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SEASCAPE WITH FOG: ANALOGY, CERTAINTY AND  
CULTURAL EXEMPLARS IN JOHN LOCKE'S  
AN ESSAY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

By

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## ABSTRACT

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The common and contradictory suppositions that John Locke's epistemology is accurately summarized by the metaphor of the tabula rasa and that Locke opposed metaphysical discourse are weighed against a rereading of An Essay Concerning Human Understanding inspired by the works of Hans Aarsleff and Dominick LaCapra. Locke's explicit defense at Book IV of metaphorical usage in metaphysical discourse is acknowledged and the logical function of Lockean metaphors is likened to that of Platonic myths. The role in the Essay of the tabula rasa is shown to have been relatively inconsequential and the metaphor of the ship is offered instead as a truer representation of Locke's probabilistic theory of mind.

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To my sisters, Karen and Becky, and my brother, Sam.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This essay benefitted greatly from my course work and conversations with Dr. Josef Konvitz, a scholar of remarkable erudition. The titles he brought to my attention ultimately accounted for nearly one fourth of the bibliography. As valuable as were his criticisms, more important still was his patient receptivity to my ideas and the contribution that that made to bolstering my confidence in my own originality.

Dr. David LoRomer's reading of my rough draft was invaluable. His criticism was the dynamite that broke what, in the summer of 1990, was looking very much like an absolutely intractable mental block. His advice that I free myself from slavish attention to secondary sources and concentrate on my own insights is deferred to future projects, but not forgotten.

Finally, I must acknowledge a unique debt to my advisor, Dr. Peter Vinten-Johansen. I cannot imagine how I might have completed this project without the emotional support he has given me since my days as an undergraduate and the intellectual freedom that he unfailingly allows me. As this project was repeatedly preempted by more urgent deadlines over nearly a two-year period, I always found that when I was ready to return to it, it was still fresh in his mind. He embodies a great deal of the continuity in my academic career. At a time when professional demands make true mentorship rare, I am one of the happy few.

No image from John Locke's philosophical work is as widely recognized as that of the white paper, the famous tabula rasa. But calls by Dominick LaCapra and other similarly-minded theorists of history for a rereading of such "great texts" as An Essay Concerning Human Understanding raise the problem of whether this particular metaphor of mind is a suitable synecdoche for the complete philosophy of mind that Locke advances in the Essay.<sup>1</sup> The same problem emerges, too, from reappraisals by historians of science of what was actually entailed in the development of the "empirical method" by an intellectual circle centered on the Royal Society that included Locke, and again, from reevaluations by cultural historians of the link between symbolism within texts and the symbol systems of the societies in which texts are produced. On close inspection, the white paper turns out to be a far less revealing and less integral part of the overall argument of the Essay than another Lockean metaphor, that of the ship. The long-standing emphasis on the white paper suits those who reduce Locke's epistemology to a simplistic empiricism, while the more frequently employed ship metaphor confronts us with the probabilistic theory of mind and perception that, more and more, Locke is rightly given credit for developing. Furthermore, by allowing the ship to supplant the white paper, we not only address the question of what constitutes a "proper" reading of this particular multifaceted text; we also

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<sup>1</sup>Dominick LaCapra, Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language (Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London. 1983).

find that the ship metaphor carries us further than the white paper toward explaining how a Scientific Revolution and an Enlightenment that are each, in their own right, undergoing reevaluation might have been linked, thereby providing one answer to the question of what, if any, historical significance a modern corrective to traditional readings of an influential text might venture to claim. As Hans Aarsleff has shown, the traditional readings we correct turn out to be those first produced long after the fact of the Essay's publication by commentators hostile to the very intellectual milieu that initially received it so enthusiastically.<sup>2</sup> Jettison their distortions and Locke's ship arrives at last with its manifest full, not blank.

This is not to say that such a manifest would list none of the empiricism that most have thought was the Essay's sole cargo. To say that Locke's epistemology is probabilistic is to admit instead that contraband rationalism also lies stowed below deck. "[Locke's] empiricism was of a peculiar kind," wrote Maurice Cranston in an early (1957) acknowledgement of the Essay's multidimensionality, "for he also entertained several notions which are all characteristic of rationalism -- "rationalism," that is, which is by definition antithetical to empiricism." Believing that Locke's analysis was clouded by his clumsy synthesis of these two supposedly-incompatible

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<sup>2</sup>Hans Aarsleff, From Locke to Saussure: Essays on the Study of Language and Intellectual History (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis. 1982).

perspectives, Cranston accused Locke of being "guilty of the very abuses of language against which he writes so forcefully," that is, of accepting uncritically the crucial distinction between primary and secondary qualities and of thereby failing to heed, in his discussion of the adequacy of language, the skepticism that elsewhere in the Essay runs strong: "By insisting that general words must stand for abstract ideas, Locke blinds himself to the fact, which elsewhere he comes very close to seeing, that general words do not "stand" for anything at all."<sup>3</sup> The best that Cranston can say for Locke is that at least one modern historian, Gilbert Ryle, credited him with "adumbrating" a "scientific probability" that might have served as an alternative to either a dogmatic defense of the reliability of language or total skepticism. Still, Cranston implies that this was overly-generous, that Ryle was offering a "twentieth-century case for the greatness of Locke": "twentieth-century" meaning,

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<sup>3</sup>Maurice Cranston, John Locke: A Biography (Oxford University Press: Oxford and New York. 1985), pp. 264-278. The distinction between primary and secondary qualities developed from the ancient problem of knowing which perceptions were accurate and which were deceptive. Primary qualities of objects were those which actually inhered in the objects themselves, while secondary qualities were generated by the human perceptive faculty. Cranston is arguing that Locke's extensive critique of the variability of language in its encounter with the (evident) universe of secondary phenomena, not to mention the many abuses to which language is routinely subjected, should have necessitated the admission that words are, as we might say today, self-referential, a far more radical conclusion than Aarsleff's point that Locke, like Saussure, rejects the "double conformity" of words to objects and to ideas (Aarsleff, p. 25; see also Essay II,xxxii,8 and footnotes 10, 11 and 12, below).

one supposes, post-Kantian or even relativistic, the point being that Ryle's apology was soft on an empiricism that Cranston felt could only become muddled by contact with rationalism.<sup>4</sup>

Peter Nidditch, editor of a recent (1975) edition of the Essay that by most accounts is the best yet, chooses the course opposite from Cranston's and simply defers to the latter-day consensus in order to sidestep entirely the issue of whether the epistemology of the Essay is that of the rationalists or the empiricists: "The Essay presents, for the first time, a systematic, detailed, reasoned, and wide-ranging philosophy of mind and cognition whose thrust, so far as it is in line with the future rather than the past, is empiricist (italics mine)."<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Peter Briggs points out the deliberate linkage between Locke's theory of language and his overall epistemology that refutes Cranston's charge of clumsiness -- "the fallibilities of language and the failures of man's understanding [in the Essay] were related and reciprocal" -- but ultimately returns to the familiar shelter to be found in reading the Essay as empiricism's seminal text: an empiricism defined, now, as the "sanative contact with the real world which differentiates Locke's definition of knowledge from his definition of madness."<sup>6</sup> Also accepting

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<sup>4</sup>Cranston, Locke, pp. 277-278.

<sup>5</sup>Peter H. Nidditch, "Introduction" to John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (Ed. Peter H. Nidditch. Oxford University Press: Oxford and New York. 1975), p. viii. All direct citations from the Essay in this paper are taken from Nidditch's edition.

the common characterization of the Essay as straightforwardly empiricist in its plan, S.H. Clark discovers therein what he imagines to be an embarrassing Platonic element, "a potent residual idealism" that "allows [Locke] . . . vicarious access to an enhancement that his epistemology rigorously excludes." This putative "enhancement" consists of a supersensual realm populated by the "spirits" and "angels" whose appearance in the Essay (unconceded by Clark) is no less important for being both figurative and brief, as well as by the beneficent diety who appears more frequently and about whom Locke is unquestionably in earnest. It also includes Locke's "ocular vocabulary," his "vast number of psychic metaphors" and his many "archetypes" and analogies, none of which reproduces the evidence of the senses with the slavish literalism thought appropriate to an empiricist text. Clark appears to be offended by the misanthropy, not to mention the intellectual pusillanimity, of introducing into the analysis images partially or wholly unsubstantiated by argument, "habitual

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<sup>6</sup>Peter M. Briggs, "Locke's Essay and the Strategies of Eighteenth-Century English Satire" in Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture (v. 10. 1981), pp. 138-139. The passage cited by Briggs (II,xi,13) in fact deals with deduction, not perception, explaining the difference between reasoning from false premises, which is the occupation of "mad Men," and not reasoning at all, which is the mark of "Idiots." Given the sarcasm shortly thereafter (II,xiii,11) against "some" who "either change the Signification of Words, which I would not suspect them of, they having so severely condemned the Philosophy of others [(etc.)]," the passage appears to be an ironic attack on those of Locke's philosophical opponents - - "mad Men," by implication -- who manipulate the ambiguity of words to justify bogus conclusions (see also footnote 9, below).

elisions of terminology," that apologize for the very epistemological limitations that the Essay is otherwise at pains to detail. Such devious machinations follow, allegedly, from Locke's unwillingness to admit the "infinite regress" produced by any honest attempt at turning the faculty of intellectual examination upon itself. The resulting contradiction is said to be felt in Locke's combativeness, his "curious excess of rhetorical energy," his "uncouthness," while the Essay's broad success in its day is dismissed as merely a "convenient corroboration and codification of popular prejudice and expectation."<sup>7</sup>

Of course, in the eyes of cultural historians, to become "a convenient corroboration and codification of popular prejudice and expectation" is no small thing, and we will see that Locke's popular success, his use of metaphorical "enhancements" and his disputatiousness were all linked, but first things first; Locke cannot be expected to have demonstrated the courage of simplistic empiricist convictions he never held, or the false manners. If Hans Aarsleff is right about the artificiality of the empiricist-rationalist dichotomy, then the discovery of Platonic elements in the Essay is no scandal. Indeed, it is Charles Griswold's recent (1988) work on the Platonic dialogues that illuminates the function of both the "enhancements" and the combativeness that

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<sup>7</sup>S.H. Clark, "The Philosophical Rhetoric of Locke's 'Essay'" in The Locke Newsletter (Ed. Roland Hall. Dept. of Philosophy, University of York. No. 17. Autumn 1986), pp. 96-99, 102, 109, 112, 115 (see also footnote 18, below).

are identified by Clark. Drawing upon Hegel, Griswold argues that disputatiousness follows naturally from a determination to philosophize in the face of an honest admission of Clark's infinite regress. Since the ultimate value of all metaphilosophy, epistemology included, is unprovable, Griswold argues that its practitioners can answer their severest critics only by provoking them into argument, for "to argue against philosophy is to engage in it."<sup>8</sup> While the disputatiousness in Locke's Essay may not appear, at first, to follow the dialogic form used by Plato (and Galileo), on closer examination, those passages in which Locke directly addresses his opponents are indeed seen to consist of the point-by-point pattern of assertion and rebuttal that one would find in a formal dialogue. Missing are the dramatic personages who would typically deliver arguments in the form of speeches, but otherwise the method of succinctly recapitulating an opponent's position and the cumulative alternation of opposing arguments is the same.

Nowhere in the Essay is this more evident than in the exhaustive attack on innateism in Book I, and, not coincidentally, it is in Book I and the first chapters of Book II that Locke's argument generates its richest array of the metaphors, the "elisions of terminology," to which Clark so

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<sup>8</sup>Charles L. Griswold, Jr., "Plato's Metaphilosophy: Why Plato Wrote Dialogues" in Platonic Writings, Platonic Readings (Ed. Charles L. Griswold, Jr. Routledge: New York. 1988), p. 154. The unanswerable nature of metaphysical questions is a recurrent theme in the Essay, beginning at I,i,3.

strenuously objects. If the human mind is not what the proponents of innateism have claimed it to be, it instead resembles an eye (I,i,1; I,ii,1; I,ii,9; I,ii,25), a candle (I,i,5), an empty cabinet (I,ii,15), a beam of light (I,ii,27; I,iii,4; I,iii,13; I,iv,9), a white paper (I,iii,22), a siege battery (I,iv,25), a mirror (II,i,15; II,i,25; II,viii,16), a painting, in general (II,ii,5; II,ix,8; II,x,5), a landscape, in particular (II,i,7), a clock (II,i,7), a fountain (II,i,2), a tomb (II,x,5), a dark room with windows, suggesting a camera obscura (II,xi,17), and a ship (II,viii,8; II,xiv,27). The mind's attempt to know its own operations is like a shipline measuring the depths (I,i,6) and its shortfalls are like blindness (I,iv,19, I,iv,23), while the separation between what can be known and what cannot is likened to a horizon (I,i,7). Locke also illustrates his more explicit arguments with similes that function as unacknowledged metaphors of mind, as in the case of the chess set invoked to clarify his position on the doctrine of substance (II,viii,8). These metaphors all serve a purpose in the Essay similar to that performed in the Platonic dialogues by myth, functioning as substitutes for the proofs that metaphilosophy simply cannot provide and offering something familiar and seemingly analogous -- something persuasive in the absence of proof -- instead. As Griswold says, in the absence of anything better, they "reassure us that there are grounds for the hope that philosophy" or, in Locke's case, epistemology, "is a



worthwhile enterprise."<sup>9</sup>

If some of Locke's metaphors bear a striking resemblance to what may or may not actually be Platonic forerunners, as the dark room and the blindness that would accompany exposure to sensation beyond normal human capacity (II,xxiii,12) recall the Republic's Cave of Er, such parallels for our purposes can be accepted as merely coincidental. The important point here is that Locke's frequent recourse to a style of argument that transcends the evidence of immediate sensory experience indicates that his position cannot simply be forced into a context of rationalist-empiricist polarization and then summarized as anti-rationalistic (or as bad empiricism, as Clark would have it), regardless of which specific sources may or may not have inspired him.

In addition to the evidence to be inferred from metaphorical usage per se, the same reassurance on the worth of philosophy spoken of by Griswold is explicitly provided by Locke himself at Book IV, Chapter xvi of the Essay, "On the Degrees of Assent:"

Concerning the manner of Operation in most parts of the Works of Nature: wherein though we see the sensible effects, yet their causes are unknown, and we perceive not the ways and manner how they are produced. . . . For these and the like coming not within the scrutiny of humane Senses, cannot be examined by them, or be attested by any body, and therefore can appear more or less probable, only as they more or less agree to Truths that are established in our Minds, and as they hold proportion to other parts of our Knowledge and Observation.

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<sup>9</sup>Griswold, "Plato", p. 159.



Analogy in these matters is the only help we have,  
and 'tis from that alone we draw all our grounds  
of Probability. (IV,xvi,12)

Having said at the outset (I,i,5) that since "the  
Comprehension of our Understandings, comes exceedingly short  
of the vast Extent of Things" we must not "peremptorily, or  
intemperately require Demonstration, and demand Certainty,  
where Probability only is to be had, and which is sufficient  
to govern all our Concernments," Locke now establishes  
metaphor, or "analogy," as providing both a means by which  
probable arguments are constructed and a criterion by which  
they are judged to be more or less persuasive, "only as they  
more or less agree to Truths that are established in our  
Minds, and as they hold proportion to other parts of our  
Knowledge and Observation": only, that is, to the extent to  
which they invoke some familiar and seemingly relevant image  
as a substitute for the more compelling proofs that cannot be  
provided. Such a situation arises, as Griswold said, whenever  
the issues involved are metaphysical: "coming," in Locke's  
words, "not within the scrutiny of humane Senses, [when they]  
cannot be examined by them, or be attested by any body," as  
happens with either "immaterial Beings" or the "material  
beings," the "Spirits" and "Angels" that so offended Clark,  
"which either for their smallness in themselves, or remoteness  
from us, our Senses cannot take notice of" (IV,xvi,12; see  
also II,xv,11).

Metaphysical proofs in the Essay do, therefore, partake

of a certain kind of empiricism, but only one in which the question of the existence of a physical world independent of human perception has become largely irrelevant, surpassed in importance by Locke's recognition of the inescapably subjective character of the individual human memories to which analogies speak. Those memories are the residue of both empirical (in the sense of universally accessible) and subjective experience: of both the "sensation" and the "reflection" that are first discussed in Book I (I,iv,18). As Locke says in Book II, "Men . . . come to be furnished with fewer or more simple Ideas from without, according as the Objects, they converse with, afford greater or less variety; and from the Operation of their Minds within, according as they more or less reflect on them" (II,i,7). Hence, where metaphysics are concerned, it is the variable reality of subjective experience, not of an external world existing independently of human perception, that is seen to provide the "sanative contact" spoken of by Briggs, the reality against which thought is measured and judged to be either sane or mad.

Lockean metaphysics employ metaphor for the same reason that Platonic metaphysics employ myth, and also in the same way, namely, as an appeal to reasonableness -- to the admission that proofs are never more than probable -- and to the individual reservoir of memory that passes for common sense. Though the memories to which analogy must make its appeal, the "Truths that are established in our Minds"

(IV,xvi,2-3), vary from person to person, tolerance within debate, not solipsism, is the consequence for philosophy:

We should do well to commiserate our mutual Ignorance, and endeavor to remove it in all the gentle and fair ways of Information; and not instantly treat others ill, as obstinate and perverse, because they will not renounce their own, and receive our Opinions, or at least those we would force upon them, when 'tis more than probable, that we are no less obstinate in not embracing some of theirs. (IV,xvi,4)

As the only form of proof that was entirely independent of the testimony of "fair Witnesses" (IV,xvi,6), analogy offered an invincibly subjective alternative to the unreflective and factious "enthusiasm" (IV,xix,3) that characterized much of the philosophical discourse of Locke's day.

Griswold and Locke are thereby seen to agree that a person who argues philosophy engages in philosophy and in so doing accepts and partakes of a level of meaningfulness that transcends what is strictly demonstrable. Implicit in the recognition of this fact (and Locke's statement that analogical thought is also probabilistic is proof that he did indeed recognize it) is the very suspension of judgment on the ultimate existence of a physical world beyond human perception and the concomitant elevation in importance of structures imposed mentally upon an otherwise undefined external manifold that together define rationalism. Since this is a view intrinsic to both Platonic myth and Lockean metaphor, and one that contrasts with the dogmatic realist position that the objects of perception actually have existence beyond the mind,

the metaphysic of the Essay must be seen to be as much rationalistic as it is empiricist.

This is not to say that every conception of proof in the Lockean schema is predominantly metaphysical, though none escapes a degree of metaphysical uncertainty to become more than merely probable. Nor is it to deny that the nonmetaphysical conceptions are more accurately described by the empiricism traditionally ascribed to the system as a whole. The four "Degrees of Assent" Locke defines in Book IV constitute a hierarchy of probability, with what amount to criteria usually associated with Kant -- (rational) necessity and (empirical) universality -- serving to define the trustworthiness of experience-claims. Besides the least compelling of the four modes, "Analogy," "Assurance" attaches to empirical arguments whose "probabilities rise so near to Certainty, that they govern our Thoughts as absolutely, and influence all our Actions as fully, as the most evident demonstration." "Confidence" names the degree of probability warranted by an argument "attested by many and undoubted Witnesses." A third, unnamed, level of empirical proof is marked by the testimony of a lesser number of "Historians of credit" when there is otherwise "nothing for, nor against it" (IV,xvi,6-9). With its combination of latent empiricism and active rationalism, analogy alone among Locke's proofs is both preeminently metaphysical and entirely independent of objective verification.

So even though he, too, otherwise recognizes the crucial role played in the Essay by the discussion of analogy in Book IV, Peter Alexander is misled by his adherence to the by-now familiar dichotomy of rationalism and empiricism into conflating Locke's discussion of metaphysical and nonmetaphysical proofs. As a result, the empirical experience against which Lockean analogies are measured appears no different from the empirical experience that was then emerging in the Royal Society as the basis for the experimental method in science. Alexander begins by answering unnamed historians who argue that Locke invented, in Book II of the Essay, the very distinction between primary and secondary qualities that Cranston says he uncritically adopted from others. On this matter of intellectual debts, Alexander is of a mind with Cranston and constructs, from prima facie evidence, an argument that the inspiration for the relevant portions of Book II came from Locke's colleague at the Royal Society, Robert Boyle. Thereafter, Alexander parts company with Cranston to suggest that Locke's use of the primary-secondary distinction, far from being uncritical, was a conscious attempt at transplanting Boyle's experimental mode from science to epistemology.<sup>10</sup> This supposedly entailed nothing

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<sup>10</sup> Peter Alexander, "Boyle and Locke on Primary and Secondary Qualities" in Locke on Human Understanding: Selected Essays (Ed. I.C. Tipton. Oxford University Press: Oxford and New York. 1977), pp. 62-66. It might be added that we need no more accept Cranston's charge of carelessness in regards to Locke's understanding of language than Alexander accepts it in regards to Locke's grasp of the primary-secondary distinction. On this point, Briggs was right: Lockean metaphysics

less than the discovery, for philosophy, of analogical reasoning itself, based on the example of speculation within the Royal Society into "primary," microscopic qualities from observations of "secondary," macroscopic phenomena.

Alexander's conclusion is that Lockean analogies were part-and-parcel of a Royal Society empiricism that, in its axiomatic acceptance of an independently existing physical world and the radical contingency of human perception, reflects what is inevitably read into the Essay by traditional Lockean scholarship.<sup>11</sup>

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inevitably spill over into a probabilistic theory of language, since word meaning must either be the same for everyone -- a position unlikely to be taken by someone who holds that analogies evoke different images from different people -- or else must vary according to the different sets of memories that it makes its various appeals to. So it is that the Essay asks in its first pages, not only that we settle for probability in place of the certainty that is unattainable, but also that we apply the same logical rigor to both our ideas and our speech, "The greatest part of the Questions and Controversies that perplex Mankind depending on the doubtful and uncertain use of Words, or (which is the same) indetermined Ideas, which they are made to stand for." Locke concedes that the compelling doubts that can be cast upon the reliability of language are answered adequately, if not definitively, by its practical usefulness. Despite the subjectivity of the perceptions that it describes and the subjectivity of the minds that it addresses, language works, and works well, if attended to with care. Locke's definitive, explicitly metaphysical answer to the critique of language would seem to be that all words are analogies (or "Archetypes," as he says at II,xxxii,25-26, III,v,3, III,ix,13, III,xi,17 and IV,iv,5-6,11-12), not just the flamboyant metaphors among them, and though they function well enough for ordinary purposes, they still produce intellectual resonances that are subjective to a philosophically troubling degree (Locke, "The Epistle to the Reader," p. 13. See also II,xxxi,7,13-14; II,xxxii,25-26; III,v,11; III,ix,5-6; III,xi,13-14).

<sup>11</sup>Alexander, "Boyle and Locke", pp. 66, 68: "Locke, in putting forward an empiricist basis for knowledge, was codifying the principles of the experimental natural

Contradicting Alexander is the point made at least as early as the 1950's by E.J. Dijksterhuis that the distinction between primary and secondary qualities long antedated the writing of the Essay, together with what would seem to be that point's corollary, that the history of the primary-secondary distinction carries it into the Royal Society on a current broader than would make plausible its transmission by any single individual, even a Boyle, to a man of Locke's connections and intellectual stature.<sup>12</sup> Given this long and syncretic history, Boyle probably has to be made the agent of transmission if the Essay is to be found to partake exclusively of what Alexander calls the intrinsic realism and empiricism of the corpuscularian tradition on which the primary-secondary distinction is predicated.<sup>13</sup> Otherwise, the

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philosophy which Boyle was championing against speculative natural philosophy." On a separate matter, Alexander blames Locke's lack of clarity of expression for an alleged inconsistency at II,viii,21, where Locke is thought to be saying that primary qualities could never produce the illusions that secondary qualities sometimes do, which would contradict his argument that (primary) qualities are in objects; if primary qualities never produce illusions, then Alexander seems to be saying that they might just as well be said to be in us as an invariable part of the perceptive faculty. Alexander's solution is that Locke probably meant to say that heat and cold, the examples he chooses, are "merely ideas in us." Since the ideational context is explicit at this point in the Essay, Alexander seems to be arguing a non-issue.

<sup>12</sup>E.J. Dijksterhuis, The Mechanization of the World Picture (Trans., C. Dikshoorn. Oxford University Press: Oxford and New York. 1960. IV:227), p. 423. This ancient distinction (see footnote 3, above) had gained new and widespread importance earlier in the century in the work of Galileo.

<sup>13</sup>Boyle's central role in the Royal Society, like Locke's, is reduced in traditional histories of science to that of a protagonist for the most narrowly-defined empiricism, as, for example, in the work of Steven Shapin and

borrowing might be unpredictable and the results not unequivocally those of empiricism, just as, in fact, a close reading of Book IV of the Essay shows that analogical reasoning for Locke was, to say the least, no more empiricist than it was rationalistic: largely subjective and unique, among the four "Degrees of Assent," in its freedom from the validation of "fair Witnesses."<sup>14</sup>

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 Simon Schaffer (see below). But as with Locke's Essay, an unbiased reading of Boyle's "Proemial Discourse" confounds the traditional interpretation. Whereas Boyle supposedly called for cultivating members of the gentry who might serve as reputable witnesses to Royal Society experiments and whose testimony might prove useful in establishing unanimity on questions whose solutions would supposedly have had to rest on convention, the only comment in the "Discourse" to address the gentry sardonically contrasts their attraction to experiments for "their novelty or prettiness" with their ignorance of "the rudiments or fundamental notions of that philosophy whose pleasing or amazing productions have enamoured them of it." As for Shapin and Schaffer's claim that Boyle categorically ruled out thought experiments because they were private and unverifiable, Boyle instead speaks somewhat murkily of reconstructing experiments out of "notes and memory" or out of repeated trials when he doubts the "sufficiency" of his mnemonic devices: "sufficiency" sounding very much here like the "probability" that attends Locke's discussion of (memory-dependent) metaphor. Finally, while Shapin and Schaffer claim that Boyle forbade ad hominem argumentation in the interest of communal accord, "The Proemial Discourse" instead includes virulent attacks on the same Aristoteleanism against which Locke directed his own sharpest invective: "to vouchsafe it a solicitous confutation might question a writer's judgement with intelligent readers . . ." Disputatiousness is a prominent weapon in both mens' arsenals, though, like recourse to thought experiments or to metaphysics, it must be denied by those who would make an entire agenda for the Royal Society out of empirical observation. Robert Boyle, "The Proemial Discourse to the Reader" from The Origin of Forms and Qualities According to the Corpuscular Philosophy in Selected Philosophical Papers of Robert Boyle (Manchester University Press: Manchester and Oxford. 1979), pp. 2, 4, 8-9. Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, Leviathan and the Air Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1985), pp. 55, 73.

<sup>14</sup>Alexander's argument notwithstanding, the measure of

A rereading of the Essay obviously becomes pertinent at this point to a long-standing debate within the history of science in which the common supposition that Lockean metaphysics are adequately described as empiricist is called into question by disagreement on the relative importance of hypothesis and observation to the so-called experimental method emerging in Locke's day within the Royal Society. The work of two of the most recent (1985) participants in that debate, Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, would seem to imply that the atmosphere within the Royal Society would have been unlikely to account for an analysis of metaphor like that found in the Essay's Book IV, judging by what they find that the "fair Witnesses" gathered there really were up to. While it has long been claimed that the experimental method developed at the Royal Society was inimical to argumentation from hypotheses, Shapin and Schaffer have refined that somewhat embattled commonplace to argue that metaphysical discourse was excluded from the Society's proceedings in the name of a communal unity then emerging among English scientists, taking with it both the metaphors and the disputatiousness that an unbiased reading nevertheless shows to have played an integral role in the Essay's treatment of

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how handily Locke was able to imbibe corpuscular thought while remaining free of the empiricist metaphysic that might reasonably (if ahistorically) be thought its reduction of all physical phenomena to the motions of invisible particles would necessarily have entailed is found at II,ii,2, where the division and recombination of ideas in the process of reflection -- an entirely mental and "insubstantial" (my term) phenomenon -- is described in unmistakably mechanistic terms.

knowledge and proof. This means that either Shapin and Schaffer, too, are wrong or the Essay can no longer be taken for granted as a product of the Royal Society's intellectual milieu, at least not as long as that milieu is understood to be, as these historians rather predictably put it, "empiricist and inductivist." Retaining Locke as a central participant in a Royal Society so defined will put historians of science in the dubious position of having to divorce him from his chief philosophical work. Certainly some sort of amputation has to be performed on the Lockean corpus if it is to conform to the conception of probability that Shapin and Schaffer say predominated in the Royal Society, whereby the veracity of any scientific account was considered to be directly proportional to the number of witnesses attesting to it: a conception that can cover only the non-analogical definitions of probability given by Locke in the Essay's Book IV.<sup>15</sup>

Shapin and Schaffer's analysis is undoubtedly best taken, not as the final statement on what was actually promoted and what might also have been permissible within the Royal Society, but as a new and provocative contribution in what

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<sup>15</sup>Shapin and Schaffer, Leviathan and the Air Pump, pp. 36, 56. In his discussion of "wrong measures of probability" at IV,xx,17, Locke also explicitly disavows the exclusivity and the artificial creation of consensus which Shapin and Schaffer say were the hallmarks of the Royal Society's organization. Condemned is the common practice of "giving up our Assent to the common received Opinions, either of our Friends, or Party". For, "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."

will be an ongoing debate. If future installments in that debate continue to count Locke's Essay as one of the most important works to come out of the intellectual circle gathered at the Royal Society and yet insist on denying the metaphysical and rationalist character of Locke's discussion of proof in general, or of analogy in particular, then either they will continue to falter when they reach the heavily metaphorical argumentation in Book I and the theoretical statements on metaphor in Book IV or they will follow what we see is ample precedent and simply ignore the embarrassing portions of the Essay altogether. Such, unfortunately, is the approach adopted by Barbara Shapiro, who sets out to reconcile the Essay with a by-now familiar picture of the Royal Society and, indeed, of the overall English intellectual temper in the late seventeenth century as inimical to metaphysical discourse. Shapiro is on safe ground in arguing that a scientific consensus toward a "probabilistic empiricism" was emerging in Locke's day from the complex crosscurrents of English intellectual life, and perhaps again, based on what we have seen of the Essay's sophisticated treatment of probabilistic argumentation, in claiming that Locke "represents the culmination of a generation's attempt to devise a new theory of knowledge appropriate to the experimental science of the era." But because such a theory was, as she conceives of it, one from which (after Francis Bacon) "ambiguity and especially metaphor" must have been

"utterly excluded," she adopts what an unbiased reading of the Essay shows to be an absurd position joining Locke -- for whom she is, of course, unable to cite a single disavowal of metaphor -- with Thomas Sprat, John Wilkins, Samuel Parker, Joseph Glanville, William Petty and Boyle (all the rest for whom she is able to produce, if not explicit statements condemning metaphorical discourse, at least approximations thereof) as an opponent of metaphorical usage in scientific discourse.<sup>16</sup>

Is the standard picture of late seventeenth century English intellectual life as dominated by empiricism and inimical to rationalism to be retained, then, minus its "culminating" figure, or will historians of science continue to force Locke into a mold that a careful reading of his major text reveals to be patently distorting? Of course, neither is acceptable; the Essay is far too important to be read inaccurately or out of context, and a new reading of the text may well be the beginning of a reappraisal of context (just as interpretations of context must be tested against texts themselves). After all, one premise of cultural history must be that analogical discourse retains a broader meaningfulness than that required merely to rescue it from solipsism. Metaphors within such influential texts as the Essay can

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<sup>16</sup>Barbara J. Shapiro, Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England: A Study of the Relationship Between Natural Science, Religion, History, Law and Literature (Princeton University Press: Princeton. 1983), pp. 12, 32, 232-245.

reasonably be read as cultural exemplars, or "archetypal analogies," in the words of M.H. Abrams, whose point that "metaphysical systems . . . are intrinsically metaphorical systems" anticipated Griswold by twenty-five years. But according to Abrams, certain perennially-important metaphors do more than fill the inevitable lacuna in metaphilosophy. He argues that they actually generate the arguments that we normally think of them as merely summarizing after the creative fact. Images of mirrors and of lamps are particularly important, says Abrams, in shaping theories of the mind as either a passive recorder of impressions originating from without or as an active agent in the interpretation of those impressions.<sup>17</sup>

If not the newest version of the dichotomizing tendency that strictly segregates rationalistic thought from empiricism, this nevertheless counts as one of the most sophisticated, in that it acknowledges, indeed, is predicated upon, the heavy reliance on metaphor in the Essay which others who deny the rationalistic element therein choose (or are forced) to ignore. According to Abrams, the image of the tabula rasa not only provides a fair (if highly abbreviated) synopsis in our own time of Lockean epistemology; it, or a metaphor very much like it -- the metaphor of the mirror, perhaps, or the camera obscura, at any rate, an image

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<sup>17</sup>M.H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (Oxford University Press: Oxford. 1953), pp. 30-31.

suggesting intellectual passivity before nature -- embodied in Locke's day what was a then still-dominant empiricist tradition and provided the inspiration for Locke's own supposedly straightforward empiricist theory of mind.<sup>18</sup> What Abrams' argument itself ignores, however, is the array of what would seem to be unequivocally active metaphors of mind in the Essay's Book I and Book II. These include such versions of the lamp metaphor as the candle at I,I,5 "that is set up in us, [and] shines bright enough for all our Purposes," the "light" at I,iii,4 that makes certain undeniable propositions seem self-evident and the "light of Nature" at I,iii,13 by which we overcome ignorance and which is nothing less than the "use and due application of our natural Faculties." This same metaphor is as useful to Locke in exposing what innateist conceptions of mind lack as it is in illustrating those powers which, in his own conception, the mind actively displays. At I,ii,27, Locke says that if we possessed innate ideas, they would shine out like "native beams of light," and again, at I,iii,1, that innate moral principles, if there were any, would manifest themselves "by their own light."<sup>19</sup> The

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<sup>18</sup> Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, pp. 57-58. Abrams does not use the term "empiricism," though his description of Locke's epistemology as "his view of the mind in perception as a passive receiver for images presented ready-formed from without" makes it clear that empiricism is what he means.

<sup>19</sup> Lamps are by no means the only metaphors in the Essay to suggest an aggressive epistemology. The very first metaphor that Locke introduces (what Clark calls his "ocular vocabulary") is the "Eye" of the Understanding ("The Epistle to the Reader") which, if it were unable to perceive innate knowledge, "Characters, which Nature it self has taken care to stamp within," "would be, to make Nature take Pains to no

evidence of metaphorical usage in the Essay therefore suggests that if Abrams is correct in saying that the metaphor of the lamp lends itself to dynamic theories of mind, he is nevertheless badly mistaken in assuming that Locke, or, therefore, seventeenth century Englishmen in general, lacked access to it or formulated conceptions of epistemology that escaped its influence.

What, then, of the passive metaphors, the mirrors that Abrams says should have determined Locke's theory of mind toward that of a "receiver for images presented ready-formed from without"?<sup>20</sup> Explicit references to mirrors occur twice in the Essay's Book II, first in the immediate aftermath of the attack on innateism, at II,i,25, where the metaphor does, in fact, function as an illustration of the mind's passive receptivity to the "simple ideas" that Locke regards as the essential rudiments (but only the rudiments) of all intellectual activity.<sup>21</sup> Yet in seizing upon this imagery as proof of the essentially empirical quality of Lockean epistemology, Abrams forgets that Locke always couples the "sensation" by which simple ideas are acquired with

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Purpose" (I,ii,25). By the same logic, intellectual passivity is disparagingly suggested by the metaphor of the eye's absence, by the "blindness" of those who uncritically embrace the opinions of others (I,iv,23).

<sup>20</sup> Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, pp. 57-58.

<sup>21</sup> "These simple Ideas, when offered to the mind, the Understanding can no more refuse to have, nor alter, when they are imprinted, nor blot them out, and make new ones in it self, than a mirror can refuse, alter, or obliterate the Images or Ideas, which, the Objects set before it, do therein produce."

"reflection," or the capacity for original and independent thought. The "primary" qualities that we perceive through sensation and that inher in objects themselves are immediately and inevitably accompanied by perceptions of "secondary" phenomena that cannot be separated from the perceptive faculty. For all the philosopher knows, these may be the product of sensation or reflection, though in either case their reliability is uncertain. So it is that the second occurrence of the mirror metaphor, at II,viii,16, invokes intellectual passivity as a reproach to those who indiscriminately attribute qualities to objects alone instead of to the mind.<sup>22</sup> Mirrors suggest intellectual passivity in the Essay only to the extent that they are used on one occasion to illustrate what is meant by simple ideas; beyond that, they reflect on intellectual passivity in an intentionally derisive way that is a reversal of the meaning Abrams attributes to them.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> "Which Qualities are commonly thought to be the same in those Bodies, that those Ideas are in us, the one the perfect resemblance of the other, as they are in a Mirror; and it would by most Men be judged very extravagant, if one should say otherwise. And yet he, that will consider, that the same Fire, that at one distance produces in us the Sensation of Warmth, does at a nearer approach, produce in us the far different Sensation of Pain, ought to bethink himself, what Reason he has to say, That his Idea of Warmth, which was produced in him by the Fire, is actually in the Fire; and his Idea of Pain, which the same Fire produced in him the same way, is not in the Fire."

<sup>23</sup> A slightly different version of the mirror metaphor occurs at II,i,15, where Locke says that a mind that retained none of its thoughts would be like a "Looking-glass," and again the image serves as a disparagement of intellectual passivity, certainly not as a final epistemological model: "the Looking-glass is never the better for such Ideas, nor the

As for the camera obscura, no specific mention is ever made of it in the Essay, though at II,xi,17 a "dark room" is described whose windows represent both sensation and reflection, suggesting, in its layout, the camera obscura but depicting Lockean epistemology in its entirety, and not just in the passive aspects (the realm of sensation) that interest Abrams. As for that other image of intellectual inertia, the much-touted metaphor of the white paper, Locke has direct recourse to it exactly twice in the Essay and makes indirect reference to it exactly twice more. First mention of the white paper is made at I,iii,22, in what may well be Locke's most scathing attack on the same passivity that the metaphor of the mirror was employed against at II,viii,16 but that traditional Lockean scholarship would have the tabula rasa enshrine. The topic is prejudice and the reluctance of most adults to critically examine their own beliefs, which makes them no better than gullible children who hold to "Doctrines, that have been derived from no better original, than the Superstition of a Nurse, or the Authority of an old Woman." "White paper receives any characters," Locke offers as an excuse for such children, speaking not about the origin of knowledge, but about moral credulity, and driving home the reproach at I,iii,21 of "Men even of Good Understanding in other matters, [who] will sooner part with their Lives, and whatever is dearest to them, than suffer themselves to doubt,

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Soul for such Thoughts."

or others to question, the truth of [their unexamined propositions]." For our purposes, the important point is that the metaphor illustrates here an absence of rationality that is willful, rather than intrinsic.

In the second and last explicit occurrence of the white paper metaphor, at II,i,2, the image does indeed suggest intellectual passivity, but only as the hypothetical precondition for speculation into the origin of knowledge, and not as a final epistemological model: "Let us then suppose the Mind to be, as we say, white Paper, void of all Characters, without any Ideas; How comes it to be furnished?" The answer once again incorporates both sensation, or the experience of "external, sensible Objects," which in isolation might be compatible with an empiricist reading of the text, and reflection, or the experience "about the internal Operations of our Minds, perceived and reflected on by our selves" that represents the element of intellectual self-sufficiency in Lockean epistemology, of independence from external sensation, and with which the narrowly-empiricist reading is obviously incompatible. After that, imagery of white paper is invoked twice in Book IV in purely incidental illustrations of comparatively minor points. The immediacy of intuitive knowledge is compared, at IV,ii,5, to the eye's instantaneous apprehension of "Whether this Ink, and this Paper be all of a Colour" and our acceptance of such knowledge without a solid understanding of its origins is likened at IV,xi,2 to the

unexamined, commonsensical connection between the paper before us and the descriptor "white."

So it is that the metaphor of the white paper -- the famous image of the tabula rasa -- functions very differently in Locke's Essay from what either intellectual historians or historians of science have traditionally asserted. Its specific role in Lockean epistemology, if minor, is nevertheless integral, not aberrant; the collective contribution made by such metaphors to the elaboration of the argument's metaphysic is technically indispensable, as Locke acknowledges in Book IV in his treatment of their theoretical status. If the mere existence of such metaphors calls into question the standard picture in the history of science of what the Scientific Revolution entailed for English thought in general, or for the Royal Society in particular, a start toward addressing the discrepancy was been made within cultural history, whereby metaphors are acknowledged to be, if not the theoretical mainstays of Lockean epistemology, at least factors in shaping both popular and philosophical perceptions of epistemological issues in seventeenth century England.

The flaw in this approach lies more in its circumspection than in its misreading of the role in the Essay of any single metaphor. Otto Mayr's point that metaphors possess an "inner logic" and exert a "suggestive power" over the arguments that they illustrate is reminiscent of Abrams' thesis that the

intellectual function of metaphors is generative. Unlike Abrams, whose "archetypal" metaphors impose meaning on thought and discourse, Mayr seems to concede the point made by Locke in Books II and IV that the resonance produced by any particular metaphor is entirely subjective. The same clock that suggested governmental or technological intrusiveness to the seventeenth century Englishman in the street embodied a rational and apprehensible cosmos to the member of the Royal Society. This is not to deny that metaphors were just as promiscuous within the Society as without, and here at last Robert Boyle becomes more than just a two-dimensional caricature of empiricism. According to Mayr, Boyle's perception of the clock as a metaphor of nature was not fixed. Instead, it underwent a "cautious transition" from the determinism consistent with a narrowly-empirical scientific method to a voluntarism that opened up much wider conceptual possibilities. But if no use of metaphor whatsoever would have been consistent with what Thomas Sprat said were the Society's goals, then Mayr is discriminating enough to know that Sprat was not the whole Society, and Boyle's statements in defense of metaphor, self-conscious and apologetic though they may have been, are duly noted. An understanding of the Royal Society modified even to this modest degree can accomodate the Locke of the Essay's Book I and Book II, the polemicist unselfconsciously peppering his arguments with potent analogies, but nowhere does Mayr credit Locke with the

explicit theoretical appreciation of metaphor that is developed in Book IV. Instead, Mayr's Locke shares in Boyle's embarrassment: "Boyle, who loved metaphors, frequently apologized for this aberration, and John Locke expressed himself against "figurative speech" and "ornaments" in philosophy."<sup>24</sup>

Hence, no history of the seventeenth century does justice to Locke's approving and richly metaphysical treatment of metaphor. Even the boldest revisions in the often iconoclastic field of cultural history fall short. The explanation for this timidity can only lie in the authoritative weight of a tradition in Lockean scholarship that has succeeded, as Hans Aarsleff says, since the middle of the nineteenth century in reducing the Essay to its component empiricism, initially as a reaction against the supposedly-materialistic Enlightenment that Locke (among others) inspired. If, like so many recent commentators on the Essay (Cranston, Briggs, Clark, Alexander, Shapiro and Abrams) we subscribe to what Aarsleff calls "the pedagogically convenient and ideologically loaded separate-box distinction between rationalism and empiricism" that this same

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<sup>24</sup> Otto Mayr, Authority, Liberty and Automatic Machinery in Early Modern Europe (The Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore and London. 1986), pp. 30, 61, 82, 94, 217. Though it is presently impossible for me to check the context from which Mayr extracted Locke's statements against figurative speech due to his use of an 1824 edition of the Essay that apparently divides chapters with a different notation from that used by Nidditch, the Essay is rich in such statements. They are inevitably directed against either the proponents of Innatism or the Scholastics and are not intended as a renunciation of metaphor correctly used.

tradition has bequeathed to us, and as indeed we are taught to do by the most common historical periodizations and the most entrenched philosophical categories, then we arrive at the conclusion that Locke's epistemology is empiricist, not by critical examination of the text, but by predisposition.<sup>25</sup> Given Locke's flamboyant use of metaphor in Book I and his meticulous justification of metaphorical usage in Book IV, it seems probable that the tabula rasa has long been extracted from Locke's Essay as representing the essence of his epistemology, not because it actually functions in the text in the way imagined, but instead because the passivity it suggests to readers who have yet to read the book conforms to what they are made to expect to find therein. Before their first encounter in the Essay at I,iii,22, the reader with a basic knowledge of history and philosophy and the metaphor of the white paper are already acquainted.

That is why LaCapra's call for an unconventional reading of "great texts" is so significant. If traditional interpretations of important books are to be reconsidered (which is the same thing as asking if they are to be read afresh or communicated to new audiences via secondary synopses), then the relationships between specific texts and specific contexts must be approached sceptically and perhaps ultimately redefined. But a reading that resists familiar

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<sup>25</sup> Aarsleff, From Locke to Saussure, pp. 9, 139.

periodizations is one that has at least temporarily cut its moorings and risks drifting into ahistoricity. LaCapra's call for a new and uncanonical approach to a canon of great books and Griswold's defense of dialectical philosophy are both consciously indebted to Heidegger's inconveniently ahistorical notion of the dialogical relationship between reader and text.<sup>26</sup> Rereading Locke's Essay and discovering that the metaphors therein function like myths in Platonic dialogues may pose a very interesting challenge to the commonly accepted relationship between this particular text and a context supposedly dominated by a newly ascendant empiricism, but whether or not the revision can provide an alternative interpretation in anything approaching similar detail, coherence or even historical accuracy is uncertain, to say the least. Put another way, if we defy the weight of tradition and say that Locke developed a metaphysic of metaphor, should we not also, like the upholders of the tabula rasa whom we would supplant, be able to say that there is a correct metaphor for Lockean metaphysics, a metaphor that is inextricably linked to Locke's particular day and place, even if its influence over the Essay is something less than archetypal?

Locke himself answers the question. The metaphor that appears most frequently in the Essay is also the one used to

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<sup>26</sup> LaCapra, p. 29; Griswold is careful to reject Heidegger's most sweeping attacks on philosophy while accepting that dogmatic metaphilosophical constructs are indefensible: pp. 144, 166.

illustrate the widest range of arguments. And though the subjectivity of metaphors makes their reception unpredictable, this particular metaphor is also the one whose immediate resonances most reliably convey the probabilism at the center of Locke's theory of mind. The imagery of the ship is used throughout the Essay in a complex of explicit and submerged metaphors that invoke the practicality, the ingenuity and the hazards of seventeenth century seamanship in order to depict the human intellect operating intrepidly within clearly defined, and widely understood, limitations. Early in Book I, the ship expresses the value of raising epistemological issues even if our weaknesses are thereby exposed: "'Tis of great use to the Sailor to know the length of his Line, though he cannot with it fathom all the depths of the Ocean" (I,i,6). "But what still remains beyond this [knowledge]," Locke adds in Book II, "we have no more a positive distinct notion of, than a Mariner has of the depth of the Sea, where having let down a large portion of his Sounding-line, he reaches no bottom" (II,xvii,15).

Later, Locke sails the metaphorical ship into the thick of battle to demonstrate the futility of wishing that our intellects were keener: "If our Sense of Hearing were but 1000 times quicker than it is . . . we should in the quietest Retirement, be less able to sleep or meditate, than in the midst of a Sea-fight" (II,xxiii,12). In Book IV, the ship is invoked in an indictment of careless word use, but also more

subtly as an encouragement to our confident use of our admittedly imperfect intellectual instrument, and perhaps also as a reminder that knowledge is only probabilistic, and never certain: "Had Men, in the discoveries of the material, done, as they have in those of the intellectual World, . . . Ships built, and Fleets set out, would never have taught us the way beyond the Line" (IV,iii,30). We each command, Locke seems to say, a cumbersome and unruly vessel over which we must decisively take charge: "'Till a Man doth this in the primary and original Notions of Things, he builds upon floating and uncertain Principles, and will often find himself at a loss" (II,xiv,27).

Less pivotal arguments are also illustrated with the ship metaphor. To show that the perception of space is relational, Locke describes chessmen moving across a board, sets the board down stationary within his ship, and then moves the ship along an imaginary coast: "and so both Chess-men, and Board, and Ship, have every one changed Place in respect of remoter Bodies, which have kept the same distance one with another" (II,xiii,8). Locke has only to stop the ship to demonstrate the closely related point that our notion of succession derives from the linearity of perception: "a Man becalmed at Sea, out of sight of Land, in a fair Day, may look on the Sun, or Sea, or Ship, a whole hour together, and perceive no Motion at all in either; though it be certain, that two, and perhaps all of them, have moved, during that time, a great way"

(II,xiv,6). Finally, to show that this same relativity of perception accounts in part for the ambiguity of words, Locke climbs down into the hold:

The Ship has necessary Stores. Necessary, and Stores, are both relative Words: one having a relation to the accomplishing the Voyage intended, and the other to future us (II,xxvi,6).

As we began by saying, the stores carried in that hold are both rational and empirical, and equally necessary to the probabilistic epistemology that this metaphor represents.

The ship that one sights from time to time in Locke's Essay would seem to convey a theory of the mind as adequate to the journey at hand. Such a reading is consistent with what is generally recognized to be the growing confidence of English philosophy in that day. While Frank and Fritzie Manuel found that an opening shipwreck frequently was part of the "stock formula" of sixteenth century utopias, ships sailing the philosophical literature one hundred years later had apparently become more seaworthy and were successfully attaining more mundane ports of call.<sup>27</sup> If they managed this by sailing cautiously, by hugging empiricism's shore and by regularly consulting the shiplines of rationalism, they thereby contributed to a new candor in both the rhetoric and the methods of philosophy. As the English expressed this candor through their writings, their Dutch counterparts

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<sup>27</sup> Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel, Utopian Thought in the Western World (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts. 1979), p. 2.

expressed it through literal renderings of nature in landscapes, or so says Svetlana Alpers.<sup>28</sup> Metaphors, though, are pictures of a sort, and the Essay paints a seascape in the meticulous detail of empiricism but with a light wash, a suggestion of fog, reminding us of the irreducible uncertainty acknowledged by a probabilistic epistemology.

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<sup>28</sup> Svetlana Alpers, The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1983), p. 11.

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