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John Locke on the naturalness of rights

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JOHN LOCKE ON THE NATURALNESS OF RIGHTS

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CHAPTER V

NATURAL HISTORY AND THE STATE OF NATURE

In the second section of chapter III above, we referred to Locke's apparent relegation of morality to the periphery of his concern in writing the Essay. Locke seems in effect to promise that however novel in other respects may be his empiricist account of natural science, that account leaves relatively inviolate the province of morality; he declares in closing that the study of nature is "wholly separate and distinct" (4.21.5) from the science of ethics or morality. We have noted too that Locke's assertions of the possibility of a demonstrative, mixed-mode science of morality appear to entail an insistence on precisely such a strict separation of the respective sciences of morality and nature.[1] In fact, however, there are significant ambiguities in Locke's presentation of this proposal. To say the least, it is by no means clear that he does insist upon the total or even decisive abstraction of morality from nature; indeed we may wonder whether his occasional qualifications of this proposal, taken together, serve ultimately to undermine in principle any attempt at such an abstraction. In the midst of his chapter "Of the

[1]See chapter III above, especially pp. 99-106.

Improvement of Our Knowledge," for instance, Locke professes to "doubt not, but if a right method were taken," that not all, but only "a great part of Morality" might be demonstrated "to a considering Man" with a clarity equal to that of a mathematical demonstration (4.12.8). Similarly, in his discussion "Of the Extent of Humane Knowledge," he claims that the central ideas of the proposition that human beings as "understanding, rational Beings" are God's Workmanship would, "if duly considered, and pursued, afford such Foundations of our Duty and Rules of Action, as might place" morality among the demonstrative sciences, "to any one that will apply himself with the same Indifferency and Attention" to morality that he devotes to mathematics (4.3.18). Shortly thereafter, in explaining why attempts at demonstrations in ethics have hitherto caused greater difficulties than those in mathematics, he makes the same point still more cautiously, maintaining that a search with "indifferency" would bring us only "nearer perfect Demonstration, than is commonly imagined" (4.3.20).[2]

Leaving aside for the moment the implications of the questionable likelihood of widespread "indifferency" on the part of individuals in their moral inquiries, we first

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[2]Gibson is rare among Locke's commentators in noting the caution apparent in Locke's formulations concerning the possibility of a demonstrative science of morality, but he seems nonetheless to hold that Locke is at best dimly aware of the difficulties that such a pure science would entail (1896, 50,58).

wonder in the wake of these qualifications precisely how according to Locke an indifferent inquiry would fall short of strict demonstration, or what part of morality necessarily resists attempts at demonstration. We recall that though he acknowledges that moral discourses inevitably contain substance ideas as well as ideas of mixed modes and relations, he maintains that the presence of substance ideas need not disturb such discourses, because the adequacy of their definitions need not--indeed cannot--be self-evident or demonstrated, and so instead can and must be merely supposed (3.11.16). As Grant explains, "With respect to subjection to the law, the question to be asked is not, Is this a Man? but Is this a corporeal rational Being?" (1987, 30). Locke suggests here that our inability to achieve any precise, finally adequate definition of a human being is inconsequential for morality, insofar as we can nonetheless frame an abstract idea comprising the qualities essential to moral beings.[3] The undemonstrative portion of ethical science would then appear to be the supposed or posited character of the subject of morality, of the "moral man" or person.

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[3]This reasoning appears to underlie Locke's occasional references to the subject of law or morality as a "rational Creature" or a "free and intelligent Agent" (TT II.12,57; also STCE 31). We hope to show in what follows, however, that for Locke such references to agency or personhood may provide greater analytical precision, but they do not imply the invalidity of ordinary references to human beings as the subjects of morality.

It is important to recognize, however, that this supposition lying at the basis of Lockean moral science does not represent a pure act of mental construction or creativity. Locke does not suggest that we ponder, in a spirit of indifference to whether such beings actually exist, what faculties one would have to possess in order to qualify as a moral being. Morality is our great concern, "the proper Science and Business of Mankind in general" (4.12.11); insofar as we do so with even minimal rationality, therefore, we frame moral ideas, be they substances or mixed modes, with a view to their usefulness (2.22.6,10; 2.28.2; 3.5.7). In the context of his own account of the origin of our moral ideas, Locke's framing of the concept of a moral man or person makes sense only on the premise that such beings actually exist in the world. He proceeds not by simply positing an idea, but instead by collecting the morally basic or necessary qualities of the class of moral beings actually existing, of which we have actual experience. Once again, Locke appeals to what "Every one, I think, finds in himself" (2.21.7) in order to corroborate his account of our moral faculties.[4] The complex idea of a corporeal rational creature is not then a pure creature of the mind, but is instead formed in an act of abstraction proper. It is abstracted from real experience.

The premise of the present chapter is that throughout

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[4]See chapter IV above, pp. 191-193.

the Essay Locke tends to exaggerate the methodological separation of moral from natural science, just as elsewhere he exaggerates the distinction between the abstract, normative-theoretical principles of political science and the empirically, historically grounded prudential art of governing.[5] In maintaining that "at best an Argument from what has been, to what should of right be, has no great force" (TT II.103), Locke implies no more than that what is moral or just cannot be simply reduced to actual historical practice; he does not deny that historical inquiry is useful and indeed necessary for the development of a proper understanding of the nature and limits of our capacities as

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[5]See again "Some Thoughts Concerning Reading and Study for a Gentleman," in Axtell 1968, 400. I do not mean to argue that the distinctions in question are without any validity for Locke. I am suggesting only that the rules of morality, and by implication the principles of political justice, rest ultimately upon an empirically grounded conception of the nature of those to whom such rules and principles properly apply. Locke's exaggerations of these distinctions tend to obscure the extent to which his account of a constructivist moral science rests upon a natural ground. Focusing on other textual ambiguities, Strauss persuasively explains much of the reason for Locke's exaggeration by reference to the different form of caution proper to practical as opposed to theoretical writers (1953, 206-209; cf. Cox 1960, 11). I believe that in the Essay Locke indeed intends to attack scholastic morality, but to do so for the most part indirectly, through his critique of scholastic natural science; he seeks to clear a space of relative freedom to deliver his critique of scholastic natural science, by suggesting misleadingly that that critique will not implicate scholastic morality as well.

moral beings.[6] In keeping with the "Historical, plain Method" of the Essay as a whole (1.1.2), Locke employs the idea of "moral man" as an empirically grounded, testable hypothesis, even as a kind of thought-experiment. Let us suppose, Locke reasons in effect, that the beings in the world who possess the capacity or equipment for morality constitute a natural species; the following empirical questions then arise, as most immediately relevant to our purposes. In what relation does the class of moral beings stand to the class or classes of beings ordinarily denominated "human"? What if anything can we infer from the nature of this moral equipment concerning the specific content of the political morality most appropriate to the class of those so equipped? What further common qualities can we discover that may be relevant to our construction of moral ideas? What natural needs, desires, interests, and passions do the members of this class share, in addition to the qualities constitutive of moral personhood, which may

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[6]Cf. ECHU 4.4.1 with 1.1.5: Perhaps with a view to the fact that a purely constructive or definitional moral science could produce only "Castles in the Air," Locke remarks somewhat offhandedly but suggestively that "Probability," the proper yield of empirical inquiry, "is sufficient to govern all our Concernments." (Emphasis supplied.) It appears that this fact compels Grant as well, notwithstanding her opinion that the distinction between normative and empirical political science derives from a distinction fundamental to the Essay, ultimately to attribute to Locke the opinion that "Nature is the appropriate standard" for the formation of our moral ideas (1987, 37; cf. 21-22,37-41,48). Cf. Ashcraft 1969, 209; Shapiro 1986, 81,105,109,123-124.

engender a natural affinity for or resistance to a given moral-political doctrine--in particular the doctrine of the natural rights of humankind?

In this chapter and the one following it, we will describe more specifically Locke's view of the nature of our moral equipment, and then examine the reasoning whereby Locke defends the doctrine of equal unalienable rights as the teaching of justice most appropriate to our nature. We will argue that there is no ultimate conflict between the Essay's proposed demonstrative moral science and the Two Treatises' doctrine of natural rights, provided that the former be understood as resting upon empirically well-founded but nonetheless necessarily experimental propositions. More importantly, we will argue that in the end Locke's account of the nature of our moral equipment does contain the materials required to erect a reasonable defense of the principles of natural rights, though the peculiar rhetorical imperatives by which Locke finds his presentation constrained tend to obscure these materials. Let us begin by elaborating Locke's account of agency as a requisite for subjection to moral rules or laws.

THE MORAL AGENT

Fundamental to Locke's elaboration of the idea of "moral man" as a "corporeal rational Creature" is the concept of a person or self. All rational creatures, according to Locke, have an experience of inwardness or of reflectiveness, in which they recognize a distinction between self and world, between the subject and objects of their thinking. To have this experience is to be a "Person...a thinking intelligent Being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider it self as it self, the same thinking thing in different times and places" (2.27.9). Moreover, to be a person is to be conscious of oneself as the author or proprietor not merely of thoughts, but also, and more generally, of actions. By ordinary reflection, according to Locke, we find in ourselves "a Power to begin or forbear, continue or end several actions of our minds, and motions of our Bodies, barely by a thought or preference of the mind ordering, or as it were commanding the doing or not doing...a particular action" (2.21.5,7, and passim). In exercising this power of willing we experience ourselves as agents, as free, self-disposing, responsible beings. For it is our sense of the mind's "Dominion...over any part of the Man" (2.21.15), of our self-ordering or commanding power, that allows us to appropriate our inter-

nal and external motions, which would otherwise be mere unconscious or unfree behavior, as our own productions and thus our own actions. Without this power we could not be moral beings, the bearers of rights and obligations. "Person" for Locke is "a forensick Term appropriating Actions and their Merit; and so belongs only to intelligent Agents capable of a Law..." In "personal Identity is founded all the Right and Justice of Reward and Punishment" (2.27.26,18; cf. 1.3.14).

Essential to our moral equipment is then, as Shapiro describes it, our capacity for "autonomous intentional action" (1986, 96,105,124,144).[7] Whether this capacity in itself represents a proper or sufficient basis for Locke's doctrine of rights, however, remains to be seen. "Freedom, or not Freedom," Locke maintains, "can belong to nothing, but what has, or has not a power to act" (2.21.19). Let us consider more carefully what it means, according to Locke, for us to be free, to be agents. We need first to bear in mind that freedom and volition are nonidentical, though closely related; volition in itself is a necessary but not sufficient condition of the freedom of agents. We are free as agents, in Locke's more provisional definition, insofar as the alternatives of performance and forbearance of a

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[7]More or less elaborate descriptions and analyses of Locke's account of agency appear in Lamprecht 1918, 96-102, 110-115; Parry 1978, esp. 23-37; Tully 1980, 105-111; Wood 1983, 143-161; Colman 1983, 188ff, 206-234; Yolton 1970, 138-159, and 1985, 17-33; Rapaczynski 1987, 116-176.

given action lie equally in our power, so that our volition to perform or forbear occurs in the context of a genuine choice (2.21.8,27). In Locke's examples, a man falling through the air who wills not to fall is obviously not free, in that his volition is irrelevant to his performing or forbearing, that is, his continuing or ceasing to fall; whereas, less obviously though on the same principle, a man who wills to remain with desirable company in a locked room is also unfree, in that his remaining does not depend decisively upon his own will, but is necessitated by an external impediment to his leaving (2.21.9,10).[8]

The freedom of agency thus requires a certain contingency or indeterminacy in the actual possibility of either doing or forbearing, in order to ensure the primacy of volition. Still, as Locke somewhat testily imagines "the inquisitive Mind of Man" might object, how does this notion of freedom apply to the action of volition itself? Can we say properly that someone is free "if he be not as free to will, as he is to act, what he wills" (2.21.22)?

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[8]Cf. Hobbes, Leviathan XXI: "A FREE-MAN, is he, that in those things, which by his strength and wit he is able to do, is not hindered to doe what he has a will to" (ed. MacPherson 1968, 262). Thus Hobbes would hold that only the man in the first of Locke's examples is unfree. In its greater emphasis on the availability of a genuine choice, Locke's stricter definition of freedom seems to reflect his desire to promote among his readers a sharper consciousness of the conditions of human freedom and unfreedom. It thus corresponds with his insistence on freedom, contrary to the doctrine of Hobbes, as an unalienable right and a condition of governmental legitimacy.

In what sense can we be agents, possessing active power, if the will itself is a passive power?[9] We recall Locke's acknowledgement that "Morality and Mechanism...are not very easy to be reconciled, or made consistent" (1.3.14). On the other hand, it is equally questionable whether we can be truly agents if the will is a strictly active power. For if we conceive of the freedom of the will or more generally of the mind as radical autonomy, as pure contingency or indeterminacy, then we would reduce human action to sheer arbitrariness--"as great an imperfection," according to Locke, "as the want of Indifferency to act, or not to act, till determined by the Will, would be an imperfection on the other side" (2.21.48). The difficulty concerning the status of the will is thus twofold, with extreme implications of arbitrariness and fatalism seeming to correspond respectively to the alternative conceptions of the will as an active or a passive power.[10] The task Locke faces in explicating our experience of agency is to find a moderate solution whereby willing can be in some sense both active and passive, both free and nonarbitrary.

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[9]"Power thus considered is twofold, viz. as able to make, or able to receive any change: The one may be called Active, and the other Passive Power" (2.21.2).

[10]Cf. Rapaczynski's formulation: "If the agent's choice of reasons is ultimately determined, then he cannot be responsible for his actions. If, on the other hand, his choice is not determined, then it is unmotivated and arbitrary. If this is the case, however, responsibility will not make much sense either, for the agent is not 'rational'" (1987, 126).

After disposing of both the semantic confusions and the more trivial questions that arise from an excessively literal construction of the term "free will" (2.21.6,14-25), Locke turns finally to the serious question of the determination of the will. He holds that "...that which immediately determines the Will...is the uneasiness of desire, fixed on some absent good..." (2.21.33). Several ideas here require explication. Most basic is the idea of good, which Locke tends to define in purely hedonistic terms: "...what has an aptness to produce Pleasure in us, is that we call Good, and what is apt to produce Pain in us, we call Evil, for no other reason, but for its aptness to produce Pleasure and Pain in us" (2.21.42; also 2.20.2).[11] Uneasiness for Locke refers simply to pain; it subsumes "All pain of the body of what sort soever, and disquiet of the mind."[12] Moreover, it is inseparable from desire, in that desire is "nothing but an uneasiness in the

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[11]Cf. again Hobbes, Leviathan ch. VI: "Pleasure therefore, (or Delight,) is the apparence, or sense of Good; and Molestation or Displeasure, the apparence, or sense of Evill" (ed. MacPherson 1968, 122).

[12]Colman complains with some justification that in its abstraction or generality Locke's concept of uneasiness is "to say the least of it, shadowy...a blanket term covering a variety of mental states of the agent...too broad and vague to be of much service in a causal explanation of human action" (1983, 216-217,223). But this for Locke seems to be precisely the point; his vague, general account of the concept of uneasiness constitutes merely a statement or restatement of the massive fact of relativism or dissensus with respect to the objects of our actions or our conceptions of happiness.

want of an absent good." No one feels pain without feeling in that very pain a desire for relief equal in magnitude to the pain itself (2.21.31). Uneasiness for Locke seems to represent the force capable of moving the will, while desire represents the determination of the direction of that movement.[13] Further, Locke distinguishes between an essentially negative or indefinite desire for ease from pain and an essentially positive desire for a particular absent good (ibid.). It is the latter form, the desire for an absent positive good, in which our cognizance of the absent good precedes the sense of uneasiness, that leads to the heart of his account of voluntary action.

According to his own testimony, Locke changed his mind concerning the determination of the will between the publication of the first and second editions of the Essay. In the first edition, he confesses, he "took...for granted" the soundness of the opinion that "seems so establish'd and settled a maxim by the general consent of all Mankind, That good, the greater good, determines the will" (2.21.35).[14] In its most basic significance, Locke's insistence in the second and subsequent editions on the primacy of uneasiness

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[13]Cf. Rapaczynski 1987, 145-148.

[14]Thus 2.21.29 of the first edition: "For the cause of every less degree of Pain, as well as every greater degree of Pleasure, has the nature of Good, and vice versa, and is that which determines our Choice, and challenges our Preference. Good then, the greater Good is that alone which determines the Will" (ed. Nidditch 1975, 250-251).

represents an application of the principle that "'tis against the nature of things, that what is absent should operate, where it is not" (2.21.37). This is in a trivial sense a matter of semantics: an absent good can be present to the mind only as desire, as privation or uneasiness, and therefore can move the will only in this mode. As for its more substantive significance, it is fundamentally true, as Yolton argues, that Locke's reconsideration involves a rejection of the first edition's "intellectualist position on motives" (1970, 144). But this does not mean that in the second and subsequent editions Locke totally or drastically depreciates the role of the understanding in volition; Colman observes aptly that Locke's revision constitutes rather a clarification than a rejection of the view "that properly free actions are those which are grounded in rational decisions" (1983, 215).[15]

The depreciation of reason in the revised account consists in Locke's denial of the causal or motivational efficacy of "bare contemplation" or "unactive speculation" (2.21.34,37); he no longer holds that the mere apprehension or acknowledgment of an absent good as such, that is, of its pleasurable potential, is in itself sufficient to raise

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[15]Contrast the account of Lamprecht, who finds in the first edition a statement of "the extreme hedonistic position, which discomfited Locke by its implication "that men were mere creatures swayed by the strongest pleasure...thus leaving no room for the guiding activity of reason." Locke's revision thus represents for Lamprecht a retreat from mechanism, not from intellectualism (1918, 112-115).

in us a desire proportionate to its goodness. What is instead sufficient to raise our desires is "happiness and that alone" (2.21.41). In accordance with his definition of the good, Locke tends also to define happiness hedonistically; in its full extent it is "the utmost Pleasure we are capable of," while in its lowest degree it is "so much ease from all Pain, and so much present Pleasure, as without which one cannot be content" (42). Thus conceived, the idea of happiness operates as a kind of regulatory principle, determining which prospective goods will and which will not raise desires in us. Not all absent acknowledged good stirs us, "but only that part, or so much of it, as is consider'd, and taken to make a necessary part of [our] happiness" (2.21.43; also 59).

Locke's diminished estimate of the power of a rational apprehension of the greater good to determine the will arises in part from the necessity of explaining the common fact of volitional error. On the principle that the greater apparent good determines the will, we are unable to explain the fact that we often stray voluntarily from our own understanding of what is good for us--that we commonly acknowledge the real possibility of a joyful afterlife or a prosperous earthly future, for instance, and yet choose not to order our lives in the pursuit of such goods.

> ...let a Drunkard see, that his Health decays, his Estate wastes; Discredit and Diseases, and the want of all things, even of his beloved Drink, attends him in the course he follows: yet the returns of <u>uneasiness</u>

> to miss his Companions; the habitual thirst after his Cups, at the usual time, drives him to the Tavern, though he has in his view the loss of health and plenty, and perhaps of the joys of another life: the least of which is no inconsiderable good, but such as he confesses, is far greater, than the tickling of his palate with a glass of Wine, or the idle chat of a soaking Club. (2.21.35; also 38,45)

If not all, nor even the greatest apparent goods, but only those that gain inclusion into our conceptions of happiness can raise in us a sense of uneasiness and thereby determine our wills, then the essential question concerns the framing of our conceptions of happiness: How do we come to regard some goods as necessary to our happiness, to the exclusion of others of equal or even greater magnitude? It is clear that in correcting the first edition's implicit assimilation of human willing to that of "those superiour Beings above us," Locke calls specific attention to the commonly subrational construction of our ideas of happiness[16]; some combination of more-or-less unreflectively acquired habits, as in the case of the drunkard, and natural passions or aversions, such as bodily pain, lust,

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[16]Wood suggests that in emphasizing the various environmental influences on or obstructions of reasoning, Locke advances the development of Bacon's "embryonic 'sociology of knowledge' and conception of 'ideology'" (1983, 94-107). Cf. Tully's discussion of the "normative and constitutive" functions of mixed-mode ideas in Locke's epistemology, apparently attributing an ideological closure to particular "language communities": like that of Vico, Locke's political thought begins (and therefore ends) with "the constitutive and regulative ideas of a given culture" (1980, 13-34). A similar account of the origin of moral reasoning, though with a greater emphasis on the possibility of transcending one's cultural inheritance, appears in Rapaczynski 1987, 161-176.

or revenge (2.21.38), tends at any given moment to produce the uneasinesses whose alleviation our happiness requires. What is crucial, however, is that Locke does not intend by his revision to assert the necessarily or essentially sub-rational character of human willing. The doctrine of the insufficiency of the mere intellectual recognition of prospective goods to determine volition may involve in one sense a diminished estimate of the subjection of volition to reason; yet what Locke's revision ultimately denies is less that subjection as such than the constancy of our understandings in devoting adequate consideration to the framing of our ideas of happiness. Our propensity to forbear the pursuit of acknowledged greater goods represents no insuperable limitation of our nature, but instead proceeds simply from our negligence in constructing conceptions of happiness.

Locke's understanding of happiness as a mental construct or a complex idea points to the sense in which his revised account of volition preserves an emphasis on the decisive role of reason. Because the substantiation of our ideas of happiness is in Locke's view identical with the specification of that complex of goods whose absence raises in us a sense of uneasiness, in order for our ideas of happiness to be rationally constructed we must be somehow capable of raising within ourselves feelings of uneasiness at the absence of goods that our reason approves. In

fact, according to Locke, the inefficacy of bare intellectual apprehension in determining volition does not signify the inefficacy of the understanding in general; we are able by "a due considering and examining any good proposed...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" (2.21.46; also 56,69).[17] Inasmuch as this account of our ideas of happiness as properly the products of reflective, considered judgment or intention holds the key to Locke's conception of moral agency, it is necessary for us to explore further the basis of this "due considering."

Two seemingly closely related mental powers are at work here. Our ability to devote due consideration to any proposed good depends at least in part upon a power that, like the primacy of uneasiness in general, Locke introduces in the revised second edition of the Essay. In the power

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[17]In this explanation of our intellectual power to raise in ourselves sensations of desire for absent goods, Rapaczynski sees the grounds for a resolution of the commonly observed tension between rationalistic and hedonistic elements in Lockean ethics (1987, 150-156). Viewing "the relation between universal moral norms and sensual inclinations [as] more 'dialectical' in Locke than in Kant," he goes so far as to issue a rather striking denial that Lockean morality is hedonistic in the ordinary sense of the term (167; 155-161). See the further discussion of this point in chapter VI below, pp. 352-364. Cf. Colman's view that while Locke's theory "is quite distinct from egoistic hedonism as a psychological theory," still his "account of rational action may be termed a hedonistic theory of reasons for actions" (1983, 223). Contrast Lamprecht 1918, 65-118; Aaron 1955, 256-269; Von Leyden 1958, 71-75.

of the mind "to suspend the execution and satisfaction of any of its desires," Locke observes "the hinge on which turns the liberty of intellectual Beings" (2.21.47,52).[18]

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[18]This conception of liberty as dependent upon a mental capacity to suspend the execution of our desires appears to supersede Locke's earlier, more Hobbesian, more behavioral or mechanical definition of liberty as the power only to do or forbear, without reference to the question whether we are free also to determine our own preferences, desires, or volitional commands. Critics have sometimes questioned, however, whether Locke's revised conception represents a truly significant departure from the original. Locke's contemporary John Jackman observes, for instance, "that either this Suspension must be no voluntary action, or, though it be a voluntary action, the Will must not be determin'd to it by any Uneasiness, or, it must be determin'd to it by a less Uneasiness than that, the relief whereof is suspended. Of the parts of which Disjunction, the first and last, are too unreasonable to need any confutation to you, and the second is directly contradictory to your opinion" (CJL #2105, 6/20/1696). More recently, Ellen Meiksins Wood opines similarly that the act of suspension must represent an act of volition determined by uneasiness, and therefore that Locke's account of voluntary action remains close to that of Hobbes (1972, 36-40). See also Von Leyden 1981, 56. Colman concludes somewhat more sympathetically that "Although Locke continues to talk of uneasiness as determining the will even on those occasions when we stand back and deliberate on whether the proposed actions accord with our true happiness, the tenor of his later doctrine is that properly free actions spring, not from some occurrent feeling of the agent, but from reason" (1983, 221-222). It is undeniable that Locke's revision creates a textual ambiguity on this point (cf. especially 2.21.40,47,53); but this ambiguity is not fatal to Locke's account of moral freedom. Even if the act of suspending one's desires were itself a voluntary act determined by the most pressing uneasiness, this need imply no more than that moral reason does not develop autonomously or spontaneously, but instead requires the cultivation of a desire in support of it. There would be no contradiction in holding that once properly cultivated, such a desire could assume a position of priority relative to all other desires, so that in effect reason, once made the primary element of one's "relish," would nonetheless constitute a power capable of overriding all or nearly all more particular desires. On the cultivation of rationality, see STCE 36,40,41,77,81,83, 95.

For the "first...and great use of Liberty, is to hinder blind Precipitancy" (2.21.67); insofar as it enables us to perform our duty to examine with "caution, deliberation, and wariness" the alternative courses of action available to us and therefore provides the foundation for our power of raising our own desires, the exercise of this suspensory power establishes us as the justly accountable authors and owners of our actions (2.21.52,56,67). But because the idea of happiness represents more for Locke than an indefinite train of successes in attaining the objects of our desires,[19] more than a mere aggregation of goods or of reports on successive present mental states--because it represents instead an ordering, an assignment of priorities that extends properly over the courses of our entire lives--the exercise of the suspensory power as a requisite of rational liberty depends in turn upon the exercise of a still more basic mental power, namely the power of abstraction.

Only in a narrow, casual sense does Locke hold that "who is content is happy" (2.21.59); he clearly believes that there is such a thing as an irrational contentment, an "imaginary" as well as a "real happiness" (51). For "the present moment not being our eternity," and "since our vol-

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[19]Cf. Hobbes, Leviathan VI: "Continuall successe in obtaining those things which a man from time to time desireth, that is to say, continuall prospering, is that men call FELICITY; I mean the Felicity of this life" (ed. MacPherson 1968, 129).

untary Actions carry not all the Happiness and Misery, that depend on them, along with them in their present performance; but are the precedent causes of Good and Evil" (39, 59), it follows that a fully rational conception and pursuit of happiness must involve a consideration of prospective as well as present pleasures and pains (61,62). This consideration obviously involves an empirical, probabilistic assessment of the consequences of alternative courses of action, but it involves more fundamentally the exercise of the crucial power of abstraction in facilitating full human self-consciousness. For it is by virtue of the power of abstraction that we are able to conceive of the core of our being as the <u>self</u>, as the source of action and concernment, with an identity continuing over time (2.27.17ff).[20]

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[20]In explaining personal identity as consisting in identity of consciousness, Locke may seem, as some critics have charged, to mistake the mere datum of personal identity, i.e. memory, for its constitutive element. Thus he declares, for instance, that "If there be any part of its Existence, which I cannot upon recollection join with that present consciousness, whereby I am now my <u>self</u>, it is in that part of its Existence no more my <u>self</u>, than any other immaterial Being" (2.27.24). For a thorough discussion of this objection, see Flew 1968, especially 158-166. In making this argument Locke may intend in part to call attention to the genuine difficulty in searching for grounds for claiming an unrecollected action as one's <u>own</u>. More importantly, however, Locke's description of the fragility of our identities as persons serves to underline the human need to struggle to overcome the attractions of present, momentary indulgences and thus to unify one's experiences into a single, coherent, well governed and directed life. "This appropriating consciousness is not just memory," observes Yolton, but involves in addition a capacity of "being concerned for the deeds I have done, concerned for their happiness-producing, for their moral worth, for their importance in my intentional actions" (1985, 32). In main-

We are thus able to abstract from a succession of instant, momentary experiences a conception of our own life as an integrated whole capable of being more or less well lived. By projecting our selves into the future and comparing the likely consequences of pursuing various possible or imaginable courses of action, we can frame general conceptions of happiness or of well-lived lives whereby we can evaluate our present alternatives.

Our construction of ideas of happiness represents for Locke the most comprehensive indication of our natural capacity for rational liberty and therefore for law. The capacity to transcend the present, or alternatively, to bring ideas of future, absent goods into the present and deliberate on their relative merits is inseparable from the capacity to master our inclinations or to forego more immediately available gratifications. Moreover, the capacity for transcendence inherent in our power of abstraction

permits us not merely to transfer, as it were, our self-consciousness to various past and future moments in our own lives. Locke's opinion concerning the ultimate sweep of this transcendent capacity may remain unclear, but in

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taining that "a concern for Happiness [is] the unavoidable concomitant of consciousness" (2.27.26), Locke comes close to arguing that individuals possess unitary selves to the degree that they are concerned to possess unitary selves. To the extent to which reason succeeds in governing our passionate pursuits, comments Pangle, "the self would seem to unify itself, to gather itself, to become more fully a self" (1988, 268). Cf. Wood on Locke's apparent conflation of cognitive and conative selves (1983, 157-161).

stressing the dangers inherent in uncritical assent to the received opinions of our various circles of association (1.4.22, 4.12.4, 4.15.6, 4.20.17; also CU 3,41), he seems to imply a far-reaching power at least in some to reflect critically upon their formative influences, to look "abroad beyond the Smoak of their own Chimneys" (1.3.2). It seems to be within our power, according to Locke, to transcend not merely our own historical present, but also our cultural inheritance.[21] Our capacity to appropriate to our imagination the experiences of others in other times and places, to consider them as potentially our own, thus seems to be an essential guarantor of our capacity to appropriate actions by ensuring that the latter proceed from an authentic choice.

This appears to be the reasoning behind Locke's claim that it is the mental power of abstraction, "the having of general Ideas," in which "the Species of Brutes are discriminated from Man; and 'tis that proper difference wherein they are wholly separated, and which at last widens to so vast a difference" (2.11.10,11).[22] Notwithstanding,

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[21]Thus Wood recognizes that, notwithstanding his contribution to the development of the 'sociology of knowledge,' Locke's conception of consciousness is essentially transhistorical. But as Wood presents it, this recognition constitutes less an appreciation than an accusation (1983, 94-100,157-163). Cf. note 16 above.

[22]Under fire from Stillingfleet, Locke subsequently disclaims any intention to argue that 'herein chiefly lies the excellency of mankind above brutes that these cannot abstract and enlarge their ideas, as men do.' He replies

therefore, his definition of happiness in wholly hedonistic terms, Locke is able to claim that on the basis of this power of abstraction or generalization, human beings are uniquely persons, capable of both law and happiness in ways that the lower animals, which are capable of little more than the mere perception of pleasure and pain, are not (2.27.26).[23] Therefore, insofar as "the highest perfection

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somewhat condescendingly that "The ability of mankind does not lie in the impotency or disabilities of brutes," and claims that he had suggested in the Essay that the power of abstraction constitutes only "one excellency of mankind above brutes" (Works 1823, IV, 15). As is often the case in his exchanges with Stillingfleet, Locke's response may seems evasive at best. Though he does at one point in the Essay refer to the power of abstraction as merely "an Excellency" that the brutes do not possess, his accompanying references to the "proper difference" and the "perfect distinction betwixt Man and Brutes" lend support to Stillingfleet's reading. On the other hand, it may be that Stillingfleet here pays insufficient attention to Locke's implicit suggestion that the power of abstraction represents the original or fundamental difference between humans and the lower animals, a difference which "at last," fully developed, widens to a vast difference. It is not at all clear that Locke's remark implies a reduction of the difference in question to a matter or degree, or of power. See chapter VI below, pp.

[23]Thus notwithstanding his conjectures and anecdotes concerning the possibility or even actual existence of non-human rational persons (2.27.8; 3.6.22,29; 3.11.16,20), Locke's account of personhood generally corroborates the reading presented in chapter III above of the ultimately moderate character of his critique of the doctrine of natural species. Whatever the status of the border cases, for the purposes of his moral and political thought Locke accepts on grounds of sound, empirical, probabilistic judgment the proposition that the qualities requisite of moral agency or personality tend to inhere in beings possessing the shape and other qualities we ordinarily identify as "human," or in other words that we can reliably judge moral beings and human beings not only as natural, nonconventional kinds, but as practically identical natural kinds. Once again, "Morality is the proper Science, and Business" not

of intellectual nature, lies in a careful and constant pursuit of true and solid happiness" (2.21.51), Locke sees no denigration of human freedom or dignity in his doctrine of the determination of the will. To the contrary, he argues that

> A Perfect Indifferency in the Mind, not determinable by its last judgment of the Good or Evil, that is thought to attend its Choice, would be so far from being an advantage and excellency of any intellectual Nature, that it would be as great an imperfection, as the want of Indifferency to act, or not to act, till determined by the Will, would be an imperfection on the other side. (2.21.48).

The freedom proper to volition consists not in pure contingency, but instead in the determination of the will by rational judgment of the good (2.21.71). As yet unexplained, however, are precisely wherein this good consists, and what substantive principles of morality follow from our capacity for moral agency.

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merely of moral beings, according to Locke, but of "Mankind in general" (4.12.11); whoever violates the law of nature violates not merely "the right Rule of Reason," but also "the Principles of Human Nature" (TT II.10; also II.63). Cf. note 3 above.

"Law," in Locke's understanding, "is not so much the Limitation as the direction of a free and intelligent Agent to his proper interest...Could [he] be happier without it, the Law, as an useless thing, would of it self vanish..." (TT II.57).[24] The end of law for Locke is to promote or facilitate our pursuit of happiness. The question arises, therefore, as to the manner in which the form of happiness toward which we are by nature directed determines the form of law most appropriate to us. Locke implicitly sharpens this question, in apparently maintaining an extreme relativism as a corollary of his hedonistic conception of happiness:

> ...I think, that the Philosophers of old did in vain enquire, whether Summum Bonum consisted in Riches, or bodily Delights, or Virtue, or Contemplation: And they might have as reasonably disputed, whether the best Relish were to be found in Apples, Plumbs, or Nuts; and have divided themselves into Sects upon it. For as pleasant Tastes depend not on the things themselves, but their agreeableness to this or that particular Palate, wherein there is great variety: So the greatest Happiness consists, in the having those things, which produce the greatest Pleasure; and in the absence of those, which cause any disturbance, any pain. Now these, to different Men, are very different things. (2.21.55)

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[24]Cf. the propositions with which Locke introduces his undated, unpublished fragment "Morality": "Morality is the rule of mans actions for the atteining happynesse. For the end and aime of all men being happynesse alone noething could be a rule or a law to them whose observation did not lead to happynesse and whose breach did [not] draw misery after it" (published in Sargentich 1974, 26). See also RC 241,245.

Does Locke hold that we can know ourselves as human beings, only as a natural species of agents or choice-makers? If so, can he avoid the implication that principles of human justice and happiness are alike relative to the societies and even ultimately to the individuals who embrace them? If human beings according to Locke have no fixed natural end, if there is no common determinate content of our happiness, then to what form of common, natural law can we be properly subject?

One traditional and still influential scholarly response to this question of moral relativism appeals to the theological horizon within which Locke frequently claims to view the human condition.[25] Immediately after presenting his emphatically relativistic description of happiness, Locke proceeds to issue an important qualification: "Men may chuse different things, and yet all chuse right, supposing them only like a Company of poor Insects," supposing, that is, that "there be no Prospect beyond the Grave" (2.21.55; emphasis supplied). Perhaps then his statement of relativism describes no more than the actual condition of diversity in human judgments of the good.[26] Accordingly,

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[25]Recent variants of this view appear in Tully 1980, 41ff,105ff; Colman 1983, 6,32ff,69ff,189; Shapiro 1986, 101ff; Grant 1987, 41-48.

[26]See Locke's own response to a contemporary objection of this kind, in a note appended by his editor Coste to ECHU 2.28.11. Von Leyden opines that a pure description of actual modes of evaluation, abstracted from any attempt at prescription, characterizes Locke's intention throughout

he subsequently proposes a distinction between the actual and the appropriate in judgments of this kind, in distinguishing natural from moral good and evil. While natural "Good and Evil," as Locke reiterates, "are nothing but Pleasure or Pain...Morally Good and Evil then, is [sic] only the Conformity or Disagreement of our voluntary Actions to some Law, whereby Good or Evil is drawn on us, from the Will and Power of the Law-maker" (2.28.5).[27] More specifically, he continues, "the only true touchstone of moral Rectitude" is the "Divine Law, whereby I mean, that Law which God has set to the actions of Men" (2.28.8). Locke overcomes or at least seeks to overcome the problem of relativism, in this view, by conceiving of human beings as God's workmanship and therefore as God's property.[28] Virtuous or vicious actions may well be productive of pleasures or pains, but they are not defined as such by that production. Rather they are defined by their conformity or nonconformity with the will of the creator God, and pleasures or pains can be no more than their incidental consequences.[29]

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the entire Essay (1954, 74-76).

[27]See also Locke's unpublished fragment "Of Ethicks in General," in King 1830, 311.

[28]See especially TT I.53,86; II.6,56.

[29]Locke's most emphatic statements of this point appear in his unpublished Questions Concerning The Law of Nature. In concluding the work he insists, for instance, that "interest is not a foundation of law or a basis of

As commentators have frequently observed, however, including some who accept this view as the most compelling statement of Locke's intention, Locke fails to provide a fully developed argument in support of the distinction between natural and moral good and evil.[30] His most elaborate attempt at demonstrating the existence of God, for instance--or more precisely, of "a GOD"--appears in Book 4, chapter 10 of the Essay. If we accept for the sake of argument the soundness of this demonstration as far as it goes, the fact remains that Locke makes no attempt at demonstrating that the God intelligible to us promulgates legislation, complete with otherworldly sanctions, for the proper guidance of human action.[31] It is true, as we have noticed, that at times Locke does suggest the possibility of deducing from the bare fact of creation by an intelligent God at least the main principle of God's legislative

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obligation, but the consequence of obedience. It is one thing if an action entails some benefit by itself, another if it should be advantageous by reason of the fact that it is in conformity to the law..." (LN 11.251; also 8 passim. Cf. Yolton 1958, 490; Singh 1961, 114; Tully 1980, 41-43.) But cf. LN 10.231, where Locke affirms the viability of "other," apparently Hobbesian arguments for defending the obligatory force of the natural law.

[30]Cf. the various accusations or admissions along this line in Strauss 1953, 202-226, and 1958, 210; Ashcraft 1969; Dunn 1969, 21,187, and 1984, 30,66ff.,84; Gough 1973, 6-11; Yolton 1985, 87,90; Pangle 1988, 198-202.

[31]Indeed Locke straightforwardly denies that we can have knowledge of an afterlife: "...that the dead shall rise, and live again" is "beyond the Discovery of Reason" (4.18.7). See also Works 1823, 4.303ff., 480,489,491.

intention for human beings (ECHU 4.3.18; 4.13.3). Because an intelligent God could only create intelligently or purposively, according to this deduction, the human creatures of that God bear an obligation to preserve themselves and their species; or to state it more precisely, they have no right of arbitrary self-disposal, no right willfully to destroy themselves or others (TT II.6). As we have argued above, however, Locke's suggested deduction is at best incomplete, insofar as he fails to explain what would constitute an arbitrary or willful, as distinct from a noble sacrifice of human life.[32] It would seem, therefore, that the obligation to preserve human beings cannot derive simply from the fact of creation, but must instead proceed from a compelling account of the unity and dignity of the species--an account that Locke's "workmanship" principle, at least as he ordinarily presents it, does not in itself provide.

If Locke's theological arguments thus imply that we can gain access to God's intentions for human beings only through our knowledge of the nature that God has given us, then the distinction between natural and moral good and evil must collapse. The relevant distinction must take the form of a distinction between true and false or apparent happiness, or between forms of pursuing happiness that are

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[32]For a fuller statement both of Locke's suggested deduction and of the difficulties that it entails, see chapter II above, pp. 73-75.

more and less in conformity with the requirements of our nature and natural condition. The incompleteness of Locke's theological arguments therefore returns us to the question whether Locke's secular, empirical-historical account of human nature and the human condition can provide an adequate basis for a genuine doctrine of political morality.

Recently some scholars have argued that the true or enduring significance of Lockean political morality, once abstracted from its ostensibly theological context, derives exclusively from its basis in the fact of personal agency or autonomy.[33] The capacity of human beings to be agents, to be the authors and owners of our actions, is in this view not only a necessary, but in fact the sufficient, definitive condition of our moral status. As the owners of our actions, according to Locke, we are the owners of our selves, of our powers of agency--free, self-disposing beings, "equal to the greatest, and subject to no Body" (TT II.123; also 27,44).[34] The priority of rights to law in

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[33]Parry argues that though it is Locke's intention to present his theory of agency in a theological context, the intelligibility of that theory does not require that context (1978, 13-17, 27,156). See also Wallin 1984, 150-157; Rapaczynski 1987, 116-176.

[34]Laslett comments that this assertion of human self-ownership "almost contradicts [Locke's] first principle that men belong to God" (1960, 114). Others believe that Locke does indeed thus retract the workmanship principle. See Strauss 1953, especially 227,247; Wallin 1984, 155ff. Tully suggests that the two principles are reconciliable; Locke intends to say that an individual's "body and his

Locke's political morality is merely a corollary of the primacy of this principle of agency or self-ownership.[35] Human beings as natural agents or choice-makers have a fundamental natural right simply to act in the pursuit of happiness--and therefore to act upon, to appropriate or otherwise transform the "materials" (TT II.41) of the external natural world in order to create or recreate a home for ourselves.[36]

If our rights as human beings derive solely from our character as self-owning, choosing actors, then it would follow that our rights can be limited or circumscribed not "vertically," by our dependence upon a higher authority,

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limbs are God's property: the actions he uses them to make are his own" (1980, 109; also 114). Cf. Colman 1983, 188-190; Yolton 1985, 69. It is difficult to see how this suggestion in itself can resolve the difficulty, insofar as God's ownership of our bodies and limbs necessarily imposes restrictions on our employment of our action-producing capacity, or in other words on our proprietorship, our right of free disposal, over our selves. However that may be, it is perhaps safest to adopt the conclusion of Mansfield, to the effect that even according to Locke's workmanship principle, individuals best follow the will of their maker and proprietor by regarding themselves as their own property (1979, 30ff.)

[35]Cf. Strauss: "Through the shift of emphasis from natural duties or obligations to natural rights, the individual, the ego, had become the center and origin of the moral world, since man--as distinguished from man's end--had become that center or origin" (1953, 248).

[36]Thus according to Rapaczynski's reading, "a man's action on the world around him is capable of imposing on it a human order and transforming it in accordance with the dictates of the agent's will...In this way, all human rights--'property' in its broader sense--are tied to man's ability to transform nature into an objective correlate of his own freedom" (1987, 172,180).

but only "horizontally,"[37] by the presence of other agents with rights equal to our own. The fact of human equality, that as human beings we are "Creatures of the same species and rank promiscuously born to all the same advantages of nature, and the use of the same faculties...sharing all in one Community of Nature" (TT II.4,6), would then constitute according to Locke the specifically moral element of the doctrine of rights.[38] Yet this justification of rights by the principle of equality in moral autonomy has also drawn scholarly objections, of which perhaps the most widely noticed is the argument of C.B. MacPherson. On the basis of Locke's apparently anomalous references to rationality as a distinguishing characteristic not merely of, but also and more importantly among human beings, MacPherson contends that Locke's general invocation of the principle of equality represents at bottom no more than an obfuscation of the morally and politically decisive inequality between the class of "industrious and rational" property owners and

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[37]Cf. Strauss' judgment on the thought of Rousseau, who in contrast to unspecified "earlier men" attempts "to get rid of that which essentially transcends every possible human reality," and thus decisively undermines the distinction between liberty and license. "These men acknowledged a limitation which comes from above, a vertical limitation. On the basis of Rousseau, the limitation of license is effected horizontally by the license of other men...The horizontal limitation is preferred to the vertical limitation because it seems to be more realistic: the horizontal limitation, the limitation of my claim by the claims of others is self enforcing" (1959, 51-52).

[38]See also II.54,87,96,159,190; TT I.27,67; STCE 117.

that of subrational wage laborers (1962, especially 221-251).[39]

Against this thesis of "differential rationality" generating differential class rights, others have argued, persuasively with respect to the immediate issue, that Locke employs the term "rationality" to refer to both a moral and a more strictly intellectual faculty, and that only his conception of the latter is significantly inegalitarian[40]; moral rationality, which properly qualifies us as the bearers of rights, is a species characteristic, shared more-or-less equally by all human beings.[41] Yet if we

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[39]In addition to Locke's apparent references to rationality as a distinguishing characteristic of the propertied class (II.34,50) and to property as a condition of full membership in civil society (II.119-122,140,158), MacPherson relies heavily upon Locke's observation that "The greater part cannot know, and therefore they must believe" (RC 243).

[40]Dunn 1969, 250-255. See also Seliger 1968, 49-53, 163-165; Ryan 1968, 239-242; Ashcraft 1986, chapters 7 and 9; Shapiro 1986, 86,136-139. Wood agrees that Locke implicitly distinguishes between moral and "naturalistic" forms of rationality, but argues nonetheless that for Locke human equality in moral rationality is not decisive for the distribution of moral and political rights; Locke "never dreamed of a social condition of widespread equality of opportunity" (1983, 115-118,121-123), and indeed regarded the propertied and the mere laborers as distinct moral species (1984, 43ff.).

[41]In addition to his references to rationality as a species-characteristic, Locke's explanation in the Second Treatise of his inclusive usages of the term 'property' (123), his clear affirmation of the reasonableness of alienating not only one's radical natural freedom in forming civil society (128-131) but also one's labor power to an employer or 'master' within the bounds of civil society (41,85,131,135), and his explicit disqualification only of slaves or aggressors and "Lunaticks and Ideots" for member-

abstract from its particulars, MacPherson's argument raises a deeper issue that remains unresolved by his critics. Notwithstanding his common affirmations of the principle of equality, Locke at times quite forthrightly acknowledges a natural inequality among human beings, with respect to both the possession and exercise of rationality. In what is only the most striking of such acknowledgments, he declares it

> evident, that there is a difference of degrees in Men's Understandings, Apprehensions, and Reasonings, to so great a latitude, that one may, without doing injury to Mankind, affirm, that there is a greater distance between some Men, and others, in this respect, than between some Men and some Beasts. (4.20.5)

Admitting the possibility that Locke refers here to the relatively small number of border cases, to "Lunaticks and Ideots" (II.60) or to "Naturals" (2.11.13; 3.6.22; also CU 6) disabled from birth, we must yet come to terms with his judgment, clearly not restricted to cases of disability, that those "who have fairly and truly examined, and are thereby got past doubt in all the Doctrines they profess, and govern themselves by...are so few" as to number perhaps no more than one in one hundred (4.16.4; also 1.3.24,25; CU 6,24,34).[42]

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ship (16-24,60) would all appear to cast doubt upon the thesis of a moral, jural distinction between laborers and owners in a Lockean political society.

[42]Thus Mansfield refers to Locke's assertion of the proposition of equal rationality as a "pretense" (1979, 32).

The implication is that in order to maintain the proposition of equal moral rationality--the proposition that whatever the differences in rationality among individual human beings, the morally relevant form of rationality is a more-or-less equally shared species characteristic--Locke must significantly dilute his conception of moral rationality. Thus, as Tarcov observes, not only is Locke ambiguous as to whether rationality as a condition of agency or personhood develops automatically with age in "the ordinary course of Nature" (II.60) or instead only as the product of a proper education (II.58,61,64,69); he also tends, more importantly, to assimilate children's irrational submission or forebearance of their desires to a rational submission (STCE 38), thereby raising the question "whether he is being similarly if not equally free in calling the adult rationally autonomous" (1984, 72-73,91-92). The Second Treatise' doctrine of natural human jural equality seems to rest upon a principle of presumptive rationality, according to which all those capable, if not of discovering, at least of understanding and conforming with the dictates of the law of nature are to be treated as rational beings and bearers of rights.[43] At bottom, the

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[43]Compare in this regard ECHU 4.20.2,3, where Locke first deplores the "natural and unalterable...Ignorance" of "the greatest part of Mankind, who are given up to Labour," and proceeds in the immediate sequel to insist that "No Man is so wholly taken up with the Attendance on the Means of Living, as to have no spare Time at all to think of his Soul."

mere potential for understanding the law of nature, in conjunction with actual innocence of irrational action, or action against that law, seems to be according to Locke the practically determinative requisite of moral rationality (II.16,59). Possession of the morally qualifying faculty of reason, in other words, seems for Locke's purposes to be demonstrated sufficiently by our observance of rational principles, or by our respect for reason understood as the social bond or "Rule betwixt Man and Man" (II.172; also 11,181).[44]

What remains to be explained, however, is why we should regard as morally decisive a conception of reason that unites us rather than one that distinguishes or divides us. In the face of what he himself acknowledges to be the manifest superiority in "Parts and Merit" of some human beings to others, on what grounds does Locke deny, consistently and emphatically, the existence of a natural right of the truly rational or wise to rule, and affirm to the contrary the "equal Right that every Man hath, to his Natural Freedom" (TT II.54)? On what grounds does Locke insist that in the morally or jurally decisive respect,

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[44]Thus Pangle observes that "Locke promotes a rational society, i.e. a socialized rationality" (1988, 272). For a discussion of the deeper significance of this observation, see chapters VI and VII below, pp. 365-390, 424-450.

human beings constitute a single species?[45]

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[45]Locke's observation of inequality among human beings in the possession and exercise of reason brings into view a particularly challenging instance of the moral-political difficulty inherent in his critique of the doctrine of natural sorts or species. If in Locke's view "each abstract Idea, with a name to it, makes a distinct Species," then though we are not free to construct (as representations of real things) substance ideas by combining simple ideas that do not coexist in nature (3.6.28), we are free to choose, among a virtually limitless number, which clusters of particular beings bearing certain common qualities we will designate as species. Locke professes to hold no doubt that this implication of his account of substance ideas and names "will seem very strange" (3.6.38). Applied to our own species, Locke's argument would compel us to admit the existence of innumerable distinct sorts of human beings, each with as much right as any other, or for that matter as the class of human beings itself, to denomination as a natural species. Nature, in its presentation of ideas to our perceptions, entitles us to form species ideas of human beings, but entitles us equally to form such ideas of, say, redheads, left-handers, English-speakers, and of innumerable other subgroups sharing some distinguishing quality. Perhaps the most malignant implication that scholars have drawn from this argument is a justification of racial discrimination, based on a justification of narrow or exclusionary definitions of humankind. (See Miller 1979, 178n; McGuinness 1989, 141. See also the overviews in Farr 1986, and Glausser 1990, 211-213.) To this particular objection Locke can reasonably respond that although his account would indeed permit, say, ancient Greeks to define non-Greeks, or North American or European whites to define Africans as by nature distinct species and vice-versa, it by no means permits them to define such groups as morally inferior, as barbarians or natural slaves. Not every species difference carries moral significance; since Locke regards morality as "the rule of mans actions for the atteining happynesse" ("Morality," in Sargentich 1974, 26; see note 23 above, and accompanying text), one must on Lockean grounds regard Greeks and non-Greeks or Europeans and Africans as moral equals, whatever their differences in other respects, insofar as they share the morally decisive capacity for the rational pursuit of happiness. (Cf. the arguments of Squadrito 1975 and Grant 1987, 28-31.) How Locke can respond to the proposition that the differential possession of rationality justifies the division of human beings into morally unequal subspecies, however, remains to be shown.

THE STATE OF NATURE

The difficulty that lingers in the wake of Locke's establishment of the capacity for agency as a requisite of the possession of rights can be restated as follows. Taken in itself, the human capacity for the self-conscious, calculatingly rational pursuit of happiness implies no more than the existence of a natural desire among individual human beings for the protection of the conditions of happiness, or at best a natural fitness for asserting one's rights as powers against others; it does not in itself imply the existence of any natural inclination to respect others' rights as rights, as equivalent to one's own and conferring reciprocal obligations. Why, in particular, should those of superior rationality, or those who believe themselves to be of superior rationality, respect the claim to equal rights by those they consider their inferiors? How is it consistent with their natural happiness for them to grant such respect?

Returning briefly to the question concerning the significance of Locke's qualified assertions of the possibility of a demonstrative science of ethics, we recall that his qualification of this point is twofold, implying first that not all but only "a great part" of morality is demonstrable, and second that we must apply ourselves with

"Indifferency and Attention" to achieve whatever degree of demonstration we may be capable of. In elaborating the latter aspect of his qualification, Locke cautions that the achievement of "much" of a demonstrative ethic is conditioned upon the triumph of rational "indifferency" over the obfuscations of "Vices, Passions, and domineering Interests" (4.3.18), and is thus "not to be expected, whilst the Desire of Esteem, Riches, or Power, makes Men espouse the well-endowed Opinions in Fashion, and then seek Arguments, either to make good their Beauty, or varnish over, and cover their Deformity..." (4.3.20).[46] According to his own qualification, the viability of Locke's proposed science of ethics rests not only upon an actual equality in natural endowment, but also, and perhaps more importantly, in our willingness to acknowledge such equality. To the extent, therefore, that he is serious about the realism or efficacy of his proposed moral science--to the extent that the Essay's moral-political project accords with the broader Machiavellian project, elaborated in his more explicitly practical works, of "endowing virtue" or aligning it with interest (RC 245)[47]--Locke is compelled to attempt to measure the power of the passions and interests in ques-

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[46]Hobbes seems somewhat less than optimistic, in concluding Leviathan with the observation that "such Truth, as opposeth no mans profit, nor pleasure, is to all men welcome" (MacPherson ed. 1968, 729).

[47]Cf. The Prince ch.15ff; Hobbes, Leviathan 31, end; Rousseau, On The Social Contract 1.1.

tion. He is compelled, in other words, to extend his empirical inquiry into the character of the subjects of his proposal, into the area of human psychology or motivation. If Locke's thinking about political morality is to accomplish more than the construction of mere "Castles in the Air" (4.4.1), if the human pursuit of happiness is not to resolve into mere solipsism,[48] the principles of human equality and unalienable rights must be not only internally consistent, but also capable of commanding a rational consensus among human beings; in short, once again, they must conform with nature.[49]

Herein lies the broader significance of Locke's insistence in the Second Treatise that "To understand Political Power right, and derive it from its Original, we must consider what State all Men are naturally in..." (4). The

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[48]Rapaczynski states the question as follows: "But even if it is granted that men do form their own standards of good and evil..it could still be argued that these facts by themselves do not guarantee any uniformity of moral values accepted by different subjects...The norms of behavior presented in the mixed-modes theory may then be said to be like figments of imagination or conventional theoretical constructs: they can be changed for all kinds of reasons and are in this respect unlike the principles of morality, which must preserve a constant and intersubjective validity" (1987, 168-169).

[49]It would seem then that not simply the abstract idea of "moral man" itself, but more significantly the relation between moral beings and human beings constitutes for Locke the undemonstrative portion of the science of ethics. If so, then his assertions of a radical disjunction between natural and moral science, and by implication of the superiority of the latter to the former, must appear still more highly questionable. See note 6 above, and accompanying discussion.

condition of "Men living together according to reason, without a common Superior on Earth, with Authority to judge between them, is properly the State of Nature" (II.19; cf. 87). On its face, this reference to men "living together according to reason" need not mean that Locke conceives of the natural condition as essentially lawful and peaceful. Rather it is safer to say that the character of the natural condition for Locke reflects the extent to which the governance of each by his or her private reason can consist with or produce social peace and lawfulness. Contrary to the views of some commentators, Locke does not employ the concept of the state of nature as a mere heuristic contrivance; he affirms quite emphatically "That all men are naturally in that State, and remain so, till by their own Consents they make themselves Members of some Politick Society" (II.15; also 14,100-103).[50] The state of nature

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[50]Dunn asserts most emphatically the arbitrariness of Locke's concept of the state of nature, describing it as a "classically feeble expository cliche...neither a piece of philosophical anthropology nor a piece of conjectural history. Indeed it has literally no transitive empirical content whatsoever...In itself it is simply an axiom of theology" (1969, 100,103). See also Von Leyden 1981, 99. Against this view, various scholars argue for the historical reality of the Lockean state or states of nature. See especially Strauss 1953, 230-231; Laslett 1960, 111-112; Seliger 1968, 83-91; Goldwin 1976; Colman 1983, 177; Pangle 1988, 244-251. Others argue that Locke's ambiguous usage of the concept signifies a dual intention on his part, that the Lockean state of nature is both a historical and a moral concept. Different versions of this reading appear in Ashcraft 1968, especially 898ff.; Aarslef 1969, 101-104; Waldron 1989.

is natural, for Locke, in large part[51] insofar as it is revelatory of the natural constitution of the human mind, or of the natural power of reason relative to that of the (socially divisive) passions. In the context of Locke's political thought, it serves as a kind of historical laboratory, or series of laboratories,[52] in which reason and the passions are allowed, free of legal or conventional restraint, to contest for dominion within the human mind.

In assessing the outcome of this contest, scholars have been and remain notoriously divided. To oversimplify somewhat, the predominant view throughout at least this century has held that in clear contrast to Hobbes and to some extent in anticipation of Rousseau, Locke conceives of an essentially pacific, even harmonious state of nature.[53]

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[51]Moving beyond the definitions in the Second Treatise, one might more expansively define the Lockean state of nature as the totality of the provisions of nature (as opposed to human art) forming the constant context of the human pursuit of happiness. Pangle seems to have in mind something like this more expansive definition, in including "the drastic economic scarcity of the natural environment in which man is situated" as a dimension of the state of nature (1988, 244).

[52]Thorough discussions of the various historical possibilities subsumed under the concept of the state of nature appear in Seliger 1968, 83-105; Goldwin 1976; and Simmons 1989.

[53]Several of Locke's commentators have tended in varying degrees to find in Locke an anticipation of Rousseau. An early proponent of this view is C.E. Vaughan; see 1925, 134-139, 159-161, 202. In his note to TT I.58, Laslett declares that Locke's contrast between the 'Brutality'of 'busie'-minded men to the behavior of the 'irrational untaught Inhabitants' of the 'Woods and Forests,' who 'keep right by following Nature,' "reads almost like...the Rous-

Locke describes the early period of political society, and by implication the prepolitical state of nature, as a "poor but vertuous... Golden Age" marked by the "Innocence and Sincerity" or the lack of "irregular," expansive desires on the part of its inhabitants (II.110,111; cf. 108,199). Because "in the beginning" each individual had not only "a Right to all he could employ his Labour on," but also "no temptation to labour for more than he could make use of," there could be "no reason of quarrelling" about property. Insofar as "Right and conveniency went together," the law of nature is at least originally self-enforcing (II.37,51; also 31).[54]

Notwithstanding the significant textual evidence lending credence to the view of the Lockean natural condition as "a State of Peace, Good Will, Mutual Assistance, and Preservation" (II.19), the preponderance of the evidence sustains the contrary view. According to this view, Locke more seriously conceives of the state of nature in a

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seau of the Discours sur l'Inegalite" (1960, 218n.). (For an effective response to Laslett's reading, see Tarcov 1984, 68-70.) More recently, Grant remarks, on the basis of some of the evidence presented here, on the association, common to Locke and Rousseau, "of simplicity, poverty, virtue, and good government" (1987, 88 n.50). Without specific reference to the relation between Locke and Rousseau, Ashcraft argues for the generally, though not entirely, peaceful character of the Lockean state of nature (1968, 904).

[54]On the originally self-enforcing character of the natural law, cf. Rousseau, Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality Among Men, "Preface," 93-96; "First Part," 128-134 (ed. Masters 1964).

manner very similar to that of Hobbes, as an essentially antisocial, warlike condition.[55] In Locke's own words, the state of nature is a condition wherein "the greater part" are "no strict Observers of Equity and Justice," and therefore a condition "full of fears and continual dangers"--an "ill condition" that is "not to be endured," whose subjects "are quickly driven into Society" (II.123,127,13).[56]

In order to provide a foundation for subsequent discussion, it is worthwhile for us to present at some length the evidence in support of this reading of Locke's intention. The argument that Locke conceives of an essentially pacific natural human condition causes us most immediately to wonder how and why, according to Locke, political societies and governments are originally constituted. With respect to the ultimate basis of human society, Locke speaks in similar, and similarly ambiguous, terms in the Essay and the Second Treatise. His summary statement in the latter runs as follows:

> God having made Man such a Creature, that, in his own Judgment, it was not good for him to be alone, put him under strong Obligations of Necessity, Convenience, and Inclination to drive him into Society, as well as fitted him with Understanding and Language to continue and

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[55]The most influential recent proponent of this view is Strauss 1953, especially 221-225. See also Cox 1960, 72-105; Goldwin 1972, 452-458; Pangle 1988, 244-251.

[56]Cf. ECHU 1.3.9: "Robberies, Murders, Rapes, are the Sports of Men set at Liberty from Punishment and Censure."

enjoy it. (II.77)[57]

Once again, in view of such remarks it may seem clear enough that Locke holds human beings to be naturally social creatures. Yet here as always it is advisable to inquire further after Locke's meaning.[58] What specifically are the "Obligations of Necessity, Convenience, and Inclination" that "drive" us, as he suggestively puts it, into society?

"The first Society," Locke continues, "was between Man and Wife, which gave beginning to that between Parents and Children" (II.77). It would seem reasonable to suppose that this society comes about through our pursuance of a natural inclination, and so it does, according to Locke, in a way; but not quite in the way that we might commonly, or perhaps charitably, suppose. In his treatment of this question in the Second Treatise, Locke characterizes "Conjugal Society" as based upon a "voluntary Compact," and rather pointedly denies, at least with respect to the generality of cases, that love alone suffices to bind men and women together. Instead he suggests that "a Communion of

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[57]The parallel statement in the Essay runs thus: "God having designed Man for a sociable Creature, made him not only with an inclination, and under a necessity to have fellowship with those of his own kind; but furnished him also with Language, which was to be the great Instrument, and common Tye of Society" (3.1.1). On Locke's apparently deliberate conflation of obligation and motivation in the Second Treatise' statement, see below, pp. 311-314.

[58]The following brief account of Locke's view of the origin and basis of the family or human conjugal society draws in particular upon the fuller discussions in Tarcov 1984, 66-76, and Pangle 1988, 172-177, 230-243.

Interest" is "necessary...to unite their Care, and Affection" (II.78). Proceeding then to reduce the nature of human "conjugal society" to merely a particular form of "conjunction between Male and Female" in the animal kingdom, Locke holds that the true end and bond of such conjunctions is "not barely Procreation, but the continuation of the Species" (II.79). This claim is consistent with his proposition in the First Treatise that next to the desire for self-preservation, "God planted in Men also a strong desire of propagating their Kind, and continuing themselves in their Posterity" (I.88). Yet again, however, we must take care to understand precisely what Locke means by his references to the desire for continuing the species. For as Tarcov in particular observes, Locke here and elsewhere in the First Treatise implies that the desire for propagation is subordinate to and even derivative of the desire for self-preservation (1984, 69-70).[59] Indeed his effective annihilation of the notion that parental affection is an ineffaceable human instinct is unmistakable in his apparently unquestioning reporting of cannibalism practiced among some peoples by parents upon their own children

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[59]That Locke intends rather literally his reference to children as continuations of their parents' selves becomes clearer at I.97, where Locke claims that parents are "taught by Natural Love and Tenderness to provide for [their children], as a part of themselves." For further discussion of our capacity for expanding our sphere of concernment beyond our individual selves, see chapter VI below, pp. 309-349.

(I.56-59).[60]

Shortly prior to delivering those reports, by means of a simple rhetorical question Locke discloses what he takes to be a more strictly natural inclination that is more effective in moving us to form conjugal societies even than the parental affection that represents a form of extended self-love. "What Father of a Thousand," asks Locke, when he begets a Child, thinks farther than the satisfying his present Appetite?" (I.54).[61] But if mere lust is according to Locke the primary natural inclination reliably supporting the formation of conjugal society, then we must view with considerable skepticism even the reasoning that

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[60]Locke presents this among several examples of like barbarism at ECHU 1.3.9,12. See also LN 4.145-147, 7.187-193, 10.217.

[61]See also ECHU 2.21.34, where Locke, apparently resolute in maintaining his bachelorhood, provides a similar, somewhat more comedic statement of this exceedingly unsentimental view of the basis of marriage: "It is better to marry than to burn, says St. Paul [I Cor. 7:9]; where we may see, what it is, that chiefly drives Men into the enjoyments of a conjugal life. A little burning felt pushes us more powerfully, than greater pleasures in prospect draw or allure." Moreover, his expression shortly thereafter of a still greater austerity may recall to mind a similar expression by an earlier detractor of the institution of marriage. It is noteworthy that in listing the ordinary, constantly recurring uneasinesses of "Hunger, Thirst, Heat, Cold, Weariness with labour, and Sleepiness" (2.21.45), Locke makes no mention of any form of erotic desire; cf. the well known austerity of Socrates' account of the origin of cities, at Republic 369-372. (See especially Strauss 1964, 111-118,138; 1972, 20-26, 38-41). For evidence indicating that such austerity may not represent the whole of Locke's view of these relationships, and on the general significance of his apparent abstraction from eros, see chapter VI below, pp. 350-416.

supports his stated estimate of the naturally longer (though by no means lifelong) conjunction that distinguishes human marriages, inasmuch as that reasoning rests upon the presumption that fathers would be naturally inclined to perform their "Obligation" to care for their offspring (II.80).[62] Moreover, if according to Locke our natural affections are generally of insufficient power to sustain even familial or conjugal obligations, it is difficult to see how they could be sufficiently powerful in themselves to bind individuals together as members of a common political society.

Similar difficulties inhere in the suggestion that convenience is the decisive factor in effecting the origin of political society. If we understand convenience as distinct from necessity proper, it would seem to reduce to the desire to diminish one's labors by cooperation with one's fellows. Supposing, then, even that the early human beings possessed the civility and foresight required for them to engage in such cooperation--a dubious assumption on the basis of Locke's discussion--we would yet be unable by reference to this factor alone to explain the origin of

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[62]Cf. Rousseau's objection to what he takes to be Locke's account of the naturalness of family life, at Discourse on Inequality, note 1, 213-220. I am suggesting that when one reads Locke's account in the Second Treatise in the light of what he says and implies about the same subject in the First Treatise, it appears that the disagreement between Locke and Rousseau is much smaller than Rousseau recognizes or is willing to admit.

political society proper.[63] It would seem that in referring to "Necessity, Convenience, and Inclination" as apparently coequal forces, Locke nonetheless implies that necessity is the primary factor motivating the creation of society. To state it more precisely, Locke seems to imply that human beings are moved originally to form stable societies less by any positive, outward- or forward-looking inclination toward one or another form of fellowship than by the inclination or "strong desire of Self-preservation" (I.86), given direction by the naturally necessitous condition of humankind.

A closer look at the relevant discussions corroborates this suggestion. Following his discussion of conjugal society and familial relations in the Second Treatise, Locke addresses the question of the beginning of political society proper. His announced purpose in chapter eight is to defend the proposition that "that, which begins and actually constitutes any Political Society, is nothing but the consent of any number of Freemen capable of a majority to unite and incorporate into such a Society" (99). Lest

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[63]One might yet argue that some combination of material necessity and convenience constitutes the primary motivation for the creation and maintenance of society within a certain stage of the state of nature, and that only later, with the development of distinctly human vices, does the need for genuine coercive government arise. For a more specific assessment of this argument, see the examination of the character of the necessity, i.e. material or martial, to which the original human beings may be subject, in the context of the more general problem of teleology in Locke's account, pp. 274-300 below.

we misinterpret his intention, however, in attempting to understand this proposition we should first bear in mind that political power in Locke's usage is not necessarily synonymous with governmental power. In strict Lockean usage, political power is by definition legitimate, involving "a Right of making Laws..." (II.3). Accordingly Locke proceeds to offer the following qualification of the doctrine of historical consent:

> Reason being plain on our side, that Men are naturally free, and the Examples of History shewing, that the Governments of the World, that were begun in Peace... were made by the Consent of the People..." (II.104)

From this remark alone we can infer only that according to Locke some governments originated in peace and consent, and some did not. In reaffirming this qualification shortly thereafter, however, Locke provides a clarifying hint. He refers in chapter 8 only to the peaceful beginnings of government, he now discloses, "because I shall have occasion in another place to speak of Conquest, which some esteem a way of beginning of Governments" (II.112). Chapter 16 of the Second Treatise, "Of Conquest," begins as follows:

> Though Governments can originally have no other Rise than that before mentioned, nor Polities be founded on any thing but the Consent of the People; yet such has been the Disorders Ambition has filled the World with, that in the noise of War, which makes so great a part of the History of Mankind, this Consent is little taken notice of... (175)

If it is Locke's view that "the noise of war...makes so great a part of the history of mankind," then it could

not be Locke's view that the generality of governments throughout history began in peace and popular consent. Nor is this Locke's only significant qualification of the announced thesis of the chapter. For as Pangle somewhat tartly observes, as the chapter unfolds "even the miniscule part of history that is the nice, peaceful, consensual part turns out to be not so nice" (1988, 249). Ostensibly as historical evidence for the thesis of original peace and consent, Locke presents the beginnings of Rome and Venice, and the founding of Tarentum by Palantus and his Spartan followers (II.102,103). Yet as Cox points out, Locke's own sources indicate that all these cities in fact began in acts of conquest, not consent (1960, 42-44,100-101,210-211). Moreover, Locke quotes the historian Acosta to the effect that the early Peruvians lived for a long time outside political society, and freely chose their rulers when they saw the need for government (II.102). But upon examining the text in question, one finds that Acosta's concept of choice can scarcely be said to meet the criteria of Lockean consent. In the immediate sequel to the remark Locke quotes, Acosta elaborates his opinion of the true origin of government among the Indians: "But some men excelling others in force and wit, began in time to rule and domineere as Nembrot did; so increasing by little and little, they erected the kingdoms of Peru and Mexico..." (1590, 72). Later in the same work, after discrediting the

Indians' own accounts of the origins of their societies, Acosta conceives of the original condition of the Indians as "altogether barbarous," a condition wherein they existed "without law, without King, and without any certaine place of abode, but [went] in troupes like savage beasts," and out of which "comminalties" develop through the "valure and knowledge of some excellent men" (427).[64] It seems clear that in this context "valure and knowledge" refer not to virtue and wisdom, or to the perfections of civilized human beings, but instead to "force and wit," to the virtues of war.[65]

Upon closer inspection even Locke's apparent descriptions in this chapter of an originally pacific human condition reveal themselves to be consistent with the more Hobbesian or Machiavellian conception suggested here. Once again, taken at face value his references to the infancy of political society as a "poor but vertuous Age," a "Golden Age" (II.110,111) in which political societies as outgrowths of particular familial societies were internally harmonious, bound by affection and troubled by only the

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[64]See also Acosta's description of "some more barbarous" places, where "all command and govern in common, having no other thing, but wil, violance, unreason, and disorder, so as he that most may, most commands" (410). For a fuller account, see Cox 1960, 94-104.

[65]Cf. Locke's reference to the tendency of the "People of America" to pass over weak heirs in favor of selecting "the stoutest and bravest Man for their Ruler" (II.105; also 109).

simplest of desires (II.105,107,110; also 74-76), would tend to raise the question why political authority, which after all involves a right of legislating "with Penalties of Death, and consequently all less Penalties" (II.3), is needed at all. Locke answers that fathers become kings, or familial societies become political in character, with a view toward defending themselves against foreign or external enemies: "their first care and thought cannot but be...how to secure themselves against foreign Force" (II.107). Government appears originally less as judicial authority than as federative, especially military, power: "...the Kings of the Indians in America, which is still a Pattern of the first Ages in Asia and Europe...are little more than Generals of their Armies..." (II.108; also 105,109,110). The affection that Locke describes in this chapter apparently serves at best as a principle of internal unity; such "golden age" as ever existed obtained at best within, but not among, particular societies.[66] Accordingly, he observes that irrespective of whether mere "Chance, Neighborhood, or Business" initially brought them into proximity, the uniting of particular societies under common governments must have occurred, as a rule, as "the stronger, or more fortunate swallowed the weaker" (II.110,

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[66]Beneath Locke's question whether human affection were originally powerful enough to prevent wars lies therefore the implicit question whether it were originally powerful enough to provoke them. See the discussion in chapter VI below, pp. 393-398.

115).

The evidence presented thus far is sufficient to establish the view that an essentially Hobbesian conception of the state of nature reflects Locke's most serious intention. Whether Locke is by his own principles or by the relevant evidence entitled to conceive of the state of nature in this manner, however, is another question. Locke himself points us toward the fundamental issue. "'Tis often asked as a mighty Objection," he acknowledges, "Where are, or ever were, there any Men in such a State of Nature?" (II.14; also 100). For if the evils of the state of nature are such as to drive its subjects quickly out of it, then would not that state be virtually inaccessible by the sort of historical evidence that Locke employs to support his description of it? Locke himself seems to concede that "History gives us but a very little account of Men, that lived together in the State of Nature." But if "Government is everywhere antecedent to Records," and the advent of "Letters" occurs only after "a long continuation of Civil Society has, by other more necessary Arts provided for [a People's] Safety, Ease, and Plenty" (II.101), how then can Locke counter the "mighty Objection" that the state of nature as such necessarily eludes precisely the sort of historical inquiry that would be required for us to gain knowledge of it? How can he avoid the conclusion that whatever his intentions, his account of the state of nature

is unhistorical, is at bottom nothing more than an arbitrary or ideological contrivance?

It is useful at this point to raise this objection not because it is in itself unanswerable in Lockean terms, but rather because the response suggested by Locke's discussion points to a still deeper objection and thus facilitates a deeper understanding of Locke's conception of the nature and natural condition of humankind. To the immediate objection Locke responds in effect that we do have access to ample historical evidence of the character of the state of nature, even if our accounts of the original condition of humankind are necessarily somewhat conjectural. Locke's concept of the state of nature is ahistorical in the sense that it refers to no particular historical or prehistorical period, but instead to a set of possible relationships among jurally free human beings.[67] This implies that the actions toward others of any human beings unrestrained by law, irrespective either of historical period or of the presence of government, are admissible for Locke as evidence of the character of the state of nature. Relations between independent rulers or sovereigns, or between uncivil, nonconsensual or despotic rulers and their subjects for this reason represent instances of the state of nature, just as would relations among truly independent

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[67]See note 52 above.

individuals or families in a prepolitical condition.[68]

Locke's response to the immediate objection thus proceeds from his refusal to recognize any strict disjunction between natural history and human history; in drawing conclusions in the Second Treatise concerning the state of nature on the basis of historical evidence, he simply applies and extends the appeal to natural history that marks his empiricism in the Essay. On the proposition that human nature can be known through the study of history[69] rests to

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[68]Locke implies a distinction between "ordinary" and extraordinary states of nature, according to which in the ordinary state each individual possesses a liberty roughly equal to that of all others "to judge of his Right, and according to the best of his Power, to maintain it," whereas in (what Locke implies would be) the extraordinary state, the enforcement of individuals' rights depends decisively upon the whims of "one, who being in the unrestrained state of Nature, is yet corrupted with Flattery, and armed with Power" (II.91). Insofar as these ordinary and extraordinary states can be identified with pre- and post-political states of nature, Locke's argument is that the character of the ordinary state can be inferred from that of the extraordinary state. See, for example, II.108, where Locke refers to "America" as "still a Pattern of the first Ages in Asia and Europe." (See also II.46,49,102). Cf. the brief discussion of Pangle (1988, 247-248), who appears to identify this distinction with Locke's parallel (and also largely implicit) distinction between "perfect" and imperfect states of nature (II.14,87, 94). As Pangle observes, Locke seems to intend both to indicate quietly the difficulty in conceiving of a strict separation between the natural and political conditions. But the difference lies in the fact that the latter turns on the degree to which each has a perfect right to judge and execute the law of nature, while the former turns on the degree to which each has the power to do so. Cf. Goldwin 1976, 135.

[69]In his brief essay "Some Thoughts Concerning Reading and Study for a Gentleman," Locke opines that one can learn of human nature "chiefly from experience, and next to that from a judicious reading of history," as well as from certain classic texts such as Aristotle's Rhetoric (quoted in

a considerable extent his agreement with Hobbes on the antisocial, warlike character of the natural condition. As he explains in a discussion of the dangers of absolute monarchy, to study "the History of this, or any other Age" is to confirm the opinion of "the baseness of Humane Nature" (II.92). Precisely because human history in great part resounds with "the noise of War" (II.175), Locke recommends that it be taught to young pupils with a special care not to bestow honor upon conquerors, lest such pupils be misled "to think Slaughter the laudable Business of Mankind, and the most Heroick of Vertues" (STCE 116).[70] His extensive exploration of the travel literature of his day, offering for Locke at least a glimpse of "the first Ages" of human

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Axtell 1968, 403). When Laslett remarks that "As a political theorist...Locke made no appeal to history or tradition," he seems to mean only that Locke did not appeal to English history or tradition as the source of his conception of right (1960, 91; cf. his reference to Locke as the founder of comparative anthropology, at 112). Glat observes properly that the Second Treatise displays a concern more for the history of humankind than for that of the English, and further that the aspiration toward a genuinely historical analysis of politics is central not only to Locke's thought, but indeed to early modern political thought in general (1981, 4,15).

[70]In an unpublished essay "Of Study," Locke recommends that history of this kind be taught only "to one who hath well settled in his mind the principles of morality," inasmuch as "the greatest part of history being made up of wars and conquest," we would be otherwise "in danger to be misled by the general current and business of history; and looking on Alexander and Caesar and such like heroes as the highest instances of human greatness because they each of them caused the death of several 100,000 men...we are apt to make butchery and rapine the chief marks and very essence of human greatness" (quoted in Axtell 1968, 422, 410).

history and of a rather broad diversity of societies and cultures, yields similar data. Locke seems indeed to find a certain relish in refuting the proposition that a natural moral consensus binds humankind, by relaying the reports of "authors worthy of confidence that entire nations have been, on their own admission, pirates and brigands" (LN 5.185). "Have there not been whole Nations," he asks rhetorically, "and those of the most civilized People, amongst whom" the practices of exposure, or parricide, or cannibalism are widespread and publicly approved (ECHU 1.3.9 et seq.; cf. TT I.56-59)?

Once again, Locke's defense of the accessibility of the state of nature depends upon the constancy of that condition, or upon the constancy of human nature, throughout human history. It depends, in other words, upon a conception of human history as fundamentally or essentially nondevelopmental. Herein lies the serious issue. In failing or refusing to recognize a strict disjunction between natural and human history, Locke may seem to expose himself to the deeper objection formulated most powerfully and influentially by Rousseau, who summarizes his charge as follows:

> The philosophers who have examined the foundations of society have all felt the necessity of going back to the state of nature, but none of them has reached it. Some have not hesitated to attribute to man in that state the notion of the just and unjust, without troubling themselves to show that he had to have that notion or even that it was useful to him...All of them, finally, speaking continually of need, avarice, oppression,

> desires, and pride, have carried over to the state of nature ideas they had acquired in society: they spoke about savage man and they described civil man. (Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality Among Men, in Masters ed. 1964, 102)

There can be no doubt that at the head of the list of philosophers to whom Rousseau refers are Hobbes and Locke. As Bloom comments, Rousseau's charge amounts to a characterization of the two English founders of modern liberalism as "cryptoteleologists" (1972, 535). Hobbes and Locke accept and indeed significantly advance the modern critique of the classical teleological understanding of nature, according to Rousseau, but they do not pursue this critique to its ultimate conclusion. They seem to conceive of the natural condition of humankind as the condition prior to all conventional acquisitions, yet in describing this condition they fail to appreciate the profundity of the act of abstraction that such a conception properly requires. Attributing to the nature of human beings a developed rational faculty and various socially dependent and divisive passions (such as, most fundamentally, pride or vanity), they fail to appreciate nature's beneficence in providing for an original human condition of simplicity and peace, and therewith the decisively conventional character of humankind's historical ills. Finally, their failure to grasp the naturally indeterminate, evolutionary character of the human species and the human condition determines their blindness to the need to discard entirely the traditional

notion of a natural law or right that is applicable to civil societies, and to replace it with purely abstract, formal principles of legitimacy, capable of accommodating as much as possible the radically malleable character of human beings and therefore the radically historical, relativistic character of substantive principles of justice.[71]

Adding to the difficulty is the fact that at times Locke himself appears to anticipate Rousseau's position and thus to contradict (what seems to be) his own. Locke's conception of the relation between nature and custom is of particular importance in this respect. In his discussions of the moral, intellectual, and political dimensions of human development, Locke stresses in varying degrees the principle that in its influence over human behavior, "Custom [is] a greater Power than Nature" (ECHU 1.3.25). In the Essay, this principle appears primarily in the form of Locke's observations of the ordinarily enormous power that traditional, received opinions exercise over our understandings (1.3.23-27, 2.33.6).[72] In Some Thoughts Concerning Education, the principle that "Custom...prevails over everything" (STCE 164) appears primarily in the form of a repeated insistence on the power of habituation as an educational device; the possibility of success in the forming

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[71]See the discussion of Rousseau's critique in Strauss 1953, esp. 264-294.

[72]See also CU 34,41; STCE 146.

of a child's character seems to rest decisively for Locke upon the possibility that "Habits" can be "woven into the very Principles of his Nature" (42; also 64,66,67).[73]

Locke's descriptions of the power of custom and habituation raise the question whether this subtle interweaving of habit into nature in the end leaves nature influential or even recognizable in any significant respect. They raise the question whether according to his own principle, Locke must ultimately acknowledge that the faculties and passions that he ordinarily ascribes, with Hobbes, to human nature are in fact in the decisive respect not natural, but products of custom or convention. To what extent does Locke's estimate of the power of custom apply to the formation or development of species characteristics as well as those of individuals? With respect to the most apparently "human" of the faculties, namely reason or the understanding, we should consider in this context the implications both of Locke's fundamental insistence that the understanding is originally or naturally unfurnished (ECHU 2.1.2), and of his occasional usages of the term "naturals" to refer to human beings lacking any developed rational fac-

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[73]As an apparent corollary of his estimate of the great power of custom, Locke offers a similarly expansive estimate of the power of education: "...I think I may say, that of all the Men we meet with, Nine Parts of Ten are what they are, Good or Evil, useful or not, by their Education. 'Tis that which makes the great Difference in Mankind" (STCE 1). Locke remarks somewhat ambiguously on the common propensity to acquire a customary attachment to traditional constitutional forms, at TT II.223,225.

ulty.[74] And with respect to the passions, we should consider as well Locke's important distinction between "ordinary" or natural and "fantastical" uneasinesses, according to which nature besets us with certain constantly recurring, apparently physiological "necessities" or uneasinesses, such as "Hunger, Thirst, Heat, Cold, Weariness with labour, and Sleepiness," whereas such other primarily mental uneasinesses as "itch after Honour, Power, or Riches...and a thousand other irregular desires" represent "acquir'd habits by Fashion, Example, and Education...which custom has made natural to us" (2.21.45).[75] On the basis of this distinction taken in itself, one would expect that Locke, like Rousseau, would consider the advent of civilization on balance a misfortune that reflects and perhaps also hastens the historical degeneration or corruption of humankind.[76] To what extent then does Locke agree with the position of Rousseau on the relation of nature to custom, and to what extent does he therefore undermine his appar-

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[74]See pp. 251-253 above.

[75]Cf. the very similar distinction between "Natural Wants" and "Wants of Fancy" at STCE 106ff. Cf. also Rousseau's famous description of the passions of the natural man, Discourse on Inequality, op. cit., 116: "His desires do not exceed his physical needs, the only goods he knows in the universe are nourishment, a female, and repose; the only evils he fears are pain and hunger..."

[76]Vaughan (1925, 138,160) and Seliger (1968, 71) attribute to Locke the thesis of historical degeneration. Albritton's inference of an original human like-mindedness at the level of simple ideas appears to point to a similar conclusion (1976, 263).

ently Hobbesian conception of the antipolitical, antisocial character of the state of nature?

Here is the basic issue. If Locke does, like Rousseau, intend a completely nonteleological conception of the natural condition, constituted only by what is originally given to humankind and excluding what is acquired or produced by human labor of any kind, then we would be compelled to acknowledge as an implication of Locke's principle that neither rationality nor any socially divisive desire could be in the strictest sense natural. On the other hand, if we ascribe to Locke an insistence on the naturalness of the latter as human qualities, then it would seem that Rousseau's observation is sound, at least to the extent that Locke's failure or refusal to identify the natural and the original marks him in some sense a teleologist. We will argue, first, that Rousseau's observation is indeed sound in the respect that Locke's conception of the state of nature does mark him, in his way, as a teleologist; but second, that Locke employs the teleological principle self-consciously and in a manner that distinguishes him not only from radically anti-teleological modern philosophers, but also from the classical teleologists.

Within the context of their political theories, Locke and Rousseau appear to disagree most fundamentally with respect to the extent to which our natural concern for our own well-being necessitates the advent of society, and

necessitates thenceforth the development of the faculties and passions that we commonly take to be definitive of or distinctive in human nature. We have established above the fact of Locke's appeal in the Second Treatise to natural necessity, to the natural endangerment of individuals' preservation or well being, as the efficient cause of the origin of political society. We must now inquire further into the grounds of that appeal, or more specifically into the character of that motivating necessity.

In chapter 5 of the Second Treatise in particular, Locke gives the impression, by means of his widely noticed references therein to the original condition as one of penury, want, need and wretchedness and to nature's spontaneous provision as mere waste (II.32,35,37,42,43,45) that the natural necessity of which he conceives is a fundamentally material condition.[77] Yet even if we dismiss as anti-Hobbesian rhetorical evasions his descriptions in the same chapter of an original condition of material plenty featuring harmonious property relations, the fact remains that Locke provides therein no real argument in support of the proposition that pure material necessity or scarcity is the decisive force that drives the early human beings into

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[77]Cf. ECHU 2.16.6, where Locke refers to the "Americans," whom he regards in the Second Treatise as paradigmatic of the first ages in Asia and Europe (108), as "accommodated only to the few necessaries of a needy simple Life." Recall also Locke's assimilation of the naturally unprovided material and intellectual conditions (ECHU 2.2.2, 2.12.1).

society.[78] He never retracts or contradicts his conjecture that the originally small number of "spenders," in conjunction with the severely limited productivity of their labor, would leave "no reason of quarrelling about Title" in the first ages (II.31,44,51). Of course, that there may have been no reason for such quarrels would not imply that they could not have occurred; but it does imply that if they did occur, they must have proceeded either from the obstinate incapacity to resolve an honest dispute or from covetousness of one form or another. It implies, in other words, that any "necessity" of sufficient power to drive the original human beings "quickly...into Society" (II.127)[79] must have been at least as much psychological as material in character; the advent of stable, enduring human societies would then represent an effort to achieve security not so much against the prospect of starvation as against the prospective consequences of conflict with other human beings.

In fact, when Locke mentions the forces that drive us out of the state of nature into society, he makes no men-

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[78]Cf. again Rousseau's apparently contrary estimate of the fertility of the natural material condition, Discourse on Inequality, First Part, 105, and note d, 186-187.

[79]Or perhaps in some cases to drive them apart from one another, into a condition of dispersion. See II.101: "The inconveniences of that condition, and the love, and want of Society no sooner brought any number of them together, but they presently united and incorporated, if they designed to continue together" (emphasis supplied).

tion of primarily material necessity. Instead he refers to the baseness and viciousness of human nature (II.13,125, 128); he maintains that the state of nature is "full of fears and continual dangers," an "ill condition" that is "not to be endured," precisely because "the greater part" of its subjects are "no strict Observers of Equity and Justice" (II.123,127). In chapter 8, as we have seen, in identifying the original necessity that binds families and political societies, Locke refers not to any material privation, but rather to a desire on the part of the stronger or more fortunate to conquer the weaker (115). His explanation is somewhat more elaborate in chapter 5, wherein he implies that at work very early in the development of the human mind if not from the very beginning is an expansive desire, a "desire of having more than Men needed," an "amor scleratus habendi" (II.37,111), even a desire to conquer and subdue, a desire for power for its own sake.

Locke introduces this desire abruptly in this context, apparently to mark a transition from one stage of the prepolitical state of nature to another. He suggests that "in the beginning, before" this expansive desire "had altered the intrinsick value of things," the right to appropriate was limited to what one could directly use or consume (II.37, emphasis supplied). But the significance of this transition is questionable. Strictly speaking, Locke refers to a condition before desire beyond necessity had a

specific effect, namely the alteration of intrinsic or use values; he makes or implies no comment here concerning whether such desire were present in the beginning and simply otherwise focused.[80] While it is true that Locke presents in chapter 5 an account of early property relations as generally peaceful, he by no means discounts entirely the passion of covetousness, or the desire for "the benefit of another's Pains" or labor, as a possible cause of contention.[81] Early in his discussion, he qualifies his statement of the originally pacific character of property relations, claiming only that "there could be then little room for Quarrels or Contentions about Property so establish'd," that is, little room for quarrels so long as property is taken directly from nature and limited to one's immediate use (II.31; emphasis supplied). Shortly thereafter he raises directly the possibility that theft might

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[80]Cf. the similar procedure at II.111: Locke's reference to a golden age "before vain Ambition, and amor scleratus habendi, evil Concupiscence, had corrupted Mens minds into a Mistake of true Power and Honour" does not imply the existence of an age from which such passions were simply absent; it seems to mean that in an age of tribal, patriarchal monarchy, such passions were typically directed outward against other peoples rather than inward against one's own.

[81]It is interesting in this respect, as Pangle observes (1988, 161), that in his chapter "Of Property," Locke makes no mention of the state of nature. Taken in conjunction with the evidence indicating that he intentionally exaggerates the peaceful character of property relations in that chapter, this seems to imply that the state of nature as such, whatever its particular manifestation, cannot be characterized as a condition of peace. See Mansfield 1979, 36; Pangle 1988, 170.

be the first of the labor-saving arts discovered by human beings, that covetousness might be a natural outgrowth of the ignorant early wanderers' subjection to uncertain, penurious material circumstances (34). Most significantly, he suggests a few paragraphs later that "Men, at first, for the most part, contented themselves with what un-assisted Nature Offered to their Necessities" (II.45; emphasis supplied); he suggests that at least in some or a few human beings, from the earliest period onward, operates some deep and potentially dangerous desire to transcend or conquer necessity, to magnify oneself by expanding the realm of one's own freedom and power.[82]

It seems clear then that whatever the form in which it manifests itself historically, the Lockean state of

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[82]Without denying the developmental aspect of Locke's account of the prepolitical state of nature, one must conclude that that development cannot be described as a lapse from a peaceful, nomadic, pre-money stage to a contentious, sedentary, post-money stage. MacPherson is much closer to the mark in arguing that Locke does divide the prepolitical state of nature into pre- and post-money stages, and yet denying that this division corresponds to Locke's descriptions of peaceful and warlike states of nature; the division is important for Locke, in this view, because it brings to light the conditions under which truly rational appropriation can flourish (1962, 197-221,232-236, 241-242). In ascribing to Locke a conception of "a monetary and commercial state of nature, which is nonsense historically" (235-6; also 209), however, MacPherson seems erroneously to assume that the Lockean state of nature must be without government altogether, not merely without civil government. As is evident in his repeated references to early wandering peoples as living under rudimentary governments (II.41,102,107-110), Locke does not suppose that the advent of money historically precedes that of government. Nor, therefore, does he suppose that the conflicts facilitated by money are the originating cause of government.

nature, understood as a condition necessitating the constitution of political societies, refers ultimately at least as much to a natural mental condition as to a material condition. What seems to impress Locke most about the natural human condition is the power of the human will to overwhelm or obfuscate the understanding's attempts at charting the course of true happiness, or of "true Power and Honour" (II.111). The state of nature as a state of "perfect Freedom" (II.4) harbors the constant danger of degenerating into a state of complete mental license, in which the mind's power to create whole worlds of fancy operates virtually without rational guidance or regulation.[83] Absent such rational restraint, the fact that human beings, unlike other animals, possess by nature no moderating instincts[84] explains why "Robberies, Murders, Rapes, are the Sports of Men set at Liberty from Punishment and Censure" (ECHU 1.3.9).[85] Locke's comment in the First

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[83]See Pangle 1988, especially 179-180.

[84]In response to humans' capacity for neglect of and even cruelty toward their own offspring, Locke asks: "And is it the Priviledge of Man alone to act more contrary to Nature than the Wild and most Untamed part of the Creation?" (I.56). In this denial of the power of instinct seems to lie Locke's real similarity to Rousseau. See Discourse on Inequality, First Part, 113-115; also Tarcov 1984, 68-70.

[85]Cf. 1.3.13: "Principles of Actions indeed there are lodged in Men's Appetites [i.e. the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain], but these are so far from being innate Moral Principles, that if they were left to their full swing, they would carry Men to the over-turning of all Morality."

Treatise on Vega's account of Peruvian cannibalism is worth quoting at length:

> Thus far can the busie mind of Man carry him to a Brutality below the level of Beasts, when he quits his reason, which places him almost equal to Angels. Nor can it be otherwise in a Creature, whose thoughts are more than the Sands, and wider than the Ocean, where fancy and passion must needs run him into strange courses, if reason, which is his only Star and compass, be not that he steers by. The imagination is always restless and suggests variety of thoughts, and the will, reason being laid aside, is ready for every extravagant project; and in this State, he that goes farthest out of the way, is thought fittest to lead, and is sure of most followers... (I.58)

An acute sensitivity to this human propensity for willfulness, fancy or "busy-mindedness"--ultimately for madness--not only underlies his urgent insistence in the Two Treatises on the proper limits of governmental, political power,[86] but also runs as a recurrent, unifying theme throughout Locke's work.[87] As we have seen, he undertakes in both published and unpublished works a wide-ranging historical refutation of the proposition that a natural moral consensus binds humankind, employing evidence gleaned both from his extensive exploration of the travel literature of his day and from his knowledge of more conventional historical sources to illustrate the prevalence of war and vio-

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[86]Thus Locke warns of the power and danger of human ambition, and particularly of the dangerous effects of flattering the powerful, at II.91,135n.,143,226, and I.10.

[87]On the power of fancy, see Locke to an otherwise unidentified "Tom," 20 October 1659, CJL #81. More generally on the human propensity for fancy, "busy-mindedness" and ultimately madness, see ECHU 1.1.4; 2.1.2,16; 2.33.4,9.

lence throughout human history.[88] The overridingly important, transhistorical constant among human beings, according to Locke, is the extreme fragility of human reason, and thus our easy susceptibility to the most extravagant, grotesque mental or psychological disorders. This, as the natural mental condition of humankind, constitutes most essentially the necessitous condition of which we must be ever cognizant in our attempts at constructing and maintaining political societies.

This is the character of the Lockean teleology, as manifest in Locke's account of the state of nature. The preceding discussion has made it clear that Locke regards the acquisition of expansive, fanciful desires (both social and antisocial) as well as of some rudimentary, instrumental rationality as occurring very early in human development. Yet at the same time, it seems tolerably clear as well, on the basis of his psychological hedonism, his distinction between natural and fanciful desires, and his critique of innatism, that he does regard these as acquisitions, not as innate or instinctual qualities. To return then to Rousseau's objection: How can Locke, in a manner consistent with his rejection of the classical principle of teleology, conceive of certain human properties as both natural and historically acquired?

As we have observed at some length above, throughout

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[88]See the evidence presented above, pp. 275-277.

the Essay Locke conceives of the natural in the strictest sense as the causally necessary, the constant, the invariant.[89] Upon occasion he further refines this conception in a manner that seems to anticipate Rousseau, associating the natural with the original or native.[90] Now, if we are to infer that according to Locke a property natural to human beings must be innate in individuals and present at the origin of the species, then we must conclude that he cannot consistently maintain his account of the state of nature or the natural condition in the form that we have described. But in conceiving of these developmental, acquired properties as natural, what Locke seems to have in mind is the proposition that while such properties are not in themselves strictly original to individuals or to the species, they are natural in the sense that they develop according to the promptings of an original, constant human condition of necessity. And although Locke's textual discussions remain somewhat ambiguous with respect to the character of this necessity or to the mode in which it

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[89]Once again, Locke implies such a conception especially at ECHU 2.21.73, 2.23.32, 3.5.8ff., 3.9.7, 3.10.20, 4.16.6.

[90]In his discussion of various relations in the Essay, for instance, he observes that among the occasions of comparing things, and by implication the properties of things, "is [sic] the Circumstances of their origin or beginning; which being not afterwards to be altered, make the Relations, depending thereon, as lasting as the Subjects to which they belong...and these I call natural Relations" (2.28.2; also 2.33.7).

effects the expansion of human desires, the following seems the most powerful among the available alternative interpretations.

Although according to the Essay's natural-historical sketch of the development of the human understanding, the first, most basic mental faculty of sensory perception is virtually innate (2.1.23; 2.9.1), only "in time" does the mind come "to reflect on its own Operations" (2.1.24). In fact, according to Locke, "'tis pretty late, before most Children get Ideas of the Operations of their own Minds; and some have not any very clear, or perfect Ideas of them all their Lives" (2.1.8) Herein lies then a further statement of Locke's observation that many people remain unreflective or less than fully self-conscious throughout their lives; but what is important in the present context is to understand the limits of this observation. Locke's denial that most children early or ever make extensive use of their powers of reflection is by no means equivalent to a denial that any form of reflection is in the strict sense natural to human beings. He argues to the contrary that the most basic form of reflection, the capacity for self-consciousness, is "inseparable from thinking," or from perception: "It being impossible for any one to perceive, without perceiving, that he does perceive" (2.27.9).

Thus at least as something akin to a felt intuition, if not necessarily as a fully articulated concept, the idea

of one's self is according to Locke natural to human beings or coeval with human thought. However dimly or crudely, we are in the most basic respect naturally reflective, inward creatures. When Locke denies that reflection is among our natural or native capacities, he is referring to the failure of most children and some adults to reflect on their own mental operations, their powers of perception, thinking, reasoning, and so forth; this failure signifies not the absence in them of any idea or consciousness of self as such, but rather a more specific failure to conceive of that self as a seat or repository of clearly defined powers. Locke's explanation of the source of this failure is helpful in clarifying more positively what in his view our natural idea of self represents. The difficulty as he presents it derives from the fact that reflection thus understood involves attentive action, a redirecting of one's attention from (mainly) outward objects to inward, subjective operations (2.1.7,8); Locke contrasts the more generally active operation of reflection to the generally passive operation of sensory perception (2.1.25; 2.9.1; 2.21.72). We have described above in some detail his hedonistic account of human motivation.[91] In its relevance to the present discussion, that account implies that we

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[91]In the absence of experiences of pleasure and pain, according to Locke, "we should have no Reason to preferr one Thought or Action, to another" (2.7.3). On Locke's tendency to conflate reasons and motivations for action, see Colman 1983, 223-224.

most basically, naturally, vividly experience the self less as the seat of perception in general than as the seat of our more specific "concernment," the subject of our pleasures and pains. A "concern for Happiness," observes Locke, is "the unavoidable concomitant of consciousness, that which is conscious of Pleasure and Pain, desiring, that that self, that is conscious, should be happy" (2.27.26; also 2.1.11; 2.27.17).[92]

To this point the divergence between Locke's conception of natural self-consciousness and Rousseau's depiction of the original, natural human beings appears relatively insignificant. It seems clear that, like Rousseau, Locke conjectures that the original human beings must have possessed at best a minimal rationality, sufficient for them to make crude instrumental calculations in meeting the necessities of daily survival, but devoid of any signif-

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[92]Taken as a description of the experience of the basic Lockean self, the following statement by Wallin is essentially accurate: "[Locke's] denial of innateness is radical because it is equivalent to a denial of any correspondence between man and the world he lives in except on the purely sensual level...That which is other does not exist, or cannot be known, or is limited to that which can produce pleasure or pain" (1984, 155). In the following chapter, however, I will try to show that according to Locke this conception of the basic materials of self-consciousness does not circumscribe human experience as severely as Wallin claims; especially the development of various mental pleasures and pains out of the sensual means that the potential sphere of human concernment, of what is capable of producing in us pleasure or pain, and therefore worthy of inquiry, is virtually infinite. See ECHU 2.7.2, 10; 2.20.15.

icant foresight, let alone any scientific curiosity.[93] There may be some ground for disagreement in Locke's account of the basic operation of willing, though as is usual in this matter he leaves it to the reader to construct the relevant argument. Inasmuch as according to Locke we can scarcely perceive anything without thereby acquiring, however dimly, some idea of the self, and we can have no experience of self-consciousness that does not include a concern for the well-being of that self, it follows that action in pursuance of our own well-being is for Locke a concomitant of perception. Thus the "two great and principal Actions of the Mind...are these two: Perception, or Thinking, and Volition, or Willing" (2.6.2). Now if we consider the naturalness of willing in the light of Locke's account of the "Association of Ideas," of the human propensity to form mental associations between ideas more or less "ally'd by Nature" (2.33.6, and passim), we might well infer the virtual naturalness of an association between the ideas of pleasure and power, at least insofar as many of the pleasures in human experience require some sort of

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[93]Locke tends to scatter throughout various works the argumentation and evidence in support of this conjecture. In the Essay, for instance, he observes, apparently with reference to no specific historical period, that "Men are apt enough," in accordance with "our feeble passionate Nature," to ignore future pleasures in favor of attending present uneasinesses (2.21.65,67). See also STCE 45,48,50. At TT II.44,45,94,107,111, Locke depicts the inhabitants of the first ages as wanderers, living hand to mouth, and also as tacitly consenting to the unlimited prerogative power of monarchs--both marks of innocence or lack of foresight.

volitional act for their production. In this way Locke seems to contend that human beings come naturally to take a kind of pleasure simply in the act of willing, of exercising power, irrespective of its object.[94] The presence of expansive desires according to Locke would then be coincident not merely with human social life, but with human consciousness itself. Such desires would be not strictly innate, but nonetheless operative virtually from birth. It is perhaps in this fairly precise sense that Locke declares in his work on education that "we are all, even from our Cradles, vain and proud Creatures" (STCE 119; also 38, 148).

It is true that Locke's presentation is not free from ambiguity with respect to the scope and intensity with which this expansive desire prevails over human behavior. Nothing in the preceding account, of course, would compel Locke to deny that the power of these expansive desires and the specific mode of their development or awakening may vary with the particular experiences and the natural constitutions of individuals.[95] In fact the willful desire

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[94]The "peculiar" character of Locke's hedonism rests according to Strauss in the fact that for Locke the greatest happiness consists less in enjoying the greatest pleasures than in having things that produce the greatest pleasures. "Locke says in effect that the greatest happiness consists in the greatest power" (1953, 249; see ECHU 2.21.55). Cf. Pangle 1988, 167.

[95]On natural constitutions, see STCE 66,101,102; cf. Tarcov 1984, 109. For Locke's statements ascribing the expansive desires to "the greater part" (II.123) or to the

for power as Locke describes it does appear in many people to lie dormant or to assume passive or attenuated forms, perhaps in some subdued by an absorption in immediate gratifications, in others overpowered by the more urgent desire for security or regulated by the desire for the esteem of one's fellows. Yet it is clearly Locke's view that in the generality of human beings inheres at least an "apt[ness] to grasp at Power" (TT II.143), and further that notwithstanding his references to self-preservation as the object of "the first and strongest desire" (I.88)[96] and to the great power of the desire for esteem,[97] the species

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generality of human beings, see II.13,92,125; I.10,106; STCE 103,119. Cf. however his reference at II.45 to the contentment of the early human beings "for the most part" with the necessitous existence provided spontaneously by nature, and his later somewhat ambiguous reference to "Ambition, Revenge, [and] Covetousness" as "irregular" passions (II.199; also ECHU 2.20.14). I take "irregular" as Locke uses it here to signify nonregularly occurrent, and thus to refer to passions whose objects are not strictly necessary for biological survival.

[96]In view of Locke's estimate of the power of the expansive, fanciful desires, it appears that Cox goes too far in ascribing to Locke the opinion that there exists "a discernible natural hierarchy among the desires; the desire for self-preservation...is primordial, universally operative, and the most powerful of all desires" (1960, 88). Goldwin exaggerates similarly: "The desire for preservation can be diverted, directed, or cajoled, but there is no way to diminish or eradicate its overwhelming power" (1972, 484). Were this simply true, the law of nature would be far less "hidden" than it is for Locke (see LN 1.111, 2.135, 10.217), and the need for him to write books like the Two Treatises much less urgent.

[97]On the power of the desire for esteem, see ECHU 2.28.10,12; STCE 56,58,61. See the further discussion in chapter VI below, pp. 339-344.

manifests no shortage of overtly ambitious, aggressive individuals in whom the desire for more than is necessary, for self-magnification, for power or dominion suppresses or overwhelms the other desires.

The essential point is simply that in Locke's view the operation of such expansive desires is "ordinary and natural" (STCE 103). The wants of fancy are in their way also wants of nature.[98] As thus far presented, Locke's argument implies a rejection of the classical notion that human nature points toward definite natural ends or states of perfection,[99] but it involves a rejection also of the inference that he is thereby compelled to understand human nature exclusively or strictly in terms of the species' beginning. Apparently recoiling from the more radically modern view on the grounds that a total rejection of the teleological principle is neither desirable nor ultimately possible,[100] Locke presents what he seems to consider a

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[98]Tarcov draws this conclusion also from Locke's comparison of mental to bodily pain, at STCE 112-114 (1984, 152).

[99]Locke's most explicit rejection of the classical teleology appears at ECHU 2.21.55. Elsewhere, however, he seems to appeal to a different, somewhat democratized or relativized form of teleology, according to which our natural "perfections" fit us not necessarily for high virtue, but rather for our personal preservation and happiness. See ECHU 2.7.4-6; 2.9.14; 2.21.50,51; 4.11.8. Cf. Colman 1983, 40,240-242; Tarcov 1984, 134,173.

[100]Cf. the discussion of ECHU 4.6.11, in chapter IV above, pp. 167-186. It is worth noting, though it is difficult to know what to make of the fact, that in an unpublished 1696 fragment entitled "Deus," Locke expresses sus-

partially or moderately teleological conception of human nature. His appeal in the Essay to "natural history," applied to the human condition, represents a continuation of the Machiavellian project of early modernity to understand human nature as it manifests itself in the generality of human beings, to view human beings as they are historically,[101] not as they ought to be or might be in exceptional cases, whether of exceptional virtue or of radical (solitary or socially creative) freedom. That appeal implies, in other words, that in Locke's view on principle there can be no strict separation between nature and history, that human nature is revealed in and throughout history. Human nature as Locke conceives it is a product of a condition of necessity that is both original and constant,[102] that brings forth faculties and passions in human

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picion of Descartes in response in part to the latter's "shutting out the consideration of final causes out [sic] of his philosophy" (in King 1830, 314). Why Locke chooses not to remedy in his own published philosophy this defect of Descartes remains to be explained.

[101]See Machiavelli's famous statement of his realistic intention, in The Prince 15: "But since my intent is to write something useful to whoever understands it, it has appeared to me more fitting to go directly to the effectual truth of the thing than to the imagination of it. And many have imagined republics and principalities that have never been seen or known to exist in truth; for it is so far from how one lives to how one should live that he who lets go of what is done for what should be done learns his ruin rather than his preservation" (ed. Mansfield 1985, 61).

[102]Lockean human nature seems in other words to be the product of something standing between, or some combination of an essential and an accidental necessity. Cf. Strauss 1953, 272.

beings that, however variously manifested or directed, cannot be eradicated or fundamentally transformed. The teleology that Locke espouses takes its bearings from the historically observable "ordinary course of Nature" (TT II.60; ECHU 2.26.4; 4.16.6); the considerable degree of observable human malleability notwithstanding, according to Locke a common subjection to certain constant, basic necessities conditions the psychological formation of both pre-social and fully civilized peoples in fundamentally similar ways.

On the basis of this account of Locke's attenuated teleology, we can see in part how it makes sense, contrary to the objection of John Dunn (1969, 102), for Locke to present his account of the human condition in the first ages as in important respects normative for modern peoples. The original condition is normative for us, insofar as it is, not because it is original, according to Locke, but rather insofar as it reveals with particular clarity the fundamental characteristics of the historically constant human condition. Yet Dunn's objection does point implicitly toward a potentially serious difficulty in Locke, insofar as it brings us to wonder how Locke's account of the human nature that is formed by this human condition can be normative for any people, ancient or modern. Having constructed the likely Lockean grounds of resistance to the Rousseauian conception of radical human malleability, we

recall the point of departure for the foregoing discussion of the natural human condition. In exploring Locke's view of the basic constancies in human nature and in the human condition, we have unearthed some undeniably troubling evidence relative to the psychological fitness of human beings for conforming with the principles of natural rights.

We have argued that Locke presents a hedonistic account of human motivation, but in a rather complex form. Though he seems to hold that in the strict sense "the only thing, we naturally [i.e. natively, originally] are afraid of, is Pain, or loss of Pleasure" (STCE 115), he observes more particularly that the focus of our egoistic concern for our own well being ordinarily falls or oscillates between two polar extremes: a "strong desire of Self-preservation" (I.86), and an expansive, transcendent desire for self-magnification. In this way Locke's view recalls to some extent Machiavelli's observation of the two diverse humors or appetites that divide the human race into two fundamental classes.[103] But with respect to Locke's theo-

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[103]"For in every city these two diverse humors are found, which arises from this: that the people desire neither to be commanded nor oppressed by the great, and the great desire to command and oppress the people. From these two diverse appetites one of three effects occurs in cities: principality or liberty or license" (The Prince 9, in Mansfield ed. 1985, 39). Locke appears to differ from Machiavelli in replacing the desire not to be oppressed with the desire for self-preservation, which would seem much more consistent with submission to despotism. (See e.g. II.223,230).

ry of justice, what are the implications of this implicit questioning of the unity of the human species? What if nature endowed a relative few with an overpowering ambition, a proud desire of dominion insatiable except by the exercise of despotic power over others, and endowed the greater number with, if not a positive desire for subjection to such power, at least a preference for suffering rather than resisting it? Would we be compelled to conclude that nature has constituted humankind, in the morally decisive respect, not one but two or at least two species--that nature does not mandate moral equality or government by consent, but instead sanctions the rule of the stronger, for the interest of the stronger?

By means of his natural-historical account of the fragility of human reason, of our frequent proneness to a destructive, fanciful will to power and even to madness, Locke appears to imply that moral dissensus is natural to human beings not only or primarily on epistemological, but also on psychological grounds.[104] He therefore raises the question whether his account of the state of nature describes so powerfully the naturalness of wrongs that it overwhelms any attempt at defending the naturalness of rights. In rejecting as he does the Rousseauian, radically

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[104]Thus observes Miller: "Locke's emphasis on the variability of moral and political ideas makes us wonder how the agreement necessary to political life can ever be secured" (1979, 184).

evolutionary argument for the conventionality of justice, does Locke necessarily commit his assent to a version of the Machiavellian or Hobbesian argument for the conventionality of justice? In the following chapter, we will finally explore in detail the arguments whereby Locke seeks to show how the materials that nature provides can both guide our construction of and sustain our commitment to certain fundamental, transhistorical principles of justice.

CHAPTER VI

THE NATURALNESS OF RIGHTS

In calling attention in the Essay to the character of our moral rules and concepts as mixed-mode constructions, Locke implies that not merely their practical efficacy, but indeed the very existence of our conceptions of morality and justice is to a considerable degree dependent upon societal consensus.[1] Moreover, as the preceding chapter's account of the Lockean state of nature makes clear, Locke's emphasis on the dependent status of morality serves also to underline the difficulty of achieving a rational consensus. When his only published suggestions of the possible content of his proposed demonstrative science of ethics point in the end from natural theology back to human nature, one might understandably conclude, therefore, that that proposal fails utterly.[2]

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[1]See chapter III above, pp. 99-115.

[2]This is the conclusion most notably of Dunn, who explains the "persistently abortive" character of Locke's sketches of his proposal of a demonstrative ethics by reference in the end to Locke's recognition of the fact that "such a demonstration is not in principle possible" (1969, 80,187; also 1984, 66ff.,84). Cf. Von Leyden 1954, 74. For Locke's own explanations of his apparent failure to accomplish or even to attempt seriously such a demonstration, see especially Works 1823 4.187,407ff., and CJL #1538, 9/20/92 and #2059, 4/5/96, both to Molyneux.

Yet, perhaps in more ways than the most obvious is Locke's insistence on the naturalness of moral dissensus similar and indeed closely related to his statement of the natural uncertainty of our definitions of the names of substances and species. It is striking, of course, that he seems so urgently concerned[3] to discredit both the traditional scholastic doctrine of natural species and the quasi-innatist doctrine of a moral consensus gentium. In both cases, however, alongside his emphatic denials of the adequacy of the definitions that nature provides us, whether of species or of moral laws, he more quietly admits that though it surely does leave the business of precise definition to human convention, nature contributes significantly in furnishing the basic "materials" of consensus. Locke indicates the character of those "materials" relevant to the issue of moral consensus, in thus qualifying one of his more extreme statements of the prevalence of moral dissensus: "there is scarce that Principle of Morality to be named...which is not, somewhere or other, slighted and condemned by the general Fashion of whole Societies of Men," he observes, "those only excepted, that are absolutely necessary to hold Society together..." (ECHU 1.3.10).[4]

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[3]Cf. Miller 1979, 178.

[4]Locke goes on to say of these rules of social necessity that they "commonly too are neglected betwixt distinct Societies"; but this is to say only that they are not self-

The rootedness of morality in societal necessity is present as a recurrent, if understated theme throughout Locke's published and unpublished works.[5] If we may therefore take it as a premise, the above qualification would suggest something like the following as a sketch of the foundations of the Lockean principles of justice. In the modernized, empirically circumscribed form of teleology common to Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Locke, politically relevant nature comprises those forms of necessity that originally and constantly move human beings to form and maintain political societies. The construction of moral concepts and rules as the regulative conditions of the human pursuit of happiness is nonrelativistic, according to Locke's suggestion, insofar as it is guided by a consciousness of the sway of necessity in human affairs. The recognition of the fundamentally necessitous character of the human condition, in its psychological as well as its material dimension, represents according to Locke the beginning of human wisdom about politics; this would explain especially the great emphasis he places on the fact of moral

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enforcing, or that the law of nature is not generally observed in the state of nature. The present argument does not maintain that such rules require no conventional supports, but only that they provide a natural basis for the promulgation of positive laws. For similar qualifications of Locke's rejection of the notion of a consensus gentium, see ECHU 1.3.6, 2.28.11.

[5]See ETG 125,172; LN 1.115-117, 5.169; "Of Ethics in General," in King 1830, 309-310; RC 243.

dissensus, rooted in the virtually boundless potential for disorder in the human mind. Political society then represents the fundamental convention whereby rational human beings confront and manage their naturally necessitous condition. It is reasonable, according to this argument, to expect that human beings reasoning in common about their fundamental interests can achieve a consensus at most on the minimal conditions necessary for the maintenance of society and thus for the management of natural necessity. The principles of justice or natural rights represent the minimal personal guarantees that rational, naturally free individuals require in submitting themselves to a common authority; their preservation constitutes, in other words, the minimal condition in which subjection to a governmental authority is rationally preferable to a more direct confrontation with the forces of nature and human nature. Inasmuch as "no rational Creature can be supposed to change his condition with an intention to be worse," individuals surrender the "Equality, Liberty, and Executive Power they had in the State of Nature...only with an intention in every one the better to preserve himself his Liberty and Property" (TT II.131).[6]

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[6]Moreover, by pursuing this line of reasoning we may gain at least some further insight into Locke's puzzling proposal of a demonstrative science of ethics. The connection between that proposal and Locke's necessitarian doctrine of justice--and by implication, between the Essay's and the Two Treatises' accounts of political morality--becomes explicit in his unpublished fragment "Morality."

It is clear, in view of the fact of moral diversity or dissensus across societies, that the "necessity" to which Locke appeals signifies only the causal (material and psychological) forces that move human beings to form and maintain societies. The consensus that such necessity

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Here, in contrast to his suggested adumbrations of moral demonstration in the Essay, Locke limits himself to a principle of secular hedonism as the source of his fundamental "definition" and axioms," acknowledging "a state after this life" only as a bare possibility (in Sargentich 1974, 26, 27; cf. ECHU 2.21.70) and proceeding to develop "a rule of action" for beings "who have noe prospect beyond this life." More precisely, just as in the more modern or Hobbesian strands of argument in the Two Treatises, Locke adopts as his premise the naturally necessitous condition of humankind, wherein the arbitrary dispensations of "want rapin and force" (ibid.) inevitably violate the equal birthright of individuals to enjoy nature's provisions, or to create for themselves the "plenty and security" that are the necessary conditions of happiness. Having therefore established justice as the determination of "peoples rights" by societal compact, Locke declares that "the rest [of the virtues] will not be hard"; he breaks off the manuscript after the briefest mention of "Civility Charity Liberality," which "relate to society and soe border on Justice" (27,28). In this presentation, the demonstrative morality thus reduces to a demonstration, on the basis of an empirically well-grounded but non-self-evident proposition, of the minimal, core principles of justice that form the bond of society. Finally, one might object that if Locke were truly interested in promoting a sober, tolerant, empiricist probabilism, he would not advertise the possibility of (and therefore raise his readers' demand for) certitude in moral reasoning. Thus Wallin 1984, 149-150, argues that the intensification of political conflicts occurs as a direct consequence of Locke's mixed-mode science of ethics, rooted in a vision of moral autonomy. To this I can respond only that in asserting the possibility of achieving such certitude, Locke seems only to be following an intellectual fashion, while his real interest seems to lie in indicating the extreme difficulty involved in achieving consensus, let alone certitude in matters of morality, and therewith the minimalist character of the principles of justice (or theology) with which we should be satisfied.

produces consists at best in a more-or-less tacit agreement on the necessity of society itself, not on the specific content of the rules whose observance is necessary to maintain society. Locke does not make the unsustainable claim that natural necessity produces an actual, historical consensus across human societies on the truth of the natural rights principles of justice. Rather, his appeal to necessity represents an appeal to what we might consider rationalized necessity, or to the potential grounds of consensus inherent in a rational, well considered, foresighted response to the actual conditions of necessity that prompt the development of human societies. A rational response must of course derive from a sound understanding of actual necessity, but not all responses to necessity are equally rational.[7] To put it another way, Locke does not propose a complete reduction of the rational to the actual in morality;[8] the actual for Locke by no means in itself circumscribes, though it may imply the limits of the possible or the rational in morality.

Yet it remains unclear precisely how even this appeal to a minimalist, necessitarian conception of justice can resolve the problem that Locke raises concerning the naturalness of moral dissensus. In the fact that "even

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[7]Again contrast Wallin 1984, 157.

[8]On the rationalization of the actual or the conquest of chance as the animating purpose of modern political philosophy in general, see Strauss 1959, 41-55.

outlaws and Robbers, who break with all the World besides, must keep Faith and Rules of Equity amongst themselves" (ECHU 1.3.2), Locke may find some cause for hopefulness with respect to the potential of a consciousness of social necessity to provide reliable natural grounds for jural consensus. Whether such hopefulness is reasonable depends upon the willingness or motivation of individuals to respect the sway of a particular form of necessity, namely that imposed by the presence in the world of others whose power and cunning at least equal one's own.[9] But it seems questionable precisely on the grounds of Locke's own account of human psychology whether such a general attitude

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[9]This is the substance also of Locke's immediate response to the pregnant objection that he raises in the fragment "Morality." To the argument that "it may be sometimes a mans advantage to break his word and then I may doe it as contributing to my happynesse," Locke responds that such a rule generalized would render it "impossible for any man to be happy unlesse he were both stronger and wiser than the rest of man kinde," and thus capable of prevailing in "a state of rapin and force" (in Sargentich 1974, 28; cf. LN 10.231). Cf. Hobbes' defense of the principle of equality: "Nature hath made men so equall, in the faculties of body, and mind; as that though there bee found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body, or of quicker mind then [sic] another; yet when all is reckoned together, the difference between man, and man, is not so considerable, as that one man can claim to himselfe any benefit, to which another may not pretend, as well as he...If Nature therefore have made men equall, that equalitie is to be acknowledged: or if Nature have made men unequall; yet because men that think themselves equall, will not enter into conditions of Peace, but upon equall terms, such equalitie must be admitted" (Leviathan 13,15, in 1968, 183,211). Among the fundamental grounds of the Lockean virtues, as Tarcov comments, is the insight "that there are more and stronger men in the world than oneself" (1984, 183).

of deference represents a realistic expectation. We have seen that Locke traces in large part the disorders prevailing in the natural human condition to the natural aptness of the human mind to fall subject to expansive, fanciful desires; indeed Locke views much if not all of human criminality as the product of the desire for more than one needs.[10] On what grounds does Locke see in humankind in general a potential to defer to the sway of natural necessity, when perhaps the most immediately threatening component of that necessity is a natural human desire to transcend necessity, to acquire more than one's share, more than one needs?

A two-dimensional question is implicit here. Arising more immediately is the familiar question of obligation, or of the reasons for submitting oneself to the dictates of Lockean justice. Yet inasmuch as Locke tends to view this question as reducing to the question of motivation, or of the presence of a effective enforcement system of rewards and punishments,[11] the question of obligation in his thought is inseparable from the deeper question of the

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[10]"Covetousness, and the desire of having in our Possession, and under our Dominion, more than we have need of, being the Root of all Evil, should be early and carefully weeded out..." (STCE 110). Cf. STCE 105; TT II.37.

[11]"Reward and Punishment," consisting in pleasure and pain of one form or another, Locke maintains, are "the only Motives to a rational Creature" (STCE 54; also ECHU 2.7.3). Therefore they constitute the only possible grounds for any rational creature voluntarily to assume any obligation. See especially ECHU 2.21.51-52; TT II.77.

consonance of Lockean justice with human happiness, and therefore with human nature. Could rational human beings, rational pursuers of happiness, render their truly free, voluntary consent to the Lockean regime, or would instead their consent to that regime rest ultimately on an act of repression, of internal if not external coercion?

Herein lies the ultimate significance of objections such as that of Strauss, to the effect that the Lockean ethic consists in a "peculiar hedonism," that is, a peculiarly repressive, ascetic hedonism. Locke's relativistic conception of happiness implies that in his account of human nature he abstracts from eros as the ancients understood it.[12] It means, as Strauss argues, that in attempting to elaborate the proper course of action for human beings as political creatures, Locke must focus not on the attainment of happiness itself, but instead on the process of creating the conditions for the attainment of happiness. Politically relevant nature consists in a set of "necessities" or "mere inescapabilities" that it is the proper business of rational action to confront and to manage, if never finally to overcome. Rational action for Locke consists in subjecting oneself to labor as "the pain which relieves pain," or more generally in acquiring power sufficient to remedy or to manage the natural condition of powerlessness. Human life is reduced to an exercise in

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[12]Cf. Pangle 1988, 213.

aimless self-denial, or in Strauss' memorable description, a "joyless quest for joy" (1953, 249-251).[13]

The implication of this and like charges is that Lockean justice is decisively if not wholly conventional in character, an alien imposition requiring the suppression of natural human desires. In view of its apparent design to subject the transcendent desires of the powerful to the levelling principle of moral and jural equality, one is tempted to regard Lockean justice as in its essence nothing more than a restatement of the ancient conventionalist conception of justice as the ideology of the weak or timid.[14] Yet in the scope of its conventionalist implications, Locke's doctrine may ultimately surpass even those of the ancients. For if our natural inclination toward our own well being is bipolar in the manner that Locke describes--if nature inclines at least some of us to employ our

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[13]In the context of a very different interpretation, John Dunn reaches a similar conclusion on this point, maintaining that the Lockean-Calvinist imperative of laboring in one's "calling" constitutes a neurotic and nearly Sisyphean ethic of "boundless repression," a seemingly "odd norm to extract from a utilitarian calculus" (1969, 259-260,265,263; see, however, ECHU 2.21.68-69). Also Wood 1984, 102. Cf. Oakeshott's similar judgment on Hobbes (1962, 257-259), and Tocqueville's description of the restlessness and anxiety prevalent among the Americans, whom he seems to regard as the world's pre-eminent rational pursuers of happiness, and thus as the world's pre-eminently Lockean people (Democracy in America 2.2.13).

[14]See especially the statements of this view by Callicles, in Plato's Gorgias 482-492; by Glaucon, at Republic 358b-362c; and by Philus, summarizing the teaching of Carneades, in Cicero, Republic 3.5-21.

liberty so as to indulge our fantasies of conquest and dominion, and inclines others to look after their own well being in a timorous, slothful submission to such conquerors[15]--then it would seem that not merely the powerful, but rather in various ways virtually all human beings must experience the socialization required for membership in a Lockean commonwealth as unnatural or repressive. The advent of the consensually minded homo civilis would seem to involve not merely the costuming in respectable attire, but instead the thorough suppression or conquest of homo naturalis.[16] Though perhaps in a significantly different manner, civilization would then represent a condition of alienation no less for Locke than for Rousseau; the alienation, as a condition of membership, of one's natural freedom would constitute an alienation of one's happiness, ultimately of one's self.

The aim of the present chapter is to show how it is possible to construct, out of the resources that Locke provides, an appropriate Lockean response to this fundamen-

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[15]In the Second Treatise, such sloth and timorousness manifest themselves in many peoples' historical contentment in material poverty (II.31,41-45,49,51), and in the relatively common fact of popular acquiescence in, or nonresistance to, umlimited, despotic government (cf. 75,94,107-110 with 92,223,230). Cf. Gorgias 493-499, where Socrates brings Callicles to concede that his identification of the good with the pleasurable implies that a life of cowardice is at least as choiceworthy or admirable as one of bravery.

[16]Cf. Caton's judgment on the disproportion between these two human types in Hobbes (1983, 8).

tal challenge. We will argue that notwithstanding either the various levels of sacrifice that consent entails or the various forms of happiness pursued or asserted by various types of human beings, the Lockean regime and the Lockean psychology of human motivation are fundamentally compatible; Locke does provide, albeit in a rather muted or even concealed manner, the theoretical grounds of a defense against tyranny, of an argument for its ultimate unnaturalness as distinct from its mere imprudence. Yet the fact that Locke does not always directly confront the relevant difficulties, and therefore that he requires his readers or commentators to construct his response to such challenges, in itself requires explanation. By exploring in the final section of the chapter the question of Locke's relative silence with respect to questions that his thought does, as we will attempt to show, contain the means for answering, we will come, finally, to the heart of Locke's political-philosophical enterprise, and to an understanding both of the essential problem posed by political life and its proper solution as he views it. More specifically, we will argue that the thesis of Lockean esotericism need not yield a radically modern, nihilistic Locke, but may instead yield a relatively moderate Locke, one whose modernity is more genuinely ambiguous than the Straussian reading seems to imply, and yet whose traditionalism is more genuinely philosophical than the most vocal detractors of Strauss on

this point have recognized.

THE PRINCIPLE OF BALANCE

A fair portion of textual evidence does appear to support the conclusion that reason functions as an essentially repressive power in Locke's moral-political thought. This appears as a particularly prominent theme in his educational writing, wherein he frequently suggests that

> the great Principle and Foundation of all Vertue and Worth, is placed in this, That a Man is able to deny himself his own Desires, cross his own Inclinations, and purely follow what Reason directs as best, tho' the Appetite lean the other way. (STCE 33; also 17,38,45, 52,107,108,200)

Yet such suggestions cannot in themselves justify the characterization of Lockean morality as proceeding from a simple neo-Stoic[17] or Puritan[18] opposition of reason to desire. As Tarcov explains (1984, 87-91,96-100), the relevant antagonism exists less between reason and passion as such than between those passions authorized and those unauthorized by reason or rational foresight.[19] More particularly, Locke tends to conceive of rational self-mastery as the ability to "resist the Importunity" not of all desire, but in particular of "present Pleasure or Pain"

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[17]Cf. Axtell 1968, 138n., 218n., 219n.

[18]Cf. Dunn 1969, especially 214-261.

[19]On the relation of the power of foresight to the humanizing power of abstraction, see chapter V above, pp. 237-242.

(STCE 45). In Some Thoughts Concerning Education, he elaborates with great subtlety the means whereby a skillful educator can cultivate and direct the passions of children in such manner as to promote most effectively their long-term virtue and happiness. At the same time, he indicates that his observations regarding both the predominant passions and even the means whereby they are to be cultivated and directed often apply similarly or analogously to adults as well as to children.[20]

The potential implication for Locke's understanding of politics is significant. The question arises whether Locke's educational project extends beyond the Thoughts' discussion of childrearing and continues in the Two Treatises. More specifically, the suspicion arises that notwithstanding his apparent entrustment of the task of education to the privacy of the family[21] and his restriction of the act of political consent to adults (II.59), Locke acknowledges the limits of the presumptive rationality of adults and therefore does not fully accept the modern liberal separation between politics and education or character-formation. Perhaps instead he views the Two Treatises' discussion of the principles of legitimacy and constitutionalism as completing, in the relatively unobtru-

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[20]We have noted above (chapter V, pp. 253-254) Locke's assimilation of children's and adults' respective acts of consent. See also STCE 73.

[21]See especially STCE 70; also Tarcov 1984, 4-8.

sive manner appropriate to the characters of adults, the project whose beginning he sets forth in the Thoughts, of cultivating the virtues necessary to membership in political society. What we seek, therefore, is to discover whether or how Locke can address the objection to his political thought as alienating or repressive, by showing how the principles of political legitimacy and constitutionalism in the Second Treatise can perform the related functions of moderating and channelling the polar passions of narrow self-preservation and covetousness or dominion, such that the adults animated by those passions can reach a rational accommodation enabling them to live together in civility if not indeed in harmony, as members of a common society, subjects of a common regime.

It is helpful to employ Aristotelian categories in conceiving of the essential problem and the Lockean response.[22] Aristotle observes in all actual political communities a tendency toward class division, and therefore views the achievement of the best practicable regime as dependent upon the identification of a principle of balance, whereby opposing class interests and conceptions of justice can be moderated and rendered mutually compatible (Politics 3.6-13, 4.1-12). Without precisely identifying the Lockean polarities with the Aristotelian principles of

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[22]For this conception of the Lockean commonwealth as a mixed regime, I am indebted to the discussion in Mansfield 1978, 1-15.

democracy and oligarchy, we can state the Lockean problem in similar terms. What principle of balance can serve in a nonrepressive, nondespotic manner to moderate the interests of the classes of people whose predominant passions or interests consist respectively in individual self-preservation and dominion over others, such that they can come to coexist as elements of a common political society, under the governance of common rules of reason and law? What is the specific formula of a Lockean mixed regime?

In order to avoid lending unintended support to the dismal proposition that Jefferson would later reject with virtually the final stroke of his pen, namely that "the mass of mankind has...been born with saddles on their backs, [and] a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately...,"[23] Locke must show, first, how the natural desire for well being can be raised or expanded from its common expression in a narrow, unforeseeing, even slavish concern for self-preservation into a more energetic disposition to assert and defend one's rights. Second, he must show how the same basic desire for well being, once hardened into its more expansive expression as a desire to aggrandize oneself, can be so tamed or moderated as to consist with a forbearance of aggression, a respect for others' rights. The middling solution that Locke's psy-

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[23]Thomas Jefferson to Roger C. Weightman, 6/24/1826, in Koch and Peden eds. 1944, 729.

chology poses consists in an elaboration of the psychological grounds of a somewhat attenuated or modernized principle of republican liberty. Those inclined toward contentment with bare self-preservation at the cost of liberty must come to embrace the principle that consent is the indispensable guarantor of preservation, that "Freedom from Absolute, Arbitrary Power, is so necessary to, and closely joyned with a Man's Preservation, that he cannot part with it, but by what forfeits his Preservation and Life together" (TT II.23). On the other hand, those inclined to value liberty only insofar as it facilitates their domination of others must come, according to this solution, to regard self-dominion as the fullest and only truly desirable form of dominion; they must come to experience the defensive capacity to resist the tyrannical assertions of other individuals, and ultimately of their own fanciful desires, as the only source of true freedom and power.

Let us consider first the project of expanding the desire of self-preservation to a posture of defensiveness, such that it encompasses a desire for liberty. Locke's attempt at cultivating such an expansion operates on both rational and sentimental levels. On the former level, Locke argues that one cannot reasonably claim a right of life or of self-preservation without also claiming a right of liberty or of self-disposal. We have referred above to his observation that self-preservation is "the first and

strongest desire God Planted in Men" (I.88). Locke conceives of this "strong desire" as the foundation of our right to our own preservation (I.86), and moreover seems to regard the natural primacy of our sense of concernment for ourselves (see ECHU 2.27.17,18,26) as the foundation of the unalienable character of that right; each individual must retain the ultimate right of judging and enforcing the conditions of self-preservation, because the wills of others are ultimately opaque to us, and (to say the least) cannot be presumed to harbor a reliable concern for our own preservation (II.13,22,123,127-131). The individual's subjective concern for preservation or, more broadly, for well-being requires that the individual retain the ultimate power of agency or of self-disposal, the power of judging and enforcing the conditions of preservation and well-being. In this way the right of preservation becomes inseparable in Locke's argument from the right of liberty, as the principle of self-preservation entails logically the principle of self-disposal or self-ownership (II.6,23,27, 44,55,59-60,123).[24]

As it is necessary, in Locke's view, for individuals not merely to know, to assent cognitively to the interdependence of preservation and liberty, but also for them to

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[24]On self-disposal or self-ownership, see chapter V above, pp. 248-250, and below, pp. 365-385.

feel it,[25] the project of practically binding the two principles must include an attempt at forming the passions or sentiments as well. This attempt assumes a variety of forms throughout Locke's work. The cultivation of a healthy desire for liberty is clearly the aim, for instance, of Locke's advice in Some Thoughts Concerning Education that children be treated as rational creatures long before they approach full, adult rationality, or that they be indulged in the illusion that their activities are for the most part self-directed.[26] A similar design is manifest in his attempts via the rhetoric of the Two Treatises at raising in his audience a proud contempt for the condition of slavery[27] and a righteous indignation or

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[25]Thus in addressing the objection that his doctrine of resistance must issue in anarchy, Locke argues that the people are "not apt to stir" until "the ill designs of the Rulers become visible, or their attempts sensible to the greater part...Are the People to be blamed, if they have the sence of rational Creatures, and can think of things no otherwise than as they find and feel them?" (TT II.230; also 168,225). In their larger significance, Locke's educational, rhetorical, and political-constitutional schemes represent elements of a larger enterprise of cultivating "the sence of rational Creatures" in both constitutive majorities and also, to a somewhat lesser extent, in governing elites.

[26]Upon observing that children "love to be treated as Rational Creatures sooner than is imagined," Locke suggests that "'Tis a Pride should be cherished in them, and as much as can be, made the greatest instrument to turn them by" (STCE 81). In a similar way, the child's natural, proud love of freedom can assist in the cultivation of industry as well as of rationality. See STCE 41,72-77,95,123,148.

[27]Thus Locke introduces the work: "Slavery is so vile and miserable an Estate of Man, and so directly opposite to the generous Temper and Courage of our Nation, that 'tis

even hatred for the wielders and seekers of absolute, arbitrary power.[28]

Of potentially far greater effect, however, than the Two Treatises' rhetoric alone as means of infusing a healthy spiritedness into the desire of self-preservation are the Lockean principles of legitimacy themselves and the constitutional provisions that flow from them. The ambiguity of Locke's account renders it difficult to estimate precisely the intended or likely effect, in this respect, of his insistence on meaningful, rational consent as a condition of governmental legitimacy. Yet if Locke's practical sympathies are as democratic, in the whole or in part, as some have argued,[29] it seems reasonable to suggest

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hardly to be conceived, that an Englishman, much less a Gentleman, should plead for't" (TT I.1; also II.23,163, 239).

[28]Laslett remarks upon the ferocity of the sentiment expressed in the epigraph from Livy that Locke placed immediately after the title page of the 4th edition of the work (1960, 170). See also his references to the beastly character and jural status of tyrants and other criminals, at II.10,11,16,93,172,181,228. In view of such references, it seems clear that Locke is hardly squeamish with respect to the right of a liberal society to punish criminal offenders; his restriction of the grounds of legitimate punishment to "Reparation and Restraint," including deterrence of others (II.8), is less severely restrictive than this discussion taken in isolation may suggest. Contrast Brubaker 1989.

[29]Kendall is the earliest and the most radical recent proponent of the reading of Locke as a majority-rule democrat; see 1941, passim. Ashcraft argues that the Second Treatise is best viewed in its context as a radical Whig manifesto, though with significant points of contact with the doctrines of the Levellers, especially concerning the right of a majority to constitute a perfectly democratic

that a significant part of the value or potential value that Locke assigns to the principle of popular representation lies in the quiet pride that accompanies ordinary people's understanding that their explicit approval is a necessary condition of governmental legitimacy.[30]

In any event, a clearer illustration of this aspect of Locke's intention appears in the "most characteristic part" of his teaching, that in which he most clearly takes issue with Hobbes,[31] namely his discussion of property.

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government if it so chose (1986, 530-589; see II.95-98). Strauss' Locke is somewhat more ambiguous, adumbrating a regime that appears to strike a balance between democratic and oligarchic principles (1953, 231-234). Thus although Locke "cannot be said to have had an implicit faith in the majority" as a guarantor of individual rights, he nonetheless places his greatest emphasis on the right of the community, not the individual, to resist an illegitimate government (especially II.168,208-209). Similarly, though he stipulates somewhat ambiguously that legislative representation be apportioned according to "the assistance, which [a given portion of the population] affords to the publick," Locke seems to intend that numbers as well as riches be taken into account (II.157-158). Moreover, if we consider his expectation that the protection and encouragement of industry will enhance social mobility and broaden the distribution of property, it follows that the Lockean regime is potentially more democratic than circumstances in Locke's own England would permit, and likely to become more democratic as it matures. See Pangle 1988, 168-170.

[30]On representation as the preferred modality of legislative authority, see II.143,153-154,157-158. On Locke's concomitant emphasis of the illegitimacy of usurpation or benign conquest, see II.141,197-198,212,215-217. On the capacity of the principle of political representation to raise the proper sense of civic pride, contrast Rousseau, Social Contract I. For Locke's own implicit qualification of the attempt at raising directly political forms of pride, see the discussion below, pp. 393-396.

[31]Strauss 1953, 234.

Locke begins this discussion by grounding the right of property or appropriation in the right of "Preservation" broadly conceived as the right to provide for the "Support and Comfort" of our being (II.25,26). Just how broadly Locke conceives of this right becomes clearer, however, when he almost immediately thereafter introduces an alternative principle as the basis of legitimate appropriation. Because "every Man has a Property in his own Person," Locke continues, the

> Labour of his Body, and the Work of his Hands...are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the State that Nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his Labour with, and joyned to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his Property. (II.27)

If laboring is in itself sufficient to create an original property right, then the right of appropriation obtains irrespective of any purely material considerations, irrespective of the claimant's level of material need or comfort. To repeat, the labor theory of appropriation constitutes in the end only a particularly crucial corollary of the fundamental principle of human agency. Locke's doctrine of self-ownership means most generally that one has a natural right simply to act, to employ one's agency or action-producing faculty so as best to secure one's own well-being, up to the point at which one's actions threaten the domination, the unjust appropriation of the labor or the agency, of another.

Locke finds the psychological significance of proper-

ty most clearly evident in the behavior of young children: "Another thing wherein they shew their love of Dominion, is their desire to have things to be theirs; they would have Propriety and Possession, pleasing themselves with the Power which that seems to give..." (STCE 105). It would appear then that Locke's insistence on constitutional protection for an expansive, even virtually unlimited right of appropriation represents much more than an attempt at ameliorating the natural condition of material unprovidedness or at creating the conditions for general private happiness in material plenty. At least as important as its effect on material conditions is its psychological effect; the protection of the right of appropriation and the concomitant raising and channelling of the acquisitive desire serve with peculiar efficacy, according to Locke's argument, to cultivate in ordinary subjects an expanded, more assertive, dignified, vigilant sense of self. As Locke explains in the Essay, actions, the experiential data of human agency or freedom, have in themselves no enduring existence save, perhaps, in the human mind; our ideas of actions as mixed modes represent only "fleeting, and transient Combinations of simple Ideas" (2.22.8). But whereas the merely transient, momentary existence of most actions limits their psychological or pedagogical power, the particular action of appropriating represents the employment and manifestation of one's freedom to create or

enlarge a visible, tangible, more-or-less enduring domain,[32] and for this reason carries a peculiar power to expand the individual's sense or consciousness of self. Locke intends the protection and encouragement of the right of productive appropriation to cement in the minds of ordinary individuals the association between the virtue of industriousness and a dignifying sense of personal potency or efficacy; by virtue of the Lockean stress on property and its inculcation of an enlarged sense of one's own, of one's personal domain of freedom and power, the imperative of preservation transcends the Hobbesian concern for mere biological existence and becomes a more vigilant, assertive concern for preservation in freedom.[33] "The great and chief end therefore, of Mens uniting into Commonwewalths, and putting themselves under Government, is the Preservation" not narrowly of themselves, but "of their Property" (II.124). By expanding, as it were, the boundaries of the

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[32]Polin (1969, 6) calls attention to the relation of Locke's conception of property to that of Hegel, observing that property for Locke "is the external manifestation of freedom, its expression and its very concrete existence for others," and not only for others. "Every man, being equal to every other, manifests his liberty by the domination, the ownership of his property" (1969, 6). Rapaczynski's reading is similar: Lockean "appropriation is the fundamental activity which permits man to overcome his estrangement from the natural environment and to achieve his autonomy" (1987, 180). The difficulty to which this conception of appropriation leads is implicit in Strauss' observation that labor, for Locke as for Hegel, "is a negative attitude toward nature" (1953, 250). See the discussion below, pp. 346-349.

[33]See chapter II above, pp. 39-45.

self and its sphere of privacy, Locke hopes to contract the proper sphere of governmental authority. In a sort of "forward defense" strategy, he hopes to raise the proper spirit of defensiveness against tyranny or illegitimacy by expanding and thus making more visible and more complete that which is to be defended. Thus understood, Locke's defense of the natural, unalienable right of private property or appropriation signifies a defense not of a sordid, mean-spirited materialism,[34] but rather of an indispensable bulwark of civil or political liberty.

A complementary design is evident in Locke's attempt at moderating or taming the desire for dominion. There is in fact a certain symmetry in the relation between these two attempts. Just as the achievement of a rational, civil consensus requires the leavening of the desire for self-preservation by its blending with a moderate love of dominion, so also it requires the moderation of the extreme love of dominion to bring that desire into conformity with the imperative of preservation. This two-dimensional character of Locke's attempt at identifying and reinforcing the foundation for a liberal consensus appears most clearly in

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[34]The most apparently materialistic of Locke's recent commentators agree on this point. MacPherson's employment of the term "possessive" to describe Lockean individualism may appear to carry this connotation, though MacPherson explains that he refers fundamentally to a doctrine of possession of <u>self</u>, or of the individualist assertion of independence of others, with the implication that the materialist form of this assertion is only incidentally related to it (1962, 3). Cf. Wood 1983, 34-35; Wood 1984, 31-33,102.

the fact that alongside his declaration that "the end of Law is not to abolish or restrain, but to preserve and enlarge Freedom" (TT II.57), Locke proclaims with significant emphasis that political power properly conceived "hath no other end but preservation" (II.135; also 124). In order properly to moderate the desire for dominion, in order to defend the principle of liberty as distinct from that of sheer license or arbitrariness, Locke maintains the grounding of that principle in a respect for the enduring sway of natural necessity. Therefore he avoids a simple reversal of the Hobbesian priority of preservation to liberty.[35] But the key to the taming of the desire for dominion so that it may coexist with the desire for preservation lies once again in Locke's defense of the right of appropriation.

The association of the activity of appropriation with

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[35]The failure to devote sufficient attention to this fact, or in other words the failure to take seriously the naturalness of the ills of the state of nature, accounts for the partiality or one-dimensionality in the reading of Locke as a teacher of individual moral autonomy. In his attempt at revealing a genuinely moral dimension of Locke's thought, Rapaczynski tends, for instance, to underemphasize (though he does not simply ignore) Locke's concern with our natural alienation from other human beings, not merely from nonhuman nature, and thus to underemphasize the essentially defensive character of Locke's political thought (1987, 9, 113-217). The real difficulty in this partial reading lies in the fact that an unmixed emphasis on the aim of pure moral, that is, individual autonomy would ultimately undermine any limitations on the assertions of individual wills, and therewith exacerbate precisely those natural ills that the Lockean regime is intended to overcome.

the desire for dominion implies the usefulness of that activity not only for expanding the ordinary concern for self-preservation, but also for channelling the desire for dominion in a socially beneficial direction. As we have seen, Locke in Some Thoughts Concerning Education conceives of the desire to appropriate or to possess as an expression of the desire for dominion. He clearly associates the possessive desire with the vice of covetousness, declaring it one of the "two Roots of almost all the Injustice and Contention, that so disturb Humane Life," and as such to be "early...weeded out" of children's prevailing motivations (105; also 110). Yet contrary to the judgment of Axtell, this does not imply that Locke in the Education takes a "low...view of acquisitiveness" (1968, 207), in opposition to the view he presents in the Two Treatises.[36] Even in the discussion in question, Locke distinguishes the unjust desire for possession from more direct expressions of the desire for dominion; the possessive desire to have "things"

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[36]Seliger goes further than does Axtell, asserting that even in the Two Treatises Locke's evaluation of the moral and social role of money "remains negative" precisely because "a money-economy makes it possible for different degrees of industry to cause a gross inequality of possessions" (1968, 157-158). Dunn holds similarly that Locke "felt deeply ambivalent" about the advent of money because money introduced reasons for quarreling over title and largeness of possession, sundering the connection between right and conveniency (1984, 40). For Tully, the acquisitive desire for more than one needs "is not the motor of technological advance and a more refined form of life," but rather the morally condemnable motive of mere miserly hoarding (1980, 148).

or objects at one's disposal appears less directly productive of injustice than the desire to be "submitted to by others," or to have actual persons at one's disposal (STCE 105,104).

More importantly, Locke's solution of the problem of covetousness or unjust possessiveness in the Education does not require the radical suppression or extirpation of the desire to acquire. It would appear, after all, a highly curious manner of radically "weeding out" children's acquisitiveness to teach them, as Locke shortly thereafter recommends, that "the most Liberal has always most plenty," that the child "loses nothing by his Liberality" (110). Locke recommends a method of moderating children's desire to acquire or possess that would surely serve to strengthen their sense of the legitimacy of that desire.[37] That he does indeed approve the legitimacy of an appropriately moderated desire to acquire is confirmed by his subsequent suggestion concerning the provision of playthings for children. Lest they be taught "Pride, Vanity, and Covetousness" along with a perpetual, inherently immoderate dissatisfaction, children according to Locke should have few or no playthings bought for them, but should instead be required to make them for themselves. "This will accustom them to seek for what they want in themselves...whereby they will be taught Moderation in their Desires, Applica-

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[37]Cf. Tarcov 1984, 141-145.

tion, Industry, Thought, Contrivance, and Good Husbandry" (STCE 130). The acquisitive desire is not to be suppressed, but instead to be subjected to the discipline of industry or laboring as the condition of its gratification.

Locke's legitimation of acquisitiveness by associating it with liberality and self-reliant creativity in the Education is in perfect harmony with the teaching of chapter 5 of the Second Treatise. Appropriation in unlimited amounts is a natural, unalienable right, according to the latter, so long as it is accomplished (directly or indirectly) through productive laboring. Whoever "appropriates land to himself by his labour, does not lessen but increase the common stock of mankind" (TT II.37; also 40-44,48). The possibility of genuine liberality rests above all on the creation of wealth, and thus on the encouragement of productive industry. Indeed there is a sense in which productive appropriation represents for Locke an obligation as well as a right conferred by nature. "God and his Reason commanded [Man] to subdue the Earth, i.e. improve it for the benefit of Life, and therein lay out something upon it that was his own, his labour" (II.32; also 34,35). Natural necessity, or the natural condition of "penury" (32; cf. 35,37) obliges us to labor in order to eliminate or minimize the need for charity traditionally understood, and thereby to lay the foundation of civil concord. Locke's ambiguous argument in the First Treatise to the

effect that charity, if not justice, accords the needy a "Right" to another's surplus (42) implies that the destitute have in the extremity of their condition a right to theft or even robbery;[38] if so, then the establishment of justice as the foundation of civil society, implying the protection of everyone's "Title to the product of his honest Industry, would require the creation or preservation of an abundance of material opportunity sufficient to enable all to subsist and even to profit by their own industry. Locke proposes the replacement of traditional charity with modern technology, with the development of "Invention and Arts" (II.44) that will revolutionize the productivity of human labor, as the solution of this aspect of the problem of the state of nature.[39]

The appeal of this solution, from the perspective of

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[38]Thus Strauss, commenting on the same paragraph: "in a state of extreme scarcity everyone may take away from others what he needs for mere self-preservation, regardless of whether or not the others starve" (1953, 239n.) Pangle adds that "what [Locke] means by 'charity' is just a subdivision of justice: an expression, in desperate circumstances, of the inalienable right...to self-preservation" (1988, 144). See also chapter II above, note 31.

[39]As we have noted in another context, Locke's most explicit statement of this intention appears at ECHU 4.12.12: "The Study of Nature...if rightly directed, may be of greater benefit to Mankind, than the Monuments of exemplary Charity, that have at so great Charge been raised, by the Founders of Hospitals and Alms-houses..." This emphasis in the Essay and the Two Treatises on the technological overcoming of the need for charity represents Locke's resolution of the problem of scarcity that he had formulated in the early Questions Concerning the Law of Nature, 11.245-249.

Locke's promotion of the "endowment" of justice, lies in its psychological realism. While the acquisitive passion may become legitimate, in Locke's scheme, by virtue of its service to the cause of preservation, it is equally clear that it remains attractive to individuals, notwithstanding its subjection to the condition of laborious productivity, by virtue of its enduring potential for gratifying the desire for dominion or inequality. In the course of his defense of the right of appropriation, Locke places considerable emphasis on the proposition that "Men have agreed to disproportionate and unequal Possessions of the Earth" (II.50); the invention of money in particular has "introduced (by Consent) larger Possessions, and a Right to them" (II.36; emphasis supplied). Recognizing not only the natural differences among individuals in "Parts and Merit" (II.54), but also the equally important human desire to be credited for such distinction, Locke insists that a well-constituted political society guarantee the rewards of superior industry. "God gave the World to Men in Common," but gave it especially "to the use of the Industrious and Rational," to those who enlarge the common stock by their rational, productive industry (II.34; also 37,48). The Lockean social contract requires then not the categorical repression of the desire for inequality or dominion, but rather its transformation. Its traditional manifestation in the "Quarrelsom and Contentious" idleness of unproduc-

tive upper classes (of hereditary aristocracies, for instance) must give way to the more energetic, socially productive, genuinely self-validating expression of the modern commercial classes.[40] Thus transformed or rechannelled by the Lockean principles of education and constitutionalism, the natural desire for self-aggrandizement is diverted from its preoccupation with dominating other human beings. Locke even expects that the pride that the industrious experience in their own providence, in their partial mastery of nature, will provide the grounds for a certain generosity toward their social inferiors. Just as his suggestion in the Education for moderating the desire to possess serves also to legitimate that desire, so in this case he suggests that children should learn civility or respect for the principle of natural equality in part by learning that "No part of their Superiority will be hereby lost; but the Distinction increased...The more they have, the better humour'd they should be taught to be..." (STCE 117; also 109). The psychological subtlety of Locke's defense of the principle of natural jural equality is perhaps best revealed in this educational stratagem, according

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[40]For Locke's critique of the traditional aristocracy, see STCE 207; Works (1823) 5.54,64,72,163; CJL #1693, 1/19/94; King 1830, 97-98. Wood observes aptly that in "Locke's vocabulary, labor, industry, perseverance, sobriety, and usefulness replaced aristocratic honor, pride, dignity, spirit, and the non-utilitarian" (1983, 148; also 128)--though this does not imply that Locke disregarded the vices of the gentry (45-46).

to which respectful assent to the principle of common humanity appears less as a duty than as a mark of dignity, a privilege of a distinguished status.[41]

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[41]This apparent attempt at cultivating a somewhat attenuated sense of noblesse seems to apply not only to the propertied class in Locke's design, but also to the scientifically or technologically skilled elite upon whose "generous pains" (ECHU 4.3.16) the wealth of the commercial classes ultimately depends. Whereas morality is the proper business of "Mankind in general," according to Locke, the "several Arts, conversant about parts of Nature, are the lot and private Talent of particular Men, for the common Use of humane Life..." (4.12.11; emphasis supplied). Locke seems to intend his recognition of the particularity of such talents as a reward for their serving the common good. He in effect treats the generosity of society's powerful benefactors as in itself a privilege.

THE LIMITS OF LOCKE'S UTILITARIANISM

Let us reflect briefly upon the nature of Locke's solution, as thus far described, of the problem of moral dissensus. We have seen at length how, much of the rhetoric of the Second Treatise notwithstanding, Locke raises very serious questions concerning the status of the principle of human equality. In affirming specifically the naturalness to the human species both of significant inequalities in the possession of rationality and of class divisions based upon the relative powers of the passions for self-preservation and self-aggrandizement, Locke implicitly questions the propriety of conceiving of humankind as, in the morally decisive respects, a single, unitary species. He questions, in other words, whether there exist natural principles of justice, or whether the natural distributions of reason and passions among human beings provide adequate grounds for the development of a moral-political consensus naturally appropriate to human beings as such. His answer, again as described to this point, consists in a sophisticated form of utilitarianism.[42] It consists in the proposition that under the influence of appropriate educational and constitutional

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[42]Strauss 1953, 235 n. 107.

principles, self-interest and the common good can be harmonized; rational seekers of well-being who are unequal both in the power of their rationality and in their substantive conceptions of their own well-being can come freely to agree upon and to live harmoniously according to the principles of natural rights. In the Lockean stress on the preservation of property and on the right of appropriation lies the basis of a sound mixed regime, the capacity to accommodate at once the lovers of equality and those of inequality. The rewarding of rational industry can appease the lovers of dominion or aggrandizement without fostering the resentment of the lovers of preservation, in that it bases social distinction upon a standard of achievement that is understandable, accessible, and beneficial to the common majority.[43]

Yet the ultimate efficacy of this mixture or the compatibility of these two principles remains in question. In order to see this, it is necessary for us first to notice the role that a sense of justice plays in the maintenance of the Lockean regime. The foregoing account of Locke's psychological realism in addressing the problem

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[43]This explains more adequately why Locke includes little mention of violence and avoids altogether the concept of the state of nature in the Second Treatise' discussion of early property relations. While property surely provides often enough the occasion for conflict, Locke's aim is to show how the desire to appropriate, suitably directed, can operate as a pacifying principle. See chapter V above, p. 286, n. 81.

of natural class divisions does not imply that Locke indulges, in anticipation of Mandeville, in a kind of uncritical moral alchemy, that he believes in the possibility of a perfect harmonization of communal well-being and private interest narrowly understood. He suggests at one point in the Second Treatise that to sacrifice in the performance of one's obligations is to act on the basis of what is "not only necessary, but just; since the other Members of the Society do the like" (II.130). In Some Thoughts Concerning Education, he declares that the inculcation of "an ingenuous Detestation...will be a better Guard against Dishonesty, than any Considerations drawn from Interest" (110). Also in the latter work, he explains that the psychological basis of this sense of justice lies not so much in abstraction from interest altogether as in its enlargement. "Reputation" in Locke's view is "not the true Principle and Measure of Vertue...yet it is that, which comes nearest to it" (STCE 61). Thus he recommends that children learn courage or fortitude, "the Guard and Support of the other Virtues," by learning to "preferr the Reputation of being Brave and Stout, to the avoiding a little Pain," and with time to the avoiding of progressively greater pains (STCE 115).[44]

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[44]Thus Locke stresses that "the great Secret of Education" is the cultivation in children of "a Love of Credit, and an Apprehension of Shame and Disgrace" (STCE 56; also 58,200).

It is possible to argue that in this enlarged concern for reputation or esteem lies the sentimental support for conformity with the demands of Lockean justice even at the extremities of political life, in those circumstances in which political obligation requires the greatest apparent personal sacrifices or acts of devotion. "Esteem and Disgrace are, of all others, the most powerful Incentives to the Mind, when once it is brought to relish them" (STCE 56; also ECHU 2.28.12). In his diary entry of 12 December 1678, Locke remarks on the power of this desire to make "the Hurons and other people of Canada with such constancy endure such unexpressible torments" (in Axtell 1968, 153n.).[45] There can be little doubt, therefore, that Locke believes the desire for esteem sufficiently powerful to support what must be at least for most the greatest personal sacrifice for their community. "Laurels and Honours," he takes care to affirm, "are always justly due to the Valour of those who venture their Lives for their Country" (STCE 115).[46] Moreover, the case seems similar

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[45]See also Horwitz 1979, 136-141.

[46]Grant concludes that the performance of this ultimate obligation "cannot be defended on the grounds of [Lockean] self-interest"; considerations of justice are entirely distinct from those of self-interest, and must supersede them (1987, 133). The argument presented here requires the following qualification of this conclusion: for an individual with the proper Lockean education or moral formation, self-interest would support justice inasmuch as the disgrace of failing to defend a free government or of subjection without resistance to an unfree one would be worse than the prospect of an honorable death.

with respect to an alternative form of personal sacrifice, involving a different sort of political extremity. To the lovers of extreme inequality, animated by the highest ambition and therefore incapable of appeasement in the ordinary acquisitive pursuits, Locke suggests that that "Prince" who secures "protection and encouragement to the honest industry of Mankind against the oppression of power and the narrownesse of Party," not only "will quickly be too hard for his neighbours," but in preserving a truly legitimate government--especially by prerogative power, at a moment when legitimacy is most vulnerable and arbitrary absolutism therefore most inviting--would become "wise and godlike," worthy of the highest distinction and esteem, the bearer of "true Power and Honour" (II.42,111,166).[47]

According to this reading, therefore, Locke's apparently stark indication of the ultimate ground of military obligation in the Second Treatise does not imply that in his view sheer terror or the fear of capital punishment by one's military superior is the only support of discipline

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[47]Cf. in this regard Locke's reference to the unknown discoverer of iron, without which "we should in a few Ages be unavoidably reduced to the Wants and Ignorance of the ancient savage Americans," as the quasi-divine "Father of Arts, and Author of Plenty" (4.12.11). Once again, Locke holds before the "Master-Builders" of the new natural science with its implicit technological providence the promise of a share of the "true honor and power" merited by the godlike princes. See note 41 above.

in combat.[48] It may be significant that in the passage in question Locke holds that it would mean not simply death, but "justly death" to disobey one's superior (II.139). But in any event, in view of Locke's estimate of the power and usefulness in this respect of the desire for esteem, and more to the point, in view of the fact that the entire argument of the Second Treatise depends upon a spontaneous, defensive but foresighted popular willingness in extreme circumstances to risk death in resistance against tyranny, it seems safest to conclude that in this brief discussion of absolute military power, Locke intends primarily to make plain the extent of the government's authority, and perhaps also to lay bare the teeth of the law in such matters, but not to comment on the ultimate grounds or supports of members' obligations.

Still, it may be possible to grant the seriousness of Locke's appeal to the concern for esteem or reputation and at the same time to persist in the argument that members' performance of their obligations to the Lockean commonwealth could not be judged in the decisive respect free, nonalienating or nonrepressive, on Locke's own principles. Locke's apparent reliance on the concern for esteem involves the following two difficulties. First, the

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[48]Contrast the view of Goldwin (1972, 483-484). In differing from Goldwin on this point, however, I am not implying that he is wrong to call attention to Locke's evident abstraction from appeals to a sense of patriotism or civic duty in the Second Treatise.

concern for esteem can take the form of either a desire or an aversion; it can move us to action through the positive attraction of the pleasures attendant upon a good reputation, or through our repulsion by the prospect of incurring shame. Indeed it may be very difficult to separate the desire from the aversion in our concern for reputation. But to the extent that our performing our obligations proceeds from the latter motive, it proceeds from a kind of fear, and cannot be judged wholly free or voluntary.[49] Second, and more importantly, inherent in the concern for reputation, whether a desire or an aversion, is a psychological dependence upon the opinions of others.[50] Although a "Mind free, and Master of it self and all its Actions... is what every one is taken with" (STCE 66), yet "We are all a sort of Camelions, that still take a Tincture from Things near us" (67). The implication once again is that our consent at least in many cases cannot be wholly free, wholly self-affirming or in accordance with our nature.

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[49]See, for instance, STCE 110: The cultivation of "an ingenuous Detestation of this shameful Vice [i.e. of injustice]...is the true and genuine Method to obviate this Crime; and will be a better Guard...than any Considerations drawn from Interest."

[50]See especially STCE 57. The fact of dependence, as Tarcov observes, "lies at the bottom of the concern for esteem" (1984, 116-117). Thus Bloom epitomizes Rousseau's characterization of the bourgeois, including the Lockean individual: "...to describe the inner workings of his soul, he is the man who, when dealing with others, thinks only of himself, and on the other hand, in his understanding of himself, thinks only of others" (1979, 5).

In view of these characteristics of the concern for esteem or reputation, it is perhaps not surprising that in the Second Treatise Locke de-emphasizes his appeal to this concern as the proper mode of governing the most ambitious individuals, those who desire sovereignty in its most profound, expansive forms. It is highly significant in its way that Locke refers to any prince or political ruler as "God-like"; yet it is also significant that he does so in the larger context of an argument to the effect that "the reigns of good Princes have been always most dangerous to the Liberties of their People," and therefore that princely prerogative is to be jealously monitored (II.166).[51] Apparently distrusting the power of esteem to govern the profoundly expansive desires, Locke maintains in the end that "the best fence against Rebellion" or against tyrannical designs on the part of rulers lies not in the desire of the latter to be or to appear godlike in their justice as well as their power, but rather in the "Doctrine of a Power in the People of providing for their safety a-new by a new Legislative" (II.226). A healthy respect for the balance of powers within the commonwealth will provide the most reliable means for attaching the ambition of rulers to

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[51]Locke thus recognizes the force of the argument that the young Lincoln would make roughly 150 years later, to the effect that it is unsafe to assume the self-moderating character of that high ambition characteristic of "the family of the lion, or the tribe of the eagle," which would sooner destroy than preserve ("Address Before the Young Men's Lyceum," in Current ed. 1967, 19).

the cause of legitimacy. The Lockean "appeal to heaven" reduces in the end to an appeal to popular vigilance (II.20,21,168,176,241-242). By raising a popular willingness in extreme circumstances to take up arms against illegitimate rulers, Locke hopes to intimidate egoistic rulers and thus to diminish their appetites for the sorts of actions that would properly provoke popular resistance.[52]

Locke's employment of this "best Fence" or balance-of-powers argument points most clearly to the persistence of the fundamental question of the naturalness of the Lockean regime. The issue is not merely Locke's acknowledgement that the reconciliation between private interest and the common good remains imperfect in the regime that he envisions, or that the laws made in accordance with the forms and goals of that regime require, like all laws, "teeth" for their enforcement. Locke maintains that the threat of popular resistance is the "best fence against Rebellion," the best defense against the greatest, most dangerous form of criminality (II.218,230). But can it indeed provide in the long run the best defense against tyranny, if it is not a theoretically satisfying, coherent defense? Given his own account of human psychology or motivation, on what basis is Locke entitled to conclude

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[52]In this striking manner, as Pangle observes, Locke reaffirms the old identification of the vox populi with the vox dei (1988, 204).

that such rebellion or tyranny is naturally undesirable, and therefore that its suppression is not contrary to nature? It appears clearly undesirable, of course, for its subjects, for those who are incapable of becoming tyrants themselves; but what of the others, those among the classes of natural oligarchs or aristocrats whose ambitions cannot be satisfied by mere inequalities in material acquisitions? If power in the service of a relativistic pursuit of happiness is the only aim of rational human action, then would it not be in the highest sense natural for human beings to seek radical freedom or sovereignty, to experience all limitations on personal freedom as alienating and to harbor a radically revolutionary animus against all conventional or political restraint?[53] For the truly ambitious individuals, would not Locke's acknowledgement of the primacy of the human pursuit of happiness serve only to expand still further the inegalitarian desires, not to diminish but to heighten a sense of the injustice of the demand for equal rights? If so, then Locke ultimately fails in his attempt at designing a mixed regime, or at discovering in the prin-

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[53]Such is the great fear of Burke, of course, who sees in the French revolutionaries an intoxicated lust for innovation for its own sake, a radically negative, destructive willfulness that is the direct consequence of the theoretical doctrine of natural freedom as pure negation or indeterminacy (Reflections on the Revolution in France, in Mahoney ed. 1955; see, e.g., 7-9,40-42,65-66, 86-89,97-101, 107-111,126-129,181). Herein lies, once again, the full significance of the observation that labor, for Locke as well as for Hegel, expresses "a negative attitude toward nature" (Strauss 1953, 250). Cf. note 32 above.

ciple of equal natural rights the grounds of rational consensus among all the partisans of democracy and oligarchy.[54] At best, according to this objection, the Lockean regime may secure the interests of the large majority, but it does not secure the interests of everyone.[55] At worst, it may establish a laborious, emotionally and spiritually ascetic regime in which those who believe themselves happy are so by virtue of a sort of internalized timidity, or a forgetfulness of their own nature,[56] and a relative few--and these the most dangerous, the desirers of the grandest inequalities--are both miserable and restless.

In thus noting the tenacity of the objection to the

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[54]In sympathy with Locke, one might argue that Locke's achievement lies not so much in balancing the opposing principles of oligarchy and democracy as in showing how the principle of democracy properly understood comprehends a moderated form of the oligarchic principle. Still, if we continue to employ Aristotelian categories in analyzing the Lockean regime, it would seem according to this objection that implicit in Locke's best fence argument is an admission of the need for ostracism, or of the impossibility of doing justice to all relevant claimants to power. Would this not constitute an admission of the partiality, of the nonuniversality of Locke's principles of justice? Cf. Aristotle, Politics 3.13.13-25.

[55]Cf. Strauss 1959, 218.

[56]Locke observes that "in this life there are not many, whose happiness reaches so far, as to afford them a constant train of moderate mean Pleasures, without any mixture of uneasiness" (ECHU 2.21.44), and clearly suggests that his readers would do well to habituate themselves to find contentment in a moderated, mixed happiness (see e.g. 2.21.43,46; STCE 130). The question is whether such moderation can be truly choiceworthy, whether in practicing it we act in accordance with our nature, or merely under the constraint of a necessity that we desire most deeply to escape.

"peculiarity" of Locke's hedonism, even in the face of his manifest Machiavellian cleverness in designing a modern mixed regime, we come to the heart of Locke's textual ambiguity and therewith to the heart of his political philosophy. Having established the sophistication, but also the essential utilitarianism of Locke's nontheological moral-political reasoning, as presented thus far; conceding, that is, that Locke does proclaim the moral primacy of the self and its happiness, and does present the rational pursuit of happiness in large part as a persistent struggle against various forms of natural necessity, we confront finally the decisive question. What has Locke to say, concerning the available sources of meaning or experiences of completion that might serve to redeem the ordinary and the extraordinary struggles that occupy so much of a rational and industrious individual's life, that might serve as the natural, rational limits on the negative, destructive projections of the human will? Beyond abstract pleasure and its instrumentalities of health, ease, and plenty,[57] what, finally, is to be affirmed according to Locke?

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[57]In a 1677 fragment Locke observes that the happiness of this world "certainly is nothing else but plenty of all sorts of those things which can with most ease, pleasure, and variety, preserve [us] longest in it" (in King 1830, 88; also 90).

Of fundamental importance here is not whether the Lockean self is capable of any genuine self-transcendence, any devotion to a cause larger than itself, but instead whether the Lockean regime is capable of securing our natural happiness and therefore inspiring our positive devotion, or the devotion of a rational subject. Irrespective of how Locke chooses to denominate such experiences, it is clear that the Lockean self is capable of so extending the sphere of its vital concernment as to make it capable of actions practically indistinguishable from those motivated by a genuine self-forgetting or self-transcendence.[58] What is less immediately clear, and of

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[58]Notwithstanding his general avoidance of appeals to patriotism, it is clear, for instance, that Locke views patriotism, an expansion of one's sphere of concernment such that the well-being of the country or nation implicates one's personal well-being, as at least a psychological possibility, if not indeed a commonplace. Albeit rather casually, he even appeals to the sentiment of patriotism in scattered passages in his published works, most prominently in the "Introduction" to the First Treatise, which begins with the declaration that "Slavery is...so directly opposite to the generous Temper and Courage of our Nation; that 'tis hardly to be conceived, that an Englishman, much less a Gentleman, should plead for't" (I.1; also STCE "Epistle Dedicatory," 115). Leaving aside whether Locke thus indicates a more powerfully self-expanding attachment to England or to the gentry, we find the most extreme illustration of this capacity in the surprisingly common human readiness not only to risk death for the sake of one's country, but even "at any time to seal with their Blood" their most cherished principles, or to "contend...fight,

decisive importance here, is whether it can do so rationally, and in accordance with our natural happiness. In the final analysis, the fundamental question for Lockean political philosophy concerns the possibility of genuine reasoning about human happiness, or to put it more simply, concerns the status of human reason itself.

On the basis of what has been said thus far, it may seem that the case against Locke is compelling. His urgent and colorful denials of the existence of any consensus gentium in matters of law and morality, and above all his assertion that "the Philosophers of old did in vain enquire" after the nature of the human "Summum bonum," because "those things, which produce the greatest Pleasure...to different Men, are very different things" (ECHU 2.21.55), appear to mark him clearly enough as a thoroughly modern moral and political utilitarian. Yet his apparently clear denials of the possibility of teleological moral reasoning must be considered in conjunction with the fact that Locke not only affirms the possibility throughout

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and die in defence of their Opinions" (ECHU 1.3.27,26). Pangle suggests that such self-enlarging identifications are "ultimately dubious on strict Lockean grounds" (1988, 212), but I fail to see the evidence for this. It seems to me perfectly defensible on Lockean grounds to argue that given the power of habituation, the self-concerned love of esteem becomes very difficult after a certain point to disentangle from an extra-personal love of the source of that esteem, just as in a more general way after a certain point the love of any particular pleasure may become practically indistinguishable from a love of the source or object of that pleasure.

the Essay and exhorts his readers accordingly, but even affords occasional, partial glimpses of his own attempts at such reasoning. Once again, nothing is more dangerous in Locke's view than to allow one's moral principles to go unexamined.[59] More affirmatively, he insists that the nature of human beings as rational creatures concerned for happiness imposes on us a kind of obligation to reason as carefully as possible about the ultimate ends of human action. "[W]hen, upon due Examination, we have judg'd, we have done our duty...in pursuit of our happiness..." For just as "the highest perfection of intellectual nature, lies in a careful and constant pursuit of true and solid happiness; so the care of our selves, that we mistake not imaginary for real happiness, is the necessary foundation of our liberty" (2.21.47,51).

This suggestion of the possibility of genuinely reasoning about happiness, of rationally distinguishing "true and solid" or "real" from "imaginary" happiness, requires further elaboration. At times Locke seems to indicate that this distinction rests upon no more than a prudent comparison of the immediate and the more distant consequences of particular courses of action[60]; the moral rightness or wrongness of a given action would then depend

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[59]See chapters II and V above, pp. 61-65, 239-240.

[60]Commenting directly on STCE 110, Tarcov suggests that "Locke...equates reason with serious long-range considerations of interest" (1984, 149).

upon quantitative but not qualitative considerations, or upon the intensity and duration of the attendant pleasures and pains, not their content (2.21.58-65). As Rapaczynski notices, however, Locke's discussion of the possibility of teleological moral reasoning does imply a movement beyond such narrowly prudential calculations. Indeed Rapaczynski goes so far as to deny that Locke's moral theory is in the final analysis hedonistic or utilitarian, on the grounds that our particular ideas of happiness for Locke are prior to and constitutive of our experiences of pleasure and pain. Locke is according to his reading a theorist of moral autonomy who closely prefigures the precritical Kant, in that his rejection of psychological hedonism allows him also to deny the necessity of abstracting moral principles altogether from natural motivations or principles of action (1987, 124,154-161).

A significant strand of argument in Locke's Essay does at least to some extent support this reading. While the experience of present uneasiness is in his revised account the immediate determinant of volition (2.21.31ff.), Locke nonetheless makes plain his opinion that it lies within our power to determine which absent goods will produce uneasiness in us: "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...it may come to work upon the will..." (2.21.46).

What we find desirable, in other words, depends upon our previously constructed and internalized complex idea of happiness (2.21.41,43). Thus by means of consideration or habituation we are capable of correcting our "palates," of changing "the pleasantness, and unpleasantness, that accompanies any sort of action," in accordance with the requirements of our conception of happiness (2.21.69). We are capable, in Locke's most far-reaching estimate of our powers of moral reasoning, of conforming "the relish of our Minds to the true intrinsick good or ill, that is in things" (2.21.53; emphasis supplied).

This line of argument obviously raises a number of difficult questions. How, for instance, are naturally pleasure-seeking creatures capable of discovering "the true intrinsick good or ill" in things? Does our capacity for reflectively modifying the content of our pleasures and pains imply that the human self is infinitely malleable? If the content of our pleasures and pains is determined by our prior conceptions of happiness, on what nonhedonistic basis do we construct those conceptions of happiness? The answers to these questions remain unclear in Rapaczynski's reading, which focuses only on the achievement of moral agency, via the appropriative transformation or humanization of nature, as the necessary means of the rational pursuit of happiness (1987, 171-176); as for the end, or the content of happiness itself, Rapaczynski offers no

satisfactory explanation of how according to Locke our choice of ideals of happiness could avoid an unreflective "heteronomy" and at the same time avoid collapsing into sheer arbitrariness or willfulness in the guise of "autonomy" (161-168).[61]

It is unfortunate though (as we will argue) understandable that Locke devotes relatively little explicit reasoning toward addressing these questions. Nonetheless it is possible to construct out of the materials Locke provides at least a partial account of his conception of the ultimate grounds and ultimate ends of moral reasoning. In the midst of his more prominently displayed arguments, Locke more quietly provides the materials of an ultimately

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[61]Rapaczynski argues that Locke's emphasis of productive appropriation provides the means for avoiding the problem of heteronomy and establishing a genuine moral autonomy, insofar as the progressive recreation of nature in accordance with human ends guarantees that the experiential materials out of which we construct our ideas of happiness will be themselves products of human creation; therefore our construction of ideas of happiness, its dependence on the external environment notwithstanding, represents ultimately an act of self-legislation (172-176). Yet it is unclear how this suggestion resolves the problem of heteronomy in any but the most abstract, species-oriented manner. It is unclear, that is, precisely how an individual's moral autonomy is enhanced by the inheritance of a cultural environment in the construction of which he or she played no part. Moreover, even if we accept this suggestion as a resolution of the problem of heteronomy, absent an explanation of how we reason about the ends that are to govern our transformation of nature, it would seem that the rationale for productive appropriation as Rapaczynski presents it reduces in the end to a celebration of creativity, of sheer arbitrariness or willfulness, for its own sake. Indeed the manner in which Rapaczynski frames the problem of heteronomy forecloses any possibility of its nonarbitrary solution.

nonutilitarian argument that is nonetheless independent of the more doubtful of his theological propositions. Occasionally, at points scattered throughout his public and private work, Locke offers some apparently rather casual pronouncements concerning the content of human happiness, showing us in effect the results if not the process of his reasonings. In the Essay's chapter "Of Modes of Pleasure and Pain," he suggests but declines to elaborate what appears to be a crucial, fundamental distinction concerning objects of pleasure and the forms of pleasure that they produce in us.

> Were it my business here, to enquire any farther...I should remark, that our Love and Hatred of inanimate insensible Beings, is commonly founded on that Pleasure and Pain which we receive from their use and application any way to our Senses, though with their Destruction: But Hatred or Love, to Beings capable of Happiness or Misery, is often the Uneasiness or Delight, which we find in our selves arising from a consideration of their very Being, or Happiness. Thus the Being and Welfare of a Man's Children and Friends, producing constant Delight in him, he is said constantly to love them. (2.20.5)

It is true that Locke immediately reverts to a more common line of argument, excusing himself from pursuing the implications of this observation by merely noting "that our Ideas of Love and Hatred, are but the Dispositions of the Mind, in respect of Pleasure and Pain in general, however caused in us" (2.20.5).[62] But how does it come about, and

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[62]In an unpublished 1676 journal entry, Locke observes that love "is a sympathy of the soul and is nothing but the union of the mind with the idea of something that has a secret faculty to delight it..." (in Von Leyden 1954, 267).

what is the significance of the fact, according to Locke, that we "often" experience an apparently nonutilitarian, selfless delight in the very existence or happiness of our children and friends, or in other words that we regard certain animate beings as possessing intrinsic worth, irrespective of the uses or applications to which we might put them? Is there some quality inherent in such beings that can produce such a response? Or if love and hatred are "but the Dispositions of the Mind," is there some quality in us, in our natural mental constitution, that makes such experiences uniquely or especially gratifying for us?

In the face of his prominently displayed evidence of the predations to which various peoples have subjected even their own children,[63] it would be difficult to attribute to Locke the opinion that something inherent in children, let alone in anyone who is not our direct, blood relative, could in itself exercise such a power over us by nature. Locke therefore explains our devotion to our children, in the normal cases in which we are devoted to our children, by reference as much to something in our selves as to something in them. "God planted in Men a strong desire also of propagating their Kind, and continuing themselves in their Posterity..." Parents are taught by "Natural Love and Tenderness to provide for [their children] as a part of

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[63]See chapter V above, pp. 264-266.

themselves" (I.88,97; emphasis supplied).[64] Parental devotion or love is thus natural, according to Locke, at least in the most basic, minimal sense that it grows out of one's natural self-concernment. To be sure, its origin in self-concernment explains its uneven power over parents, and explains more particularly its occasional subjection to other, more fanciful visions of self-expansion. But the crucial question in this context concerns the character of the need that is expressed and fulfilled in the self-extending activity of devotion to one's children. Does our ordinary if nonuniversal devotion to our children express, and fulfill more adequately than the relevant alternatives, a need on the part of the human self not merely to expand its sphere of concernment, but to do so specifically by identifying with another self? In his references to parenthood as self-extension, does Locke quietly suggest a greater natural sociality than he is willing consistently or unambiguously to attribute to the human self?

A fuller consideration of Locke's treatment of the experience of friendship produces further support for this proposition. In conceiving of parental love as rooted in our more fundamental capacity and desire for self-extension

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[64]In the unpublished fragment "Ethica 92," Locke explains parental love as one of the pleasures of the mind, which "are the greatest as well as most lasting" pleasures. "Who ever was soe bruitish as would not quit the greatest sensual pleasure to save a childs life whom he loved. What is this but pleasure of thought remote from any sensual delight" (in Sargentich 1974, 30).

or for identification with another self, Locke implicitly assimilates parental love to friendship. As we will see more fully below,[65] this assimilation appears in the Second Treatise mainly in the form of an admonition. But just as in Some Thoughts Concerning Education, in which education appears as an essentially private function, Locke seems to correct the one-sidedness of the Second Treatise in this respect by presenting a somewhat warmer conception of familial life,[66] so also he reveals elsewhere in both private and public writings that he is by no means insensible of the power and sweetness of the sentiment of friendship or interpersonal love. In the Essay, he provides only hints to the contrary, contenting himself to mention without comment the common acceptation of the word "Friend" as "a Man, who loves, and is ready to do good to another" (2.28.18), and to offer as an instance of "other Modes of Pleasure" undiscussed in the chapter devoted to that

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[65]See below, pp. 396-398.

[66]Locke does warn in this work, as he does implicitly in the Second Treatise, that "Parents, being wisely ordain'd by Nature to love their Children, are very apt, if Reason watch not that natural Affection very warily...to let it run into Fondness," and thus too often to "cherish their Faults" (STCE 34). This means, however, only that parental love should be informed by reason, or by an understanding of the long-term interests of the child; it does not mean that Locke conceives of a callous, calculating utilitarianism as the proper bond of the rational family. To the contrary, Locke argues that an essential means of rendering a child receptive to instruction in virtue is to make the child "sensible of your Care and Love of him," thereby planting in him "a peculiar Affection for you" (99). See also STCE 95-96. Contrast Pangle 1988, 230-243.

subject "the pleasure of rational conversation with a Friend..." (2.20.18).

Striking a much more personal note, however, in the "Epistle Dedicatory" of Some Thoughts Concerning Education, addressed to his friend Edward Clarke, Locke confesses to "know no greater Pleasure in this Life, nor a better Remembrance to be left behind one, than a long, continued Friendship, with an honest, useful, and worthy Man, and lover of his Country" (in Axtell 1968, 113).[67] The same sentiment finds still more powerful expression in his private correspondence. In one of his numerous letters to his dear friend William Molyneux, upon expressing his heartfelt disappointment at the postponement of a planned meeting, Locke confesses that "when the conveniences of life are moderately provided for," our earthly existence holds for him "nothing of value...equal to the conversation of a knowing, ingenious, and large-minded friend..." (CJL

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[67]In an unpublished journal entry for 7/16/1676, Locke distinguishes between purer and more utilitarian forms of friendship. Although men, observes Locke, "often love their friends with whose good offices or conversation they are delighted, endeavoring and wishing their good, thereby to preserve to themselves those things they have pleasure in...[s]ome wise minds are of a nobler constitution, having pleasure in the very being and happiness of their friends, and some yet of a more excellent make are delighted with existence and happiness of all good men, some with that of all mankind in general, and this last may be said properly to love" (in Von Leyden 1954, 266).

#2115, 8/4/1696).[68] The untimely death of Molyneux provided the occasion for a similar, still more heartfelt declaration by a genuinely grief-stricken Locke. Upon receiving the news, he wrote to Thomas Molyneux that

> Death has with a violent hand...snatched from you a dear brother...I bear too great a share in the loss, and am too sensibly touched with it myself...to do anything but mingle my tears with yours. I have lost in your brother...an intimate and sincere friend whom I truly loved and by whom I was truly loved. And what a loss that is, those only can be sensible who know how valuable and how scarce a true friend is and how far to be preferred to all other sorts of treasure. (10/27/1698; quoted in Cranston 1957, 441).[69]

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[68]See also #3088A, 2/10/1702, to William Popple: "When necessarys are provided for, friendship is the best, most usefull, and most delightfull treasure that I know..."

[69]It may be relevant in this context to note further that although the published works of the bachelor Locke are notably free of any discussion of romantic love, his private correspondence indicates that in his younger years and even beyond, his life manifests no similar freedom. The young Locke writes, for instance, in a draft letter to an unnamed "Madam": "To catch the eyes of forward gazers, or by degrees to fire a heart that courts its flames is the effect of an ordinary face...But M. to Captivate at a distance and takeing a heart (that supposed it self well fortified) without either surprise or seige is the priviledg only of your beauty which scorns to conquer ordinary ways...thinke it not strange that you finde at your feet an unknowne captive, who may be permitted to submitt to a passion hee had noe means left him to resist and can noe more conceale then those flames that comeing from heaven are more violent then others and seldome burne slow or secreatly" (CJL #45, date unknown [de Beer estimates 1658 or 1659]). That his heart was not completely "fortified" even in his later years against such "non-Lockean" passions (see Tarcov 1983) is indicated by his lengthy and somewhat mysterious relationship with Damaris Cudworth, later the Lady Masham. See the discussions of this relationship in Cranston 1957, especially 215-224,236,335-336; Yolton 1985, 8-10. It is perhaps suggestive too that in his apparently casual enumeration of "other Modes of Pleasure" in the Essay Locke implies that the "Pleasure of Musick" lies at least in part in its power to soothe "the pain of tender

Is it plausible that this is not the expression of a genuinely grief-stricken man? Further, is it plausible that Locke, who relied so heavily on introspective evidence in the development of his empiricist epistemology, could have failed to reflect on the significance of his own sentiments for his account of human motivation? To the extent to which these propositions are indeed implausible, it is all the more necessary for us to consider a host of difficult questions. What reasoning according to Locke explains the experience of friendship, and supports the claim of its superiority to other pleasures? What more basic needs or desires in our selves are fulfilled by the experience of friendship or interpersonal love? What qualities in our friends or in those whom we love appeal to us, make them distinct from and preferable to others? Furthermore, insofar as friendship and love involve such a sense of distinction, to what extent could even a capacity on our part for genuine friendship or love provide support for the broader public principle of human equality?

Once again, there is no question that Locke wishes to leave with at least some of the Essay's readers the impression that his remarks on the content of our pleasures and pains express merely subjective valuations, that the love of friendship represents a mere private "relish" or taste. It is therefore impossible to eliminate entirely

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Eyes" (2.20.18).

the element of conjecture from our attempt at uncovering the reasoning that underlies those remarks.[70] It is safest

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[70]One might offer the following conjecture, for instance, in defense of the proposition that even an originally radical egoism of the kind that Locke sometimes suggests contains the materials for the development of at least a partial sociality or sense of sympathy. Locke observes the most extreme expression of our natural desire for well-being or pursuit of happiness in the desire to have more than one needs or to transcend necessity, to overcome all natural or conventional limits on one's own volition. But insofar as this desire for radical freedom and sovereignty represents a desire to transcend limits, it remains essentially relational in its object; one's sense of self, of the degree of one's self-magnification, depends on the degree of resistance, whether from the realm of nature in general or from other people, one encounters and overcomes. Locke seems to hold that the primary expression of the desire for dominion is a desire to be "submitted to by others" (STCE 104), to have one's greatness attested by others more-or-less like oneself. From this arises a question. How is self-magnification to be gained through the experience of power over others or even over nature in general, when it would seem that the very fact of their subjection would render one's subjects contemptible, unworthy to attest to the scope of one's powers or greatness? (Cf. Aristotle's denial that there is dignity in the ruling of unequals; Politics 1.5.2-3, 1.7.4, 7.14.15-19). The desire for self-magnification would seem then to require for its fulfillment recognition by another whom one respects or even admires, by another equal to or even superior to oneself. Perhaps from the perspective of the great, the Lockean ethic consists less in a joyless quest for joy than a limitless quest for limits. The very logic of the desire for dominion or aggrandizement would then paradoxically culminate in a certain desire for equality, a desire for a certain kind of fellowship with another whose greatness confirms one's own, makes it recognizable. To be sure, such a desire for equality does not necessarily entail a desire for human equality; it could very well manifest itself in a fanciful desire for fellowship or identification with a god. (See the discussion below, pp. 398-408.) For the desire for self-magnification to generate more than a partial sociality and in particular a desire for human equality, it must somehow discover grounds for identification of oneself with other human beings as such. The completion of this conjectural argument turns in the end on whether Lockean reason forms a proper basis for community or for distinction among human beings.

here, however, to begin by considering Locke's own testimony concerning the grounds of the respect or sympathy he feels for his own friends, the quality or qualities by virtue of which he could desire to identify himself with another. In the remarks we have cited, Locke makes clear that he values friendship in general, and that of Molyneux in particular, by virtue of the friend's knowledge, ingenuity, and large-mindedness--in other words, by virtue of the perfection of the friend's rationality. A rational person finds the highest pleasure in a rational friendship; the pleasurableness or goodness of friendship is therefore ultimately inseparable from that of reason, or of the pursuit of truth. In fact, in his published work Locke is considerably less reluctant to proclaim his devotion to reason or to the truth for its own sake than he is to expound the joys of friendship, though in neither case does he appear completely forthcoming. The question then becomes: Why or in what respect does Locke find the exercise of reason a <u>dignifying</u> pursuit, a pursuit worthy of respect or admiration?

In the Essay's "Epistle to the Reader," Locke remarks that as the understanding is "the most elevated Faculty of the Soul, so it is employed with a greater, and more constant Delight than any of the other," and insists that "'tis Truth alone I seek" (Nidditch ed. 1975, 6,11).[71] In virtually the same breath, however, he describes its exercise as mere "Sport" or "Entertainment" or "Diversion," as though it held no more significance than the play of children, or at best than the "recreation" by which adults restore the energy they must apply to their truly serious pursuits.[72] It is surely implausible that Locke loved Molyneux and mourned his death for no more profound reason than that Molyneux was a clever or witty conversation partner; and it is perhaps still more implausible that he thought of the Essay, on which labored for over two decades and in the process placed at least his reputation at

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[71]He reiterates directly or indirectly this devotion to the truth throughout the Essay and The Conduct of the Understanding in particular. See ECHU 1.2.28, 1.4.23,25, 2.21.72, 3.5.16, 3.9.21, 3.10.13, 4.19.1, 4.20.17; CU 3,6, 11,14,33,34,42.

[72]See Pangle 1988, 269-270. For Locke's thoughts on recreation, see STCE 108,206-209; also CJL #328, 3/12/1677, #426, 11/26/1678, both to Denis Grenville; #1655, 8/23/1693 to Molyneux. Cf. the sophistic conception of philosophy as a child's pursuit, a nonserious form of play, in Plato, Gorgias 484c-486d, and Republic 328d.

considerable risk,[73] as nothing more than the product of a pastime or hobby. One might then argue that he partially corrects this impression in ascribing to his intellectual labors a more serious purpose, in his famous self-description as an "Under-Labourer" to the true natural philosophers or scientists; perhaps Locke locates the dignity or seriousness of his work in its contribution, however indirect, to the development of "Philosophy, which is nothing but the true Knowledge of Things" ("Epistle to the Reader," 10).

But in stating this alternative we merely restate the question. The dignity of Locke's own work as a contribution to philosophy would depend ultimately upon the dignity of philosophy itself as a non- or trans-utilitarian pursuit. As we have seen, Locke indicates clearly enough his support for the modern project of placing scientific inquiry, that is, reason, in the service of the technological enhancement of human power over material nature.[74] In this respect it is true, as Pangle observes, that Locke

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[73]For a historical account of the controversies that the Essay aroused, see Yolton 1956, passim. On the Oxford attempt in 1703 at suppressing the teaching of the Essay, see Cranston 1957, 466-469.

[74]In addition to the remarks we have discussed at ECHU 4.12.10-12, see the unpublished fragments "Knowledge, Its Extent and Measure," and "Of Study," in King 1830, 87-91, 106-107; also "De Arte Medica," in Fox Bourne 1876, I 222-227.

does "'sell' philosophy" to the utilitarians (1988, 270).[75] But the important questions concern to what extent and why he does so. If, as Pangle seems to charge,[76] Locke presents utilitarian arguments for utilitarian reasons, if he endorses a wholly utilitarian, technological or instrumental conception of reason, he then commits himself to the nihilistic, Hobbesian or Nietzschean implications of the subordination or reduction of reason to will-to-power. There is, however, an alternative possibility. If the fundamental, unifying principle of Locke's thought is the rejection of arbitrariness in all its forms, or in other words is the rejection of the sovereignty of the human will, then his apparent endorsement of the technological

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[75]In the end Locke's suggestion of the technological applications of knowledge is only a particularly important implication of his more frequent assertion that the end of reason is action, not contemplation. "Our Business here is not to know all things, but those which concern our Conduct" (ECHU 1.1.6; also 2.7.3, 2.18.7, 2.22.10, 2.23.13, 3.6.30ff., 3.11.5, 4.2.14, 4.11.8).

[76]The nature of Pangle's objection to Locke is somewhat unclear, inasmuch as in the passage just cited, he seems to characterize Locke as a thoroughgoing utilitarian, whereas in the same context he describes Locke as a fundamentally Socratic philosopher whose failure to provide a complete account of the philosophic life reflects his failure or miscalculation in considering the "preconditions for the survival and fostering of that extraordinarily rare sort of young mind or self or personality that alone has the potential to become philosophic in the precise sense" (1988, 272; in general, 262-275). We will argue below that what appears to Pangle as a failure or miscalculation may just as well proceed in Locke's mind from a different assessment of the nature and limits of the philosophic experience, and in particular of its capacity to serve as a model for human striving in general.

conception could not represent Locke's most serious thinking concerning the status of human reason; Locke's most serious thinking must somehow contain an affirmation of the ultimate sovereignty of human reason over human willfulness.

The present reading stands or falls by a qualified rejection of the former alternative and affirmation of the latter. In this view, Locke does not unqualifiedly endorse an instrumental conception of reason and is not a Hobbesian or proto-Nietzschean nihilist, but instead presents such a conception in pursuance of a somewhat paradoxical rhetorical strategy to promote a more moderate, rational form of politics. There can be no doubt that Locke's support for the modern technological project rests to some extent on the pragmatic or utilitarian justification that it serves the cause of social peace; it binds as tightly as possible the interests of the few and the many, in that it creates a material abundance that provides both comfort and security for the latter, and opportunities for power and preeminence for the former. What requires particular emphasis at present, however, is the significance of the fact that Locke explains his support for the technological project by reference not only to such pragmatic considerations, but also to the proposition that that project properly conceived serves also, and indeed cannot serve its pragmatic ends without serving also, the cause of <u>truth</u>, or more

precisely, of respect for truth.

As Zuckert perceptively observes (1974, 555-564), Locke's distinction in the Essay between civil and philosophic forms of discourse (3.9.3) carries the initially surprising implication that the former is all too often in the most important respect more genuinely philosophical than the latter:

> Vulgar Notions suit vulgar Discourses: and both, though confused enough, yet serve pretty well the Market, and the Wake. Merchants and Lovers, Cooks and Taylors, have Words wherewithal to dispatch their ordinary Affairs; and so, I think, might Philosophers and Disputants too, if they had a Mind to understand, and to be clearly understood. (ECHU 3.11.10)

Paradoxically, according to Locke, its task of facilitating and regulating the affairs of ordinary practical life tends to impose a discipline upon civil discourse, guiding it to a degree of respect for reason and truth that is unfortunately absent from much of what purports to be philosophic discourse.[77] People wholly ignorant of the concepts of real essences or substantial forms, who know things only by their sensible qualities, are often according to Locke "better acquainted with their Differences" and "can more nicely distinguish them from their uses...than those learned quick-sighted Men" (3.6.24) in large part because they, unlike the pseudo-philosophers of the schools, have a

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[77]Recall Locke's repeated disparagements of the school philosophers' licentious management of their verbal currency, by contrast with the practical men of affairs' more sober and honest treatment of their own currency. See ECHU 3.10 passim.

genuine, practical interest in making reliable identifications and distinctions (cf. 3.10.8-13). Locke's suggestion can be viewed as a corollary of his more general political project of endowing virtue or justice. In order effectively to combat the theoretical obfuscation and political divisiveness that often proceed from an unregulated desire for power, Locke seems to reason, it is necessary not simply to suppress that desire, but instead to direct it toward material nature as its proper object. Thus directed, the desire for power can provide crucial support for the creation of material abundance and the cultivation of respect for reason and truth, both of which are indispensable elements of a free, stable, secure political society. In accordance with this reasoning, Locke expresses the hope that in bringing his readers to reflect on their use of language by first reflecting on what practical interests their use of language serves, he shall have served not only the cause of "Peace," but also that of "Truth...and Learning" (3.5.16; also 3.9.21).

Like Strauss before him and Pangle after him, Zuckert doubts Locke's sincerity in claiming service to the cause of truth as a standard that transcends ordinary considerations of interest and that therefore enables him to judge civil discourse in the most important respect superior to philosophic discourse. Instead Zuckert infers from the reversal of the rank ordering of the two forms of discourse

that according to Locke "there is no realm of 'pure' philosophic discourse...for there is no class of philosophers aiming at 'true knowledge'; all men have a by-interest" and thus all thought reduces ultimately to ideology, to willful self-assertion (1974, 559). In response to this reading, it may be relevant for us to observe preliminarily that it would be by no means beyond the capacity of a writer such as Locke, ever-sensitive to the character of his audience, to present for rhetorical purposes a reductionist account of reason while maintaining a greater reserve in the presentation of what he considers a more serious account. Locke does after all describe the intended audience of the Essay, however learned or capable, as an essentially nonphilosophic audience;[78] the fact that he chooses to appeal to nonphilosophic, often self-interested persons on the level of self-interest does not in itself imply that he categorically rejects the possibility that human thought or discourse can transcend mere self-interest.

Nor does it in itself imply, of course, that he affirms this possibility. The more powerful evidence that Locke does quietly affirm the sovereign, transcendent

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[78]His addressees, as he claims, are not primarily "men of large Thoughts and quick Apprehensions," but rather "Men of my own size" or scholars ("Epistle to the Reader," in Nidditch ed. 1975, 8). If we concede the ambiguity evident in the reference to "Men of my own size," it seems obvious nonetheless that Locke's intended audience consists primarily, if not exclusively, in nonphilosophers. Cf. Wood 1983, 41-47.

character or potential of human reason appears as an inference from the spirit of modesty or humility that guides Locke's theoretical writing. It is understandable and to some extent justifiable that some might view as a kind of inverted Platonism Locke's suggestion that the most rationally adept turn their attentions away from useless disputations about the nature of "separate Spirits" and like issues, and toward the "useful Arts," whose improvement promises to ameliorate the material condition of humankind (4.12.11,12; also 1.1.5-7). As Socrates in The Republic promotes a turning-away from the ephemeral practical world and toward a realm of eternity accessible (if at all) only through pure theory or contemplation (515c-521b), so Locke may seem to suggest a turning-away from whatever intimations of eternity our experience may contain, and toward an ever-more comprehensive accumulation of power in our practical, secular lives. Perhaps as prominently as one could expect in view of the prevailing circumstances, Locke does indeed make this suggestion. Yet when we consider well the context of his suggestion, we find that Locke's inversion of Plato is not necessarily complete. What is of decisive significance here is the evidence that Locke's promotion of the technological project proceeds not from a dogmatic skepticism or an act of willful ideological closure, but instead from a more genuinely moderate spirit of intellectual modesty and open-

ness.

As we have shown at length in chapters III and IV above, Locke's attempt at reforming the study of nature, and therefore at enhancing our technological power, rests upon both our recognition of our immense ignorance of the natural order and our acceptance of the possibility that through empirical and rational investigation, we can make genuine discoveries and lessen that ignorance. As a practical matter, the degree of care we take in our investigations of nature depends upon our ability to moderate between a dogmatic assurance of the adequacy of our present knowledge and a skepticism so thoroughgoing as to commit us to intellectual paralysis or arbitrariness. The point of those earlier chapters was to emphasize Locke's view that nature is not simply a human construction, that the world external to the mind is not simply a chaos into which we project our ordering, creative wills, and thus that reason in cooperation with empirical investigation can produce at least probabilistically reliable claims of knowledge. What is equally necessary in the present context, however, is to emphasize Locke's characteristic refusal to assent to any dogmatic claim of finality for our knowledge of the external world. As we have seen, seldom in the Essay does Locke miss an opportunity to reiterate the point with which he introduces the work, that "the Comprehension of our Understandings, comes exceeding short of the vast Extent of

Things," though not so far short as to justify despair of the availability of the knowledge required for our genuine concernments (1.1.5).[79]

Now, one might argue that taken in itself, Locke's skepticism regarding the accessibility of a comprehensive, finally adequate science of nature represents only the provisional or tactical skepticism of the technological mind--that it proceeds ultimately from a conception of nature as a sort of void that we cannot comprehend, yet into which we can freely, experimentally project our will, so that our recognition of the limits of our potential knowledge prepares an effective denial of the limits of our potential power. It is for this reason that Locke's modest skepticism regarding our capacity for resolving the ultimate questions of theology is of decisive importance in elucidating the character of the Lockean inversion of Plato. However incomplete or inadequate in their more literal formulations and however exoterically intended, Locke's theologically oriented arguments can be taken to represent the surface or exterior of a more philosophically serious core. Looking beyond his perhaps deservedly ill-received arguments purporting to demonstrate the existence of God or "a god" (especially ECHU 4.10) or to show us how to verify the authenticity of miracles (Works 1823, 9.256ff.), in addition to his bare assertions of the

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[79]See especially chapter III above, pp. 127-147.

authenticity of the Biblical revelation,[80] we find intimations of a more subtle, even more Socratic approach to these questions. For example, when we attempt seriously to give an account of it, what seems to be the outstanding characteristic of our idea of God, according to Locke, is its mysteriousness or incomprehensibility. Prior to any divine revelation, the "rational and thinking part of mankind" or the "heathen philosophers" could conceive of "the one, supreme, invisible God," though they were compelled for the most part to maintain this discovery in secrecy (RC, in Works 1823, 7.135,138). We (monotheists) commonly attribute to God infinity in the possession of such qualities as duration, power, wisdom, goodness, and so forth, but in so doing, we can only conceive of these infinities as negations of boundaries or limits, as the products of endless additions. The upshot for Locke is that "GOD...is infinitely beyond the reach of our narrow capacities" (2.17.1; also 2.16.8).[81] More clearly stated,

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[80]See chapter II above, pp. 69-72.

[81]Cf. ECHU 3.6.11: "...even the most advanced Notion we have of God, is but attributing the same simple Ideas which we have got from Reflection on what we find in our selves, and which we conceive to have more Perfection in them, than would be in their absence, attributing, I say, those simple Ideas to him in an unlimited degree. Thus... we have the complex Idea of an eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, infinitely wise, and happy Being." See also ECHU 1.4.15, 2.23.35; journal entry of 8/17/1681, in King 1830, 123. Cf. Jaffa, commenting on the meaning of the appeal to "Nature's God" in the Declaration of Independence: "Whether the God whom the Signers assume to exist can be proved to exist is not necessary to the argument...What can be

the upshot seems to be that the philosopher's god is in Locke's view virtually identical with the questioning experience of infinity, or with the transcendent mysteriousness of the human condition within the order of being. Locke's view is similar with respect to the question of an afterlife. As reason compels us to maintain an openness to the possibility of the existence of a god, so we "cannot but be certain," as Locke cleverly puts it, "that a future Life is at least possible" (2.21.70; also 44).[82]

Some commentators cite such remarks as evidence of Locke's severe narrowing of the claims of religion or theology on reason.[83] We do not deny either that this is

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proved is that a divine nature is of a certain sort. Such a nature would carry to absolute perfection those partially existing perfections perceivable in man...Men form the idea of such a perfect being, as much to understand the limits of their own humanity, as to decide objectively of that superior being's existence" (1975, 153).

[82]"This therefor is evident that there is pleasure and pain to be had in this life and all that it is possible there may be a state after this life wher in men may be capable of enjoyments or sufferings" ("Morality," in Sargentich 1974, 27). See also "Knowledge, Its Extent and Measure," in King 1830, 89-90.

[83]According to Strauss, even if we attribute to Locke no more radical thought than "some misgivings" concerning the power of his arguments in support of the authenticity of the Christian revelation to persuade all his readers, we must yet conclude that "he was forced to make his political teaching...as independent of Scripture as it could possibly be" (1953, 209; see, more generally, 202-226, and Strauss 1959, 197-220). Pangle "hasten[s] to stress" that "No one who possesses a sympathetic understanding of Locke's political theology could ever pronounce against him the accusation of atheism" (1988, 149), although the general thrust of his assessment of Locke's political theology leads us to wonder whether a "sympathetic" understanding is in Pangle's

Locke's intention or that his remarks have this effect. For present purposes, however, that we cannot know whether there is a personal god or an afterlife is less important than the implication that according to Locke we cannot reasonably deny the existence of either; Locke's most radical, most implicitly skeptical statements concerning these questions do not surpass an insistence on an attitude of rational openness to the possibilities. For this reason, "everyone," every rational, mortal being, "has a concern in a future life which he is bound to look after," according to Locke, and indeed cannot avoid pondering the possibility, at least "sometimes" (CU 8; ECHU 4.20.6).[84]

The implication of Locke's theoretical modesty is that no matter how much practically reliable knowledge, or more pertinently no matter how much power over nature we acquire, there is always a beyond, something that remains mysterious to us, something that eludes or resists our efforts at comprehension or control. Expressed somewhat more broadly, the posture of openness with respect to the questions of god and afterlife means an acknowledgement of a realm of authentic, permanent mysteries, and therewith an

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view equivalent to a fully adequate, reasonable, penetrating understanding. See idem 131-158, 204-211. See also Mansfield 1979, 28, and 1989, 209; Bluhm et al. 1980; Zuckert 1988, 112-117.

[84]Cf. Pascal on the rationality of "wagering" in favor of the existence of God and an afterlife (Pensees III, especially aphorism 233).

openness to the possibility that those permanent, ultimate mysteries provide intimations of the existence of a dispensation that orders insofar as it transcends our practical and theoretical strivings. Therefore, in suggesting to at least some of his readers that they redirect their intellectual energies away from fruitless efforts at resolving the deep questions of ontology and theology and toward the more practically useful, more genuinely charitable study of nature (ECHU 4.12.12), Locke does not necessarily suggest or reveal a posture of intellectual closure, a willful denial of the existence or legitimacy of such questions. He suggests not, for instance, that such questions proceed from a deformed or alienated consciousness whose overcoming is the historical task of humankind,[85] but rather that we simply acknowledge their status as authentic mysteries, reconcile ourselves to a condition of "quiet Ignorance" with respect to them (1.1.4), and focus our attentions on

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[85]The classic expression of such a posture of closure appears in a manuscript of the young Marx, who acknowledges that "the idea of creation is thus one that it is very difficult to drive out of the minds of people," because to do so would contradict "all the evidences of practical life," and yet who proceeds to demand of an imagined interlocutor that the latter give up the "abstraction" from which such questions proceed. "Once the essential reality of man in nature, man as the existence of nature for man, and nature for man as the existence of man, has become evident in practical life and sense experience, then the question of an alien being, of a being above nature and man...has become impossible in practice" ("Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts," in McLellan ed. 1977, 94-95). See the commentary on this passage by Voegelin 1968, especially 23-28, 44-45.

those pursuits whereby we can more directly address our basic concernments.

In the context of this argument, Locke's suggestion that we refocus our intellectual energies on technological pursuits represents not a negation, but to the contrary an affirmation of the limits of human knowledge and power; it implores us not to fancy ourselves the absolutely sovereign creators and masters of nature, but rather to create the conditions for securing that degree of freedom appropriate to our station in the order of being. Our possession of the faculty of reason could supply no firm grounds for the "Dignity and Excellency" of the human species (STCE 31) if it were no more than a technological faculty, an instrument for the achieving of practical aims. Such a faculty would be no more than a power, capable of distinguishing us from the other animals only by virtue of the superior cleverness or facility with which we pursue the objects of our happiness; our claims of human or natural rights could be at bottom nothing more than assertions of power. According to this strain of Locke's argument, the technological mind is not simply identical or coextensive with the human mind, because the realm of human experience is broader than the realm of experience amenable to technological experimentation and control. The dignity of the faculty of reason, and therewith of the human beings who possess it, rests upon its capacity to transcend merely practical objects, to

rise to an awareness of the permanent mysteries that forever stand before and challenge the human understanding as proper objects for its contemplation, that transcend the projects of our wills. Only as a contemplative faculty, exercised for its own sake, can human reason achieve a genuine independence of the will or the passions, and therewith a position of sovereignty within the human self or soul.[86] When Locke insists that we begin our inquiries in a spirit of modest recognition of our own ignorance, he does not refer merely to the sort of ignorance that assiduous empirical or experimental exertions can dispel; he refers to the fact that there are some questions, ultimate questions, about which we are permanently ignorant.

Herein consists the serious core of the principle of "workmanship" that Locke commonly presents as the foundation of much of his moral and political argumentation. In briefly elaborating that principle in the Essay, Locke argues that whoever considers together the two ideas of God and man as God's workmanship must "certainly find that the Inferior, Finite, and Dependent, is under an Obligation to

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[86]Eisenach remarks that "Locke scholars always seek to resurrect elements of autonomous reason in Locke's politics, despite Locke's own denials in his epistemology" (1981, 239 n.28). I do not doubt that Eisenach would find herein a similarly futile effort. It seems to me, however, that, even leaving aside for the moment the fact that a consistent denial of reason's autonomy would make nonsense of the whole of Locke's thought, Locke's implicit denials of that autonomy are hardly unambiguous and must be understood in the light of the spirit of intellectual modesty that inspires and pervades the Essay.

obey the Supreme and Infinite" (4.3.13; also 1.4.13). Albeit in a somewhat revised form, the proposition that the human condition is in the morally ultimate respect a condition of dependence remains tenable even in the absence of a demonstration of the existence of a creating god. If we understand this condition of dependence as signifying more precisely a condition of limited independence or limited sovereignty, we can then maintain the principle of human dependence as a corollary of Locke's theoretical openness, or as an implication of our negative knowledge, our Socratic knowledge of our own ignorance. If we know that there are permanent questions, that the human condition is in the ultimate respects permanently mysterious, that the ultimate origin and destiny of human beings transcend our understanding and our power, then we know that the human condition is in the decisive respect a condition of "mediocrity" or in-betweenness in the order of animate being.[87] We know

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[87]In a 1678 letter to Grenville, Locke remarks that "I have often thought that our state here in this world is a State of Mediocrity which is not capeable of extreams though on one side or other of this mediocrity there might lie great excellency and perfection. Thus we are not capeable of continuall rest nor continuall exercise, though the later has certainly much more of excellency in it. We are not able to labor always with the body nor always with the minde. And to come to our present purpose, we are not capeable of liveing altogeather exactly by a strict rule, nor altogeather without one. not always retired nor always in company. But this being but [an] odde notion of mine it may suffice only to have mentioned it..." (CJL #374; see also "Of Study," in Axtell 1968, 419-420). In addition to its expressions in the workmanship principle, this "odde notion" appears in the Essay in Locke's acknowledgment of "the weakness of our Faculties in this State of Mediocrity,

then that we are not gods, not the all-knowing sovereign creators and masters of nature,[88] and that it would involve a dishonesty, a willful obfuscation, a contraction dis-

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which we are in this World," in particular for acquiring final knowledge of nature (4.12.10; also 4.14.2); in his revised account of the inconstancy of the determination of our wills by the law of reason or toward our greatest happiness (2.21.31-71) and in his related observations of the necessary imperfection of our mundane happiness (2.7.5, 2.21.46); and somewhat more ambiguously, in his characterization of the great chain of animate being, from which, whatever his other motives, one could reasonably infer at minimum an agnostic openness to the possibility that human life or human intelligence is not the highest form in the order of animate being (3.6.12). Though his general emphasis on the significance for Lockean morality of the concept of mediocrity or in-betweenness is thus defensible, Colman attributes far too much credulity to Locke in asserting that Locke "accepts unquestioningly" the doctrine of the great chain of being (1983, 2; also 76-106).

[88]According to this argument, Locke's premise that "Man made not himself nor any other man" and "made not the world which he found made at his birth" implies a fundamental qualification of his assertions of human sovereignty or self-ownership in the Second Treatise (27,44,123). In this view, Locke therein asserts not an absolute, but only a relative property of individuals in themselves, i.e relative to other human beings; he intends not necessarily to assert that the only genuine obligations are those self-imposed, but only to deny that any person is the natural property of any other person. Similarly, the argument points to the limitations of Rapaczynski's observation that Locke attempts "to synthesize praxis and poesis in a unified theory of human activity" (1987, 117). A complete synthesis of these two categories would mean, as Rapaczynski argues, that human action according to Locke is self-production, production of oneself, which would imply once again a justification of a thoroughgoing arbitrariness or willfulness. True, Locke synthesizes the categories of action and production, to the extent that he does, with a view to establishing the ownership of or responsibility for actions (see TT II.27; ECHU 2.27.9,17,18). But as we have seen, the principle of personal responsibility depends on the governing presence of rationality, which is ultimately incompatible with the principle of radical self-creation. Cf. Windstrup 1981.

guised as an expansion of our basic experience, for us to attempt to assume or usurp such a status.

Locke's agnosticism can serve as the grounding for an affirmation not only of the dignity of human reason, but also of the moral principle of human equality, as follows. Our rational capacity represents in its highest expression a capacity to transcend our particular historical conditions and to confront the essential mysteriousness of our human condition. Somewhat paradoxically, we become free, self-knowing, self-possessing beings to the extent that we are able, by confronting our ignorance and our dependence with respect to the ultimate source of our being. Our capacity for law consists then in a capacity to regulate rationally our pursuit of happiness, in accordance with the fundamental, orienting insight into the middling, in-between status of a rational, corporeal, mortal being. It is true that the natural law according to this argument could have no genuinely, categorically obligatory force, if we conceive of genuine obligation as Locke sometimes does, as depending upon a discoverable schedule of otherworldly sanctions to enforce our conformity with that law.[89] The argument does, however, yield a conception of a natural law that obliges hypothetically or with directive force, requiring us to respect the principle of equal natural rights

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[89]See ECHU 1.3.6,12,13; STCE 61; also Strauss 1953, 226.

inasmuch as reason informs us that it is appropriate for beings of our station to do so.[90] More specifically, it would be appropriate for us to respect the principle of equal natural rights by virtue of the fact that whatever the differences in our particular powers of reasoning, in the morally fundamental respect we share a common condition, a common experience of dependence upon a transcendent dispensation. In this way reason can serve as a source of human community, justifying a sense of sympathy for our fellows and a commitment to their preservation and well-being. Tyranny can be attractive to us only insofar as we misunderstand our own nature, insofar as we fail to confront rationally or to recognize the challenge of what transcends us, and therefore mistake human beings as the highest in the order of being, with no proper limits on the projection of our own wills or powers. By means of thus paring away, in the spirit of the modest, moderate skepticism of the Essay, the more dogmatic and less sustainable assertions with which Locke tends to clothe his workmanship principle, Locke has, or would have, at his disposal

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[90]Jaffa observes, without specific reference to Locke, that the "imperatives of natural right have the character of the 'then' clause in an 'if...then' proposition. 'If you would be happy, then you must be virtuous'" (1957, 64). With less sympathy for his subject matter, Von Leyden assimilates Lockean natural law in this respect with that of Grotius and Suarez, according to whom natural law "only indicates whether or not an action is morally necessary," or has only "the nature of a directive rule rather than of a law in the strict sense" (1956, 32).

an essentially Socratic or Platonic conception of the dignity and sovereignty of reason, capable of supporting both the distinction of human beings from lower orders of being and the rejection of any assertion of fundamental moral or jural divisions within the human species.[91]

Now, in view of the apparently "non-Lockean" coloring of much of the foregoing, it is particularly necessary for us to be clear about what, precisely, we are and are not

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[91]Locke has available, in other words, an argument very similar in outline to the argument whereby Jaffa explicates the foundations of the natural rights principles in the Declaration of Independence. "We understand man, and his rights, as much by understanding what he is not, as by understanding what he is. In fact, we understand the latter only by understanding the former...In short, as men are neither beasts nor gods, they ought not to play God to other men, nor ought they to treat other men as beasts" (1975, 153). Contrast Mansfield, who argues that Locke attempts in a more modern manner to conceive of a faculty of reason that distinguishes without dividing us. For Mansfield's Locke, the key to the moderation (or qualified democratization) of the power of reason lies in its mixture with the element of labor or industry (1979, 33-35). Contrast further Pangle, who argues that Locke's utilitarian argumentation proceeds from an "immoderate detestation of his necessarily embattled situation as a philosopher," or from a desire to free himself from "the troublesome need to respond to attack from the defenders of traditional or unadulterated piety and reverence" (1988, 274). If the present argument is correct, there is no need to ascribe to Locke such philosophic aloofness or even selfishness. If Locke maintains seriously his own principle of "mediocrity," then he has grounds for believing in the principle of moral and political equality. His utilitarianism would then proceed from the virtue of care or the sentiment of sympathy for the surrounding community. It seems to me that the relevant evidence that Pangle himself presents with great insight indicates a much greater concern on Locke's part for protecting the community against philosophy, or against the corruptions incident to any serious public attempt at cultivating it, than the reverse.

arguing here. First, we do not suggest that Locke intends to present with any significant emphasis this implicitly Socratic dimension of his thinking as a publicly efficacious source of our moral-political orientation. Pangle, who concedes that the core of the originally Socratic, rationalist philosophic experience remains present and alive in Locke's thought, is perfectly correct in observing that Locke fails to make that experience an explicit theme of his reflections (1988, 265-275). Second, though Locke does seem to believe that such a presentation would be at best of very limited public utility,[92] we are not suggesting that his reluctance to elaborate this Socratic foundation proceeds only or primarily from his estimate of its relative inaccessibility, or for that matter from a fear on his part of the consequences of its relative heterodoxy. We are suggesting more simply and cautiously, and for the moment without commenting on Locke's intentions at all, first that a Socratically inspired argument of the kind adumbrated above is <u>available</u> to Locke, is at his disposal within the boundaries of his epistemological and psychological principles, and second that such an argument contains in the end the only possibility of making coherent sense out of his philosophical-political thought and the life

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[92]See Locke's account of the failure of the ancient philosophers in this respect, in <u>The Reasonableness of Christianity</u> (<u>Works</u> 7.135-151).

that he devoted to it.[93]

From this perspective, the difficulty involved in any attempt at more confidently attributing such an argument to Locke's intention lies in ascertaining why he so steadfastly refuses to give it his clear endorsement. More precisely, the difficulty lies not only in the fact that Locke characteristically presents the workmanship principle in a form that virtually guarantees its dismissal by any serious thinker, and refuses to elaborate the Socratic element of his thought along with its potential moral significance. After all, given his observation that the difference in individuals' understandings renders it impossible that "the same Truth shall be equally relished by every one in the same dress" (ECHU "Epistle to the Reader," 8), it is entirely plausible that in setting forth a program of social as well as intellectual reform, Locke would act upon the principle that the deepest, most theoretically adequate

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[93]That Locke must recognize this appears evident in the following remark, from an unpublished fragment entitled "Ethica B": "The original and foundation of all Law is dependency. A dependent intelligent being is under the power and direction and dominion of him on whom he depends and must be for the ends appointed him by that superior being. If man were independent he could have no law but his own will no end but himself. He would be a god to himself and the satisfaction of his own will the sole measure and end of all his actions" (MS Locke c.28, p.141; quoted in Dunn 1969, 1; emphasis supplied). See also Colman 1983, 46.

arguments may not be the most publically persuasive.[94] The difficulty lies in the fact that Locke evidently does not regard the argument in question as appropriate or persuasive for even the most rational, free-thinking portion of his readership; he flatly, publicly contradicts in the most implicitly radical terms his own suggestion that our openness even to the possibility of an afterlife would, if well considered, provide for us sufficient moral orientation.[95]

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[94]In one of his replies to Stillingfleet, Locke admits to acting on the related principle that it may be unwise to discredit publically even relatively weak arguments that are intended to support true and salutary propositions, in view of the possibility that less discerning readers may find in such arguments "enough to preserve in them true sentiments of religion and morality" (Works 1823, 4.53-54). I am unable to follow Strauss on this point, however, who asserts that Locke hereby admits the weakness of the entire argument developed in ECHU 4.10 (1953, 207). It is clearly implausible that Locke would under any circumstances make such an admission to anyone, let alone Stillingfleet; and in any event Locke clearly refers to an argument specifically mentioned and dropped at 4.10.7.

[95]Contrast ECHU 2.21.70 with 2.21.55. In the latter paragraph, which so far as I am aware constitutes the most extreme statement of moral relativism in the entire Lockean corpus, Locke concludes an ostensible explanation of the diversity of individuals' conceptions of happiness with the following observations: "For if there be no Prospect beyond the Grave, the inference is certainly right, Let us eat and drink, let us enjoy what we delight in, for to morrow we shall die...Men may chuse different things, and yet all chuse right, supposing them only like a Company of poor Insects, whereof some are Bees, delighted with Flowers, and their sweetness; others, Beetles, delighted with other kind of Viands; which having enjoyed for a season, they should cease to be, and exist no more for ever." One might upon first reading believe that Locke intends here to reject the supposition that "there be no Prospect beyond the Grave." Yet he implies in context that he takes the proposition that we have no prospect to be identical in meaning with the proposition that "Men in this Life only have hope." We have seen that Locke denies in principle that we can have

The following questions arise. If Locke holds in the end an essentially Socratic conception of human reason, why does he not more openly and emphatically say so? Why would he sprinkle his works, however subtly, with such morally radical implications--why promote, even alongside his more theologically orthodox professions, a hedonistic, utilitarian, ultimately nihilistic line of reasoning whose promotion is sure to endanger his reputation and may well endanger his career and even his life--if he did not mean them, or intend his most radical readers to believe them? Why, for that matter, if he holds it the most edifying, most dignifying of human activities, does he apparently encourage the most rational portion of his audience to forego a serious, sustained rational confrontation of the ultimate mysteries of the human condition, and to embrace instead a more pragmatically or technologically oriented study of nature? Yet why, on the other hand, if Locke does not seriously believe in the principle of common human dignity,

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knowledge of an afterlife; he affirms that we can know the afterlife only as a possibility, or in other words that we "have only hope." The inescapable implication is that in this passage Locke denies that the possibility of an afterlife can provide us any moral orientation; he suggests that we are "only like a Company of Poor Insects" who should spend our lives in pursuance of transient delights, "for to morrow we shall die." Cf. Burke's fear that under the influence of modern egoism, "Men would become little better than the flies of a summer" (Reflections, in Mahoney ed. 1955, 108). See also Locke's similar denials that our thoughts on the possibility of an afterlife can provide any moral orientation, in The Reasonableness of Christianity (Works 1823, 7.149-150), and in the fragment "Morality" (Sargentich 1974).

if he really believes that we occupy no loftier moral status than that of "a Company of poor Insects" (ECHU 2.21.55), does he devote his adult life to advancing the cause of natural human rights, a cause manifestly indefensible in the absence of a grounding in such a principle of dignity? Who is the real Locke?

THE CRITIQUE OF EROS

In attempting to decide which of the available alternatives represents Locke's deepest reflections--the rationalized, quasi-Socratic version of the workmanship principle or the radically modern, ultimately nihilistic utilitarianism--we are dealing with a matter of judgment, an estimate of relative plausibilities or probabilities. In order to support their case, those who endorse the latter reading have provided a plausible explanation of Locke's common public affirmations of more traditional, less radical foundations for his political principles.[96] In order to defend the more Socratic alternative as at least an equally plausible reading, it is therefore necessary for us to defend the perhaps initially surprising claim that Locke could intend his more radically modern, utilitarian suggestions also to serve an essentially rhetorical, even to some extent exoteric purpose.

The point of departure for this alternative reading consists in a reflection on the significance of Locke's emphasis on the great power of <u>eros</u>, or of the various objects of extra-personal devotion, to stimulate the human inclinations toward willfulness and partisanship. We have

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[96]See Strauss 1953, 165-166, 202-230; Cox 1960, 1-44; Zuckert 1978.

shown above how, notwithstanding occasional assertions to the contrary, Locke regards as inadequate a narrowly egoistic conception of the motivations and concernments of the human self. To repeat, the most telling indication of the self's capacity for self-transcendence lies in the relatively common human willingness to die in the service of causes larger than self-defense or preservation. Yet in Locke's view that same willingness provides also a telling indication of the power and danger of the human propensity for partisanship, a recurrent, governing theme throughout Locke's work.[97] To be a partisan in Locke's sense is to be resistant to rational appeal.[98] In the end, in Locke's estimation, a danger equal to or greater than that posed by egoism or narrow self-absorption lies in the fact that the desire for self-preservation is so frequently overpowered by other desires--that people too easily allow the expansion of their spheres of vital concernment, or that we are so frequently all too willing to sacrifice ourselves in

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[97]On partisanship or sectarianism in general, see TT II.42; ECHU 1.3.14, 2.33.18, 3.10.2ff., 4.3.6,20, 4.20.18; CU 3,34,41; also Wood 1983, 101-109.

[98]"[W]hat one of a hundred," he asks rhetorically, "of the zealous bigots in all parties ever examined the tenets he is so stiff in, or ever thought it his business or duty so to do?" (CU 34). The effect of this characteristic obstinacy is to render real communication impossible, as "the contending learned Men of different Parties do, in their Arguings one with another...speak different Languages" (ECHU 3.10.22).

acts of uncritical devotion to larger causes.[99]

Locke's concern over the human propensity for partisanship, or over the fragility of human reason that it reflects, is abundantly evident in his treatments of the more common or prominent modes of our expansive affections. Although, as we have seen, Locke occasionally appeals to such affections as supports of our duties or sources of our happiness, the more immediately noticeable characteristics of those appeals are their infrequency and their considerable ambiguity. Such is the case, for instance, with respect to his treatment of the sentiment of patriotism, which, notwithstanding his references to his readers' duty to country and to the "generous Temper and Courage" of the English nation, is marked in general by neglect and at least implicit hostility. The relevant textual discussions certainly contain no suggestion that Locke conceives of any romantic absorption into a supposed national will as an appropriate sentimental support for the performance of individual obligations. If anything, Locke's argument in the Second Treatise serves to undercut the sentiment of

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[99]"I easily grant, that there are great numbers of Opinions, which, by Men of different Countries, Educations, and Tempers, are received and embraced as first and unquestionable Principles; many whereof, both for their Absurdity, as well as oppositions one to another, it is impossible should be true. But yet all these Propositions, how remote soever from Reason, are so sacred somewhere or other, that Men even of good Understanding in other matters, will sooner part with their Lives, and whatever is dearest to them, than suffer themselves to doubt, or others to question, the truth of them" (ECHU 1.3.21).

patriotism. Not only does he maintain therein the ultimate arbitrariness of political boundaries, devoting little attention to the argument that such boundaries should correspond to national divisions,[100] but he also explains the enduring fact of political divisions among humankind only by reference to "the corruption, and vitiousness of degenerate Men," without which there would be no need for any society other than the community of "Mankind...one Society distinct from all other Creatures" (II.128; cf. II.14). Apparently in keeping with the same intention, Locke leaves little ground for confusing his doctrine of political liberty with a doctrine of republican liberty in the classical sense. By carefully avoiding any reference to "citizens"

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[100]I take this to be the implication of Locke's loose stipulation, issued without further qualification, that "Wherever...any number of Men are so united into one Society" as to surrender their natural executive powers, "there and there only is a Political, or Civil Society" (II.89), also of his apparently approving observation of the historical frequency of "Men withdrawing themselves...from the Jurisdiction they were born under...and setting up new Governments in other places" (II.115), and finally of his observation that it "seldom happens, that...Conquerors and Conquered never incorporate into one People, under the same Laws and Freedom," again with the implication that the free consent of a conquered people to a benign conqueror suffices to establish the legitimacy of the government of the latter, irrespective of considerations of nationality (II.178). I cannot agree with Seliger, therefore, in the assertion that "Locke's political society presupposes the coexistence of contractual with such natural ties as the modern conception of a nation associates with it" (1969, 22). Seliger seems thus to underappreciate the indissoluble link between liberty and preservation in Locke's thought, such that the imperative of preservation for Locke renders rational one's consent even to a government that does not represent one's nationality.

or any insistence on participatory freedom, he attempts to maintain the assertiveness of free "subjects" or "members" in an essentially defensive posture, intent on the protection of the self's sphere of privacy but resisting the absorption of that sphere into a larger, collective, public sphere.[101] Locke's treatments of the issue of patriotism and of the closely related issue of civic virtue in the Second Treatise appear thus to be governed by the opinion that national and political identities both reflect and exacerbate the human propensity for divisiveness or partisanship, and are therefore to be diluted or subordinated as a precondition of the achievement of a truly liberal, stable, moderate, consensual politics.[102]

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[101]To his friend Edward Clarke, Locke expresses the hope that "the zeale and forwardness of you your selves [i.e. the House of Commons] makes it needlesse for us without dores soe much as to thinke of the publique which is the happyest state a country can be in, when those whose businesse it is, take such care of affairs that all others quietly and with resignation acquiesce and thinke it superfluous and impertinent to medle or beat their heads about them" (CJL #1326, 10/17/1690). Cf. Jefferson's reflection on the ultimate guarantor of happiness and prosperity in his first inaugural address: "a wise and frugal government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, which shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government, and this is necessary to close the circle of our felicities" (in Koch and Peden eds. 1944, 323; also Jefferson to Madison, 6/9/1793, idem 523-524).

[102]In an entry in his "Common-Place Book" entitled "Amor Patriae," Locke appears to conceive of patriotism or love of country as an instance of the association of ideas, in particular as an association or outgrowth of private affections. "The remembrance of pleasures and conveniences we have had there; the love of our friends, whose conversa-

The same rhetorical design appears still more clearly in Locke's analogous reflections, once again scattered throughout his work, on the sentiments of friendship and familial love. Again notwithstanding his published intimations and his more expansive private testimony concerning the power and sweetness of such sentiments, it is undeniable that the attitude toward them that predominates in his published works, and especially in those more immediately concerned with politics, is much more narrowly utilitarian and emotionally austere. The Second Treatise contains but three direct references to friendship, none of which emphasizes the power of friendship to bring meaning and completion to individuals' lives. In a discussion of parental rights and obligations, Locke mentions as an aside that a person may owe "defence to his Child or Friend" (II.70); in his discussion of the beginning of political

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tion and assistance may be pleasant and useful to us; and the thoughts of recommending ourselves to our old acquaintance, by the improvements we shall bring home, either of our fortunes or abilities, or the increase of esteem we expect for having travelled and seen more than others of this world... all these preserve in us, in long absence, a constant affection to our country." Cf. Tarcov 1983, 136. Yet "the chief cause, that keeps us a longing after our country," Locke suggests pregnantly, is the fact that "Whilst we are abroad we look upon ourselves as strangers there...and the mind is not easily satisfied with anything it can reach to the end of. But when we are returned to our country, where we think of a lasting abode, wherein to set up our rest, an everlasting abode...we do not propose to ourselves another country whither we think to remove..." (in King 1830, 291-292). On the implications of the mind's dissatisfaction with transience, see note 114 below.

societies, he supposes (questionably, as it turns out[103]) that the members of political societies in the beginning must have "some Acquaintance and Friendship together," only to draw the inference that "they could not but have greater Apprehensions of others, than of one another..." (II.107). He makes clear his view of the possible consequences for domestic politics, in raising the obvious difficulty with the individual exercise of executive power: "it is unreasonable for Men to be Judges in their own Cases," precisely because "Self-love will make Men partial to themselves and their Friends" (II.13). Friendship appears in the Second Treatise as a power that divides just as it unites, that moves us to feel the alienness of non-friends in proportion as we experience friends as extensions of ourselves. It appears, in other words, as little more than an occasion of partiality or partisanship. The same can be said of familial love: Locke's widely remarked utilitarian conception of marital and familial relations in the Second Treatise can be understood as an attempt not only at correcting the tendency for excessive parental tenderness to cultivate habits of slavishness and dependence in their children,[104]

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[103]Cf. the passage under examination here with II.112, 115,175; see the discussion in chapter V, pp. 263-272.

[104]Cf. Seliger 1968, 238-241; Pangle 1988, 230-243. The cultivation of such slavishness can be seen as a consequence of an excessive sense of self-extension on the part of parents; to identify oneself with one's child may facilitate a salutary sense of devotion, but it may also in more extreme cases move parents to appropriate their childrens'

but also at tempering the love of one's own, which when taken to an extreme can produce a spirit of clannishness that corrupts and fractures the public sphere.[105]

Among all self-transcending or self-expanding human devotions, however, unquestionably the deepest and most dangerous, the most productive of partisanship, according to Locke, are those associated with religion or theology--or more fundamentally still, are those associated with attempts, whether ostensibly by reason or revelation, at gaining knowledge of divinity or eternity. "The three great things that govern mankind," he observes in a 1681 journal entry, "are Reason, Passion, and Superstition; the first governs a few, the two last share the bulk of mankind...but superstition is most powerful, and produces the greatest mischiefs" (in King 1830, 120). It is, broadly understood, the theological dimension of partisanship, its faith in the divine authorization of its mission, that most concerns Locke. The theological partisanship that he judg-

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sense of agency or responsibility, thus impairing their development into free, self-disposing beings.

[105]Locke indicates his disagreement with Hooker on this point, in diverging from Hooker's explanation of the basis of equality. In the latter's view, it is men's "Duty, to Love others than themselves, for seeing those things which are equal, must needs all have one measure." It seems to be the weakness less of our capacity to love others, according to Locke, than of our ordinary capacity to love others <u>equally</u> that leads Locke to explain the basis of equality in the "independent" status of individuals rather than in an obligation to mutual love (II.5,6). See Zuckert 1978, 60.

es dangerous is a form of "enthusiasm," of purely willful, nonrational or irrational assent. The paradigmatic example of such assent is the pretension among such partisans that they are the recipients of a divine revelation, "that they are under the peculiar guidance of Heaven in their Actions and Opinions..." (4.19.5).

Notwithstanding, therefore, his often-repeated declaration that the true ground of morality can only be "the Will and Law of a God, who sees Men in the dark, has in his Hand Rewards and Punishments, and Power enough to call to account the Proudest Offender" (ECHU 1.3.6), and notwithstanding further his claim that any serious reflection on the phenomena of causation confirms the proposition of the existence of a supreme being (ECHU 1.4.9-10; 4.10 passim), Locke expresses throughout his career a deep concern over the power of religious or quasi-religious sentiment to stimulate partisanship or sectarianism. In his early Two Tracts on Government, he testifies in the preface that "I no sooner perceived myself in the world but I found myself in a storm, which hath lasted almost hitherto," and proceeds to argue that a denial of the civil sovereign's authority to "determine the use of indifferent things relating to religion" would provide "only a liberty for contention, censure, and persecution and turn us loose to the tyranny of a religious rage" (ETG 119,125,120; also LTG 210-211). Much later, commenting on "those Absurdities,

that fill almost all the Religions which possess and divide Mankind," Locke observes plaintively that "Religion which should most distinguish us from Beasts, and ought most peculiarly to elevate us, as rational Creatures, above Brutes, is that wherein Men often appear most irrational, and more senseless than Beasts themselves" (ECHU 4.18.11).[106]

Theological sectarianism or fanaticism as Locke diagnoses it proceeds from two general causes. Its permissive cause lies in the willingness and even eagerness of flocks of people to embrace unreflectively the dogmatic teachings of one theological authority or another. The "greatest part of the Partisans of most of the Sects in the World" hold in the strict sense, according to Locke, no genuine opinions of their own, and often become militant defenders of their received dogmas not in spite of, but rather because of that fact. "They are resolved to stick to a Party, that Education or Interest has engaged them in; and there, like the common Soldiers of an Army, shew their Courage and Warmth, as their Leaders direct, without ever examining, or so much as knowing the Cause they contend

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[106]See also Locke's more private remark to a French acquaintance: "...les bestes sont plus sages que nous autres parceque comme dit une de nos poets burlesques... 'But noe beast ever was so slight/For man, as for his god to fight/They have more wit alas! and know/Themselves and us better than soe'" (Correspondence #623, 2/9/1681 to Toinard; the verse is from Butler, Hudibras I.i.775-778). Cf. TT I.58.

for" (ECHU 4.20.18). In many cases, partisan assent simply attests to the great power of custom in forming human minds and characters. The power of custom in shaping our opinions results in part from the laborious character of serious inquiry. As is the case with material property, it is far easier to acquire one's opinions by inheritance than by industry; and unlike that of inheriting property, the opportunity of inheriting opinions extends to virtually all members of society. Moreover, the powerful desire for esteem may discourage even the relatively industrious from inquisitiveness, insofar as the challenging of orthodox or fashionable opinions may invite the opprobrium of one's fellows (CU 34; ECHU 1.3.25, 2.28.12, 3.10.4).[107]

Given thus both the lack of opportunity or inclination for most people to reflect seriously on their principles, and the fact that "most Men cannot...be at quiet in their Minds, without some Foundation or Principles to rest their Thoughts on" (1.3.24), the commonness of the human propensity to render nonrational assent should come as little surprise. But it does call attention to the extreme importance of the formation of opinions among the "Leaders" of parties, who do so much to form others' opinions, and

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[107]Or it may, as in Locke's own experience, invite worse than opprobrium; surely not the least cause of nonrational assent is the fact that many people are "cooped in close, by the Laws of their Countries, and the strict guard of those, whose Interest it is to keep them ignorant" (ECHU 4.20.4), or if not wholly ignorant, orthodox.

with such potentially grave consequences. In reflecting upon the character of the latter, Locke suggests with some understatement that "If we could but see the secret Motives, that influenced the Men of Name and Learning in the World, and the Leaders of Parties, we should not always find, that it was the embracing of Truth for its own sake, that made them espouse the Doctrines, they owned and maintained" (4.20.17). To the contrary, Locke observes throughout his career that the passion of ambition, the desire for dominion or self-aggrandizement, constitutes the more active or efficient cause of theological partisanship. In the English Tract he argues that a proper religious liberty does not include "a liberty for some men at pleasure to adopt themselves children of God, and from thence... proclaim themselves heirs of the world; not a liberty for ambition to pull down well-framed constitutions...not a liberty to be Christians so as not to be subjects" (121). Supporting the opposite constitutional principle in his 1667 "Essay Concerning Toleration," he similarly decries the propensity of "depraved ambitious human nature" to assume "something of a godlike power" in the attempt at enforcing uniformity in religious worship (in Fox Bourne 1876, 1.178). It is in the Essay Concerning Human Understanding, however, that Locke presents his most elaborate and penetrating analysis of the enthusiastic propensity to interpret one's strongest inclinations, however bizarre, as

directives from heaven:

> the love of something extraordinary, the Ease and Glory it is to be inspired and be above the common and natural ways of Knowledge so flatters many Men's Laziness, Ignorance, and Vanity, that when once they are got into this way of immediate Revelation...'tis a hard matter to get them out of it. (4.19.8)

In attempting to appreciate the extent of Locke's respect for the depth and profundity of the human desire for dominion at its extremes, it is important for us first to notice that the doctrinal expressions of that desire are not in Locke's view confined to the realm of theology narrowly conceived. Throughout the Essay, Locke characteristically uses the terms "party" and "sect"[108] in reference not only to theological, but also to certain philosophical schools; whereas the "Romanist[s]" provide a theological example, the "Peripatetick[s]," Platonists, and Epicureans are examples of "Sect[s] in Philosophy" (3.10.14). Moreover, the philosophical or quasi-philosophical sects in the schools that Locke observes firsthand tend paradoxically to provide theoretical support for the irrationalism or enthusiasm that he finds so prevalent among the theological sects. This points to the deeper significance of his sustained and vigorous attack on the scholastic philosophers whose dominance over the English universities lingers even to his own day.

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[108]He tends to use these terms interchangeably, as at ECHU 4.20.18, where he refers to "the Partisans of most of the Sects in the World..."

As we have seen, the "Schoolmen and Metaphysicians" as Locke presents them are abusers of speech, wholly absorbed in abstract, purely formal, aridly logical disputations, arrogantly eschewing any real empirical inquiry. In effect, according to Locke, the scholastics are in the realm of theory what the "Quarrelsom and Contentious" (TT II.34) are in the realm of practice; their fondness for displaying rhetorical virtuosity serves ultimately to precipitate an intellectual state of war, wherein words and arguments serve as weapons and the purpose for their exchange is not to enlighten, but only to prevail (3.10.7; also 3.5.16; CU 42). The scholastic conception of argumentation, as Locke presents it, constitutes the theoretical or ideological form of willful self-assertion. The crucial point here, however, is that the theoretical expressions of willfulness do not merely parallel, but also support and strengthen the more directly practical forms. The scholastic abusers of words have not confined their attentions to mere "logical Niceties, or curious empty Speculations." They have "invaded the great Concernments of Humane Life and Society"; they have "obscured and perplexed the material Truths of Law and Divinity...and if not destroyed, yet in great measure rendered useless, those two great Rules, Religion and Justice" (3.10.12,8; also 13).

Locke repeatedly and emphatically contends that these destructive effects proceed from no mere inadvertency, but

rather from "wilful Faults and Neglects" (3.10.1). The scholastics act as purveyors of "affected Obscurity, "filling their discourse "with abundance of empty unintelligible noise and jargon" (3.10.6,4), often in a spirit of sheer dishonesty, in order "to cover some Weakness of their Hypothesis" or to "hinder their weak parts from being discovered" (3.10.2,6). By marshalling "Legions of obscure, doubtful, and undefined Words" to guard their "strange and absurd Doctrines" against rational scrutiny, making their "Retreats, more like the Dens of Robbers, or Holes of Foxes, than the Fortresses of fair Warriours," they have sought and in large measure acquired "Glory and Esteem" along with "Authority and Dominion" (3.10.8,9; also 12,28). In their motives and aspirations as Locke presents them, the schoolmen are akin to liars, robbers, and conquerors; they are intellectual criminals or even tyrants whose subtly, insidiously intellectualized form of criminality makes them no less and perhaps at bottom more practically dangerous than those less artful in concealing their designs.[109] Reflecting on the resistance to reason charac-

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[109]Zuckert comments that though this is not Locke's last word on the subject, "Locke's suggestion as to the character of the by-interests is certainly ungracious and reflects perhaps worse on him than on those of whom he speaks" (1974, 558 n.32). Locke's incivility toward the scholastics is obviously incongruous with the spirit of modesty and toleration that generally animates the Essay, as well as the emphasis on civility in his educational writing (STCE 67,93,141-145). The incongruity here seems to proceed from Locke's more general attempt at attaching our pride to our rationality. The peculiar odiousness and

teristic of the partisan enthusiast, Locke wonders "how almost can it be otherwise, but that he should be ready to impose on others Belief, who has already imposed on his own?" (4.19.2). Further, from this implicit warning one might draw the corollary that whoever tyrannizes over others' faculties can only be expected to tyrannize over their bodies, their entire persons, as well. It is after all no "small power it gives one Man over another," Locke warns, "to have the Authority to be the Dictator of Principles, and Teacher of unquestionable Truths" (1.4.24).

In objecting to scholastic philosophy and theology in particular, Locke objects to a mode of thinking that lends itself far too easily to the service of the human passion for glory or dominion, if indeed it is not at bottom a mere projection of that desire. When we reflect on this particular critique, however, we come to question whether or to what extent it applies in Locke's view not merely to late-medieval scholasticism, but in principle to the rest of the

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dangerousness of Locke's scholastics lie in their implicit treatment of arguments as weapons, and interlocutors and audiences as potential subjects to be vanquished thereby, or as irrational creatures incapable of judging and pursuing their own goods. Scholasticism then represents an affront to our rationality, to our capacity for self-government, to our very dignity as human beings. Thus according to this reading, in the Essay as well as in the Two Treatises Locke seeks to fortify human rationality, appealing to his readers' natural love of independence as the psychological support of a proper respect for reason. In seeking to arouse anger at the schoolmen, he seeks to arouse anger at irrationality as such.

"pre-modern consciousness,"[110] the Biblical-Classical moral and intellectual tradition. For what seems, according to Locke, particularly to suit scholasticism for the service of the passions of self-aggrandizement is not only its disputatious, polemical mode of reasoning, but also, and perhaps more fundamentally, the characteristic objects of its reasonings. At one point Locke assimilates to the schoolmen "the Philosophers of old," who like the former would gain glory "for their great and universal Knowledge" (3.10.8). Inasmuch as he immediately qualifies this remark by explaining that it is "the disputing and wrangling Philosophers I mean, such as Lucian wittily, and with reason taxes," it is doubtful that Locke intends thus to characterize the great classical Greek philosophers as mere lovers of glory.[111] But it is far less doubtful that accor-

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[110]Zuckert 1973, 69.

[111]Locke appends to his remark a footnote directing his readers to three of Lucian's comedies in particular: Bis Accusatus, Vitarum Auctio, and Convivium. In Bis Accusatus, the voice of Justice distinguishes Socrates, whose sincere defense of the worthiness of justice proved inefficacious, from the contemporary schools of philosophers who "quarrel so among themselves," and who "make so free with my name" yet "show no inclination at all to put my principles into practice" (Works 1905, III.147-148). In the Essay Locke is notably more generous to Aristotle himself than to Aristotle's professed followers among Locke's contemporaries, taking pains in the midst of his critique of the syllogistic form of reasoning to insist that he intends thereby "not...to lessen Aristotle, whom I look upon as one of the greatest Men among the Antients; whose large Views, acuteness and penetration of Thought, and strength of Judgment, few have equalled" (4.17.4). On the other hand, this is by no means to deny the significance of Locke's general failure, in his educational writings, to

ding to Locke in the nature of the "old," premodern philosophers' publicly professed aspiration to "great and universal Knowledge" is the power to stimulate the vanity of those perhaps least in need of such stimulation.

Just as Locke holds that the prevalence of scholastic disputation bears most heavily on the great human concernments of religion and justice, so he seems more generally to view the most important focus of the premodern philosophic aspiration as the search for the human "Summum bonum" (2.21.55). If the love of glory tends to corrupt the love of truth or wisdom, then it would seem to follow that the pursuit of the highest truths, corresponding to the deepest human concernments and thus promising the greatest glory to their discoverers,[112] is most susceptible to this form of corruption.[113] In the Second Treatise and still more clearly in Some Thoughts Concerning Education,

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include the works of Aristotle (to say nothing of his complete neglect of Plato) among the front rank of works he recommends for special study. See STCE 185-186. In a draft letter to the Countess of Peterborough, Locke allows that in the study of "True politics" as "a part of moral philosophy...Aristotle may be best to begin with," supplemented later by "more modern writers of government" (in Axtell 1968, 395-396). See also "Some Thoughts Concerning Reading and Study for a Gentleman," in Axtell 1968, 400, 403.

[112]On the glory of religious founders, cf. Machiavelli, The Prince 6; Discourses 1.10.

[113]Cf. Pangle: "Among civilized and educated men influenced by priests, theologians, and philosophers," according to Locke, "the most insidiously powerful desire is the one for the Summum Bonum" (1988, 184).

Locke identifies the most dangerous human desire or the "Root of all Evil" as the desire of "having in our Possession, and under our Dominion, more than we have need of" (STCE 110; TT II.37). The human desire of having more than we need represents in its extremity a desire to transcend once and for all our necessitous, incomplete natural condition, to achieve a final state of fullness or completion, to be perfectly free and absolutely sovereign--to imitate and even to identify ourselves with God, or with the highest, freest, most powerful being we can conceive of. In the Essay's discussion of the power of volition, Locke remarks on our good fortune to be determined in willing not by the greater prospective good, but rather by the greatest uneasiness present to our senses. His immediate intention is to explain how many people can maintain a sense of contentment with a "moderate portion of good" or a succession of ordinary Enjoyments"; if it were otherwise, "we should be constantly and infinitely miserable; there being infinite degrees of happiness, which are not in our possession" (2.21.44). But the implication relevant for the present argument is that for a person ruled by the expansive desires, a serious contemplation of the infinite, and therefore of the infinite degrees of happiness beyond what is present to us and especially of "the infinite and eternal Joys of Heaven" (2.21.38), may very well make life a constant and infinite misery. For such people, it would

seem, mortal life could be made bearable only by embracing the thought that it is within one's power--perhaps by withdrawing from the world, perhaps by attempting actively to recreate it--to achieve the infinite, to obtain for oneself the heavenly joy of final completeness or self-sufficiency, of the infinite freedom and power whose absence brings such misery.[114]

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[114]Locke's view of the moral significance of the fact of mortality is complex and difficult. As we have seen, according to Locke the human condition of "mediocrity," involving especially the unavailability of any pure, unmixed pleasure or happiness, makes some awareness of and reflection on the possibility of an afterlife unavoidable for even a minimally rational person (ECHU 2.7.5, 2.21.46, 4.20.3,6; see pp. 376-383 above). The moral or legislative implications of this fact, however, are problematic. First, the natural or unreflective human propensity for absorption in the present appears in many people to minimize the effect of this thought on their behavior (2.21.44, 60; 2.28.9, 12). The suspicion of the greater likelihood that death is a mere void or nothingness may do the same (2.21.55; Works 1823, 7.6-7). Second, among those over whom the thought of an afterlife exercises some significant power, it is by no means clear that that power will serve the endowment of virtue (7.149-151), or that it will take the form of an "expectation" that "carries a constant pleasure with it" ("Thus I Think," in King 1830, 307). It may produce in the manner presently described an overpowering, expansive desire for the fullness of heaven, or it may produce an immoderate, incapacitating fear (STCE 115,191). As Strauss observes, Locke goes so far in his unpublished work on the law of nature as to hint that "the creation of man as a mortal being which knows of its own mortality cannot be due to a being which loves man" (1959, 213-214; see LN 5.161-163). On the human uneasiness or revulsion at the experience of transience, see "Amor Patriae," in King 1830, 291-292. Cf. the expansive uneasiness Locke fears with that of Nietzsche's Zarathustra: "if there were gods, how could I endure not to be a god! Hence there are no gods" (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, 2.2 [Kaufmann ed. 1954, 198]). Locke's attempt is to teach us to endure our condition of in-betweenness, to bear not to be God without thereby inviting others to act as gods over us.

In thus reflecting on the deeper significance of the scholastics' intellectual tyranny and of the partisan enthusiasts' tendency to proclaim their own opinions as the directly revealed word of God, in effect to usurp God's dominion, we return ultimately to the fundamental issue, namely Locke's respect for the enormous and enormously destructive power inherent in "the busy and boundless Fancy of Man" (ECHU 2.1.2; also 4.19.3,6,11). "[Tis] Phansye," the young Locke writes privately, that "is the great commander of the world" and that "rules us all under the title of reason," acting as "the great guide both of the wise and the fooleish" (to [Thomas Westrowe], CJL #81, 10/20/1659). Locke's emphasis on the moral primacy of the ego or self, his insistent explanation of what may appear to be experiences of genuine sociality or self-transcendence as instead experiences of mere self-extension or self-expansion, reflects his urgently felt need to call attention to the sobering ease and frequency with which the human fancy seduces its proper governor, or eclipses its "only Star and compass," the guiding, directive power of reason (TT I.58). The human experiences of love or devotion--for country, for family and friends, but especially for God and for reason itself--serve in Locke's view as powerful stimuli for our fanciful, willful inclination to endow our particular affections with transcendent significance and thereupon to demand that others embrace or bow to them. It is only too

human, according to Locke, for us to create gods or visions of human completion and then to attempt to stride the earth as their prophetic messengers, in effect to create or re-create the world so that we may rule it ourselves.

Herein lies, then, a plausible rationale for Locke's firm refusal to appeal to any vision of human completion as a source of moral and political orientation. It is clear that the primary business of political philosophy in Locke's view is not to raise the aspirations of political societies toward ennobling but potentially intoxicating visions of the best, but rather to educate them to recognize the constraints imposed by natural necessity and thus to prepare them to defend themselves against the worst, to assist them in constructing the "best fence against Rebellion" (TT II.226).[115] Locke's great respect for the human propensity for partisanship, for the corrupting, disordering power of the human fancy, implies that he may well

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[115]Grant observes aptly that according to Locke the "most important task" of political theory "is to let men know what political evil is" (1987, 203). Cf. Mansfield: "To cool the ambition of religious fervor and replace it with decent calculation of self-interest, Locke sketches out a demonstrative morality according to which we are wholly absorbed in meeting our necessities. By this view we shall find it in our interest always to consult necessity and live as we must without taking on the risks of enterprise" (1989, 208). See also Cox (1960, 165-195) on the primacy of foreign policy in Locke's political thought. More fundamental in this respect is Locke's emphasis on the primacy of pain in human experience. See especially ECHU 2.1.21, 2.20.6; STCE 126; Locke's journal entry of 7/16/76, in Von Leyden 1954, 265-268; and the discussion in Strauss 1953, 249-251.

maintain, in his most serious thinking, the propositions of the sovereignty of reason and of the possibility of teleological moral reasoning, and yet feel rhetorically compelled to de-emphasize or to render problematic his support for such propositions in public, at least to certain portions of his public audience. That the implications of the utilitarian strain of Locke's presentation are incontestably radical and even dangerous does not in itself prove that this strain represents Locke's most serious thinking;[116] he may well find the implications of the contrary alternative more dangerous still.

We have argued at some length in this chapter and those preceding it that Locke's highly self-conscious modesty and openness to empirical evidence, his insistence on

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[116]Contrast Seliger, who asserts that "according to [Strauss'] "esoteric method the inoffensive views must be cancelled; they are intended to mislead the censor and protect the writer" (1968, 34). Though he clearly errs in conceiving of this manner of interpretation as a preconceived method to be inflexibly applied to the reading of any text, Seliger is not wrong in observing a tendency, quite commonly justified, among Straussian readers to conclude that the most radical statements or implications of an esoteric writer must reflect that writer's most serious intention. Such conclusions normally rest upon the absence of any plausible alternative for explaining the presence of textually anomalous statements that it is clearly contrary to an author's narrow interest to make. As Zuckert points out in response to Seliger and others, however, the imperative of self-preservation, and by implication of avoiding or concealing "offensive" views, is by no means the only or the highest reason for esoteric writing (1978, 63). I am suggesting that even Locke's utilitarian or Hobbesian strain may not represent his deepest understanding of the human condition, but instead may be intended to serve for a certain portion of his audience a pedagogical purpose.

the possibility of a rational pursuit of happiness over against the countervailing forces of passion, custom, enthusiasm, and the irrational association of ideas, even his acknowledgement of the occasional legitimacy of prerogative power, with its implicit allowance of the limitation of the claim of consent by the claim of wisdom,[117] all require the sovereignty of reason within the human mind or self. When we consider the defensiveness of Locke's thought in conjunction with these facts, it seems most plausible to infer that Locke maintains in his deeper reflections an awareness of the limits of the utilitarian principle. On the basis of the available evidence, it

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[117]Wallin maintains that for Locke "Government becomes based on consent in a more explicit manner than ever before for the very reason that consent or agreement is thought to be so arbitrary" (1984, 157). But with respect to the prerogative power of the "wisest and best Princes," Locke comments that "such God-like Princes indeed had some Title to Arbitrary Power, by that Argument, that would prove Absolute Monarchy the best Government, as that by which God himself governs the Universe by: because such Kings partake of his Wisdom and Goodness" (II.165,166). It is true, of course, that Locke decisively rejects "that Argument" to which he refers; but the fact that he admits the legitimacy of prerogative power at all, of executive action "without the prescription of the Law, and sometimes even against it" (160) in furtherance of the public good, implies an acknowledgement on his part of the claim of genuine wisdom to supersede consent, or of the partial force of the classical argument in support of a natural right of the wise to rule. This means that for Locke wisdom must be distinct from or nonreducible to consent, as reason must be distinct from and nonreducible to will. Locke's emphasis on consent implies that the sovereignty of reason is politically problematic; it does not imply the sovereignty of will over reason. His difficult discussion of tacit consent seems to carry a similar implication (II.119-122), as does his support for the principle of representation (especially II.154-158; contrast Rousseau, Social Contract 2.1, 3.15).

seems most plausible to infer that Locke's abstraction from eros, his appeal to a principle of egoistic utilitarianism or of the moral primacy of the self and its pursuit of happiness as the basis of natural human rights, and further his reluctance to present detailed treatments of foundational questions,[118] proceed in Locke's own mind less from a theoretical than from a merely practical or rhetorical necessity. It appears, in other words, that his relative narrowing of the political horizon proceeds from a judgment less of the ultimate theoretical groundlessness of various conceptions of human completion or fulfillment than of

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[118]Locke begins the concluding chapter of the First Treatise by declaring, "The great Question which in all Ages has disturbed Mankind, and brought on them the greatest part of those Mischiefs which have ruin'd Cities, depopulated Countries, and disordered the Peace of the World, has been, Not whether there be Power in the World, nor whence it came, but who should have it" (I.106). This declaration seems somewhat disingenuous in implying that the clarity with which it establishes the title to authority is the primary criterion whereby a political theory should be judged. To say nothing of other difficulties, Locke's awareness of the frequent dependence of disputes over title on the question of the foundation of political authority is beyond question. As Grant observes, the "first task of theory" for Locke "is a normative one...to identify a standard of legitimate authority that does not dissolve into 'might makes right,'" while its second task is to meet the criterion of clarity, to "teach us how to recognize who has [authority]" (1987, 52-53). In contenting himself explicitly to argue against Filmer that the principle of divine right cannot meet the criterion of clarity, Locke implies that the divine right principle (and by implication, that of the natural right of the wise) resolves into an assertion of faith or will. A complete defense of the principle of consent then requires a defense of reason against faith or will as the proper foundation of politics, a defense that Locke is characteristically reluctant to elaborate clearly and completely.

their public dangerousness. If so, then Locke's break with the premodern tradition of political philosophy would be much less radical, and the foundations of his liberalism more secure, than his most powerful critics allow.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION: THE PROBLEM OF NATURAL RIGHTS

Commenting on the problem of preserving the world's most Lockean regime, the young Lincoln insists that "All the armies of Europe, Asia, and Africa combined...could not by force, take a drink from the Ohio, or make a track on the Blue Ridge, in a trial of a thousand years." Whatever danger may arise "must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad" ("The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions," in Current ed. 1967, 12). Blessed on the whole with the most favorable historical conditions, the United States in Lincoln's view can best secure itself as a free society by securing itself against the dangers generally incident to free societies, against the dangers to which such societies tend naturally to be susceptible. He suggests implicitly that the theoretical problem of preserving a free society, of preserving a societal attachment to the idea of freedom under law, reduces to the problem of forming domestic public opinion.

Guided by the principle that at least in a free or open society, the soundness of the formation of public opinion depends in large part upon the soundness of its theoretical foundations, we have attempted in the present

work to uncover and elucidate the foundations of Lockean natural right. In the course of that attempt, we have struggled, as virtually all of Locke's commentators have struggled, to understand the significance of the extraordinary complexity and difficulty of Locke's political philosophy in general and of his account of natural rights in particular, its peculiar apparent resistance to unitary, coherent interpretation. We have suggested that that apparent resistance need not reflect a state of theoretical confusion on Locke's part, but instead may itself function as an integral component of his highly self-conscious response to the complexity and difficulty of the problem as he understands it. Having completed our investigation, we are now in a position to state briefly our understanding both of the manner in which Locke holds certain rights to be natural and unalienable and of his insight into what is essentially problematic about political justice, or into the nature of the problem that requires for its solution his peculiarly elusive treatment of the doctrine of natural rights. Finally, we will attempt to elaborate in somewhat broader and more conjectural terms the intention behind and the significance of his treatment of that problem.

Natural rights are natural to human beings, are naturally appropriate to human beings, according to Locke, in three main respects. First, it is natural for human beings as individuals to assert, or at least to desire the secur-

ity of, their own rights of life, liberty, and property. Second, notwithstanding the fact of diversity among individuals, the constitution of our natural desires is such that we are naturally capable of, though not instinctively driven toward, achieving a general consensus on the rightfulness of respecting the claims of other persons to rights equal to our own. Third, natural rights are appropriate to us in the most profound, comprehensive respect, by virtue of the unity, dignity, and middling or in-between status of humankind in the order of animate being.

This account of Locke's conception of the naturalness of rights carries implications for two broad and related scholarly controversies. As we have seen, particularly though not exclusively in the past few decades, scholars have disagreed radically in their assessments of the fundamental coherence or incoherence as well as of the fundamental traditionalism or modernity of Locke's thought. Our own findings support the following general conclusions with respect to these issues. However numerous his apparent confusions or self-contradictions, Locke can be most plausibly understood as a fundamentally coherent political thinker. The basis of his coherence consists, however, not in the essential subordination or reduction of the traditional or premodern to the modern element of his thought, nor even in the subordination of the latter to the former as it is commonly conceived, but rather in a peculiar

attempt at combining or synthesizing modern and premodern elements. "There is no occasion," Locke maintains, "to oppose the ancients and the moderns to one another or to be squeamish on either side. He that wisely conducts his mind in the pursuit of knowledge will gather what lights and get what helps he can from either of them, from whom they are best to be had" (CU 24).

Perhaps the most uncommon aspect of this suggestion concerns the character of the traditional or premodern, or to borrow Tarcov's usage (1983), the "non-Lockean" Locke. According to the present reading, the premodern Locke is not a faithful expositor of any authoritative revelation, nor even fundamentally a theologian, but rather in his most serious intention a quasi-Socratic rationalist. As a modern, Locke rejects both in its corrupted and original forms the classical teleological understanding of nature, and proposes its replacement with a conception of nature as an aggregation of diverse powers, explainable most precisely in terms of hypothetically formulated laws of material and efficient causation. The completeness of his assent to modern principles is questionable, however, at least insofar as Locke does not draw from the ultimately hypothetical character of any scientific or causal account of nature the more radically modern inference that we are incapable of any reliable knowledge of nature, or that what we please ourselves to call "knowledge" is at bottom a pure mental

construction.

Locke insists that the inaccessibility of a genuine, comprehensive science of nature need not and should not dissuade us from the serious study of nature. It need not, because we can gain reliable probabilistic knowledge through careful empirical study, through the gathering of "natural history," in many cases under the guidance of hypotheses involving causality. It should not, because the advancement of the empirical study of nature lies very much in our practical concernment. Thus the validity of Locke's defense of the study of nature rests in part upon conclusions drawn from his study of human nature. But this means in turn that in order to perform a natural-historical investigation of the human condition and the concernments proper to human beings as such, the human understanding must maintain an openness to the relevant evidence, must operate in the decisive respect in independence of the conditions of its own efficient causation. Locke cannot then maintain dogmatically, but must instead maintain only provisionally, the modern conception of nature. He acknowledges not only that we are inherently incapable of certainty with respect to propositions involving efficient causation, but more importantly that there are natural phenomena--mental operations in particular--whose explanation we cannot even conceive in such terms. In this consists the basis of the Socratic element of Locke's thinking.

Cognizant of its limitations, Locke adopts only partially and provisionally the modern conception of nature as a realm ruled by the forces of material and efficient causation; at least his natural-historical account of the human condition must rest on a somewhat more "naive," more genuinely empirical investigation.

For the same reason, Locke's rejection of the specifically classical teleology and its more dogmatic medieval variants need not proceed from or entail a categorical rejection of the notion of teleology. In conceiving of the human nature that is relevant to the foundation of the principles of natural human rights, Locke conceives of the faculty of reason as engaged in a two-sided relationship with the most powerful passions. In its more common, pragmatic or instrumental manifestations, reason cooperates with and even serves the passions; while in its manifestation as consciousness of our common ignorance or of the mysteriousness of the human condition, reason struggles to gain independence of the passions. In this way, Locke adopts a kind of modernized, attenuated teleology, which takes its bearings not from instances of exceptional human perfection, but rather from natural, empirical regularities or from the "ordinary course of nature."

The suggestion that Locke's political philosophy proceeds from a fundamentally Socratic inspiration carries a surprising and at least initially problematic implication.

It implies the existence of not one, but two exoteric Lockes: not only the more prominent Locke who claims an intellectual genealogy tracing through Hooker to the roots of the Christian natural law tradition, therewith invoking religious authority in support of his conception of human dependence; but also, with a somewhat more specialized intention, the more radically modern Locke who seeks to adapt to liberal ends the hedonist subjectivism of Hobbes in particular. We might say then that Locke diverges from the premodern tradition, ultimately from the Socratic tradition, not radically, not theoretically, but only prudentially or instrumentally. Yet we cannot simply leave the matter as it stands; for the question arises whether this apparently instrumental divergence in itself entails a deep radicalism. Stated in other words, the peculiar implication of our suggestion is that the appropriate mode of preserving or advancing in practice the Socratic principle is not, according to Locke, the classical regime or political science designed by Socrates and his philosophic descendants, but rather the modern regime and political science, at the core of which is the modern principle of natural rights. What the Socratic premoderns affirm on Socratic grounds as a guide to rational action, Locke rejects, also, according to our argument, on Socratic grounds. The following is an attempt at elaborating somewhat more conjecturally the grounds of Locke's surprising

choice to advance his own foundational Socratism at least to a significant extent by modern means.

The point of departure for Locke's deviation from premodern natural right teachings appears especially in the problematic relation between the second and third propositions stated above, describing the manner in which Locke holds certain rights to be natural. It appears, in other words, in the fact that the "ordinary course of nature," as manifested throughout human history, hardly provides unambiguous support for the principles of natural rights. Natural rights are most powerfully and persistently, in this sense most <u>naturally</u> endangered, in Locke's view, not by the material unprovidedness of nature in general, but rather by the natural expansiveness of the specifically human, mental desires. The implication seems to be that the rhetorical advancement of the cause of natural rights requires not only the affirmation of the <u>fact</u> of human dignity, but also and perhaps more urgently the de-emphasis of and even abstraction from the <u>grounds</u> of human dignity. Insofar as arguments elaborating those grounds may tend to excite in some readers fanciful dreams of dominion, in particular in the most clever, most ambitious, most rationally adept readers, their unambiguous public presentation may serve in the end to harm the cause they are intended to advance.

For this reason, the suspicion arises that the spirit

of defensiveness that animates Locke's political thought also governs Locke's presentation of his political thought. According to this reading, the peculiar problem of natural rights in Locke's view would then consist in the tendency in practice of even or especially the deepest, most profound and complete accounts of human nature and of the naturalness of rights to invite the greatest abuses, to reinforce or exacerbate the greatest dangers to the securing of those rights. Herein lies the broader significance of Locke's emphasis in the Second Treatise and elsewhere on the centrality of the property right and the justice and social beneficence of the productive pursuit of material abundance. This emphasis can be misleading in the respect that it tends to mask the essentially austere, necessitous character of the Lockean political ethic. Somewhat paradoxically, the Lockean liberation of acquisitiveness represents in fact an attitude of deference to the powerfully necessitous character of the human condition. Locke not only acknowledges as legitimate, but in fact urges as a natural political imperative the creation of a condition of material abundance; the right to acquire is to be protected because nature compels us to labor productively, not only to relieve or moderate our natural penury, but also to stimulate a more active desire for independence among the sluggish and to provide benign gratification for the expansive desires of many of the more energetic members of

the species. In its defensive respect for the power of necessity, Locke's political thought can be viewed as centering on an act of resistance to the transition that Glaucon insists upon in Book 2 of The Republic, the transition from the necessitous to the luxurious or feverish city (369b-373e). The Second Treatise in this way presents a liberalized, technologically fortified version of the Platonic "city of sows," and thus denies, despite its emphasis on the creation of abundance, any public significance to the liberal arts, the leisured pursuits that might fulfill the lives and redeem the labors of its inhabitants.

In short, Locke seems more deeply impressed than Plato himself by the Platonic insight of the kinship between eros and tyranny (Republic 571a-580a; cf. Strauss 1964, 110-111,133), to the point that he seeks to defend the commonwealth against tyranny by banishing at least the most prominent forms of eros from public life. The enormous disordering power of the human fancy, which Locke seems implicitly to accuse the premoderns of underappreciating, greatly magnifies the enduring political problem of authenticating the claims of wisdom to the unwise and therewith intensifies the need to separate philosophy from political life, to deny for practical purposes that wisdom or philosophy as such has any superior legislative claim. The dangers to public well-being posed by private fancies are so persistent and so severe, in Locke's estimation,

that any vision of human happiness or completion that tends to enflame such fancies, including the life of reason as the classics presented it, must be at least to a considerable extent relegated to private life along with the activities of the fancy proper.

As a rationale for his deviation from premodern natural right, however, Locke's appeal to the fundamentally necessitous character of the natural human condition as thus described remains partial or one-dimensional. It is useful in this connection first to observe that the tradition of premodern natural right hardly manifests an obliviousness to the disorderly potential of the human mind. The Socrates of Plato's Republic, to cite perhaps the clearest example to the contrary, remarks not only upon the presence in virtually all human souls of "beastly and wild," tyrannical desires that emerge commonly in dreams, unrestrained by "shame and prudence," but also upon the power of a partial education in philosophy to liberate or inflame those desires, producing the most degenerate forms of human being (571c-d, 491a-492c, 495a-b; cf. Aristotle, Politics 2.7.11-13,19). It clearly strains credulity to charge the major figures of the premodern natural right tradition, originally inspired by a reflection on the meaning of the life and death of Socrates, with insensitivity to the dangerousness of philosophy or of any truly ennobling vision of virtue or completion to the political

community (cf. Republic 539c). The disagreement between Lockean and premodern natural right would appear then to consist less in their divergent estimates of the power of the fancy or of the human propensity for madness than in their conceptions of the most appropriate or efficacious remedy for the mind's peculiar diseases. At issue, in other words, would be the most appropriate or efficacious manner of communicating and therewith cultivating and preserving respect for the human condition of "mediocrity" or in-betweenness.

In Plato's Republic's implicit teaching of the enduring tension between love of one's own and love of the good (419a-421c, 472a-473b, 499b-c, 501a, 519d-521b, 541a), for instance, as well as in Aristotle's more straightforward observation in the Politics of the naturalness of the desire for private property and therefore of the need for balancing the competing claims of virtue and consent in constituting a legitimate regime (2.5.8, 3.10.4, 3.11.7; cf. 7.14.12), appears a recognition on the part of the founders of classical natural right of the enduring power of necessity over political life and human life. The characteristic classical emphasis on the priority of virtue or wisdom to consent, of the liberal to the necessitarian pursuits, most generally of the sphere of peace to that of war, in no way reflects an opinion that the sway of necessity can be simply overcome at the political level, but to

the contrary proceeds at least in part from a conviction that a genuine respect for the limits of political life or political strivings requires in the end an affirmative conception, a publically superintending and in some manner authoritative conception of the good or the admirable for the sake of which one willingly restrains the fanciful, antisocial desires.

Thus a certain confidence in the proposition that a teleological conception of human virtue and the human good can serve to limit as well as to elevate human strivings in and out of the political arena underlies the general premodern insistence on viewing the question of political legitimacy in the light of the question of the best regime, just as it underlies the general premodern rejection of "egalitarian natural right" in favor of a more meritocratic or aristocratic conception of the proper ordering of a political community (Strauss 1953, 131-143). The serious cultivation of virtue, in this view, requires directly or indirectly the political rule of virtue. It requires that the healthy community feature an ordering of rank among the various classes that compose it, that it distribute offices, honors, and influence among those classes not simply equally, but in accordance with the nature and extent of their respective contributions to the maintenance and especially the perfection of the regime (Aristotle, Politics 3.7-3.13). In its highest or purest instantiation,

this ordering of rank according to virtue would entail the absolute rule of the wise, while in its less pure, more practically accommodating forms, it would entail a mixed regime, combining the more partial interests and principles with whatever approximation of the aristocratic principle prevailing circumstances might permit (Plato, Republic 473d-e; Aristotle, Politics 3.13.24-25, 4.1.3-7, 4.7, 4.8.3-10; Cicero, Republic 1.26,29-30,35-41, 2.1-2,11,23).

The need to mix or dilute the aristocratic principle with lower interests or principles, or in other words to qualify pure merit or virtue as the requisite of rulership by the lower requisite of the consent of the governed, derives from the practical impossibility or extreme unlikelihood of the direct rule of reason in political life. Even in the most favorable circumstances, the unphilosophic character of the governed requires that their consent be secured by means of an unphilosophic appeal or "noble lie" (Plato, Republic 377a-383c, 389b-c, 414c-415d, 459d). In more ordinary circumstances, such an appeal seems in some form to influence governors as well as governed, inasmuch as, however refined their practical wisdom, the aristocratic gentlemen who occupy the highest or the most important offices in the classical mixed regime belong ultimately among the unphilosophic, among the bearers of faith or moral commitment (Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 1094b29-1095a14, 1095b4-5; Politics 7.8.7, 7.9.4,5,9). The classi-

cal mixed regime can therefore remain informed by a high rational principle to the extent that its ruling aristocracy cultivates a respect if not an affinity for theoretical as well as moral virtue and possesses the leisure required for the most gifted and independent of its members or of their offspring to pursue the life of reason in the fullest sense. Under such conditions, the indirect legislative influence of philosophy injects an element of openness into the general atmosphere of closure that pervades the regime as a moral community, thus preventing the moral bond of the community from degenerating into a species of tribalism (Strauss 1964, 28). At the same time, philosophy itself in this view seems best to renew a sense of its own limits, and thus to preserve the purity of its own rational striving, through a serious and continuing confrontation with the realm of moral commitment or of faithful devotion to the sacred (Strauss 1979; Strauss 1983, 147-173; Pangle 1983, 18-26).

From the perspective of classic or premodern natural right, the Lockean political science, elaborating a fundamentally egalitarian regime or according the principle of consent a status of primacy relative to that of wisdom or virtue, runs the risk of neglecting and thus undermining the communal or political supports required for the cultivation of reason as a truly independent, regulatory power. Notwithstanding his suggestion that "if those of [the gen-

tleman's] rank are by their Education once set right, they will quickly bring all the rest into order" (STCE "Epistle Dedicatory"; cf. Horwitz 1979, 142), Locke recommends measures with respect to the formation of a gentlemanly class, as well as of a more distinctly intellectual class, that may tend to diminish significantly the capacity of such classes to function as genuine elites. Apparently moved by an acute sensitivity to the fragility of political consensus, and thus by a heightened concern to formulate an effective principle of political mixture, Locke elevates the principles of Cartesian subjectivity and of the virtually all-encompassing sway of natural necessity to a status of prominence or even primacy in his political ethic, with the result, according to this view, that he renders somewhat obscure the grounds for the principle of the sovereignty of reason within the human self or soul, upon which his doctrine of justice ultimately depends.

In speaking to what would appear to be his most intellectually refined audience, Locke certainly allows greater visibility to his levelling conception of the pursuit of happiness than to his Socratic inspiration. He refuses to present in the more classically Socratic manner a comparative analysis of or dialectical confrontation between the various regimes or ways of living, and tends to state the principles of natural right in a relatively dogmatic or doctrinaire manner, apparently in order to

minimize the constitutional or legislative importance of the distinctive virtue of prudence (cf. Mansfield 1989, 209-210). Above all, he refuses to provide an explicit account of the specifically philosophical way of living, instead placing his main emphasis on an account of science as proceeding from an essentially technological inspiration. In providing for the formation of a more practically oriented, more directly influential class, Locke relies for a primary principle of political mixture on an ethic of rational, industrious, productive acquisitiveness, underlining his emphasis on the power and scope of natural necessity by his doctrine of the rationality of endless striving for endless increase and its corollary in his replacement of the classical concept of leisure with the more modern or utilitarian concept of "recreation" (STCE 108,206). Perhaps most tellingly, the Lockean education relies heavily on the cultivation in its pupils of a heightened desire for esteem or sensitivity to the opinions of others, with the consequence that the Lockean gentry may tend to value civility over independence of spirit, and therefore may prove an insufficient check against the conformist tendencies of modern egalitarian societies (Strauss 1959, 38; Pangle 1988, 227-229,264-266,272).

The upshot seems to be that if Socrates is willing to risk the emergence of an Alcibiades in order to preserve the possibility of cultivating a Plato, Locke seems intent

on suppressing the likes of Alcibiades, even at the cost of malnourishing those natures out of which, properly tended, the likes of Plato may develop. The general failure of the older political science to promote or to generate moderate forms of political practice may indeed lend considerable force to Locke's critique. Yet, to repeat, the danger is that in his sensitivity to the susceptibility of the doctrines of classical natural right to capture and misuse by the willful, Locke proposes a remedy that involves an oscillation to the opposite extreme, thus overlooking the potential in the principle of subjectivity or in the denial of a proper human orientation by the transcendent to support even more extreme and self-consciously arbitrary forms of willfulness, to effect a fuller eclipse of reason than had ever been accomplished in the corrupted practical forms of classical or premodern natural right.

The core dilemma of Lockean liberalism, as perhaps for modern liberalism in general, lies in the fact that while, cognizant of the danger and practical likelihood of enthroning malevolent impostors, it declines to honor the claim of superior reason to public sovereignty, it all the more firmly requires the sovereignty of reason in private, requiring of individuals that they rationally consent to government and rationally pursue private happiness. An overemphasis of the sovereignty of reason carries the danger of emboldening the ambitions of those unreasonably

proud of their own rationality. Yet an underemphasis of the same carries the danger of teaching the complete privacy of reason and of therewith facilitating the overwhelming of the public by the private realm, led by those who make no pretense of rationality, but who proclaim merely the most powerful faith or the strongest will. In the latter dimension of the dilemma, then, if Locke abstracts too completely from the ultimate aims of rational action, if he too thoroughly ostracizes philosophy from public life, he may leave reason powerless beyond the dictates of mere instrumental calculation to regulate the forces of irrationalism or willfulness, and thus leave the political sphere to be ruled by pure ideology. If he attempts too one-sidedly to erect a defense against tyranny, he may unwittingly unsettle the theoretical grounds for objecting to tyranny. It would seem then that Locke's diagnosis leads him to confront the possibility that the major theoretical alternatives, the classical or premodern teleology as well as the radically modern antiteleological view, carry unacceptable dangers as public teachings, insofar as each tends in its way to excite or flatter the human fancy. Absent a viable alternative or middle ground, it would seem that Locke's estimate of the power of the fancy must yield a Hobbesian or even Nietzschean conception of the human condition, according to which a willful politics of one form or another is all but unavoidable, a truly liberal,

moderate, reasonable politics all but unattainable.

Given that he provides ample indication of an awareness of the dangers presented by both extremes, it seems reasonable for us to view Locke's foundational ambiguities, his peculiar apparent oscillation between premodern and modern, teleological and nonteleological arguments, as necessitated by the delicacy of his task in addressing this dilemma. The middling solution that Locke seeks seems to require the partial, practical or political, not total, radical or theoretical, privatization of the quest for the human good or human completion. It requires the deflation of the legislative aspirations of visionaries of human salvation or perfection, while requiring also the preservation of a notion of human dignity that seems to depend ultimately on a conception of the human good.

In accordance with these requirements, Locke seems to intend the ostracism from public life of philosophy in its classic form, with its implicit or explicit persuasion of its own sovereign dignity, while yet intending the preservation or even enhancement of the public stature of reason. Thus if it is unsafe for philosophy to appear fully exposed in public, according to Locke (see e.g. ECHU 2.21.20), it may be safer and even salutary for it to appear in public as it were partially exposed, as the new "natural philosophy" or at least as "Under-Labourer" to the same. By honoring the new natural philosophy and its eminent "Master-

Builders" as an exemplary employment of human reason, Locke advances his public purposes in the following ways. He establishes by this means a prominent public model of devotion to reason and truth, of openness to the persuasive power of evidence and rational argumentation, and at the same time honors a form of reasoning or of the pursuit of truth that promises to generate very substantial utilitarian benefits while carrying in itself no significant legislative aspirations. He seems to calculate that the pursuance of this strategy will serve not only to facilitate the production of at least that level of material abundance required for the establishment of a general, societal consensus on the protection of property rights as a core principle of justice, but also to lay the public foundation for the promotion of a societal respect for reason in the most generally accessible manner. It will tighten as it lends greater visibility to the bond between truth and utility, encouraging a conception of truth, if as a means, then as an indispensable means to public and private utility or happiness. Moreover, to honor scientific explorations of the infinite mysteries of material nature may provide some publically salutary direction for the indulgence of the more expansive yearnings of the intellectually refined or sophisticated class; in minimizing his ostracism of the latter, Locke may well minimize the potential for cultivating enemies of the regime, and further reinforce his claim

to have identified the grounds of rational consensus on a principle of justice that, of the available alternatives, would be both least dangerous and fairest to all concerned.

The question persists, however, concerning the extent to which this casting of philosophy in the role of underlaborer or handmaiden of an essentially mechanistic or nonteleological natural science can promote among the most intellectually adept members of society the requisite devotion either to the principle of reason or to the Lockean regime. Granted, there can be little doubt that in observing that "most Men cannot...be at quiet in their Minds, without some Foundation of Principles to rest their Thoughts on," Locke refers to the educated as well as to the uneducated classes (ECHU 1.3.24). Insofar as the desire for foundations frequently overpowers the desire for rational foundations, Locke would have reason to believe that many members even of his society's intellectual elite will espouse some version of his rationalized Christianity or of his workmanship argument, and therewith the equalitarian moral implications he adumbrates, and that others more secularly inclined but perhaps chastened by his insistent illustrations of the fragility of reason and the grotesque extremes to which fanciful visions of dominion or completion can carry us, will see in the utilitarian principle an adequate foundation for the same equalitarian morality. Yet, just as it strains credulity to suggest

that Locke himself is unaware of the intrinsic weaknesses of such arguments, so it is equally implausible to attribute to Locke, who after all is repeatedly compelled by contemporary critics to respond to charges of Hobbesian skepticism and nihilism, the opinion that none of his readers would be cognizant of those weaknesses. It seems further implausible, in view of Locke's great sensitivity to the human mind's susceptibility to disorder, to suggest that he could simply fail to consider the possibility that a few of the most ambitious and intellectually radical of his readers would find in his utilitarian relativism in particular an implicit invitation to reduce morality and justice to sheer willfulness and thus to formulate new, modern sectarianisms, secular fancies of human completion.

It may well be a part of Locke's calculation that the human desire for foundational principles is ordinarily of such power as to engender a certain popular resistance to the principle of subjectivity, thus enabling him to employ the latter as a monitory corrective of the excesses to which an embrace of the contrary principle of natural providedness may lead, confident that the principle of subjectivity will not take root so deeply as to supplant or undermine all other, more genuinely moral, foundational principles. His critique of the implications of moral innatism (ECHU 1.3) clearly indicates his opinion of the enervating and corrupting effect of the presumption of a

morally provided world, while his suggestion of the superiority of civil to philosophic discourse seems to indicate a calculation of the potentially salutary effect of a teaching of pragmatism and provisional subjectivism in cultivating a genuine respect for reason and for the rational conception and pursuit of happiness (cf. ECHU 3.11.10 with 3.5.16, 3.6.24, 3.9.21, 3.10.8-13). Carrying this calculation further, Locke may reason that if by propagating the principle of subjectivity he weakens or removes the moral constraints on willful thought and action on the part of those relative few capable of appreciating the radical implications of that principle, then by the same means he also prepares the majority of the Lockean regime's subjects to recognize assertions of willfulness as such, and consequently to resist them.

Yet it is not quite sufficient to conclude simply that if Locke finds it in the end impossible to formulate a political theory that eliminates the potential for abuse, he elects in accordance with this somewhat Machiavellian calculation to risk the sorts of abuse attendant upon the principle of subjectivity rather than those associated with the premodern orientation toward a state of completion or perfection. Taking advantage of the hindsight afforded by the experience of the past two centuries in particular, we can hardly avoid questioning the soundness of any judgment to the effect that the desire for moral foundations engen-

ders an ordinary human resistance to demoralization, and therefore that the propagation of the principle of moral subjectivism can serve reliably to immunize at least the majority of human beings against assenting to the fanciful, fanatical dreams of a few. That Locke himself already questions the soundness of such a judgment or that he takes seriously the possibility of popular demoralization is evident in the attention that he devotes to constructing the "best Fence against Rebellion" by cultivating in his respectably acquisitive gentry and laboring class alike a spirited, defensive, jealous love of privacy or independence. Implicit in this attempt appears to be a conception of the proper or salutary role of the philosopher as that of an underlaborer not only in the realm of scientific inquiry, but also in that of political morality. Imitating nature as he presents it or proceeding in the manner of a judicious parent or educator, Locke insists upon the specific "Dignity and Excellency" of rational creatures and on the estimable, dignifying character of the rational pursuit of happiness, while permitting himself to provide only the scattered materials or seeds of arguments pointing toward the nature of human happiness or of the various goods proper to rational beings. The political task of the philosopher according to Locke appears to involve the cultivation of reason in nonphilosophers, not by directly instructing them in the content of their proper happiness, but by pro-

moting, and supplying the rationale for the political protection of, their own active, industrious reflection on the nature of a life well-lived.

Thus in his exhortations to his readership and by extension to all members of society insofar as it lies in their capacity to take care in reasoning about their own proper happiness, we might find Locke's implicit response to the charge that in promoting civility and a sensitivity to esteem he prepares the undermining of the moral independence and courage from which one draws the strength to resist the recurring tides of irrationalism. While the Lockean education clearly does involve an attempt at forming the class of gentry in particular as creatures of esteem, it appears nonetheless Locke's intention that they be bred to consider themselves estimable insofar as they are rational, self-disposing, self-providing, independent proprietors. It may then represent a dictate of pedagogical prudence for Locke to leave his political philosophy in a condition of incompleteness, such that it points beyond itself to its completion in the private thoughts of the subjects of the Lockean regime. By thus limiting or obscuring the legislative authority of philosophy, Locke facilitates the cultivation of a nonphilosophic or aphilosophic yet firmly rationalistic people, of the sort that Tocqueville finds exemplified in the Americans of the early nineteenth century (Democracy in America 2.1.1,2).

In this appears to consist the theoretical core of Locke's middling or moderating approach to the liberal dilemma. Philosophy is to serve in public as underlaborer not only to the new science or sciences of nature, but also to moral and political reasoning; and in the latter capacity, it is to serve not only a negative, critical function, but also a pedagogical, even exhortative function in seeking to raise in nonphilosophers an energizing sense of their own rational dignity. But this means that even the Lockean regime seems to require the indirect rule of philosophy, if in a much more indirect way than the best regime according to premodern or classical political philosophy would require. For to the extent to which we recognize the nonphilosophic character of the various appeals whereby Locke seeks to establish in the public mind the legitimacy of the Lockean regime--in particular, of his appeals to the workmanship principle or to a more secularized, more utilitarian doctrine of rights, along with his assertive insistence on the principle of common human dignity--it becomes all the more necessary for the propagators of such appeals to recognize their deeper, more defensibly philosophical justification. In order for such appeals to serve effectively as noble lies, lest they be contemptuously debunked and replaced by more radical, allegedly more coherent ideological constructions, the merit or nobility of the principle they serve must be evident to those cognizant of

their intrinsic weaknesses. The implication, to repeat, is that notwithstanding his visible ostracism of philosophy or of any claim to wisdom concerning the comprehensive human good, Locke is compelled by the logic of his own argument to care about and if possible to take measures to provide for the cultivation, if not of philosophy itself, at least of a rational elite sufficiently philosophic in character to reflect upon and thus preserve the ordering experience of openness or in-betweenness that alone can serve as the foundation for his teaching of rights.

Herein then lies the ultimate question for Lockean politics. If we are correct in viewing Locke as a Socratic revisionist, attempting to promote essentially Socratic ends by decidedly non-Socratic means, then the wisdom or reasonableness of Locke's revision seems to depend most fundamentally upon the capacity of the most apparently non-Socratic means to promote the highest Socratic ends. In contrast to Socrates or to Plato, Locke does not present philosophy as emerging from and struggling to achieve clarity in an endless dialogue with various representatives of the realm of faith; he seems to intend, if not simply to bring that dialogue to a final resolution, at least to obscure the centrality of its role in sustaining the life of reason (cf. Pangle 1988, 273-274). Viewed in the light of his apparent preference of the modern natural scientists to the defenders of the faith as conversation partners,

Locke's repeated emphasis of the inherent limitations of the formers' enterprise carries potentially great significance. From this insistence on the theoretical limitations of the modern scientific perspective, one might draw either or both of two implications. On the one hand, accepting without necessarily attempting to ascend from the partiality of the truths produced within the scientific perspective, one might infer that the aim of scientific endeavor is not truth or knowledge as such, but instead power. On the other hand, one might find implicit in its limitations the need to transcend the scientific perspective, to ascend from its partial truths to a fuller, more specifically philosophic reflection on the openness of the human understanding to the ultimate mysteriousness of the order of nature.

In insisting both on the theoretical limitations of the perspective of modern natural science and on his own nonutilitarian devotion to the truth, Locke clearly lays the foundation for a more genuinely philosophic ascent from that perspective. Insofar as a clear recognition of the limits of the scientific perspective represents for Locke a prerequisite of sound moral reasoning, we may take these insistences as Locke's implicit suggestion that his or the Lockean philosopher's function as moral underlaborer in the end supersedes or comprehends his function as scientific underlaborer. Yet, to state it once more, it is clear also

that, apparently with a view toward promoting the creation of the material abundance required both to broaden the civility of the gentry and to facilitate the elevation of the class of common laborers, Locke much more emphatically directs the readers of the Essay toward technological or power-oriented than toward contemplative pursuits. As moral underlaborer, the Lockean philosopher serves primarily, most visibly or vocally, the advancement of pragmatic concerns, not the advancement of the cause of philosophy itself. Insofar as we are justified in viewing it as the product of rational deliberation or choice, Locke's politically narrowed or partialized presentation of philosophy appears to proceed from his calculation that the pursuit of power and the pursuit of truth can be linked with sufficient firmness that a recognition of the limits of our comprehension of the latter can serve to bring into view also the proper limits of our desire or demand for the former. His de-emphasis of philosophy as such appears to rest, in other words, on a calculated, qualified confidence that philosophy could emerge more safely in the course of a dialogue with modern natural science than in a dialogue with revealed religion in one form or another, or that it would confront less inherent resistance and thus require less explicit cultivation in a society formed by the influence of modern science than in a society formed predominantly by the influence of religion. If so, then for that

very reason the characteristic danger for the Lockean or modern liberal regime becomes the danger of succumbing to "the charm of competence" (Strauss 1959, 40) or of lapsing into a state of intoxication by its own unprecedented technological prowess. The essential challenge for that regime must then be to preserve or to reinvigorate a societal consciousness of the limits of human power, rooted in turn in a consciousness among the regime's rational elite of the grounds of the principles of human freedom and dignity that such power is to serve. Locke seems to calculate that he does as much as is necessary or prudentially advisable to nurture such a consciousness, in preparing but only preparing the way for a continuing reflection on the limits of human science and power, thus leaving it for others to reproduce in private the reflections that he himself seems to engage in for the most part in private as well.

Let us return, in closing, to the question with which we began. In arguing for the likelihood that Locke's utilitarianism in particular does not represent his deepest reflection concerning the foundation of the natural rights principle, but proceeds instead from an essentially instrumental calculation concerning the most effective rhetorical and constitutional strategy for advancing that principle, we have been attempting to rethink the distinction between what is essential and what accidental, what is the core and what the exterior in Locke's political

thought. If we are correct in suggesting that the core of Lockean natural rights is not utilitarianism, not simply an arbitrarily equalitarian expression of will-to-power, but rather a partially classical, moderately teleological, genuinely empirical conception of human nature, then the roots of the contemporary opinion of the infirmity of the foundations of classical liberalism would require some similar rethinking. On the part of those sympathetic to attempts at constructing more radically modern foundations for liberal theory, this might involve a reconsideration of the element of common sense that endures in the midst of Locke's critical epistemology, and in particular of his defense of probabilistic judgments about nature and his demonstration of the arbitrariness that follows from their rejection. Conversely, for those inclined to reject Locke altogether and attempt the recovery of purely classical foundations for modern liberalism, it may be worthwhile to reconsider not only the element of classical thinking that endures in Locke, but also the reasoning behind Locke's reluctance both to preserve more than this element of premodernism and to present unambiguously the element that he does preserve.

In arguing in this manner for a reconsideration of what is the core or the spirit of Locke's political philosophy, we are suggesting primarily that the relative resilience of the Lockean regime in practice may be less

accidentally, more essentially related to Locke's theoretical provision than his most severe and powerful critics maintain. In making this suggestion, we grant that the long-term resilience of that regime remains at this point an open question, and therefore by no means deny the reasonableness of wondering whether over the long term Locke miscalculates or calculates one-sidedly the dangers of serious public theological or teleological reasoning, or whether Locke's partial or political modernism may be less efficacious in defending the health of the Lockean regime against the challenge posed by theoretical modernism than against that posed by corrupted premodern principles. The effect of the present argument is to deny not the legitimacy of such doubts, but only their radical character and implications. Our reconsideration of the core of Locke's intention suggests a flexibility in Locke's political thought, such that should the need arise, it could accommodate as a matter more of rhetorical adjustment rather of radical alteration the formulation of a more forceful and straightforward defense of the sovereignty of reason and the grounds of human dignity. If we judge it necessary at some point to ascend from the principles of utilitarianism or relativism upon which Locke seems content at times to rest his political thought, we may do so, according to this argument, in the understanding that Locke's assent to such principles is at best partial and serves a moderate inten-

tion. In appealing to such principles in a manner that invites at least some of his readers to seek to ascend from them, Locke enables those readers to conceive of the requisite ascent as an ascent within, not beyond the boundaries of his political thought. Thus understood, the perplexities of Locke reflect not confusion or thoughtlessness on Locke's part, but are made necessary by the difficulty and delicacy of his task of at once explaining and advancing the cause of legitimate, civil, rational, liberal government.

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The dissertation is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Ph.D.

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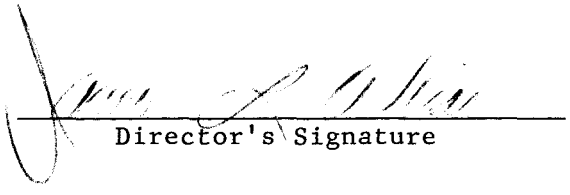

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