opened new ways for his reproductive creativity, will now be shown.⁵¹ The fresh start did not cover the general physics of the *Ethica*’s first part, which was already processed. It were the second and third parts that drained and renewed his mind for the resetting of his theory of knowledge.

Ethica 2 opened a new and bright horizon to Locke from its very beginning. Spinoza’s theory of the mind was clearly constructed on an anti-cartesian foundation. Having defined an *idea* as “the concept formed by the mind as thinking” he immediately takes a step in order to avoid any misunderstanding. “Man thinks” (axiom 2). That is other cake than what Descartes dished up, who always asserted that it is the soul which thinks because she is the thinking substance in the human complex. Our modes of thinking like loving and desiring, says axiom 3, always presuppose an idea of the loved or desired thing whereas the reversed is not true. But how does Spinoza conceive this kind of ideas, i.e. our sensations? Do we have an immediate contact with things around us? No, says axiom 4: “We notice that a certain body [our body, wk] is in many ways affected”. This implies that we do not directly perceive things around us but only changes of our own body. When I perceive the bird flying in the air before my eyes, I do nothing else than thinking an affection, i.e. a mutation, of my own body, the body being the exclusive object of my ideas. The fifth and last axiom of *Ethica 2* is even more exciting: “We do not sense or perceive other singular things besides bodies and modes of thinking” (*Nullas res singulares praeter corpora et cogitandi modos sentimus nec percipimus*). The plural ‘bodies’ must refer to the parts of my body, otherwise the axiom is in conflict with axiom 4. Taste is the idea of my so and so affected tongue, pain the idea of my hurt toe. Spinoza, then, asserts that all our thoughts are *either* sensations *or* perceptions of these sensations. This must necessarily imply that our primitive ideas, which are essentially ideas of parts of our body (see axiom 4), are also themselves objects of thought or a reflective idea, so that we know them, and are, accordingly, at one and the same time sensing an object and conscious of our sensing this object. This far-reaching principle, printed on Dutch paper, made a deep impression on the body of the reading Locke. Here lies the origin of Locke’s world-famous distinction between and combination of *sensation* and *reflection*.

The very first sentence of his book *Of ideas* and of its first chapter *Of ideas in general and their original* unites narrowly to the second page of *Ethica 2*: “Every man being conscious to himself that he thinks, and that which his mind is applied about *whilst thinking* being the *ideas* that are there such as are those expressed by the words whiteness, hardness,

⁵¹ A small historical *intermezzo*: I wish to underline here that occupying oneself with Spinoza was at the time a must for the whole scene of intellectuals, sympathizer or opponent, as is marvelously shown in Jonathan Israel’s *Radical Enlightenment* o.c. See also Paul Vernière, *Spinoza et la pensée française avant la Révolution* (Paris 1982). Discussing the heated debate (*la querelle de Spinoza*) in France he writes: “Spinoza concentre toutes les haines” (p. 126). Everybody was perplexed about the extraordinary novelty of Spinoza’s theses and tried to straighten them out. In his French period (1675-1679) Locke was certainly well informed about the hot news of the pro’s and contra’s in the polemic by his contacts with Malebranche, “qui a souffert toute sa vie, dans sa conscience de chrétien et de prêtre, de l’existence même du Spinozisme” (p.269). In Paris (1675) he probably had contacts with Huygens, Leibniz and Tschirnhaus, the temporary club of *virtuosi*, who discussed about Spinoza’s physics. See Wim Klever, “Spinoza en Huygens. Een geschakeerde relatie tussen twee fysici” in *GEWINA* 20 (1997) 14-32.

sweetness ...”. Man thinks, yes. And his ‘mind’, the ‘*mens*’ of the title of *Ethica 2*, is composed of two kinds of thought, or better: of two aspects or components. The point of Locke’s take off is our mind in its double orientation: outwards on things whatever and inwards on itself as thinking those things in its sensitive ideas. Each idea is essentially object to itself or transparent to itself as being an idea of x. To say it in a simpler way: we cannot perceive something without perceiving our perceiving, i.e. without being conscious that and what we perceive.⁵²

<p>For in truth the idea of the mind, that is the idea of an idea (<i>idea ideae</i>), is nothing else than the form of an idea in so far as it is considered as a mode of thinking without relation to its object. <i>For if a man knows anything, by that very fact he knows that he knows it</i> (<i>Ethica 2/21</i> scholium). The human mind perceives not only the modification of the body, but also the ideas of these modifications (<i>Ethica 2/22</i>)</p>	<p>[...] <i>it being hard to conceive that anything should think and not be conscious of it</i> (<i>Essay 2.1.11</i>). [...] that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking and, as it seems to me, essential to it: it being impossible for anyone to perceive without perceiving that he does perceive. When we see, hear, smell, taste, feel, meditate, or will anything we know that we do so (<i>Essay 2.27.9</i>).</p>
---	---

As concerns the origin of our ideas (Locke: ‘*their original*’; Spinoza: ‘*de origine mentis*’) both our two philosophers stay firm on the common ground of *radical empiricism*, in spite of the frontal opposition between their ‘rationalism’ and ‘empiricism’ respectively as suggested by superficial historians of philosophy and writers of schoolbooks.

<p>The human mind does only know the human body and its existence through the ideas of the affections, by which the body is affected (<i>Ethica 2/19</i>). The mind has no knowledge of itself save in so far as it perceives the ideas of the modifications of the body (<i>Ethica 2/23</i>). The human mind does not actually perceive any external body in another way than by the ideas of the affections of its own body (<i>Ethica 2/26</i>).</p>	<p>Whence has (the mind) all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, from <i>experience</i>; in that all our knowledge is founded, and from that it ultimately derives itself. Our observation, employed either about external sensible objects, or about the internal operation of our minds perceived and reflected on by ourselves, is that which supplies our understandings with all the materials of thinking (<i>Essay 2.1.2</i>).</p>
---	---

There is, after all, only one source of all our knowledge and that is the *experience* of ourselves in the broadest sense. As explained above there are, as it were, two layers in this experience of ourselves, marking its duplicity. Spinoza (cf. his 4th and 5th axiom) considers them as primary and secondary perceptions, i.e. the *sensations*⁵³ and the *ideas of* (these primary) *ideas*, for which latter type he does not have a special term. The latter are, indeed, *reflections* of the former, given the fact that they are ideas of ideas. In the TIE §26 the expression *idea ideae* was accordingly characterized as a *cognitio reflexiva*. It is certainly a great merit of John Locke to have discovered this duplicity in Spinoza’s explanation of our experience and to have minted it to his classical couple ‘sensation – reflection’. The ‘sensation’ provides us with the ‘sensible qualities’ (2.1.3) as yellow, white, heat, soft etc.⁵⁴ In the ‘reflection’, or as he

⁵² La Mettrie, an eighteenth century follower of both, Spinoza and ‘le sage Anglois’, sharply remarked Locke’s joining Spinoza in this point, when he writes in his *Abrégé des systèmes* (1751): “En un mot, M. Locke nie que l’ame puisse penser & pense réellement, sans avoir conscience d’elle meme, c’est-à-dire, sans sçavoir qu’elle pense”. Quoted from La Mettrie, *Le Traité de l’Ame*. Edited by Theo Verbeek (Utrecht 1988), p. 233.

⁵³ The word *sentatio* was already part of Spinoza’s vocabulary in a passage that Locke’s attention cannot have missed when he still lived in Oxford. See CM 1/1/5: “By what *modes of thinking* we imagine things [...] But because to imagine is nothing other than to sense those traces found in the brain from the motion of the spirits, which is excited in the senses by objects, such a sensing (*talais sentatio*) can only be a confused affirmation”.

⁵⁴ Locke had read this term in PPC 2/1: “Quamvis durities, pondus et reliquae *sensibiles qualitates* ...”.

calls it with Spinoza ‘the internal sense’ (2.1.4),”the mind furnishes the understanding with ideas of its own operations”, like thinking, doubting, believing etc.

The perfect correlation between the reflected sensations of our body and its being affected and agitated by other bodies ought to have brought Locke to endorsing the famous proposition *Ethica* 2/7 (“The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things”). Had he not, in fact, already subscribed to an equivalent of *Ethica* 2/13 (“The object of the idea constituting the human mind is the body, or a certain mode of extension actually existing and nothing else”) and its corollary (“Hence it follows that man consists of mind and body, and that the human body exists according as we sense it”)? *Anyhow he did follow the clear anti-cartesian, while anti-dualistic, position of Spinoza*. Man is one thing, a unity, not a combine of two substances, a thinking thing and an extended thing somehow related with and working upon each other. A thinking soul independent of specific variations of the body is for Locke an impossibility. Descartes was condemned to conceive the soul as an always thinking thing, because otherwise it would not permanently exist. Whereupon Locke reacts: “I confess myself to have one of those dull souls, that does not perceive itself always to contemplate ideas; nor can conceive it any more necessary for the soul always to think, than for the body always to move: the perception of ideas being (as I conceive) to the soul what motion is to the body; not its essence, but one of its operations” (2.1.10). Locke cynically chastises the Cartesians, “who so liberally allow life without a thinking soul to all other animals”: “they make the soul and the man two persons, who make the soul think apart what the man is not conscious of” (2.1.12). “Can the soul think and not the man? Or a man think and not be conscious of it?” (2.1.19). This is the *reductio ad absurdum* of Descartes’ dualism in favor of Spinoza’s anthropological monism (*Ethica* 2, axiom 2 and 2/1/3c).⁵⁵

The conclusion is unavoidable: Locke did endorse the typical Spinozistic coordination of the series of ideas with the series of corporeal affections in man.

The order and connection of the ideas is the <i>same as</i> the order and connection of the things (<i>Ethica</i> 2/7).	As the bodies that surround us do diversely affect our organs, the mind is <i>forced</i> to receive the impressions (<i>Essay</i> 2.1.25)
--	--

The metaphor of the mind as a *mirror*, therefore, is not considered inappropriate by Spinoza as well as by Locke and they both subsequently underline the passivity of our knowledge.⁵⁶

[criticizing Bacon:] Human intellect is in relation to the rays of the universe like an uneven <i>mirror</i> , which mixes its own nature with the nature of things (Letter 2). We cannot attribute to god our thinking, which is passive and is determined by the nature of things (CM 2.10.8).	The understanding can no more refuse to have, nor alter when they are imprinted, not blot them out and make new ones itself, than a <i>mirror</i> can refuse, alter, obliterate the images of ideas which the objects set before it do therein produce (<i>Essay</i> 2.1.25).
---	--

The holy empirical principle, which both, Spinoza and Locke, never renounced, seems to exclude the possibility of any adequate knowledge of the essence of things. We only do know them in a confused way by means of our sensorial apparatus, which only permits to know their nature in so far it is present in or working on our senses. In order to escape the boundaries of our subjective impressions and find a cognitive access to the world on itself

⁵⁵ The text of the Dutch translation of the *Ethica* by Spinoza’s friends, the *Nagelate Schriften*, gives a more complete form of the discussed axiom 2 than the *Opera Posthuma*: “De mensch denkt; of anders, wy weten dat wy denken” (“Man thinks, or, we know that we think”). This formula comes even closer to Locke’s interpretation in 2.1.12: “Can a man think without being conscious of it?”

⁵⁶Cf. KV 2/15/5: “the understanding is a pure passion”.

without disavowing the empirical principle, our twins both refuge to a short introduction to mechanical physics proper, in which they emphasize the laws of motion, rest and change of bodies by each other. As we demonstrated earlier they did not disagree on this field of hard science.

I must premise a <i>few statements concerning the nature of bodies (paua de natura corporum)</i> (<i>Ethica</i> 2/13s).	I shall be pardoned this <i>little excursion into natural philosophy</i> (<i>Essay</i> 2.8.22).
--	--

It is precisely the shared natural science, which enabled them to find the access to adequate knowledge in the properties that are common to all bodies as we sense them:

All bodies agree in certain respects (<i>Omnia corpora in quibusdam conveniunt</i>) (Lemma 2). Those things, which are common to all (<i>omnibus communia</i>), and which are equally in a part and in the whole, can only be conceived adequately (<i>Ethica</i> 2/38). Hence it follows that there are certain ideas or notions common to all men. For (Lemma 2) all bodies agree in certain things, which (prev. Prop.) must adequately or clearly and distinctly be perceived by all (Corollary).	Qualities ... such as are utterly inseparable from the body, in what state soever it be; such as in all the alterations and changes it suffers, all the force can be used upon it, it constantly keeps; and such as sense <i>constantly</i> finds in every particle of matter which has bulk enough to be perceived; and the mind finds inseparable from every particle of matter, though less than to make itself singly be perceived by our senses (<i>Essay</i> 2.8.9). Those ideas which are constantly joined to all others must therefore be concluded to be the <i>essence</i> of those things which have constantly those ideas joined to them and are inseparable from them (<i>Essay</i> 2.13.26).
--	---

The ‘common properties’ of bodies, which according to Spinoza are necessarily perceived in the ‘common notions’,⁵⁷ are baptized by Locke as “*real, original or primary qualities*” (2.8.9). Locke makes only use of the expression ‘common notions’ for indicating the principles of moral life, the principles known and to be practiced by everybody.⁵⁸

Locke is rather sloppy and sometimes incomplete in his always slightly different inventories of the constantly present qualities that reveal the essence of things. *Solidity* or *impenetrability* or *extension* or *exclusive repletion of space* is the first candidate coming on the scene in 2.4. In 2.4.8 *figure* and *mobility* are added. In 2.10.6 the latter quality is called *motion and rest*. The way bodies operate can only be *by impulse* (2.8.11). And of course the *causality* principle: “everything that has a beginning, must be caused”.⁵⁹ Spinoza was certainly more systematic in his physical diagram, which he also developed in a geometrical manner. All parts of extension “are either moving or at rest” (ax. 1) and “move now slower now faster” (ax. 2), only distinguished from each other by their ‘*degree of motion*’ (lemma 1), which is, in whatever state they are, always caused by other bodies (lemma 3). After this lemma Spinoza gives another physical axiom (again ‘axiom 1), which explains the origin of our confused or impure ideas of external bodies, called ‘secondary qualities’ by Locke, who, in fact, rephrases this axiom.

All ways in which any body is affected by another follow alike from the nature of the body affected and the body affecting: so that one and the same body may	If it were the design of my present undertaking to inquire into the natural causes and manner of <i>perception</i> , I should offer this as a reason ... viz. <i>that</i>
---	---

⁵⁷ In Letter 6 he called the ‘notions which explain nature as it is on itself’ *notiones castae* (pure notions).

⁵⁸ See *Essay* 1.3.17 (“Do as thou wouldst be done unto”) and 1.3.18 (“virtue is the best worship of God”). - The well known Locke scholar Michael Ayers supports my thesis that Locke with his ‘constant’ elements of our experience builds forth on Spinoza’s ‘common notions’. See his “Spinoza, Platonism and Naturalism” in Ayers, M. (ed.) *Rationalism, Platonism and God* (Oxford, forthcoming).

⁵⁹ See *A Letter to the right reverend Edward Stillingfleet*, in *Works* IV, p. 61.

<p>be moved in various ways according to the variety of the natures of the moving bodies, and on the other hand, various bodies may be moved in various manners by one and the same body (axiom 1). Hence it follows ... that the human mind <i>perceives</i> the nature of many bodies at the same time as the nature of its own body (c. 1) [and] that the ideas which we have of external bodies indicate <i>rather the constitution of our body</i> than the nature of the external bodies (c. 2). [...] the modifications of the human body, the ideas of which represent to us external bodies as if they were present we call the images of things, although they <i>do not represent the shapes of things</i>; and when the mind regards bodies in this manner we say it <i>imagines</i> them (2/17s)</p>	<p><i>all sensation being produced in us only by different degrees and modes of motion in our animal spirits, variously agitated by external objects</i>, the abatement of any former motion must as necessarily produce a new sensation as the variation or increase of it, and so introduce a new idea, which depends only on a different motion of the animal spirits in that organ (<i>Essay</i> 2.8.4). [...] secondary and <i>imputed</i> qualities (2.8.22). But our senses not being able to discover any unlikeness between the idea produced in us and the quality of the object producing it, we are apt to <i>imagine</i> that our ideas are resemblances of something in the objects (2.8.25)</p>
---	--

One could quote many other parallel sentences from *Essay* 2.8 to prove that Locke follows exactly Spinoza's physical (physiological) explanation of our perception in *Ethica* 2, but the above selection will be sufficient for persuading the attentive reader. One point may perhaps be added. Our perception of the 'secondary qualities' like *hot, sweet, dark* etc. is produced by the entrance (via our senses) of 'imperceptible bodies' into the fluid and soft parts of our body ('our nerves or animal spirits'), which 'convey to the brain some motion' (2.8.12). This theory reverberates Spinoza's argument in 2/17c about hallucination ("When external bodies so determine the fluid parts of the human body that they often impinge on the soft parts, they change the surface of them ..."), and reflects the six postulates he enumerated at the end of his 'small physics' and to which he remarked in 2/17s: "there is nothing in it, that is not borne out by experience". Our world, we must say with our philosophers, is necessarily full with phantastical illusions about its population, an essentially 'undisenchanted' world. Efforts from the side of rationalists for its disenchantment are utopian and can hardly be considered a contribution of radical enlightenment.

Spinoza and Locke draw a whole *series of conclusions* from their shared theory of perception: about adequacy and inadequacy of ideas, about their truth or falsity, about memory and retention of ideas, about universality and variety of perception among animals, about association of ideas, about custom and education. The textual evidence is as follows.

<p>Inadequate and confused ideas follow with the same necessity as adequate or clear and distinct ideas (<i>Ethica</i> 2/36). [...] inadequate or partial (<i>inadequata seu partialis</i>) (<i>Ethica</i> 3, def. 1).</p>	<p>OF ADEQUATE AND INADEQUATE IDEAS. Of our real ideas, some are adequate, and some are inadequate. Those I call adequate which perfectly represent those archetypes, which the mind supposes them taken from, which it intends them to stand for, and to which it refers them. <i>Inadequate</i> ideas are such which are but a <i>partial or incomplete</i> representation of those archetypes to which they are referred (<i>Essay</i> 2.31.1)</p>
--	---

<p>And here, so that I may begin to point out where lies error, I would have you note that the <i>imaginations of the mind, regarded in themselves, contain no error</i>, or that the mind does not err from the fact that it imagines, but only in so far as it is considered as wanting the idea which cuts off the essence of the things she imagines (<i>Ethica</i> 2/17s)⁶⁰</p>	<p>And so I say that the ideas in our minds, being only so many perceptions or appearances there, none of them are false [...] <i>Our ideas are not capable</i>, any of them, <i>of being false</i>, till the mind passes some judgment on them, that it affirms or denies something of them (<i>Essay</i> 2.32.3).</p>
---	---

⁶⁰ Cf. Wim Klever, "The Truth of Error: A Spinozistic Paradox", in Y. Yovel (ed.), *Spinoza on Knowledge and the Human Mind* (Leiden: Brill 1994) 111-128. "Simple ideas are not fictions of our fancies, but the natural and regular productions of things without us, really operating upon us" (*Essay* 4.4.4). This is Locke's perfect

<p>If the human body has once been affected at the same time by two or more bodies, when the mind afterwards remembers any one of them it will straightway remember the others (<i>Ethica</i> 2/18) until the body is affected by a modification which cuts off the existence or presence of that body (2/17). Hence we clearly understand what is <i>memory</i>. For it is nothing else than a certain concatenation of ideas ... according to the order and concatenation of the affections of the human body (2/18s). The more an image is joined with many other things, the more often it flourishes (<i>viget</i>) (5/13). For it comes about <i>sometimes</i> that a man suffers such changes that it is difficult to say he is the same, as I have heard related of a certain Spanish poet, who had been seized with a certain <i>sickness</i>, and although he recovered from it, remained so <i>oblivious of his past life</i> that he did not think the tales and tragedies he had written were his own (<i>Ethica</i> 4/39s). The more any image has reference to many things, <i>the more frequent</i> it is, i.e., the more often it flourishes, and the more it occupies the mind (<i>Ethica</i> 5/11). For there is another point which I wish to be noted specially here, namely, that we can do nothing by a decision of the mind unless we recollect (<i>nisi recordemur</i>). For instance, we can not speak a word unless we recollect it (<i>Ethica</i> 3/2s).</p>	<p>Concerning the several <i>degrees of lasting</i>, wherewith ideas are imprinted on the <i>memory</i>, we may observe that some of them have been produced in the understanding by an object affecting the senses once only, and no more than once; others that have more than once offered themselves to the senses have yet been little taken notice of (2.10.4). How much the constitution of our bodies and the make of our animal spirits are concerned in this, and whether the temper of the brain make this difference that in some it retains the characters drawn on it like marble, in others like freestone, and in others little better than sand, I shall not here inquire, though it may seem probable that the constitution of the body does sometimes influence the memory, since we <i>oftentimes</i> find a <i>disease</i> quite strip the mind of all its ideas and the flames of a <i>fever</i>, in a few days, <i>calcine all those images to dust and confusion</i> which seemed to be as lasting as if graved in marble (2.10.5). Those (ideas) that are oftenest refreshed (amongst which are those that are conveyed in the mind by more ways than one) be a <i>frequent return</i> of the objects or actions that produce them, fix themselves best in the <i>memory</i> (2.10.6).[...] <i>repetition</i> helps much to the fixing any ideas in the memory (2.10.3). Memory ... is of so great moment that, where it is wanting, all the rest of our faculties are in a great measure useless; and we in our thoughts, reasonings, and knowledge could not proceed beyond present objects ...” (2.10.8)</p>
<p><i>All things are, though in various degrees, animate (omnia [individua], quamvis diversis gradibus, animata sunt)...</i> This, however, I will say in general, that according as a body is more apt than others for performing or for receiving many actions at the same time, so is its mind more apt than others for perceiving many things at the same time. And according as fewer other bodies concur with its action, so its mind is more apt for distinct understanding (2/13s)</p>	<p><i>Perception</i>, I believe, <i>is, in some degree, in all sorts of animals</i>; though in some possibly the avenues provided by nature for the reception of sensations are so few, and the perception they are received with so obscure and dull, that it comes extremely short of the quickness and variety of sensation, which is in other animals (<i>Essay</i> 2.9.12). Children, by the exercise of their senses about objects that affect them in the womb, receive some few ideas (2.9.5)...small dull perception ...in decrepit old age (2.9.14).</p>
<p><i>Concatenation of ideas according to the order and concatenation of the modifications of the human body</i> ... And hence we can clearly understand why the mind from thinking (<i>cogitatio</i>) one thing should immediately fall upon thinking another which has no likeness to the first, e.g. how from the thinking the word <i>apple</i> (pomum) a Roman immediately began thinking a fruit, which has <i>no likeness</i> to that articulate sound nor anything in common, save that the body of that man was <i>often affected</i> by these two, that is, the man frequently heard the word <i>apple</i> (pomum) while looking at the fruit and thus passes from the thought of one thing to the thought of another according as <i>custom</i></p>	<p>On the association of ideas (2.33) [This strong combination of ideas] comes in different men to be very different, according to their different inclinations, <i>educations</i>, interests, etc. <i>Custom</i> settles habits of thinking in the understanding, as well as of determining in the will, and of motions in the body: <i>all which seems to be but trains of motion in the animal spirits</i>, which, once set a-going, continue in the same steps they have been used to, which, by often treading, are worn into a smooth path, and the motion in it becomes easy and, as it were, natural (<i>Essay</i> 2.33.6). For a child quickly assents to this proposition, that an <i>apple</i> is not fire, when <i>by familiar acquaintance</i> he has got the ideas of those two <i>different things</i> distinctly</p>

explanation of Spinoza’s example, that the sun *has to appear* as a bright disc on a short distance in the sky (*Ethica* 2/35s).

<p>(<i>consuetudo</i>) has arranged the images of things in his body (<i>Ethica</i> 2/18s). For <i>custom</i> and <i>religion</i> are not the same to all, but on the contrary, what is sacred to some is profane to others, and what is honorable to some is disgraceful to others. Therefore, according as each has been <i>educated</i>, so he repents or glories in his actions (<i>Ethica</i> 4, df xxvii). Anything can <i>accidentally</i> (per accidens) be the cause of pleasure, pain, or desire ... Hence we understand how it comes about that we love or hate certain things without having any known cause for it, but only out of what people call <i>sympathy</i> and <i>antipathy</i> (<i>Ethica</i> 3/15 & scholium).</p>	<p>imprinted on his mind and that the names <i>apple</i> and <i>fire</i> stand for them (1.2..23). How children learn languages [...] gold or <i>apple</i> to distinguish the one from the other (1.3.9 & 15). Let <i>custom</i> from the very childhood have joined figure and shape to the idea of God and what absurdities will that mind be liable to about the Deity? (2.23.17). To this [associations made by custom] perhaps might be justly attributed most of the <i>sympathies and antipathies</i> observable in men, which work as strongly and produce as regular effects as if they were natural; and are therefore called so, though they at first had no other original but the <i>accidental</i> connexion of two ideas (2.33.7)</p>
---	--

After having demonstrated that all our ideas are originally and essentially ideas of our thus or so affected body and that they are without exception confused, because we cannot distinguish between what in our body is the effect of its own nature and what is due to the affecting external bodies, Spinoza comes to a summary of his long discourse, which may also be considered its summit. The fragment must have made a deep impression on Locke and have turned his mind definitely in a completely new direction. Here, on this point of *Ethica* 2, he was struck by the light that made him see and understand, for the first time in his life, how we humans raise from the bottom of confused and inadequate knowledge towards the level of adequate and crystal clear knowledge, how we escape from the imaginative sphere into the realm of pure reason and irresistible concepts.

<p>I say expressly that the <i>mind</i> has no adequate but only confused knowledge of itself, of its body, and of external bodies, when it perceives things according to the common order of nature, that is, whenever it is determined externally, that is, by fortuitous circumstances, to <i>contemplate</i> this or that, and not when it is determined internally, that is, by the fact that it <i>contemplates</i> many things at once, to understand their agreements, differences, and repugnances one to another (<i>eo quod res plures simul contemplatur, determinatur ad earundem convenientias, differentias et oppugnantias intelligendum</i>). For whenever it is disposed in this or any other way from within, then it <i>contemplates</i> things clearly and distinctly, as I shall show further on (<i>Ethica</i> 2/29s).</p>	<p>On knowledge in general. 1. Since <i>the mind</i>, in all its thoughts and reasonings, hath no other immediate object but its own <i>ideas</i>, which it alone does or can <i>contemplate</i>, it is evident that our knowledge is only conversant about them. 2. <i>Knowledge</i> then seems to me to be nothing but <i>the perception of the connexion and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy, of any of our ideas</i>. In this it consists (4.1.1&2).⁶¹ He (God) has given mankind a mind that can reason without being instructed in methods of syllogizing; the understanding is not taught to reason by these rules, it has a native faculty to perceive the coherence or incoherence of its <i>ideas</i> (4.17.4).⁶²</p>
---	---

⁶¹In 4/17/4 Locke explained our automatic seeing of agreement or disagreement between our ideas with the word 'native faculty', a skill, therefore which needs not to be acquired. "The mind ... has a native faculty to perceive the coherence or incoherence of its *ideas*".

⁶²Cf. Wim Klever, "Hoe men wijs wordt. Een gespannen doch vruchtbare relatie tussen Spinoza en Bouwmeester in het licht van een nieuw document", in *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 21 (2005)335-353 . This article provides an interesting background to Locke's statement here.

To have sensations implies knowing it and mentally seeing them. The mind, being the (complex) idea of its ideas, contemplates (reflects) its own ideas (sensations). Is it a wonder, then, that it *must* perceive at once their being identical, different or opposite, because they cover each other yes or no? It needs thereto no process of reasoning and concluding. The mind cannot avoid the clear and distinct perception as described in the threefold terminology (agreement / *convenientia*, disagreement *differentia*, repugnancy / *oppugnantia*), just like the mathematician cannot avoid seeing equality, partial equality or opposition between his figures. Locke's use of the word 'contemplate', which is so prominent in Spinoza's scholium, is even more significant than his taking-over of the just mentioned trio, because up till now it did not belong to his vocabulary.⁶³

As I remarked already in my 'Slocke' one cannot find in the drafts A and B (1671) an analogy or equivalent of Locke's forceful starting point of *Essay* 4.⁶⁴ It first appears in *Essay* 1.2.15 ("In *ideas thus* got, the mind discovers that some agree and others differ, probably as soon as it has any use of memory") and 1.2.16 ("upon the first occasion that shall make him put together those ideas in the mind and observe whether they agree or disagree"). The word 'together' in this quote may be seen as a resonance of '*simul*' in Spinoza's 2/29s. Spinoza's distinction between external and internal sensation finds its place in Locke's own recapitulation of the antecedent expositions in his chapter 2.11 OF DISCERNING AND OTHER OPERATIONS OF THE MIND, where he starts § 15, like Spinoza did in 2/29s, with a retrospect. "And thus I have given a short and, I think true *history of the first beginnings of human knowledge*, whence the mind has its first objects, and by what steps it makes its progress to the laying in and storing up those ideas out of which is to be framed all the knowledge it is capable of". The distinction mentioned above follows in § 17: "I pretend not to teach, but to inquire; and therefore cannot but confess here again that *external and internal sensation* are the only passages that I can find of knowledge to the understanding. These alone, as far as I can discover, are the windows by which light is let into this *dark room* ... These are my guesses".

I dare assert apodictically that the opening statements of *Essay* 4 were not drawn from his own brain or products from his own invention. They were also not guesses, as may be concluded from the fact that they were further on in the *Essay* more than ten times reaffirmed without any hesitation or doubt. Locke leans heavily on Spinoza's shoulders without confessing it. *Ethica* 2/29s was the clue that opened his eyes widely. In the history of philosophy there is no other precedent apart from Spinoza's text. Yet in his correspondence with Stillingfleet Locke insists on the originality of his definition of knowledge. In the second letter he affirms: "Nobody that I ever met with had in their writings particularly set down wherein the act of knowing precisely consisted".⁶⁵ In the third letter he states quite specifically that Descartes did not, as he himself did, "place certainty in the perception of agreement or disagreement of ideas".⁶⁶ But as we already remarked in our introduction: in the public polemics with bishop Stillingfleet he had something to win with the denial of any trace of Spinozism in his works. His best defense was to maintain his philosophical virginity.

⁶³ John W. Yolton is on page xx of his introduction to the Everymans edition of the *Essay* (reprint 1972) not wrong with his interpretation of the word 'repugnancy' (used by Locke in 4-1.2 and elsewhere) as meaning 'contradiction or inconsistency', but it is a bit curious to refer to the Middle Ages where the source is contemporary. 'Oppugnancy' was not current in English language, but 'repugnancy' is good enough as a translation.

⁶⁴ Cf. P. H. Nidditch and G. A. J. Rogers (eds), *Drafts A and B* (Oxford 1990). R. Aaron writes in his *John Locke* (Oxford 1937): "Now it is a highly interesting point that the opening chapters of Book IV have no counterpart in the drafts of 1671" (p. 87).

⁶⁵ *Works* o.c. vol. IX, p. 143.

⁶⁶ *Ib.* p. 362. Also H.A.S. Shankula ("Locke, Descartes, and the Science of Nature", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 41 (1980), p. 459-477) rejects the Cartesian origin of Locke's solution.

When did Locke start writing the *Essay*? Formerly Locke scholars said unanimously that it was in 1671, the date of two extant drafts about human intellect. But G. A. J. Rogers, co-editor of those drafts, has recently successfully defended that this must have been when Locke was back again in England after his stay in France, in the years 1680-1681.⁶⁷ His argument can be reinforced by what Locke wrote to Edward Clarke on 21/31 December 1686 from Amsterdam, when he sent to his friend the “fourth and last book of (his) scattered thoughts concerning the *Understanding*”. He added the following remark to it: “Of what use it may be to any other I cannot tell, but, if I flatter not myself, it has been of great help to [our first enquiry], and the search of knowledge ever since has been in my thoughts, *which is now five or six years*. For so long ago is it since some friends upon an accidental discourse [started me] upon this enquiry, which I am not sorry for.”⁶⁸ And if it has cost me some pains in thinking, it has rewarded me by the light I imagine I have received from it, as well as by the pleasure of discovering certain truths, which to me at least were new”⁶⁹ 1680 as the birth year of the *Essay* fits well to the current view that Locke, after returning from France, first wrote the *Two Treatises of Government*, a thing most urgent on account of the political situation in England, and then proceeded to the epistemological project. Without the *Opera Posthuma* (1677) the start of Locke’s career as a senior philosopher and his inexhaustible energy in the production of so many treatises in a short period are not explainable.⁷⁰ The most plausible hypothesis seems to be that Locke began the writing of his treatise in 1682, his last year in London, continued this work in his Dutch years and finished it in December 1686 in Amsterdam. The immeasurable impact, which the *Ethica* had on the progress of Locke’s philosophizing, is comparable to its influence, in particular also 2/29s, on a couple of Dutch followers of Spinoza. So was Johannes Duijkerius in his *Vervolg van ‘t leven van Philopater* (1697) not less than Locke addicted to a radical form of empiricism, in which adequate ideas are thought to rise up automatically from the affections of our body by objects.⁷¹ And Herman Boerhaave, the famous Leiden professor of medicine, wrote in his often reprinted *Institutiones Medicae* (1707), that we are not self responsible for our thoughts and that “you contemplating the identity or diversity of your sensitive ideas, are forced (*cogaris*) to think that they are one when they are one and that they are different when they are different”.⁷²

Returning now to the *Essay* we discover that Locke also takes over, in a reversed order of numbering, Spinoza’s most famous and very typical distinction between *three kinds of knowledge*.⁷³ In the next frame the relevant, but dispersed, text fragments are collected that, again, will convince the reader of Locke’s being the faithful student. Each item on one side has some relation to one or more items on the other side.

⁶⁷ See his “Introduction” to G. A. J. Rogers (ed.) *Locke’s Philosophy. Content and Context* (Oxford 1994) p.9-12. The basis of his argument is the analysis of Letter 1266 (De Beer, o.c.).

⁶⁸ My italics.

⁶⁹ Letter 886 in De Beer, *Correspondence*, o.c. In his edition of Locke, *Selected Correspondence* (Oxford 2002) Marc Goldie remarks to this passage in a footnote: “Probably an error for ‘fifteen or sixteen’. Locke began the *Essay* in 1671”. It seems rather improbable that the mentioning of five or six years would be an error, since Locke accentuates and reaffirms the mentioned period by saying ‘for so long ago is it...’ and adds moreover that the discovered truths were ‘new’ for him!

⁷⁰ That Spinoza’s works are also the source of inspiration for the TTG and the *Epistola de Tolerantia* will be shown later.

⁷¹ Amsterdam 1697.

⁷² O.c. § 586. See quote in Wim Klever, *Boerhaave ‘sequax Spinozae’* (Vrijstad 2006), p.72. Boerhaave continues: “Exinde conficio, iudicium non esse actionem voluntatis, ad sensum vel largientis vel renuentis, quae Cartesii est definitio”.

⁷³ Spinoza inherited this distinction from his master Franciscus van den Enden, who wrote: “First and above all people have to be taught their threefold knowledge (driederley kennissen), namely belief, rational persuasion and clear knowledge”. See his *Free Political Propositions and Considerations of State* (1665). *Introduced, presented, translated and commented on by Wim Klever* (Vrijstad 2007) p. 196.

<p><i>Modi percipiendi</i>: 1) perception from hear say / perception from vague experience, 2) perception in which the essence is concluded from another thing, 3) when the essence of the thing is perceived directly or as coming forth from its proximate cause / intuitive (<i>intuitive</i>) and <i>doing nothing</i> (<i>nullam operationem facientes</i>) (TIE § 24).</p> <p>The best mode of perceiving ... in order to know correctly the differences, agreements and repugnancies (<i>oppugnancias</i>) of things. (§25) But the things I have so far been able to know by this kind of knowledge have been <i>very few</i> (<i>perpauca fuerunt</i>) (§ 22).</p> <p><i>Tria genera cognitionis</i>: 1) <i>from particular things represented</i> to our intellect <i>mutilated, confused</i> and without order ... / from signs e.g. from the fact that we remember certain things through having read or heard certain words and form certain ideas of them similar to those through which we imagine things. Both of these ways of regarding things I shall call hereafter knowledge of the first kind, <i>opinion</i> (<i>opinio</i>) or <i>imagination</i> (<i>imaginationis</i>). 2) from the fact that we have common notions and adequate ideas of the properties of things ... And I shall call this <i>reason</i> (<i>ratio</i>) or knowledge of the second kind.⁷⁴ 3) Besides these two kinds of knowledge there is a third ... which we shall call <i>intuitive knowledge</i> (<i>scientia intuitiva</i>). Now this kind of knowing proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the essence of things (<i>Ethica</i> 2/40s2).</p> <p>And so I shall <i>treat</i> of the nature and force of the emotions, and the power of the mind over them in the same manner as I treated of God and the mind in the previous parts, and I shall regard <i>human actions</i> and appetites exactly <i>as if I were dealing with lines, planes, and bodies</i> (<i>Ethica</i>, preface to part 3).</p>	<p><i>Of the degrees /kinds / sorts of our knowledge</i> (<i>Essay</i> 4.2.2 & 14). 1) Sometimes the mind perceives the <i>agreement or disagreement of two ideas immediately by themselves, without any intervention</i> of any other. And this I think we may call <i>intuitive knowledge</i>... This kind ... is the clearest and most certain, that human frailty is capable of... is irresistible and, like bright sunshine, <i>forces</i> itself immediately to be perceived. <i>It is on this intuition that depends all the certainty and evidence of all our knowledge.</i> 2) The next degree of knowledge is where the mind perceives the agreement or disagreement of any ideas, but <i>not immediately</i>.... That is what we call <i>reasoning</i> ... Where the agreement or disagreement is by this means (of intervening ideas) plainly and clearly perceived, it is called <i>demonstration</i>... Demonstrative certainty ... is not the privilege of the ideas of number, extension, and figure alone (9)⁷⁵ 3) These two , viz. intuition and demonstration, are the degrees of our knowledge; whatever comes short of one of these, with what assurance soever embraced, is but <i>faith or opinion, but not knowledge</i>, at least in all general truths.⁷⁶ There is, indeed, another perception of the mind, employed <i>about the particular existence of finite beings without us</i>, which, going beyond bare probability and yet not reaching perfectly to either of the foregoing degrees of certainty, passes under the name of knowledge ... <i>Three degrees of knowledge, viz. intuitive, demonstrative and sensitive</i> (14) But ideas which, by reason of their <i>obscurity</i> or otherwise, are <i>confused</i> cannot produce any clear or distinct knowledge (15).</p> <p>Some <i>few</i> of the primary qualities have a necessary dependence and visible connexion one with another, as figure necessarily supposes extension, receiving or communicating motion by impulse supposes solidity.⁷⁷ But though these and perhaps some others of our ideas have, yet there are <i>so few</i> of them that have <i>visible</i> connexion one with another, that we can by intuition or</p>
--	---

⁷⁴ Spinoza gives an example of this knowledge *by ratiocination* from Euclid's *Elementa*, the method of finding the fourth proportional "from a common property of proportionals".

⁷⁵ Locke, of course, implicitly refers to the method of the *Ethica more geometrico demonstrata*, which deals not with numbers. See also *Essay* 4.3.18 ("Morality (being) amongst the sciences capable of demonstration, wherein I doubt not from self-evident propositions, by necessary consequences as incontestable as those in mathematics, the measures of right and wrong might be made out to anyone that will apply himself with the same indifference and attention to the one as he does to the other of these sciences") and 3.11.16 ("Upon this ground it is that I am bold to think that *morality* is as *capable of demonstration*, as well as mathematics; since the precise real essence of things moral words stand for may be perfectly known, and so the congruity or incongruity of the things themselves be certainly discovered, in which consists perfect knowledge").

⁷⁶ It is interesting that Locke has 'faith or opinion' for Spinoza's 'opinion or imagination'. Spinoza would certainly not object to this qualification, because according to him *all* kinds of perception, also his first kind, make us '*indubie*' (without doubting) affirm or deny. Cf. Locke's '*assurance*' in this context.. In 4.4.1-4 Locke also embraces Spinoza's technical term '*imaginationis*', since he uses it in that chapter four times and forgets his own equivalents.

⁷⁷ The examples show that the co-perceived common 'things' need not be atomic primary properties but include also various primary principles. Where Spinoza takes an illustration from Euclid, Locke gives two ethical cases: "where there is no property there is no injustice is a proposition as certain as any demonstration in Euclid", and "no government allows absolute liberty" (*Essay* 4.3.18). Mind that further on in this same paragraph he does not shun the word '*ethics*' !

	demonstration discover the co-existence of <i>very few</i> of the qualities that are to be found in substances (4.314).
--	---

The last quote on the left side, betraying Spinoza's intention to practice only the method of rational demonstration in his ethics, has brought Locke, who had the *Ethica* lying on the top of his desk, now in its third part. And, yes, again we find without delay two counterparts.

The body cannot determine the mind to think, nor the mind the body to motion, nor to rest, nor to any other state (if there be any other). [...] That which determines the mind to think is a mode of thinking and not ... a body....Again, the motion and rest of a body must arise from another body, which also was determined to motion or rest by another body [...] (<i>Ethica</i> 3/2&d)	As the ideas of sensible secondary qualities, which we have in our minds can by us be no way deduced from bodily causes, nor any correspondence or connexion be found between them and those primary qualities which (experience shows us) produce them in us, so, on the other side, the operation of our minds upon our bodies is as inconceivable. How any thought should produce a motion in body is as remote from the nature of our ideas, as how any body should produce any thought in the mind (<i>Essay</i> 4.3.28).
---	---

Locke excludes with Spinoza any intercausality between hypothetically substantial minds and bodies in man. He had already pleaded, like Spinoza, for the unity of mind and body in his strong anti-cartesian chapter *Essay* 2.1.⁷⁸ Also in the context of 4.3 he maintains the unity: “*We* [‘men’, not: ‘our souls’, wk] have the ideas of matter and thinking, but possibly shall never be able to know whether any *mere material* being thinks or no” (4.3.6). In that case thinking would be a power of ‘fitly disposed’ matter itself. The Cartesian theory about a divinely operated connection between two substances in man is not explicitly rejected here, but considered only a theoretical and even implausible alternative, because Locke does “see no contradiction” in the first, the Spinozistic, alternative. Both, however, claim certainty in *attributing* in exactly the same way the production of motions only to bodies and of thoughts only to thoughts. That ‘mere matter’ would be responsible for ‘mere thoughts’ or the reversed, ‘mere thoughts’ for ‘mere matter’, is “outside the reach of our knowledge”. The conclusion, therefore, is that phenomena like pleasure and pain, “in some bodies *themselves* after a certain manner modified and moved”, must be the effect and manifestation of the one and the same thing: “thinking extended matter”.⁷⁹ It cannot be doubted that Locke’s sympathy lies on the side of Spinoza’s reformed Cartesianism. They cherished a common explanation of human behavior.

Locke found himself also on Spinoza’s line where he underlined the limitations of our natural science, i.e. the *impossibility of knowing perfectly concrete phenomena* of whatever kind. Again, the only method to convince a reader of this shared theory will be to put two ranges of text fragments next to each other.

Experience does not teach us the essences of things (Letter 10, 1663). Hence it follows that the human mind, whenever it perceives a thing in the common order of nature, has no adequate knowledge of itself, nor of its body, <i>nor of external bodies, but only a confused and mutilated knowledge thereof</i> ... It does not perceive its [own] body save through the ideas of its modifications, <i>through which alone also it perceives other bodies</i> (<i>Ethica</i> 2/29c). As to knowing the actual manner of this coherence, i.e. the way in which each part of Nature	Whatever therefore be the secret and abstract nature of substance in general, all the ideas we have of particular distinct sorts of substances, are nothing but several combinations of simple ideas, co-existing in such, though unknown, cause of their union as makes the whole subsist of itself (<i>Essay</i> 2.3.6). Nor indeed can we rank and sort things ... by their real essences because we know them not ... It is evident the internal constitution, whereon their properties depend, is unknown to us (3.6.9). [...] since we, having but some few superficial ideas of things, discovered to us only by
--	--

⁷⁸ See above.

⁷⁹ Cf. *Ethica* 2/7s: “Sic modus extensionis et idea illius modi una eademque est res, sed duobus modis expressa”.

<p>accords with the whole and the manner of its coherence with other parts, I made it clear in my previous letter that this is <i>beyond my knowledge</i> (Letter 32). One can never have adequate knowledge (<i>comprobare</i>) by chemical or any other experiments, but only by demonstration and by calculating. For it is by reason and calculation that we divide bodies to infinity, and consequently also the forces required to produce them (Letter 6). The general consideration of fate and the concatenation of causes would aid us very little in forming and arranging our ideas <i>concerning particular things</i>. Let us add that as to the actual co-ordination and concatenation of things, that is how things are ordained and linked together, we are <i>completely ignorant (plane ignorare)</i> (TTP 4/4). It would be impossible for human weakness to grasp the series of singular, changeable things, not only because there are innumerable many of them, but also because of the infinite circumstances in one and the same thing, any of which can be the cause of its existence or nonexistence (TIE § 100). If we attend <i>to the analogy of the whole nature</i> (CM 2/8/7). From the analogy of the universe (Letter 2).</p>	<p>the senses from without or by the mind reflecting on what it experiments in itself within, have no knowledge beyond that, much less of the internal constitution and true nature of things, being destitute of faculties to attain it (2.23.32). Therefore I am apt to doubt that, how far soever human industry may advance useful and experimental philosophy in physical things, scientific [philosophy] will still be out of our reach ... We are <i>not capable of scientific knowledge</i>, nor shall ever be able to discover general, instructive, unquestionable truths <i>concerning them [particular things, wk]</i> (4.3.25). We can go no further than particular experience informs us of matter of fact, and <i>by analogy to guess</i> what effects the like bodies are, upon other trials, like to produce. But as to a perfect science of natural bodies ... we are, I think, so far from being capable of any such thing, that I conclude it lost labor to seek after it (4.3.30) "<i>As thou knowest not what is the Way of the Spirit, nor how the Bones do grow in the Womb of her that is with Child</i>", Eccles. Xi.5 on title page of <i>Essay</i>.</p>
--	--

Experimental science, nonetheless, does have sense. By this we will not really be able to learn precisely the laws according to which nature works, but only approach them by analogy. Both, Spinoza and Locke, were experienced experimenters. Spinoza loved working in hydrostatics, chemistry and optics, Locke practiced chemistry and medicine.⁸⁰

We do have, however, *true mathematical and moral science*, consisting of the greatest common nominators of all our imaginations or confused sensations, our 'common notions', in Locke's preferred terminology their 'constants'. In them we think the common things i.e. the things on themselves *in general*, not in particular. They are the abstract ideas "of the mind's own making" (4.4.5), the mind's own operations or *constructs*. This does not mean that they are not true. They are. Confer *Ethica* 1, axiom 6 (*Idea vera debet cum suo ideato convenire*) with *Essay* 4.4.1 ("So a man observe but the agreement of his own imaginations and talk conformably, it is all truth, all certainty. Such castles in the air will be as strongholds of truths as the demonstrations of Euclid"). The adequate ideas fully agree with their *ideatum* but reflect only a very small part of the infinite aspects and causes of the objects intended. They cover, so to say, their idealized form.

Spinoza's mathematical ethics is nothing less than a treatise about man's behavior, which does not exceed the realm of *entia rationis*. It treats the laws of everybody's behavior, but does not enumerate the infinite causes and circumstances which determine Peter's or Paul's particular behavior (and make all men differ from each other), just like Euclid's geometry did not provide the properties of the really existing and always different circles, which never are and never can be perfect. Locke had well understood the abstract character of the central and indestructible part of our mind, constituted by the agreement of the totality of our confused ideas. And he closely followed Spinoza in his persuasion that mathematics or true science is not confined to the science of numbers and figures.

⁸⁰ Cf. Wim Klever, "Insignis opticus. Spinoza in de geschiedenis van de optica", in *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 6 (1990) 47-63 and Idem, "Anti-falsificationism: Spinoza's theory of experience and experiments", in Ed Curley & P. F. Moreau (eds.), *Spinoza. Issues and Directions. The Proceedings of the Chicago Spinoza Conference* (Leiden: Brill 1990) 124-136. J. R. Milton, "Locke, Medicine and the Mechanical Philosophy", in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 9 (2001) 221-243.

All the discourses of the mathematicians about the squaring of a circle, conic sections or any other parts of mathematics concern not the existence of any of those figures; but the demonstrations, which depend on their ideas, are the same, whether there be any square or circle existent in the world or no. In the same manner, the truth and certainty of moral discourse abstracts from the lives of men and the existence of those virtues in the world whereof they treat (*Essay 4.4.8*). 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 we can find their habitudes and relations, so far we shall be possessed of certain, real and general truths (*Essay 4.12.8*). Upon this ground 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 or incongruity of things themselves be certainly discovered, in which consists perfect knowledge (*Essay 3.11.16*).

His friend Molyneux asked Locke to figure out such a scientific ethics.⁸¹ But Locke saw no reason why he should. More than once he lets us surmise that according to him such a mathematical science of ethics does already exist. “We have reason to thank those who in this latter age have taken another course and have trod out to us, though not an easier way to learned ignorance, yet a surer way to profitable knowledge” (*Essay 4.12.12*).

Spinoza stood a model for all that Locke was claiming in his epistemological project. This appears also in his treatment OF MAXIMS (4.7). Spinoza started the five parts of the *Ethica* with mentioning the axioms to which he reduced several propositions. This geometrical method was in use by many scientists of the new age: his colleague Christian Huygens (in *Horologium oscillatorium*, 1673), his friend Nicolaas Steno (*Descriptio geometrica musculorum*, 1665), Isaac Newton (*Principia mathematica philosophiae naturalis*, 1687). Locke was impressed and wanted to comment upon. “There are a sort of propositions which, under the name of *maxims and axioms*, have passed for principles of science and, because they are self-evident, have been supposed innate, without that anybody (that I know) ever went about to show the reason and foundation of their clearness or cogency” (4.7.1). It will no longer be a surprise that Locke reduces their evidence to our immediate perception of agreement between our sensations. The agreeing items might be put on the forefront of the scientific discourse, but one must realize, he continues, that they are not temporally primary notions. “That they are not the truths first known to the mind, is evident to experience, as we have shown in another place, Book II, ch. I” (4.7.9). Calling them “the foundations of all our other knowledge” (4.7.10) is more than misleading, because they are themselves the product of our experience. Since also Spinoza is a radical empiricist as concerns the origin of the axioms, the reader of his text may be grateful for Locke’s clarification.

We discussed already in the beginning of this article, in connection with Spinoza’s Letter 32, Locke’s impressive upshot of our universal knowledge in 4.6. The head of this chapter was telling: OF UNIVERSAL PROPOSITIONS. In 4.7 Locke not only stipulates the aposteriori character of axioms or maxims, but also their difference from other ‘contrivances of the mind’ that are nothing less than confused general notions. For this type of imaginings Spinoza and Locke take both our customary idea of the species *man* as example.

<p>For, as we have said, the mind cannot imagine a fixed number of particulars at the same time. But it must be noted that these notions are not formed by all in the same manner, but vary with each according to the thing by which the body was most often affected, and which the mind imagines or remembers most easily. For example, those who have most often admired for their stature, by the name of man will understand an animal of <i>erect stature</i>; and those who are wont to regard men in another way will form another common image of</p>	<p>A child having framed the idea of <i>man</i>, it is probable that his idea is just like that picture which the painter makes of the visible appearances joined together, whereof white or flesh-color in England being one, the child can demonstrate to you that a Negro is not a man ... Another that has gone further in framing and collecting the idea he calls <i>man</i>, and to the outward shape adds <i>laughter</i> and <i>rational discourse</i>, may demonstrate that infants and changelings are no men ... Perhaps another makes up the complex idea which he</p>
---	---

⁸¹ *Correspondence*, ed. De Beer, no. 1513).

<p>men, namely a <i>laughing animal</i>, a <i>featherless biped animal</i>, a <i>reasoning animal</i>, and so each one will form concerning the other things <i>universal images</i> of things according to the dispositions of his body. Wherefore it is not surprising that so many controversies should have arisen among philosophers who wished to explain natural things merely by images of things (<i>Ethica</i> 2/40s1).</p>	<p>calls <i>man</i>, only out of the ideas of body in general and the powers of <i>language</i> and <i>reason</i> and leaves out the <i>shape</i> wholly (4-7.16-17) It could not possibly be that the abstract idea to which the name <i>man</i> is given should be different in several men, if it were of nature's making, and to one it should be <i>animal rationale</i>, and to another <i>animal implume bipes latis unguibus</i>... I think there is scarce anyone will allow his <i>upright figure</i> ... to be the essential difference of <i>species man</i>; and yet how far men determine of the sorts of animals, rather by their shape than descent, is very visible... (3.6.26).</p>
---	---

Our so-called universal ideas are mostly nothing but ideas of particulars for universal use, for *comparing* things which each other and calling them accordingly perfect or imperfect.

<p>But afterwards, when men began to form universal ideas and to think out <i>standards (exemplaria)</i> of houses, buildings, towers, etc. and to prefer certain standards to others, it came about that every one <i>called (vocaret)</i> that perfect which he saw to agree with the universal idea which he had formed of that sort of thing, and on the contrary, imperfect what he saw less agree with the exemplar that he had conceived, although in the opinion of the artificer it might be perfect (<i>Ethica</i> 4, preface).</p>	<p>The mind makes the particular ideas received from particular objects to become general ... this is called abstraction, whereby ideas taken from particular beings become general representatives of all of the same kind; and their names, general names, applicable to whatever exists <i>conformable</i> to such abstract ideas. Such precise, naked appearances in the mind, without considering how, whence, or with what others they came there, the understanding lays up as the <i>standards</i> to rank real existences into sorts, as they agree with these patterns, and to <i>denominate</i> them accordingly (<i>Essay</i> 2.11.9).</p>
---	--

Does *our idea of God* belong to the realm of confused belief and fancy or is it part of our scientific knowledge? Locke cannot and will not avoid the question, about which Spinoza's proposition 47 at the end of *Ethica* 2 was so conspicuous: "human mind has an adequate knowledge of the eternal and infinite essence of God". His demonstration was simple: because we perceive our own existence and know that the idea of whatever particular body involves necessarily the idea of God's eternal and infinite existence (2/46), a proposition that on its turn was based on 1/15 ("Whatever is, is in God and nothing can exist or be perceived without God") and 1/axiom 4 ("The knowledge of an effect depends on the knowledge of the cause and involves it"). Well, Locke takes the same steps in his proving "our knowledge of the existence of a God" (*Essay* 4.4.10).⁸² The argument is based on the clear perception of our own being (§ 2), the intuitive certainty that a finite thing (like we) cannot be produced by nothing (the causality principle, § 3) and a second axiom, namely that effects cannot have what causes miss (§ 5). Together with our ideas of matter and thinking these principles lead us humans to the certainty of an eternal, most powerful, and most knowing being, in fact thinking and moving matter (4/10/6 & 10). The argument is a kind of formalization of what we already could read under the 'universal propositions' of *Essay* 4/6, in which passage was also assumed that we and all other things are the modifications of the universe. The term 'universe' for thinking and moving matter, by which everything finite is produced, is used in chapter 10, albeit concealed in a quote from Cicero (§ 6). Locke does not want to make use here of Spinoza's technical term '*substantia*' and qualify the things accordingly as their bare modifications "because this is a very harsh doctrine" (2/13/18) he

⁸² It is plausible, as William Carroll intimated already, that Locke writes 'a' God in order to let his reader surmise that 'his' god differs from the 'personal' God of the believer. It must, moreover, be remarked that he does not, equally like Spinoza, argue for the existence of a God, but demonstrates that we already know that!

could better not officially admit.⁸³ That things are nevertheless according to Locke in fact (modal) ‘parts’ of God conceived as the Universe is implicitly asserted by what is said in 4/10/10: “So that if we will suppose nothing first or eternal, matter can never begin to be; if we suppose bare matter without motion eternal, *motion* can never begin to be; if we suppose only matter and motion first or eternal, thought can never begin to be. For it is impossible to conceive that matter either with or without motion could have originally, in and from itself, sense, perception, and knowledge; as is evident from hence, that then sense, perception, and knowledge must be a property eternally inseparable from matter and every particle of it”.⁸⁴ It cannot be, then, a surprise to read in the later chapter 12 about ‘our *eternal state*’ (§ 11)⁸⁵. The affinity with Spinoza’s reasoning is again unmistakable: “*Sentimus experimurque nos aeternos esse*” (*Ethica* 5/23s). Locke’s conclusion of the infinite from the finite and conceiving the latter in the first is, moreover, a copy of Spinoza’s procedure as summarized at the end of his *Letter* 12 to his learned friend Lodewijk Meyer: “The force of the argument lies not in the impossibility of an actual infinite or an infinite series of causes, but in our assumption that things, which by their own nature do not necessarily exist, are determined to exist by a thing which necessarily exists by its own nature”.⁸⁶ This assumption is not optional. “We more certainly know that there is a God than that there is anything else without us” (*Essay* 4.10.6). Denying God’s existence is not a possibility of our rational equipment. Of course there are a lot of people who confess atheism or at least their ignorance, but that is only a ‘misnaming’: “they don’t apply names correctly to things” (*Ethica* 2/47s).

Against the brightness and clarity of our knowledge of God’s existence our ‘knowledge’ of external things is weak and turns pale. In so far our regular observations, together with what we remember from hearsay, are not obstructed by contrary perceptions, historical information or fairy tales (TIE § 19-20) and we experience things constantly after the same manner in the ordinary course of nature (*Essay* 4.16.6), we are *assured* of what we perceive or hear and actually have no doubts. We trust that the things exist like they appear or are told (preached) to us. But theoretically we have here only *probability*. This is no problem for our daily life, as Locke states in the same words and with the same example as Spinoza.

<p>It is true that in this world we often act from conjecture, but it is not true that philosophical thinking proceeds from conjecture. In the common round of life we have to follow what is probable, but in speculative thought we have to follow what is true. A man <i>would perish of hunger and thirst if he refused to eat and drink until he had obtained perfect proof (demonstrationem) that food and drink would be good for him ...</i> However, leaving aside and granting the fact that in default of demonstrations (<i>demonstrationum defectu</i>) we must be content with the probable (<i>verisimilitudo</i>), I say that verisimilitude must be such that, although open to doubt, it cannot be contradicted;</p>	<p><i>Probability</i> is nothing but the appearance of such an agreement (between sensations) (4.51.1). <i>Probability is likeliness to be true</i>, the very notation of the word signifying such a proposition for which there be arguments or proofs to make it pass or be received for true. The entertainment the mind gives this sort of propositions is called <i>belief, assent, or opinion</i> (4.15.3). <i>He that will not eat till he has demonstration that it will nourish him ... will have little else to do but sit still and perish</i> (4.14.1). He that, in the ordinary affairs of life, would admit of nothing but direct plain demonstration would be sure of nothing in this world but of <i>perishing</i> quickly. The wholesomeness of his <i>meat or drink</i> would not give him reason to venture on</p>
--	---

⁸³ However, in a clandestine letter (see above) he did not hesitate to conceive God as “rem vel *substantiam cogitantem ... infinitam*”.

⁸⁴ Between the lines of this argument Locke implicitly asserts motion as the essence of (eternal) matter, which is precisely Spinoza’s position against Descartes. See my “Moles in motu. Principles of Spinoza’s Physics”, in *Studia Spinozana* 4 (1990) 165-194.

⁸⁵ My italics. The expression ‘eternal state’ occurs also in 2.21.44.

⁸⁶ The text of the *Opera Posthuma* and all following editions is corrupt. It shows a ‘non’ before the word ‘determinari’, which must be wrong according to the Leibniz’ transcript of the letter, kept in the Niedersächsischen Landesbibliothek at Hannover. See Wim Klever, “Actual infinity. A note on the Crescassus in Spinoza’s letter to Lodewijk Meyer” in *Studia Spinozana* 10 (1994) p. 11-121.

for that which can be contradicted is similar, not to truth, but to falsehood (Letter 56).	it, and I would fain know what it is he could do upon such grounds as were capable of no doubt, no objection" (4.11.10).
--	--

In his chapter OF THE DEGREES OF ASSENT (4.16), in which he tackles the tricky problem of the relation between faith and reason, Locke does not retract an inch from this epistemological position.

So that faith is a settled and sure principle of assent and assurance, and leaves no manner of room for doubt or hesitation. Only we must be sure *that* it be divine revelation and that we understand it right: else we shall expose ourselves to all the extravagancy of enthusiasm and the error of wrong principles, if we have faith and assurance in what is not divine revelation. And therefore in those cases, our assent can be rationally no higher than the evidence of its being a revelation (*Essay* 4.16.14).

But isn't divine revelation, correctly interpreted, in conflict with reason? Faith certainly does not reach the highest degree of probability, based on "the general consent of all men in all ages" and "the regular proceedings of causes and effects in the ordinary course of nature" (4.16.6). Religious faith is, accordingly, not comparable with the belief (yes!) that 'fire warms man' and 'iron sinks in water', things which are absolutely put 'past doubt' by 'constant experience'.⁸⁷ Faith also seems to be weaker than our hypotheses based on experiments and reasoning by analogy, like e.g. the explanation of the inflammation of bodies rubbed one upon another by the violent agitation of their imperceptible minute parts (4.16.12).⁸⁸ Revelation contains 'matters of fact', which are, in spite of converging testimonies, not in accordance with the concepts of our reason nor with the ordinary course of nature. They are delivered to us by hearsay, by language, as integrated in an edifying and moralizing story of salvation. So is "the resurrection of the dead above reason" (4.17.23) and does it "exceed the limits of our natural knowledge" (TTP 1/5). Both philosophers make a distinction between two provinces of faith and reason and assert that they have nothing to do with each other. When confronted with each other in the consciousness of the same (intellectually emancipated) person faith does give way to reason.

Who is able to adhere mentally to something against a protesting reason (<i>quis mente aliquid amplecti potest reclamante ratione</i>)? (TTP 15/10).	Nothing, I think, can ... shake or overrule plain knowledge ... <i>Faith can never convince us of anything that contradicts our knowledge</i> (<i>Essay</i> 4.18.5).
--	---

Revelation, moreover, can never transmit new or otherwise unknown truths to humans, let alone supra-natural knowledge, because the *meaning of words* depends on what we have learned in our linguistic education. Orthodox Revelation is impossible.

<i>Words gain their meaning solely from their usage (ex solo usu)</i> (TTP 12/11) from the common way of speaking (TTP 7/15). One might rightly ask how God can make himself known to man, and whether this happens, or could happen, through words.... We answer: not in any case by words. For then man would have had to know already the meaning of those words before they were spoken to him. For example, if God had said to the Israelites ' <i>I am Jehova your God</i> ' ... they knew that	Words having naturally no signification [...] <i>Common use regulates the meaning of words</i> (<i>Essay</i> 3.9. 5 & 8). I say, that no man inspired by God can by any revelation communicate to others any new simple ideas which they had not before from sensation or reflection [...] because words, by their immediate operation on us, cause no other ideas but <i>of</i> their natural sounds; and it is by the custom of using them for signs that they excite and revive in our minds latent ideas, but yet only
--	--

⁸⁷ Cf. Spinoza's examples of the first kind of knowledge, attested by random experience: 'that oil is capable of feeding fire and that water is capable of putting it out' (TIE § 20).

⁸⁸ This example was also given by Spinoza in his Letter 6.

<p>that voice, thunder and lightning were not god, though the voice said that it was God (KV 2/24/9-10).⁸⁹ It seems scarcely reasonable to affirm that a created thing, depending on God in the same manner as other created things, would be able to express or explain the nature of God either verbally or really by means of its individual organism, by declaring in the first person ‘I am the Lord your God’ (TTP 1/15).</p>	<p>such ideas as were there before (<i>Essay</i> 4.18.3). Nor is it to be wondered, that the will of God, when closed in words, should be liable to that doubt and uncertainty which unavoidably attends that sort of conveyance [...] revealed truths, which are conveyed to us by books and languages, are liable to the common and natural obscurities and difficulties incident to words (<i>Essay</i> 3.9.23).</p>
--	---

Above we signaled already, on occasion of their identical example (*apple*), that Locke shares Spinoza’s theory of language. He mainly concentrates on this subject in *Essay* 3. We might add here their parallel statements on the always personally diversified meaning of words.

<p>As to what he [Tschirnhaus] goes on to say, ‘if one of two men affirms something of a thing and the other denies it’ etc., this is true if he means that the two men, while using the same words, nevertheless have different things in mind. I once sent some examples of this to our friend J. R. (Letter 58 to Schuller).</p>	<p>Men, though they propose to themselves the very same subject to consider, yet frame very different ideas about it, and so the name they use for it unavoidably comes to have, in several men, very different significations (<i>Essay</i> 3.9.13).</p>
---	---

After our discussion of the fascinating contents of *Essay* 4, the book that Locke was still writing on the 10th July 1688,⁹⁰ we have now to return to the main chapter of *Essay* 2, the (in later editions much extended and rewritten) chapter 21 OF POWER. One might consider this chapter as a commentary on *Ethica* 4: DE AFFECTUUM VIRIBUS (ON THE POWERS OF THE REACTIONS). The chapter is preceded by a minor one, called OF MODES OF PLEASURE AND PAIN, which has to be interpreted as a summary of *Ethica* 3: DE ORIGINE ET NATURA AFFECTUUM. This part is the unmistakable source.

<p>The human body can be affected in many ways whereby its power of acting (<i>agendi potentia</i>) is increased or diminished, and again in others, which neither increase nor diminish its power of action (<i>Ethica</i> 3, postulate 1) Whatever <i>increases or diminishes, helps or hinders the power of action of our body</i>, the idea thereof increases or diminishes, helps or hinders the power of thinking of our mind (3/11) These passions ... explain the reactions of <i>pleasure</i> (sensation of our transition to greater perfection) and <i>pain</i> (sensation of our transition to lesser perfection) (scholium).</p>	<p>Things are good or evil only in reference to <i>pleasure or pain</i>. That we call good which is apt to cause or <i>increase pleasure or diminish pain in us, or else to procure or preserve</i> us the possession of any other good or absence of any evil. And on the contrary, we name that evil which is apt to produce or increase any pain, or diminish any pleasure in us, or else to procure us any evil or deprive us of any good (<i>Essay</i> 2.20.2).</p>
---	--

Locke’s terminology and distinctions are too close to Spinoza’s to be possibly independent from them. Our acting power is enhanced or diminished (and consequently felt as pleasant or painful) by various immediate or mediate affections. This power is a kind of vectorial energy, which may become unsettled or brought to unbalance, a change that it tries to promote or to overcome. Its being affected is automatically transformed into an appetite or endeavor to either conserve the positive or remove the negative influences. Spinoza indicates this passive-active motion of our mind-body-complex with the technical term *affectus* and summarizes these variable states in his definition of concupiscence as “man’s essence in so far it is from its being produced by a certain affection conceived as determined to do something”.⁹¹ Locke

⁸⁹ Translation by E. Curley, *Collected Works, o.c.*

⁹⁰ See *Essay* 4.11.11.

⁹¹ See ‘first definition’ at the end of *Ethica* 3.

prefers a different terminology. He chooses the word *uneasiness* and this is certainly not a bad choice, because the effect of affections is always a desire to repair a kind of *disease* or to acquire something in order to feel good again. His introduction of this term in 2.20 precludes on the dominant role it will play in chapter 21. “The uneasiness a man finds in himself upon the absence of anything whose present enjoyment carries the idea of delight with it is that we call desire, which is greater or less, as that uneasiness is more or less vehement. Where, by the by, it may perhaps be of some use to remark that *the chief, if not only spur to human industry and action is uneasiness*”(2/20/6). Locke now proceeds to circumscribe ten passions in a narrow junction to Spinoza’s much more extended list. I give only two examples.

<p><i>Love</i> is nothing else than pleasure accompanied by the idea of an external cause (<i>laetitia concomitante idea causae aeternae</i>).</p> <p><i>Hate</i> is pain accompanied by the idea of an external cause (<i>tristitia concomitante idea causae aeternae</i>) (<i>Ethica</i> 2/13s).</p>	<p>Anyone reflection upon the thought he has of the delight which any present or absent thing is apt to produce in him has the idea we call <i>love</i>... The thought of the pain which anything present or absent is apt to produce in us is what we call <i>hatred</i> (<i>Essay</i> 2.20.4 & 5).</p>
--	--

It requires some attention to discover the identity of the respective definitions. Spinoza is more compact than Locke, who on his turn includes objects of love and hate which are imagined to be in the future and constitute other “modifications or tempers of the mind” 2.20.3), namely *hope* and *fear*. Locke concludes his survey of single and mixed passions with the statements that “we *love, desire, rejoice, and hope* only in respect of pleasure; (and) we *hate, fear, and grieve* only in respect of pain ultimately (2.20.14) and that “they are *many more than those* I have here named”. Spinoza remarks at the end of part 3, that he has only treated the most important *affectus*, “not all that can exist” and in his list of 48 *affectus* he states that there are many more, “which have no name”.

The title OF POWER for a chapter on human liberty to act and to choose (2/21) may at first sight seem rather strange for the modern reader who is accustomed to a totally different terminology. But on further reflection he will be willing to confess that there is something in it, which yet could please him. He does imagine himself to be a substance, which has itself in its own hands, a person who is indeed a power of autonomous acting. And renouncing this idea is mostly no option for him.

One may guess that Locke came upon the idea of this title on reading the subject of *Ethica* 4 (*impotentia humana*; see first two words of the preface), the title of *Ethica* 5 (DE POTENTIA INTELLECTUS) and the key term in *Ethica* 3/11 & 12 (*agendi potentia*) that just now, perhaps the day before, had inspired him for the composition of chapter 2/20. And indeed, if the substantive nomen ‘will’ stays for anything at all, it is for a kind of power to do something or to change something in the environment. He borrows the term *power* from Spinoza but we must give him the great credit that he provides us with a fine and rather original analysis of the concept indicated by the term. (Between brackets: in this chapter 2/21 he generally shows an admirable analytical skill and a capacity for precise definitions of concepts). What is seldom, if ever, remarked concerning power, is that one must sharp distinguish between active power and passive power. Active power is power to cause a change; passive power is power to receive a change (2.21.1-2). God is, as the tradition says, *actus purus*, as Locke says: “above all passive power”. We seem to experience active powers in our environment. “Fire has a power to melt gold i.e. to destroy the consistency of its insensible parts, and consequently its hardness, and make it fluid”(§ 1). But is this not a too ‘hasty thought’ about the power of fire? Is the burning and destroying power of fire truly active? “If we will consider it attentively, bodies, by our senses, do not afford us so clear and distinct an idea of active power, as we have from reflection on the operations of our minds” (2.21.4). Here I will certainly not pass without quoting again one of the many ravishing passages in this chapter:

A body at rest affords us no idea of any active power to move; and when it is set in motion itself, that motion is rather a passion than an action in it. For, when the ball obeys the stroke of a billiard-stick, it is not any action of the ball, but bare passion; also when by impulse it sets another ball in motion that lay in its way, it only communicates the motion it had received from another, and loses in itself so much as the other received; which gives us but a very obscure idea of an active power of moving in body, whilst we observe it only to transfer, but not produce, any motion. For it is but a very obscure idea of power which reaches not the production of the action but the continuation of the passion. For so is motion in a body impelled by another (2/21/4).

This is Locke's 'reproduction' of Spinoza's radically mechanistic denial of unconditioned inertia as defended by Galileo, Descartes and Newton, the rehearsal in his own words of the famous third lemma after *Ethica* 2/13: "A body in motion or at rest must have been determined (*determinari debuit*) to motion or rest by some other body, which, likewise, was determined for motion or rest by some other body, and this by a third, and so on to infinity".⁹² This is, according to Spinoza, not less true for the mind: "There is in no mind an absolute or free will, but the mind is determined for willing this or that by a cause which is determined in its turn by another cause, and this one again by another, and so on to infinity" (*Ethica* 2/48).

Normally we ascribe to ourselves a will, i.e. a faculty of choice, alongside other faculties. We presented and discussed earlier in this paper Locke's critique on "this way of speaking of faculties", as if there were 'distinct agents' in us, and flanked this fragment to Spinoza's Letter 2. Locke goes at length in ridiculing this habit by deriding the possible consequences of accepting an autonomous elective faculty: a digestive faculty, an expulsive faculty, a motive faculty, an intellectual faculty (2.21.20). And where there is no will, Locke told us explicitly, there cannot be spoken of freedom of the will. The question whether the will is free, is an inappropriate question that cannot be answered positively. But there are, of course, acts of willing, we actually strive after things. Concerning these acts, however, Locke's thought is as well deeply rooted in Spinoza's physics. Those acts are ideas of the always conditioned motions of our body. This situation is comparable with the situation of the thrown stone, which, could he think, would think that he freely wanted to go and actually went to a certain point on the earth.⁹³ In spite of his critique of faculties, Locke, like Spinoza, does not forbid himself to use the word 'will' "a word proper enough, if it be used, as all words should be, so as not to breed any confusion in men's thoughts, by being supposed (as I suspect it has been) to stand for some real beings in the soul, that performed those actions of understanding and volition" (2.21.6).

How, then, is it with the freedom of man's actual behavior, a property which is commonly conceived of as a human privilege? As regards this question, which bothers philosophers of all ages, Locke operates very prudently in order not to deter nor affront his readership. He introduces his paradoxical position carefully in a couple of definition like sentences, which are packed in the form of conditionals and graduals. '*So far as* man has power to think or not to think, to move or not to move ... *so far* a man is *free*. *Wherever* any performance or forbearance are not equally in a man's power ... *there* he is not *free*' (2.21.8). These are nothing but analytic sentences by means of which Locke does not reveal his soul. Further on, in 2.21.21, one finds more in the same style: "Whether a *man* be free', 'so far as',

⁹² Behind the example of billiard balls one may imagine the demonstration which Christiaan Huygens gave for the Royal Society in London: DE MOTU CORPORUM EX PERCUSSIONE. Its first proposition sounds: "Si corpori quiescenti aliud aequale corpus occurrat, post contactum hoc quidem quiescet, quiescenti vero acquiratur eadem, quae fuit in impellente, celeritas". See Christiani Hugenii, *Opera reliqua* (Amsterdam: Janssonius 1717) 75-81. Huygens' experiment in London must have been performed in September or October 1665. See Wim Klever, "Spinoza en Huygens", o.c. p. 20. We can hardly have doubts about the attendance there of Locke, who was so much interested in this kind of things.

⁹³ See the example in Spinoza's Letter 58 to Tschirnhaus.

‘if I can’, ‘as far as this power reaches’, ‘so far is man free’, ‘so far as anyone can ... so far can he do what he will’. Such language has no factual content and does not make us wiser concerning the question whether man is free. The comparison in 21.9 with the tennis ball, “which is not by any one taken to be a free agent (because) all its both motion and rest come under our idea of necessary” is provocative, because Locke seems to give it as an illustration of our own behavior: “So a man striking himself or his friend by a convulsive motion of his arm, which is not in his power by volition or the direction of his mind to stop or forbear, nobody thinks he has in this liberty”. The innocuous conditionals immunize the writer; Spinoza uses the same method with his rather frequent couples *quatenus – eatenus* and *quo – eo*.⁹⁴

But is convulsion or being forced to certain actions not exceptional in human behavior? Locke inclines to the proposition that man’s freedom in choosing and acting is not only non-existent but also impossible. The unity of mind and body excludes their interdependence, let alone the divergence of their respective intention and direction. “The power of thinking operates not on the power of choosing, nor the power of choosing on the power of thinking” (2.21.18). ‘Choosing’ in this sentence must indicate the motion of the body as it becomes clear from the context in which, again, faculties like will and intelligence are rejected. That Locke turns out to be an out and out Spinozistic determinist appears above all in the paragraphs, in which he sees man’s *uneasinesses* coerce his so-called freely chosen behavior, not electronically as the boy who steers with a joy stick his plaything, but by inciting through neurons his muscles.

<p>[immediately after the general definition of <i>affectus</i> at the end of <i>Ethica</i> 3, <i>Ethica</i> 4 opens with] Human lack of power (<i>humanam impotentiam</i>) in moderating and checking the reactions (<i>affectus</i>) I call slavery For a man submissive to his reactions (<i>affectibus obnoxious</i>) does not have power over himself (<i>sui iuris non est</i>), but is in the hands of fortune to such an extent that he is often constrained (<i>coactus</i>), although he may see what is better for him, to follow what is worse (<i>preface</i>). It is apparent from these propositions that we are driven about by external causes in many manners, and that we, like waves of the sea driven by contrary winds, waver, unaware of the issue and our fate (359s). The force with which man persists in existing is limited and far surpassed by the power of external causes (4/3). Reactions (<i>affectus</i>) can neither be hindered nor removed save by a contrary reaction and one stronger than the reaction, which is to be checked (4/7). We demonstrated [in the <i>Ethica</i>] that men are necessarily obnoxious to passions (TP 1/5).</p>	<p>The motive for continuing in the same state or action is only the present satisfaction in it; <i>the motive to change is always some uneasiness</i>: nothing setting us upon the change of state, or upon any new action but some <i>uneasiness</i>. This is the great motive that works on the mind to put it upon action, which for shortness’ sake we will call <i>determining of the will</i>, which I shall more at large explain (2.21.29). (<i>Uneasiness</i> being) the chief spur, if not only spur to human industry and action (2.20.6). All pain of the body, of what sort soever, and disquiet of the mind, is <i>uneasiness</i>, and with this is <i>always joined desire ... and is scarce distinguishable from it</i> (2.21.30). To return, then, to the inquiry, ‘What is it that determines the will in regard to our actions?’ And that, upon second thoughts, I am apt to imagine is <i>not</i>, as is generally supposed <i>the greater good in view</i>, but some (and for the most part the <i>most pressing</i>) <i>uneasiness</i> a man is at present under. This is which successively <i>determines</i> the will, and <i>sets us upon those actions we perform</i> (2.21.31).</p>
--	---

The *affectus / uneasinesses* (passions, reactions, desires) determine man’s actions. This is common theory of Spinoza and Locke. One of the consequences is that we do not actually follow the principles and precepts of our reason and that the influence of ideals, norms and values on our behavior is close to zero. Both thinkers refer in this connection to Ovid’s verse: *video meliora proboque meliora sequor*.

⁹⁴ Cf. *Ethica* 4/20, 4/23, 4/30, 4/31, 4/32, 4/33, 4/35, 4/35d, 4/62, 5/6, 5/7, 5/11, 5/13, 5/20, 5/24, 5/26 etc. The convulsion passage reminds us, moreover, of 4/20s: « No one, therefore, unless he is overcome by external causes and those contrary to his nature ... commits suicide... Someone may kill himself by compulsion of some other who twists back his right hand, in which he holds by chance his sword, and forces him to direct the sword against his own heart; or like Seneca ... »

<p>Experience more than sufficiently teaches that there is nothing less under man's control than their tongues, or less in their power than the control of their appetites... We are by no means free. But in truth, if they did not experience that we do many things for which we are sorry afterwards, and that very often when we are harassed by contrary emotions we 'wee the better, yet follow the worse', there would be nothing to prevent them from believing that we do all things freely (<i>Ethica</i> 3/2s). A true knowledge of good and bad cannot restrain a reaction (4/14). Thus I think I have shown the reason why men are guided rather by opinion than by true reason, and why a true knowledge of good and bad often excites disturbances of the mind, and often yields to all manner of lusts. Whence is arisen the saying of the poet: 'the better course I see and approve, the worse I follow' (4/17s).</p>	<p>A little burning felt pushes us more powerfully than greater pleasure in prospect draw or allure. It seems so established and settled a maxim, by the general consent of all mankind, that good, the greater good determines the will, that I do not at all wonder that when I first published my thoughts on this subject I took it for granted ... But yet, upon a stricter inquiry, I am forced to conclude that good, <i>the greater good</i>, though apprehended and acknowledged to be so, <i>does not determine the will, until</i> our desire, raised proportionably to it, makes us uneasy in the want of it (<i>Essay</i> 2.21.35). And thus (man) is from time to time, in the state of that unhappy complainer, <i>video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor</i>; which sentence allowed for true and made good by constant experience may this, and possibly no other way be easily made intelligible (2.21.36).⁹⁵</p>
--	--

The 'topping' or 'most pressing' uneasiness (2.21.40) in the field of counterbalancing forces supersedes the others and determines, as the winner, our behavior, but this needs not *per se* to be an uneasiness or desire for lust, honor, riches etc. In the last quote from § 35 Locke opens a perspective on the situation that another good makes us so 'uneasy in the want of it' that its force is proportionally stronger than the down-to-earth uneasinesses and as a kind of superpower, then, takes over their determining our 'will'. In a chapter, which bears the same title as Spinoza's earliest work *De Intellectus Emendatione*, namely *On the Improvement of our Knowledge* (4.12) Locke showed clearly its influence, especially of the introduction. Spinoza relates therein his search after the *summum bonum*, which he finds in the knowledge of his naturalness, in "loving the eternal and infinite thing, which feeds the soul alone with joy and is exempt from sadness" (TIE § 10). More than an echo from this is to find in Locke's text.

<p>Whatever can be a means to his attaining it is called a true good; but the <i>highest good</i> (<i>summum bonum</i>) is to arrive – together with other individuals if possible – at the enjoyment of such a nature ... the enjoyment of the union that the mind has with the whole of nature. This, then, is the end I aim at: to acquire such a nature, and to strive that many acquire it with me.... To do this it is necessary, first, to understand as much of nature as suffices for acquiring such a nature; next, to form a society of the kind that is desirable, so that as many as possible may attain it as easily and surely as possible. Third, attention must be paid to <i>Moral Philosophy</i> and to Instruction concerning the education of children ... fourthly, the whole <i>Medicine</i> must be worked out... Fifthly, <i>Mechanics</i> is in no way to be despised (TIE § 13).</p>	<p>Our faculties are not fitted to penetrate into the internal fabric and real essences of bodies, but yet plainly discover to us the being of a God and the knowledge of ourselves ... our duty and great concernment ... 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 <i>eternal</i> state. Hence I think I may conclude that <i>morality</i> is the proper science and business of mankind in general (who are both concerned and fitted to search out their <i>summum bonum</i>) as <i>several arts</i>, conversant about several parts of nature, are the lot and private talent of particular men for the common use of human life and their own particular subsistence in the world (<i>Essay</i> 4.12.11)</p>
---	---

Knowing 'the condition of our eternal state' might also be Locke's reflection on *Ethica* 5, the part culminating in Spinoza's statement that "we feel and experience that we are eternal" (5/23s), which gives us the greatest possible joy and happiness. Spinoza's description of the mind's turning from perishable goods to the highest and really compelling good and of his

⁹⁵ 'Upon second thoughts', 'upon a stricter inquiry'. These confessions seem to indicate a kind of conversion of Locke to another view, deviating from the customary interpretation of man's behavior. His conversion was towards Spinoza's physics of man.

rising, ‘by assiduous meditation’ (*assidua meditatione*), towards a higher level of consciousness, is magisterially and very impressively reformulated in the following fragment.

The ordinary necessities of our lives fill a great part of them with the uneasiness of hunger, thirst, heat, cold, weariness, with labour, and sleepiness in their constant returns, etc. To which, if, besides accidental harms, we add the fantastical uneasiness (as itch after honour, power, or riches, etc) which acquired habits, by fashion, example, and education, have settled in us, and a thousand other irregular desires which custom has made natural to us, we shall find that a very little part of our life is so vacant from these uneasinesses as to leave us free to the attraction of remoter absent good. We are seldom at ease and free enough from the solicitation of our natural or adopted desires, but a constant succession of uneasinesses, out of that stock which natural wants or acquired habits have heaped up, *take the will in their turns*; and no sooner is one action dispatched, which by such a determination of the will we are set upon, but another uneasiness is ready to set us on work [...] till *due and repeated contemplation* has brought it nearer to our mind, given some *relish* of it, and raised in us some desire: which then, beginning to make a part of our present uneasiness, stands upon fair terms with the rest to be satisfied, and so, according to its greatness and pressure, *comes in its turn to determine the will*. And thus, by a due consideration, and examining any good proposed, *it is in our power*, to raise our desires in a due proportion to the value of that good, whereby in its turn and place it may come to work upon the will and be pursued (*Essay* 2.21.45-46).⁹⁶

Spinoza was looking for and finally found a solid good (*fixum bonum*) that gave him greatest happiness (*summa felicitas*). Locke writes that “the highest perfection of intellectual nature lies in a careful and constant pursuit of true and *solid* happiness” (2.21.51). Both came to realize and relish the power of the intellect. There is *genealogical* affinity between the title of *Essay* 2.21 ‘OF POWER’ and the title of *Ethica* 5 ‘DE POTENTIA INTELLECTUS’.

As promised above we shall now discuss the relation of *filiation between the political theories of our philosophers*. But is such a claim not an impious assault on the holy statue of glorious originality that tradition has erected as a symbol of its respect for the magisterial second *Treatise of Government*? The author of this piece has no choice. The evidence of borrowed material forces him.

Consensus is the key term in Spinoza’s theory about origin and developments of any body politic. His consent theory was elaborated in three political treatises, the *Ethica*, the TTP and the TP. Here is the source of Locke’s explosive political insight, just as *Ethica* 2 was the spring from which he drank the clear water of his dazzling ‘way of ideas’. Apart from Spinoza’s master Van den Enden there was no philosophical forerunner of any importance, who had given the consent of the people such a formative and decisive role.⁹⁷

<p>As obedience consists in acting at the bidding of external authority, it has no place in a state where the government is vested in the whole people (<i>penes omnes</i>) and where laws are made by common consent (<i>ex communi consensu</i>) (TTP 5/25). Men must necessarily (have) come to an agreement (<i>conspirare debuisse</i>) to live together as securely and well as possible, if they are to enjoy <i>as one body</i> (<i>collective</i>) the rights which naturally belong to them as individuals and their life should be no more conditioned by the force and desire of individuals but by the power and the</p>	<p>[Twice the expression:] ‘<i>common consent</i>’ TTG 1/ § 88) The liberty of man in society is to be under no other legislative power but that established <i>by consent</i> (TTG 2/§22). For, when any number of men have, <i>by the consent of every individual</i> made a community, they have thereby made that community one body, <i>with power to act as one body</i>, which is only by the will and determination of the majority (§ 96) The great and chief end, therefore, of men uniting into</p>
---	---

⁹⁶ Just before this unsurpassable paraphrase of Spinoza’s naturalistic passage TIE 1-13 Locke seems to have consideration with his eventually still dogmatic readers and, therefore, speaks in double language once about “our state of eternal durable joys *after this life*”, but refers on the other hand without giving a time index to “that eternal state” that people ‘neglect’ in behalf “of that pittance of honour, riches, or pleasure which they pursue” (2.21.44).

⁹⁷ Cf. Franciscus van den Enden, *Free Political Propositions and Considerations of State* (1665) o.c. I annotated in this work the places, which lie behind Spinoza’s identical statements.

<p>will of the whole body (<i>ex omnium potentia et voluntate determinaretur</i>) (TTP 16/13). [...] when men either <i>tacitly</i> or expressly (<i>tacite vel expresse</i>) handed over to the sovereign power all their power of self-defense (TTP 16/26) But only in a civil state, where it is decreed by <i>common consent (communi consensu) what is good or bad</i> and each one is bound to obey the state... In a natural state no one is master of anything <i>by common consent</i> nor can there be anything in nature which can be said to belong to this man and not to that, but all things belong to all men ... but only in a civil state where it is decided <i>by common consent what belongs to this man or that (Ethica 4/37s2)</i>. Speaking generally, he holds dominion, to whom are entrusted by <i>common consent (ex communi consensu)</i> the affairs of state, such as the laying down, interpretation, and abrogation of laws, the fortification of cities, deciding on war and peace, etc. (TP2/17).</p>	<p>commonwealths, and putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their property; to which in the state of nature there are many things wanting. Firstly, there wants an established, settled, known law, received and allowed <i>by common consent to be the standard of right and wrong</i>, and the common measure to decide all controversies between them (§ 124). For in government the laws regulate it; they having, by consent, found out and agreed in a way how a man may, rightfully and without injury, <i>possess ...</i> (§50). [...] <i>by tacit consent</i> [...] (§94). For in government the laws regulate it; they having, by <i>consent</i>, found out and agreed in a way <i>how man may</i>, rightfully and without injury <i>possess ...</i>” (§50).</p>
--	--

It is perhaps the typically Spinozistic enforcing of *consent* by the adjective *common* that is most revealing for Locke's narrow association to the TTP and the *Opera Posthuma*, which latter work he only possessed for a year or two when he started work on the TTG in 1679.⁹⁸

The decisive role of *consent* for constituting political power and authority means that the multitude is prevalent in everything. The majority rule is its logical consequence like also the right of the strongest.

<p>As the right of the commonwealth is determined by the common power of the <i>multitude (ius civitatis communi multitudinis potentia definitur)</i>, it is certain that the power and right of the commonwealth are so far diminished, as it gives occasion for many to conspire together (TP 3/9). A king may indeed abdicate, but cannot hand the dominion over to another, unless with the permission of the multitude (<i>nisi connivente multitudine</i>) or <i>its stronger part</i> ... The king's sword or right is in reality the will of <i>the multitude itself, or its stronger part (validioris partis)</i> (TP 7/25). Right is defined by power (Ethica 4/37s1) This right, which is defined as the power of the multitude (<i>ius quod potentia multitudinis definitur</i>) is generally called dominion (TP 2/17). For instance, fishes are naturally conditioned for swimming, and the greater to swallow the less (TTP 16/2).</p>	<p>Political power, then, I take to be the right ... of employing the <i>force of the community</i> (TTG §3). The ruling power ... <i>the joint power of the multitude</i> (§137) [...] with his own <i>consent</i>, which is the consent of the <i>majority</i>” (2.§140). The legislative power ... being but a delegated power from the people, they who have it cannot pass it over to others. The <i>people alone can appoint</i> the form of the commonwealth (2.§141). [...] <i>whither the greater force carries it</i>, which is the consent of the <i>majority</i> (§96). And, by this reason, he that is strongest will have a right to whatever he pleases to seize on (§184). For there are no examples so frequent in history both sacred and profane, as those of men withdrawing themselves and their obedience from the jurisdiction they were born under ... and setting up new governments in other places ... till the <i>stronger and more fortunate swallowed the weaker</i> (§115).</p>
---	--

This brings us to the subversive, because anti-moralistic, position the two unique philosophers shared, namely the theory that the state of nature does not really cease as soon as states are founded. Both thinkers explicitly assert the *not ending of natural right in civil society*, which implies an always-threatening conflict between the participants (government and citizens) of a political community and in the relation between states.

<p>If we weigh the matter aright, the <i>natural right of every man does not cease in the civil state</i>. For man, alike in the natural and in the civil state, acts according to the laws of his own nature, and consults his own interest</p>	<p>The obligations of the <i>law of Nature cease not in society</i> (TTG §135). The people generally ill-treated and contrary to [positive, wk] right will be ready upon any occasion to ease themselves of a burden that sits</p>
--	--

⁹⁸ Cf. P. Laslett, *Two Treatises of Government*, o.c. p. 35.

<p>(TP 3/3). With regard to political theory, the difference between Hobbes and myself, which is the subject of your inquiry, consists in this, that I always preserve the natural right in its entirety, and I hold that the <i>sovereign power in a State has right over a subject only in proportion to the excess of its power</i> over that of a subject. This is always the case in a state of nature (Letter 50). It comes to be considered, that things belong less to the commonwealth's right in the degree they cause more indignation among the people (TP 3/9). If the fear of the <i>majority of citizens</i> changes in <i>indignation</i>, the state is ipso facto dissolved (TP 4/6). Two commonwealths are naturally enemies (TP 3/13). An enemy is one who lives apart from the state, and does not recognize its sovereignty (<i>imperium</i>) either as a subject or as an ally (TTP 16/47).⁹⁹</p>	<p>heavy upon them (§224). [Given a miserable situation, rebellion will follow:] for the society can never ... lose the native and original right it has to preserve itself (§220). There remains still <i>in the people a supreme power to remove or alter the legislative</i>, when they find the legislative act contrary to the trust reposed in them. For all power given with trust for the attaining an end being limited by that end, whenever that end is manifestly neglected or opposed, <i>the trust</i> must necessarily be <i>forfeited</i>, and the power devolve into the hands of those that gave it (TTG §149). [The people will] <i>resume</i> [its power] (§152). They make one body, which is, as every member of it before was, still in the state of Nature with the rest of mankind ... The whole community is one body <i>in the state of nature in respect of all other states or persons out of its community</i> (§145).</p>
--	--

Rebellion is the quite normal resumption of political power and authority by the people in the cases where it is enslaved or put to death by the acting governor. This is a state of war in the civil state, i.e. civil war. Whether rebellion is righteous, depends on whether it succeeds, but the method is violence against violence.

<p>The state, then, to maintain its independence (<i>ut sui iuris sit</i>), is bound to preserve the causes of <i>fear</i> and <i>reverence</i>, otherwise it ceases to be a state. For the person or persons that hold dominion, can no more combine with the keeping up of majesty the running with harlots drunk or naked about the streets, or the performances of a stage-player, or the open violation or contempt of laws passed by themselves, than they can combine existence with non-existence. But to proceed to slay and rob subjects, ravish maidens, and the like, turns <i>fear into indignation and the civil state into a state of enmity</i> (TP 4/4). For as we have shown (4/5-6) a king can be deprived of the power of ruling, ... by the law of war, in other words the <i>subjects may resist his violence only with violence (ipsius vim vi solummodo repellere subditis licet)</i> (TP 7/30). Things belong in so far less to the right of the state as more people are undignified by it. For it is certain, that by the guidance of nature men conspire together, either through common fear, or with the desire to avenge some common hurt (TP 3/9). If the fear of the majority changes in indignation, the state is eo ipso dissolve (TP 4/6).</p>	<p>The true remedy of force without authority is to oppose force to it (§155). But if either these illegal acts have extended to the majority of the people, or if the mischief and oppression has light only on some few, but in such cases as the precedent and consequences seem to threaten all, and they are persuaded in their consciences that their laws, and with them, their estates, liberties, and lives are in danger, and perhaps their religion too, <i>how will they be hindered from resisting illegal force used against them I cannot tell</i> (§209). (They will) <i>resist to force with force</i> (and cancel) all former relation of <i>reverence, respect</i> and <i>superiority</i> (§235). For <i>when the people are made miserable</i> and find themselves exposed to the ill usage of arbitrary power ...; the people generally ill treated, and contrary to right, <i>will be ready upon any occasion to ease themselves of a burden</i> that sits heavy upon them. They will wish and seek for the opportunity, which in the change, weakness and accidents of human affairs, seldom delays long to offer itself. He must have lived but a little while in the world, who has not seen examples of this in his time. [...] Such revolutions happen not upon every little mismanagement in public affairs (§224-225).</p>
--	---

Spinoza's historic example was the peaceful and corrective revolution in the kingdom of Aragon against Don Pedro (1384); Locke, of course, when writing this in 1679-1680, hopes that a similar revolution will take place in his home country and subvert the oppressive regime

⁹⁹ For shortness sake I abstain from a discussion about the relation between Spinoza and Hobbes, which, of course, is also relevant for the relation between Locke and Hobbes. See for this: *Hobbes e Spinoza, scienza e politica. Acti del Convegno Internazionale Urbino, 14-17 ottobre 1988, a cura di D. Bostrenghi, introduzione di Emilia Giancotti* (Napels 1992) and Alexandre Matheron, *Anthropologie et politique au XVIIe siècle. Etudes sur Spinoza* (Paris 1986).

of Charles II, for whom he and his master Shaftesbury were so afraid. His regime was in their view arbitrary and not aimed at the interest of the people.

<p>The well being of the people is the highest law (Master Van den Enden, on title page of <i>Free Political Propositions</i>, 1665). But in a republic or empire, in which <i>salus totius populi</i>, not of the emperor, <i>summa lex est...</i> (in which the well being of the people ... is the highest law) (TTP 16/33) It is a stupidity to entrust ones own welfare to another party, that is independent and has for its highest law the welfare of its own state (TP 3/14). ‘for no one of his own will yields up dominion to another’, as Sallust has it in his first speech to Caesar (TP 5/5). [Promises to one’s disadvantage need not to be kept:] Suppose that a <i>robber</i> forces me to promise that I will give him my goods at his will and pleasure. It is plain ... that if I can free myself from this robber by stratagem ... I have the natural right to do so (TTP 16/17).</p>	<p><i>Salus populi suprema lex</i> is certainly so just and fundamental a rule that he who sincerely follows it cannot dangerously err (TTG §158). For since a rational creature cannot be supposed, when free, to put himself into subjection to another for his own harm ... <i>prerogative can be nothing but the people’s permitting their rulers to do several things ... for the public good ...</i> (§164). The aggressor, who puts himself into the state of war with another, and unjustly invades another man’s right, can ... never come to have a right over the conquered... Men are not bound by promises which unlawful force extorts from them. Should a <i>robber</i> break into my house, and with a dagger at my throat, make me seal deeds to convey my estate to him, would this give him any title? (§176).¹⁰⁰</p>
---	---

In all variants of political organization (parliament in a monarchy, council in an aristocracy, assemblies in a democracy) a *proportional* presence or representation of the subjects c.q. citizens is a thing of highest importance in order not to forfeit their common well-being, their reverence for the authority, their consent. In his political architecture Spinoza, therefore, does his utmost to conceive and institutionally guarantee the right proportion, which must satisfy everybody. One place is especially relevant, because Locke used its argument as a principle for the proportional representation of the cities in the provincial or national council. A ‘true proportion’ and ‘a fair and equal representation’ (§158 and TP 7/4) are essential for the coherence of the political society and its becoming “united into one body” (§87), which has one mind (*una veluti mente ducitur*, TP 2/21), “for the essence and union of the society (consists) in having one will” (§212).

<p>[Things have to be organized in an empire in this way:] that every city has so much more right as against the dominion than the others as it exceeds others in power. <i>For he who seeks equality between unequals, seeks an absurdity</i> (TP 9/4).</p>	<p>It often comes to pass that in governments where part of the legislative consists of representatives chosen by the people, that in tract of time this representation becomes very <i>unequal</i> and disproportionate to the reasons it was at first established upon. To what great <i>absurdities ...</i>” (TTG §157).</p>
--	---

In the introduction to his well known critical edition of the TTG (Cambridge 1960, reprint 1999) Peter Laslett writes to have no idea where the conspicuous novelty of this work comes from. “The book itself comes as a *revelation*” (34). “The book took shape *suddenly* for an author with such slow habits” (35).¹⁰¹ Nothing in Locke’s earlier activities with and in behalf of Shaftesbury indicates a preparation to this explosion of radical political thought. In the past half century the literature did not set one step further. Nobody surmised that Spinoza was the catalyst. The only possible explanation is that the Locke scholars did not know Spinoza’s political works.

¹⁰⁰ The classical proverb ‘*Salus populi suprema lex*’ is also quoted by Hobbes, but he applies it in a totally different sense and context. See *De Cive* 13/2. The subjects have to trust that the monarch will care for them and keeps to his promise to do so.

¹⁰¹ Also Richard Ashcraft, who wrote a classical and very erudite study on *Revolutionary Politics & Locke’s Two Treatises of Government* (Princeton UP 1986), sees the novelty of Locke’s ‘radical manifesto’. He explains its origin in the context of a radical political movement, but does *not even once* mention the real philosophical predecessor: Spinoza.

Finally there remains one work left to discuss, Locke's *Epistola de Tolerantia*, anonymously published in 1689 at Gouda. On account of the many theological and political passages of the TTP that evidently inspired Locke, we may safely conclude that this treatise was more than enthusiastically savored by him and that it functioned, as it were, as a conceptual frame that conditioned his thinking about religious matters. It is perhaps not superfluous to emphasize here that the TTP was not primarily intended to defend the *libertas philosophandi*. Spinoza's main objectives were, as he told us in Letter 30, to denounce and refute the prejudices of theologians, i.e. to develop a true and scientific theology about the meaning of Scripture, and, secondly, to apologize himself that he was not an atheist, proclaiming that he piously served his fatherland according to the moral lesson of Scripture, namely practicing justice and charity together with other citizens.¹⁰² But this exercise was, of course, at once an excellent demonstration of the harmlessness of philosophy, which theme was, then, separately treated in chapter 20. But we need not forget that this item was only the *third* objective.

The occasion, which prompted Locke to write the letter, was probably the cruel and barbarous repression of the Huguenots in France in 1685, who, thereupon, took in great numbers refuge in Holland.¹⁰³ The letter is a masterpiece of composition and clarity, this in sharp contrast to the *Essay*, which conveys many 'hasty and undigested thoughts' and is written 'in a discontinued way', often resumed 'after long intervals of neglect'.¹⁰⁴ No wonder that it showed many inconsistencies between the 'scattered thoughts', as is remarked by nearly all scholars.¹⁰⁵

I shall not summarize here the whole letter, but restrain myself to the foundation of its discourse, which is the same as in Spinoza's chapter TTP 18. Questions of faith fall not under the jurisdiction of the state. "For no man can, if he would, conform his faith to the dictate of another" (18). In behalf of the care of their soul people often organize themselves into a church. Locke gives a fine definition of a church: "A church then I take to be a voluntary society of men, joining themselves together of their own accord, in order to the public worshipping of God, in such a manner as they judge acceptable to him, and effectual to the salvation of their souls" (20). This is their free choice to which a state normally does not object in so far as such an institutional subset of the population does not call up its members to rebellion and not tries to enforce other people against their will and against the laws to join them because their religion would be the right one. "No private person has any right in any manner to prejudice another person in his civil enjoyments, because he is of another church or religion". Such a person or group of persons acts not only uncharitable, but steps across the border between private and public by arrogantly appropriating a right, which only belongs to

¹⁰² In this respect the title of the first Dutch translation of the TTP (1693) was very significant: '*De rechtsinnige theologant of godgeleerde staatkunde*' (the orthodox theologian or divine politics). And according to Willem van Blyenbergh, who had an interview with Spinoza, he would have confessed that he developed 'a political theology'. See Wim Klever, "Spinoza interviewed by Willem van Blyenbergh", in *Studia Spinozana* 4 (1988) 317-321.

¹⁰³ See Maurice Cranston, "John Locke and the case for toleration" in John Locke, *A letter concerning toleration in focus*. Ed. by John Horton and Susan Mendus (London 1991) 78-98. The letter is according to Cranston written in 1685. "Locke wrote his *Epistola de Tolerantia* immediately after the *revocation* [of the Edict de Nantes, wk] and clearly has these events in mind" (p. 82). The letter was written in Latin. I quote from this translation, indicating between brackets the page numbers. And this time the source fragments of Spinoza's text are mentioned in footnotes.

¹⁰⁴ See *Essay. Epistle to the Reader*. The passage may also be read as an indication of Locke's feeling that he has not updated and correctly integrated all the old and superseded papers or drafts he had incorporated in the final *Essay*. See R. A. Aaron, *John Locke*, o.c., note 1 "How the *Essay* was written" (50-55).

¹⁰⁵ Like John Yolton in his introduction to the Everyman edition of the *Essay*, p. XV-XVII and Richard I. Aaron, *John Locke* o.c. passim. See also Rosalie Colie, "The social language of John Locke", *Journal of British Studies* 3 (1965) p. 29: "For the lack of consistency Locke has always had his critics".

the public realm.¹⁰⁶ Only the magistrate is “armed with the force and strength of all his subjects, in order to the punishment of those that violate any other man’s rights” (17).

The government operates ‘by the consent of the people’. People have never been so blind as to abandon the care of their mental peace and salvation to a magistrate. That is why the magistrate has no right, given it could so effectively, to intervene in doctrinal questions of faith and private practices.¹⁰⁷ Only “the public good is the role and measure of all law-making” (23). For the rest is the magistrate’s duty nothing but ‘the business of toleration’ (28) “leaving in the meanwhile to every man the care of his own eternal happiness”. The limit of the government’s toleration in religious matters is there where sedition is preached. “No opinions contrary to human society, or to those moral rules which are necessary to the preservation of civil society, are to be tolerated by the magistrate” (45). Locke cannot mean here opinions, which remain in one’s breast, but only those, which are uttered in inflammatory and rebellious words. Nor does he intend moral rules, which have only validity in churches, but, indeed, those moral rules, which are prescribed by the law.¹⁰⁸ Locke puts a second limit to toleration: “Those are not at all to be tolerated who deny the being of God. Promises, covenants, and oaths, which are the bonds of human society, can have no hold upon an atheist. The taking away of God, though but even in thought, dissolves all” (47). Many enlightened philosophers judge this to be unacceptable in a modern society. Is the denial of God’s existence not a question of one’s interior life, one’s soul? Is Locke not inconsistent with this second condition for having a right on tolerance? I think that the second phrase of the quote gives the solution of the problem. In Locke’s view atheism is equivalent with anarchism, with rejection of all political authority, and of all social conventions.¹⁰⁹ Locke finally excludes Roman Catholics from the sphere of tolerance, because they pretend to be loyal to a foreign authority. And this is – Locke is right - incompatible with national loyalty.

In his *Letter Concerning Tolerance* Locke keeps unconditionally to the absolute authority and competence of government in questions of external or public worship: to control whether it remains inside the borders of the law and to punish or repress in case of

¹⁰⁶ Cf. TTP 18/22: “We may now clearly see from what I have said: I. How hurtful to religion and the state is the concession to ministers of religion of any power of issuing decrees or transacting the business of government “.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. TTP 18/23: “II. How dangerous it is to refer to divine right matters merely speculative and subject or liable to dispute. The most tyrannical governments are those which make crimes of opinions, for everyone has an inalienable right over his thoughts, nay, such a state of things leads to the rule of popular passion”.

¹⁰⁸ The laws in vigor are moral rules. Cf. TTP 18/27: “III. We see how necessary it is, both in the interests of the state and in the interests of religion, to confer on the sovereign power the right of deciding what is good or bad (*quod fas nefasque sit*)”. The Roman figures (I – II – III) indicate that these were Spinoza’s conclusions of the whole ‘theological-political treatise’, drawn in chapter 18: “From the republic of the Hebrews and their history certain political doctrines are deduced”. All these ‘political doctrines’ were incorporated in Locke’s discourse.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Locke’s concept of practical or moral atheism with what is implied in Spinoza’s indignation on the accusation by Lambert van Velthuysen of his being an atheist. “If he had known what manner of life I pursue, he would not have been so readily convinced that I teach atheism. For atheists are usually inordinately fond of honours and riches, which I have always despised, as is known to all who are acquainted with me” (Letter 43). Illuminating (in the sense of justifying Locke’s argument) is also the comparison of the passage in question with Spinoza’s sharp reprove of the author of the pamphlet *Homo politicus*: “The highest good of the man who wrote it is wealth and honours. To this he shapes his doctrine, and shows the way to attain them, and that is, by inwardly rejecting all religion and outwardly assuming such as will best serve his advancement, and furthermore by keeping faith with no one except in so far as it conduces to his advantage. For the rest, his highest praise is reserved for dissembling, breaking promises he has made, lying, perjuring, and many other such things. People, who proclaim this, are dangerous for the state. Through them “commonwealths must necessarily perish, and have perished” (Letter 44. Translation Shirley, Spinoza’s *Letters*, o.c. p. 244). Also in a writing of Locke’s Spinozistic contemporary Frederik van Leenhof (*De prediker*, 1700) ‘atheism’ has evidently a political connotation, meaning defiance of society’s laws and well-being. Nothing could be more atheistic, he contends, than that ‘men koningen boven de wetten stelt’ (one places kings above the law). See J. Israel, *Enlightenment contested* (Oxford 2006) p. 237. Cf., finally, my statement (above in the text) about the second objective of the TTP.

transgression. For the rest tolerance is recommended to its utmost limits. The author of this article does not succeed in discovering even a minimal difference between Locke's and Spinoza's ideas about toleration by the state.¹¹⁰

Enough evidence is now presented in behalf of the thesis of Locke's thorough Spinozism in the fields of theology, physics, epistemology, ethics and politics. But why did Locke disguise and eventually deny his roots? There were good reasons for this attitude of secrecy and anxiousness.¹¹¹ Spinoza's works were forbidden by the Provincial States of Holland and the synods of the Reformed Church. Spinozism was considered to be a great danger for society, in Holland as well as in England and other European countries.¹¹² The heavy turmoil around this works and the many hot and violent disputes about it (the Bredenburg disputes, the Koerbagh trial, the Meyer polemics, the persecution of Duijkerius and Van Leenhof and the denouncement of many other sympathizers) are extensively described by Jonathan Israel in his *Radical Enlightenment* and need not to be retold here. Locke knew about all that. He had very frequent personal and theological contacts with the remonstrant professor in Amsterdam, Philippus van Limborch, who was no Spinozist but could not refrain his mind from permanently worrying about his theories. His correspondence with Dr. Lambertus van Velthuysen at Utrecht (1671), Dr. Christian Hartsoeker at Rotterdam (1678) and Jean Leclerc at Geneva (1682) show that he was, as an effect of the impact of Spinoza's doctrine on his mind, in a kind of theological crisis or schizophrenia.¹¹³ Spinoza's work caused an enormous unrest, not to say horror, in public opinion as well as in the republic of letters. Is it a wonder that Locke hid his political manuscripts under a false name (*De morbo Gallico*) in 1682 and published his works anonymously in 1690?¹¹⁴ After all, Spinoza's posthumous works were also spread surreptitiously under fake *impressa* and false titles of pseudo authors, among which also various *medically* sounding titles like *Operaa Chirurgica omnia, Totius Medicinae idea nova* and *Opera Omnia, novas potissimum super morborum causis, symptomatic & curandi rationes meditationes & disputationes continentia*.¹¹⁵ The medical title was a logical choice for people who were infected by the Spinoza virus without wanting to be cured. In his protracted discussion with Leibniz (1698-1706) the Leiden professor in mathematical physics, Burchard De Volder, with whom Locke had been in contact, called his Spinozistic disease '*morbus meus*'!¹¹⁶ It is not impossible that he used this qualification also in his conversation with Locke a decade earlier.

A conclusion needs not to be drawn to this already much to long discourse about the relation between Spinoza and Locke. The textual evidence speaks for itself. In his review of

¹¹⁰ This in contrast to Jonathan Israel in *Radical Enlightenment* o.c. p. 265-270. The subject is so important, especially also in view of our contemporary situation where many of our compatriots are Moslems, which prefer obedience to the 'sharia' above following the national law, that a special project of research, consisting in a detailed comparison of Locke's and Spinoza's thesis, would not be superfluous. Spinoza's and Locke's publications about the subject are, after all, exceptional in the history of mankind and have a broad foundation in sound reasoning.

¹¹¹ Cf. Cranston, "John Locke and the case for toleration", o.c. p. 85: Locke was "an unusually secretive man".

¹¹² In England the famous and influential Henricus More, professor in Cambridge, had published in 1677 his *Confutatio Spinozae*, which was intentionally more a physical attack than an intellectual refutation. In fact he asked for purifying the Augiasstable of the infected public space by another Hercules, i.e. a political elimination. Locke had processed the Spinozistic political theory in his manuscripts on government, which explains his 'extraordinary furtiveness' (Laslett, p. 66) when the Rye House Plot, the trial of Sidney and the burning of forbidden books in Oxford made him realize in 1683, that his life was in danger.

¹¹³ The correspondence is published by K. O. Meeinsma, *Spinoza en zijn kring. Over Hollandse Vrijgeesten* (Utrecht, reprint 1980).

¹¹⁴ Laslett's plea (see the introduction to his edition of TTG pp 62-66) for the identification of the 'volume' *De Morbo Gallico* as the TTG-ms is, in my view, incorrigible and absolutely convincing.

¹¹⁵ See the complete bibliographical survey in J. Kingma & A. K. Offenbergh, *Bibliography of Spinoza's Works yup to 1800* (Amsterdam University Library 1977).

¹¹⁶ See Wim Klever, *Mannen rond Spinoza* o.c. p. 205-229.

Peter Anstey (ed.), *The Philosophy of John Locke. New Perspectives* (London 2003)¹¹⁷ a disappointed Michael Ayers remarks: “Rhetoric apart, the overall impression is that the contributors are assiduously and informatively *filling out a picture drawn*, and pursuing issues raised, during several decades before the one that immediately preceded publication. Much evidence, some familiar, some new or previously unexplored is sorted, explained and weighed, but the outcome consists for the most part in minor corrections and changes of emphasis rather than any *seismic shift in the interpretation of Locke’s philosophy*”. Whether my contribution to the Locke scholarship is perhaps such a ‘seismic shift’ has to be judged by the unprejudiced student. Prejudices have played a too great role in the past centuries.

¹¹⁷ *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 14 (2006) 173-176.