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EXPERIENTIAL OBJECTS AND THINGS THEMSELVES

Locke's Naturalistic, Holistic Logic, Reconsidered

YASUHIKO TOMIDA

In Locke's *Essay* we find two different viewpoints being deployed: direct-realistic and representational-realistic. They are closely connected with each other and together form a holistic whole. Every meta-scientific view possesses one of its common, indispensable origins in our ordinary, direct-realistic (or in Edmund Husserl's terminology, 'natural') attitude; and Locke's meta-scientific view in the *Essay* is no exception. However, since he usually expresses his direct-realistic view in a language of 'ideas' that stems from the Cartesian representational-realistic viewpoint adopted in the *Essay*, his arguments there have often seemed confused to many readers. I have pointed out this problem on other occasions,¹ but have not yet treated it thematically. In this paper I take up the problem once more and attempt a fuller clarification of Locke's naturalistic, holistic logic.

In Locke's widest sense of the term, every object of our thought or perception is an 'idea'. Therefore, not only immediate objects in our minds—'ideas' in the narrow sense—but also external corpuscular things are, as far as they are objects of our thought or perception, equally ideas. This allows us to treat them from the viewpoint of intentionality; that is, as ideas in this second sense they are equally objects of our intentionality. Accordingly in this essay I will sometimes attempt to approach the problem identified above from the viewpoint of intentionality.² This will make it easier to grasp some seamless

¹ See e.g. Yasuhiko Tomida, 'Locke, Berkeley, and the Logic of Idealism II', *Locke Studies* 3 (2003): 63–91, at 69–70 and idem, 'Locke's Representationalism without Veil', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 13 (2005): 675–96.

² Locke does not use the word 'intentionality' himself, but in the *Essay* he mentions intentional, mental phenomena in various ways. For example, he considers the

transitional relationships between internal and external items that together form Lockean holistic logic.

1. Hypotheses and Observational Data

Richard Rorty once criticised Locke as one of those philosophers who have a ‘mirror of nature’ view of human beings.³ According to Rorty, Locke’s ‘things themselves’ and ‘real essences’ are supposed to be part of an absolute, immutable ‘nature’ which the minds of human beings attempt to copy accurately in the way that mirrors must do. However, Locke’s ‘things themselves’ are not such things; they are, for a variety of reasons, hypothetically posited on the basis of various observations.⁴ Hypothetical views

facts that we think of things, that we think of ideas, that we think of various relationships between things and ideas, and so on. This means that our minds are directed to things, ideas, relationships between things and ideas, and so on again. If we limit our subject to directedness to physical objects, we find in the *Essay* at least two different sorts of directedness to physical objects. The difference is partly dependent on the sorts of ‘intentional acts’. But in Locke’s case the difference is largely based on that of objects to which the mind is directed. We find two sorts of physical objects in Locke’s *Essay*: ordinary physical objects and corpuscular ‘things themselves’.

For intentionality itself, see Franz Brentano, *Psychologie: Vom empirischen Standpunkt* (Leipzig, 1874), 115. Brentano writes: ‘Jedes psychische Phänomen ist durch das charakterisirt, was die Scholastiker des Mittelalters die intentionale (auch wohl mentale) Inexistenz eines Gegenstandes genannt haben, und was wir, obwohl mit nicht ganz unzweideutigen Ausdrücken, die Beziehung auf einen Inhalt, die Richtung auf ein Object (worunter hier nicht eine Realität zu verstehen ist), oder die immanente Gegenständlichkeit nennen würden. Jedes enthält etwas als Object in sich, obwohl nicht jedes in gleicher Weise. In der Vorstellung ist etwas vorgestellt, in dem Urtheile ist etwas anerkannt oder verworfen, in der Liebe geliebt, in dem Hasse gehasst, in dem Begehren begehrt u s w.’ See also Edmund Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen* (Halle, 1901), esp. V. ‘Über intentionale Erlebnisse und ihre “Inhalte”’, 322–472; John R. Searle, *Intentionality: An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge, 1983), esp. ch. 1; Richard Rorty, ‘Realism and Reference’, *The Monist*, 59 (1976): 321–40. Rorty’s paper is not about intentionality itself, but his view on ‘talking about’ without the Searlian axiom of existence is, in essence, closely connected with Brentano’s ‘inexistence’ and Husserlian intentionality.

³ For this, see e.g. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, 1979), ch. 3.

⁴ For Locke’s view on hypothesis, see my *Locke, Berkeley, Kant: From a Naturalistic Point of View* (Hildesheim, 2012), 37–38. For his corpuscular hypothesis,

are human creations, a fact of which Locke is fully conscious. Therefore, Locke is not, after all, antithetical to Rorty, who attaches great importance to human creativity and spontaneity.⁵

Hypothesis-formation is based on observational data. Such data are, usually, various, sensed appearances. In the established framework of Locke's theory of ideas, hypothetically posited objects play the part of a new sort of 'things themselves'. By contrast, sensed appearances are regarded as ideas in the mind, produced by things themselves affecting our sense organs. Sensed appearances—sensed colours, sensed shapes, and so on—are just sensed by us as they really are, and in this sense they are 'hard'. Indeed, according to Locke, '*Ideas we receive by sensation, are often...alter'd by the Judgment*';⁶ so that, as Norwood Russell Hanson says, our observation is 'theory-laden'. However, it is not

see James Gibson, *Locke's Theory of Knowledge and its Historical Relations* (Cambridge, 1917), 260–65; Maurice Mandelbaum, 'Locke's Realism', in idem, *Philosophy, Science, and Sense Perception* (Baltimore, 1964), 1–60; Peter Alexander, *Ideas, Qualities and Corpuscles: Locke and Boyle on the External World* (Cambridge, 1985); G. A. J. Rogers, 'The Writing of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*', in idem, *Locke's Enlightenment* (Hildesheim, 1998), 1–22, at 4–5.

⁵ For this, see Rorty's letter to me, dated 9 August 1995, in my *Quine, Rorty, Locke: Essays and Discussions on Naturalism* (Hildesheim, 2007), 85–87, at 86. Whereas I assert that Locke's view about 'things themselves' and 'real essences' was propounded as the hypothesis 'which is thought to go farthest in an intelligible Explication of the Qualities of Bodies', (John Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford, 1975), IV. iii. 16, 547), and that it was one of the results of human creativity, Rorty replies, from a viewpoint somewhat different from mine, 'I think that Locke could have, as you say... "regarded the corpuscular hypothesis of his day as the best one" without "trying to consider our mechanism of knowledge." He didn't have to have the notion of a "mechanism of knowledge"... The notion of "idea" and that of "mechanism of knowledge" go hand-in-hand, but neither of them were inevitable once one had decided to go corpuscularian'. For this, see also my answer to Rorty, dated 31 August 1995, in my *Quine, Rorty, Locke*, 87–92, at 88; Yasuhiko Tomida, 'Davidson-Rorty Antirepresentationalism and the Logic of the Modern Theory of Ideas', in Randall E. Auxier and Lewis Edwin Hahn (eds.), *The Philosophy of Richard Rorty* (Chicago, 2010), 293–309, and Rorty's 'Reply to Yasuhiko Tomida', *ibid.*, 310–12; Yasuhiko Tomida, 'Locke and Rorty', in idem, *Inquiries into Locke's Theory of Ideas* (Hildesheim, 2001), 175–97.

⁶ *Essay*, II. ix. 8, 145.

usually the case that changing the theory that we use to see the object in question effects a change in its apparent colours, plane shape, and so on. In this sense observational data are ‘hard’. In contrast, from the same observational data we can, in principle, form various hypotheses. The corpuscular hypothesis is one of these. In this sense, hypotheses are ‘soft’. This softness echoes human creativity, and Locke’s meta-scientific view in the *Essay* clearly reveals his confidence in this human creativity and spontaneity.⁷

As I said above, we cannot arbitrarily change the data *qua* appearances that we observe, and in this sense they are ‘hard’. This hardness, however, is limited to their appearances themselves. Appearances can change their *ontological status* according to the differences in the theories through which we observe them. In everyday life we treat appearances through our ordinary view of the physical world and see them as ordinary physical objects or their properties. (For the sake of convenience, let us refer to ordinary physical objects as ‘experiential objects’.) They are *external* things or their properties. However, when we form a hypothesis that contains an ontological view which differs from our ordinary one on the basis of the given data *qua* appearances, the ontological status of the appearances may change. If the newly formed hypothesis contains such reification as posits things differing from the experiential objects at least in some points, the appearances cannot maintain their status as experiential objects or their properties. Since the newly posited things inherit the status of external things that experiential objects have enjoyed, the appearances *qua* experiential objects must change their status to one of something internal. Corpuscularianism is a hypothesis of this sort. On this hypothesis, appearances change their status to that of ideas produced in the mind by newly posited things themselves affecting our sense organs.

⁷ For this, see my *Inquiries into Locke’s Theory*, 61–71.

Interestingly, since our original viewpoint is the ordinary one, when we attempt to explain the corpuscular theory we must repeatedly return to the folk physical theory ('vulgar Notions' in Locke's words)—the folk theory of experiential objects. As Locke says, 'without [appealing to vulgar Notions], one cannot be well understood'.⁸ Therefore, even after accepting the corpuscular theory we must still switch our viewpoint, returning to the ordinary view of experiential objects.⁹

This means that when we talk about the corpuscular hypothesis, we repeatedly switch our intentionality. Sometimes we talk about corpuscular things themselves and sometimes we talk about experiential objects. Further, sometimes we talk about appearances qua experiential objects or their properties and sometimes we talk about appearances qua ideas produced in the mind by corpuscular things affecting our sense organs. In the following section I take up this Lockean twofold way of talking (and thinking) and consider how the two ways are connected with each other in the holistic framework I am attributing to Locke.

2. 'New Things Themselves' and the Language of Ideas

In order to delve more deeply into this theme, let us reconsider the relationship between positing new things themselves and introducing the language of ideas.

In everyday life, when we see or touch things, we usually believe that we perceive them immediately, as they really are. This ordinary 'natural' attitude is usually called naive realism or direct realism. But we sometimes encounter certain phenomena that cannot be adequately treated from the naive-realistic or direct-realistic viewpoint, and it is such phenomena that often act as a cue for the dynamic process discussed above, namely, the transition from the direct-realistic attitude into the

⁸ For this phrase, see *Essay*, II. xxxi. 2, 376.

⁹ For more on this point, see my *The Lost Paradigm of the Theory of Ideas: Essays and Discussions with John W. Yolton* (Hildesheim, 2007), 194.

representational view.

In principle, the transition can always happen in each individual's ordinary experience, but early modern Western intellectuals also had access to some historical materials for interpreting this transition in the tradition of *Physike* which had developed from the ancient Greeks, and more especially, in the atomistic tradition. Encouraged by the atomistic, Epicurean view which in the Renaissance began to permeate the western Christian world, Locke's predecessors like Descartes and Gassendi posited as 'new things themselves' some things that were in some aspects quite different from the things that we ordinarily perceive. We have some records of such positing of new things themselves, for example, in Descartes's *Meditationes*, his posthumous *Le Monde*, and *La Dioptrique* and *Les Météores*, published instead of *Le Monde*.

Admittedly, such positing of new things themselves shares a characteristic with a series of similar past physical (scientific) proposals, i.e. it contains as its basis the notion that the things themselves must be in some respects different from what we ordinarily perceive as bodies. Therefore, in the positing process the qualities immediately perceived by the mind and ordinarily thought of as the qualities of things themselves have to change their status from the qualities of things themselves to something that is perceived by the mind as an effect of 'affection' by things themselves. The same kind of change in status had already been expressed in, for example, Aristotle's remarks concerning the pre-Socratic *physikoi* or *physiologoi*, using the terms '*phantasma*' or '*phantasia*'. Such an ancient distinction between things themselves and sensible effects caused by their 'affection' was handed down and gave strong impetus to the early modern natural philosophers through the writings of Lucretius, Diogenes Laertius, Sextus Empiricus, and the like.¹⁰ Thus, in the case of

¹⁰ For the translation and circulation of Diogenes Laertius's *Lives of the Philosophers*, which made a great contribution to the dissemination of Epicureanism, see Giovanni Santinello, et al. (eds.), *Models of the History of Philosophy*, vol. 1 (Dordrecht, 1993), 154ff. For the influence of Sextus Empiricus, see Luciano Floridi,

Descartes, we find the process of the change in status, for example, in his argument about the piece of wax in the second Meditation. Further, we also find the distinction and relationship between things themselves and what the mind senses (which he calls ‘idea’) in his physical works, especially in such words as ‘les choses...pourront donner occasion à l’ame de sentir le mouuement, la grandeur, la distance, les couleurs, les sons, les odeurs, & autres telles qualitez’.¹¹

What deserves our attention is that if we read Descartes’s works in terms of their historical formation, we are certain to recognize that the formation of the early modern usage of ‘idea’ has an essential linkage with the positing of new things themselves, namely, with a certain physical view. Locke criticises Descartes in many respects, but surely follows him on this point.¹²

3. Transition 1: From Experiential Objects to Things Themselves

Interestingly, to posit a new sort of things themselves is, in Locke’s wording, to make a new *idea* of things themselves.¹³ In Quine’s wording, an ‘idea idea’ is formed with the new idea of things. When corpuscular natural philosophers form such a new

‘The Rediscovery and Posthumous Influence of Scepticism’, in Richard Bett (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Scepticism* (Cambridge, 2010), 267–87. For Lucretius’s Epicureanism, see e.g. George Depue Hadzits, *Lucretius and His Influence* (London, 1935); Howard Jones, *The Epicurean Tradition* (London, 1989); Introduction by Don and Peta Flower, in Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe* (Oxford, 1997), ix–xxx.

¹¹ See René Descartes, *Le Monde*, in *Œuvres de Descartes*, ed. C. Adam and P. Tannery (11 vols., Paris, 1974–1986), xi, 176.

¹² For the fact that Locke’s usage of ‘idea’ has an essential linkage with the positing of new things themselves, see my *Locke, Berkeley, Kant*, 35–41. As to Locke’s corpuscularism, see also Mandelbaum, ‘Locke’s Realism’ and Alexander, *Ideas, Qualities and Corpuscles*.

¹³ See my *Inquiries into Locke’s Theory*, 69–70.

idea, they select some of the qualities that the ordinary physical objects (experiential objects) possess and from them they form a new idea of things like this: small globules that possess only primary qualities: shape, size, solidity, number, motion or rest, and so on. Locke suggests this formational process, for example, in the following passage:

though our Senses take no notice of [the *Idea* of Solidity], but in masses of matter, of a bulk sufficient to cause a Sensation in us; Yet the Mind, having once got this *Idea* from such grosser sensible Bodies, traces it farther; and considers it, as well as Figure, in the minutest Particle of Matter, that can exist; and finds it inseparably inherent in Body, where-ever, or however modified. (II. iv. 1, 123)

In this passage Locke shifts his focus from ‘grosser sensible Bodies’ to ‘the minutest Particle of Matter’ and brings the idea of solidity ‘as well as Figure’ found in the former into the latter. In such a way corpuscular philosophers make a new idea of ‘things themselves’ from several selected qualities of experiential objects. But then, one might wonder, how can we reach the things themselves? To say that we make a new *idea* of things themselves might seem to say that we cannot go beyond our realm of internal ideas to that of external things themselves. But this interpretation is perhaps not correct. In the next two sections I will attempt to show why it is not so.

4. Transition 2: The Lockean ‘Idea’ in the Widest Sense of the Term and the Original Idea-Thing Distinction

In the *Essay* there are several seemingly strange passages. Read from the viewpoint of standard Lockean idea language, they seem incoherent or unnatural. Among the strangest is the following:

To discover the nature of our *Ideas* the better, and to discourse of them intelligibly, it will be convenient to distinguish them, as they are *Ideas* or Perceptions in our Minds; and as they are modifications of matter in the Bodies that cause such Perceptions in us: that so we *may not* think (as perhaps usually is done) that they are exactly the Images and *Resemblances* of something inherent in the subject; most of those of Sensation being in

the Mind no more the likeness of something existing without us, than the Names, that stand for them are the likeness of our *Ideas*, which yet upon hearing, they are apt to excite in us. (II. viii. 7, 134)

In this passage, ‘ideas’ are divided into two sets: ‘*Ideas* or Perceptions in our Minds’ and ‘modifications of matter in the Bodies that cause such Perceptions in us’ (in other words, ‘ideas’ and ‘qualities’ respectively).¹⁴ It is not impossible to read this passage as showing that for Locke all things are ideas (with some exceptions like our minds), but this idealistic interpretation is opposed to the realist tendencies he evinces elsewhere. How should we understand it, then?

Perhaps it would be better for us to take the passage as expressing the original idea-thing distinction *in terms of idea language*. In our direct-realistic attitude we view the qualities external things exhibit as their qualities. But, for some reason we come to think that things do not necessarily exhibit their qualities as they really are, and distinguish things themselves and their appearances. In the original form of the transition we begin with ordinary things (experiential objects) and their properties and then proceed to the distinction between corpuscular things and internal ideas. All of them, however, are equally objects of our thought in the wide sense of the term, and in the idea language they are ideas. Therefore, in the passage above Locke begins with ‘*Ideas*’ and then divides them into ‘*Ideas* or Perceptions in our Minds’ on the one hand and ‘modifications of matter in the Bodies that cause such Perceptions in us’ on the other.¹⁵

¹⁴ See *Essay*, II. viii. 8, 134. Locke says: ‘Whatsoever the Mind perceives in it self, or is the immediate object of Perception, Thought, or Understanding, that I call *Idea*; and the Power to produce any *Idea* in our mind, I call *Quality* of the Subject wherein that power is’.

¹⁵ For this matter, see also J. L. Mackie, *Problems from Locke* (Oxford, 1976), 11. Concerning the passage in question, Mackie says ‘When he is about to introduce the distinction between primary and secondary qualities, he first distinguishes between ideas—the word must here be used in a broad sense—“as they are ideas or perceptions in our minds” and “as they are modifications of matter in the bodies that cause such perceptions in us”, and proposes to call only the former *ideas*’.

5. Consciousness and Internality

To understand the situation better, let us return to Descartes. Though Descartes's *mens* was never any kind of spatial capsule containing various ideas within it, he could not help using the imagery of 'internality' in the sense in which the *mens* is an 'internal' world terminated by the external world of bodies. He says '*ideae, sive cogitationes*'¹⁶, and asserts '*Cogitationis nomine, intelligo illa omnia, quae nobis consciis in nobis fiunt, quatenus eorum in nobis conscientia est*'¹⁷. Thus, ideas are 'what we are conscious of'. But at the same time he had to express them as 'something which exists *in us*', for there were no other appropriate epithets that could precisely express the distinction between things themselves on the one hand and our mental images etc. on the other.

These double characteristics of the 'ideas'—namely, the characteristic that they are objects of our consciousness or perception on the one hand, and the characteristic that we must express them in terms of being '*in us*' or '*in the mind*' on the other—explicitly appear in Locke's text too. Indeed, Locke says that being in our mind or understanding means being perceived or understood by the mind,¹⁸ but though the statement describes one of the double characteristics of ideas, it does not express the logic of physical (scientific) distinction and transition which compelled the intellectuals of his day to use the word 'idea'. If we place emphasis on the first characteristic only, so far as it is the understanding or the mind that posits the things themselves, the things thus posited could also be called ideas. For they are certainly 'what we are conscious of'. In this sense *all* things are

¹⁶ René Descartes, *Meditationes de prima philosophia*, in *Œvres de Descartes*, vii, 35.

¹⁷ René Descartes, *Principia Philosophiae*, in *Œvres de Descartes*, viii–1, 7.

¹⁸ See *Essay*, I. ii. 5, 50, where Locke says that 'if these Words (*to be in the Understanding*) have any Propriety, they signify to be understood'.

‘ideas’ and in this same sense Locke is an idealist. But if we interpret ideality in this case as internality and assert that all things (including things themselves) are ideas in the mind, his arguments in Book II, Chapter 8 lose their sense and significance; their main point concerns the distinction between ideas and things themselves.¹⁹

‘Internality’ has a meaning only when it is paired with ‘externality’. Locke’s ‘idea’ in the widest sense of the term does not have such a counterpart. Therefore, being ‘idea’ qua objectivity of consciousness and being ‘idea’ qua internality is, at least in Locke’s case, different. We must think that their extensions are not identical with each other. Things themselves and ideas are, as far as they are objects of consciousness, equally ‘ideas’ in the widest sense of the term. But as far as external things themselves are distinguished from ideas in the mind, they must be treated as something ‘without the mind’. In this sense, Locke is not an idealist but a realist.

Incidentally, to say that something is an object of our consciousness is to say that it is our intentional object. In Lockean realism, some intentional objects are internal and others are external, but all of them are equally objects of our consciousness and objects of our intentionality. In this sense, as we have seen, all of them are ‘ideas’ and we can denominate Locke’s view ‘idealism’. However, whereas in Berkeley’s idealism matter is rejected, in Locke’s realistic idealism matter is positively posited. Even if we call Locke’s view ‘idealism’, his idealism and Berkeley’s are different in this critical respect.

As far as things themselves are posited by our minds, they are ‘ideas’ in the widest sense of the term. But as far as they are

¹⁹ In regard to Descartes and Locke, we can still read in their writings the logic of transition from direct realism to representationalism rather clearly. But, in the case of Berkeley and Hume the situation is different; they simply take up as their starting point the Cartesian-Lockean legacy, namely the notion that the objects of our perception are ideas (or impressions). This means that they cut off the physical (scientific) basis of the theory of ideas from the theory itself, as if it were an early Wittgensteinian useless ladder.

posited as external things opposed to internal ideas, they are not ‘ideas’ in the narrow sense of the term. By positing them our minds surely reach external things themselves. In this sense we have already ‘gone beyond our realm of internal ideas to that of external things themselves’.

6. Transition 3: Between Experiential Objects and Corpuscular Things Themselves

Case 1: Substance

Locke’s arguments in the *Essay* observably maintain the dynamic logic of the transition from the direct-realistic attitude to that of representationalism. In his original consideration Locke begins with things qua experiential objects, and then introduces new things themselves. And via this introduction, things qua experiential objects become ideas. However, Locke writes the *Essay* in the language of ideas, within the established framework of his theory of ideas. So his wording does not necessarily represent the original line of the change as it is. The following passage is another example:

The Mind being, as I have declared, furnished with a great number of the simple *Ideas*, conveyed in by the *Senses*, as they are found in exterior things, or by *Reflection* on its own Operations, takes notice also, that a certain number of these simple *Ideas* go constantly together; which being presumed to belong to one thing, and Words being suited to common apprehensions, and made use of for quick dispatch, are called so united in one subject, by one name; which by inadvertency we are apt afterward to talk of and consider as one simple *Idea*, which indeed is a complication of many *Ideas* together; Because, as I have said, not imagining how these simple *Ideas* can subsist by themselves, we accustom our selves, to suppose some *Substratum*, therein they do subsist, and from which they do result, which therefore we call *Substance* (II. xxiii. 1, 295)

In this passage Locke takes up ‘simple *Ideas*’ and says that ‘Because...not imagining how these simple *Ideas* can subsist by themselves, we accustom our selves, to suppose some *Substratum*, therein they do subsist, and from which they do

result, which therefore we call *Substance*'. Here he is clearly talking in the idea language. But if we bear his original logic in mind, in the case of '*Ideas conveyed in by the Senses*', those 'simple *Ideas*' are simple properties of experiential objects; e.g. an apple's colours, shape, and the like. So, in the case of '*Ideas conveyed in by the Senses*', what he wants to say is: 'Because...not imagining how these [properties of experiential objects] can subsist by themselves, we accustom our selves, to suppose some *Substratum*, therein they do subsist, and from which they do result, which therefore we call *Substance*'. Thus, in the case of corporeal substances, the origin of the '*Notion of pure Substance in general*' (II. xxiii. 2, 295) is in a certain supposition based on the observation of experiential objects.²⁰

On the other hand, in Locke's framework of theory of ideas properties of experiential objects are treated as ideas in the mind. Added to this, they are viewed as so many effects of the 'affection' of things themselves on our sense organs. Therefore, when Locke quests for their substance, he attempts to find it ultimately in the realm of corpuscular 'things themselves' qua causes of the properties of experiential objects. He says:

If any one should be asked, what is the subject wherein Colour or Weight inheres, he would have nothing to say, but the solid extended parts (II. xxiii. 2, 295)

The 'solid extended parts' here means, of course, the solid extended corpuscular particles. Thus, in his view of substance Locke makes a seamless transition from experiential objects to corpuscular things themselves, though since he describes it in the idea language based on corpuscular hypothesis, his logic does not necessarily reveal itself clearly.

Case 2: Locke's Theory of Reference

We find the same seamless transition between experiential objects

²⁰ For this, see also my 'Locke, Berkeley, and the Logic of Idealism II', 70ff.

and things themselves in Locke's theory of reference. As is well known, Locke was often viewed as a so-called 'descriptivist', but ever since J. L. Mackie pointed out Locke's 'causal-theoretic' side,²¹ it has been recognized that Locke's theory of reference has at least two different phases. As I showed on another occasion, Locke's theory of reference is homologous to Putnam's.²²

In Locke's theory of reference nominal essences play an inevitable practical role. A nominal essence is 'a Collection of those sensible *Ideas*, which we observe in [Things]' (III. vi. 9, 444), that is, a collection of the properties that we observe in experiential objects. Regarding this, he says:

Nor indeed *can we* rank, and *sort Things*, and consequently...denominate them *by their real Essences*, because we know them not. Our Faculties carry us no farther towards the knowledge and distinction of Substances, than a Collection of those sensible *Ideas*, which we observe in them; which however made with the greatest diligence and exactness, we are capable of, yet is...remote from the true internal Constitution, from which those Qualities flow (III. vi. 9, 444)

According to Locke, since we do not know the 'real Essence' of a thing (i.e. 'that real constitution of any Thing, which is the foundation of all those Properties, that are combined in, and are constantly found to co-exist with the *nominal Essence*; that particular constitution, which every Thing has within it self, without any relation to any thing without it', III. vi. 6, 442), we cannot depend on real essences to refer to things. However, he firmly believes that the nominal essences of things are based on their real essences and that the properties of experiential objects are produced by things themselves. Therefore, even though nominal essences variously change, since things themselves qua

²¹ See J. L. Mackie, 'Locke's Anticipation of Kripke', *Analysis* 34 (1974): 177–80.

²² See my 'Theory of Reference in the Time of Natural History', in *Inquiries into Locke's Theory*, 153–66.

their bases are identical, we can believe that the species of things do not change. Concerning such a close relationship between nominal and real essences, Locke says:

in *Mixed Modes* any of the *Ideas* that make the Composition of the complex one, being left out, or changed, it is allowed to be another thing, *i.e.* to be of another Species...But in *Substances* it is not so. For though in that called *Gold*, one puts into his complex *Idea*, what another leaves out; and *Vice Versâ*: yet Men do not usually think, that therefore the Species is changed: Because they secretly in their Minds referr that name, and suppose it annexed to a real immutable Essence of a thing existing, on which those Properties depend. He that adds to his complex *Idea* of *Gold*, that of Fixedness or Solubility in *Aqua Regia*, which he put not in it before, is not thought to have changed the Species; but only to have a more perfect *Idea*. (III. x. 19, 500–1)

As this passage shows, in his theory of reference too, Locke's two-way seamless transition between observable ideas (properties of experiential objects or 'nominal Essences') and unobservable properties of things themselves (their internal constitutions or 'real Essences') appears clearly.

Case 3: The Existence of Things

The same switching of intentionality also appears in Locke's consideration of the existence of things.

In the *Essay* Locke offers two considerations concerning existence of things. One regards the origin of the idea of existence. He says:

Existence and *Unity*, are two other *Ideas*, that are suggested to the Understanding, by every Object without, and every *Idea* within. When *Ideas* are in our Minds, we consider them as being actually there, as well as we consider things to be actually without us; which is, that they exist, or have *Existence* (II. vii. 7, 131)

In this passage Locke mentions 'every Object without' and 'every *Idea* within' and says that 'When *Ideas* are in our Minds, we consider them as being actually there, as well as we consider

things to be actually without us'. Bearing in mind the fact that in this passage he explains the 'origin' of the idea of existence, the 'Object' and 'things' here cannot be corpuscular things themselves. For it is quite unnatural that one has a corpuscular view before one acquires the idea of existence. Rather, we should view the 'Object' and 'things' here as experiential objects.

However, when Locke considers our knowledge of the existence of things, the situation differs. In the first section of the chapter on this topic in the *Essay* (IV. xi) he says:

The *Knowledge of the Existence* of any other thing [than ourselves and God] we can have only by *Sensation*...[N]o particular Man can know the *Existence* of any other Being, but only when by actual operating upon him, it makes it self perceived by him. (IV. xi. 1, 630)

In ordinary life we know the existence of things mainly on the basis of sensation. The things in question are usually not hypothetical 'things themselves' but experiential objects. In fact, Locke says that 'it makes it self perceived by him'. So, at first sight it seems that we can interpret this passage as mentioning the knowledge of the existence of experiential objects.

But in the next section he says:

'Tis...the actual receiving of *Ideas* from without, that gives us notice of the *Existence* of other Things, and makes us know, that something doth exist at that time without us, which causes that *Idea* in us, though perhaps we neither know nor consider how it does it (IV. xi. 2, 630)

Here Locke adverts to the existence of 'something...which causes that *Idea* in us'. In the Lockean corpuscular hypothesis the 'something' that causes ideas in us is the corpuscular internal constitution of things themselves. Therefore, in this passage Locke seems to be talking about the existence of 'things themselves'.

Locke makes the same assertion in the same chapter repeatedly. For example, he says:

In fine then, when our Senses do actually convey into our Understandings any *Idea*, we cannot but be satisfied, that there doth something at that time really exist without us, which doth affect our Senses, and by them give notice of it self to our apprehensive Faculties, and actually produce that *Idea*, which we then perceive (IV. xi. 9, 635)

However, interestingly enough, there are several passages in the same chapter that seem to concern the existence of experiential objects. For example, in the same section cited above (IV. xi. 9) Locke continues:

we cannot so far distrust their Testimony, as to doubt, that such Collections of simple *Ideas*, as we have observed by our Senses to be united together, do really exist together.

The phrase ‘such Collections of simple *Ideas*, as we have observed by our Senses to be united together’ means experiential objects qua collections of observed qualities. Likewise we find one more passage in the same chapter in which Locke seems to say the same thing:

I think no body can, in earnest, be so sceptical, as to be uncertain of the Existence of those Things which he sees and feels. (IV. xi. 3, 631)

‘Those Things which [one] sees and feels’ are not hypothetical ‘things themselves’ but experiential objects. So in this passage Locke is talking about the existence of experiential objects.

Thus, concerning the existence of things too, Locke’s eyes move between experiential objects and corpuscular things themselves.²³ However, I do not see this as a confusion. Our original confidence in the existence of things consists in our actual sense perception of experiential objects. In the corpuscularian hypothesis, corpuscular things themselves inherit the existence that experiential objects have originally possessed. When we bear this fact in mind, we can understand the seeming

²³ For this, see also my *Inquiries into Locke’s Theory*, 78–79.

confusion as follows: As a corpuscularian Locke discusses the knowledge of the existence of corpuscular things themselves. However, since our original knowledge of the existence of things consists in our experience of experiential objects, when Locke discusses it he must return to the original experience upon which it depends. Thus, in this case too, his eyes survey a holistic whole in which the view on experiential objects and that on things themselves are twin nodes.

7. Conclusion

As I said at the beginning of this paper, in Locke's view direct realism and representational realism are closely connected with each other. Accordingly, his view of experiential objects and that of corpuscular 'things themselves' play the role of two nodes in his whole meta-scientific theory. They are two 'moments' in the Hegelian sense of the term. Locke's eyes move in this holistic whole to and fro and this move creates various interesting perspectives: perspectives on corporeal substance, the theory of reference, our knowledge of the existence of things, and so on.

Added to this, for Locke, ideas in the narrow sense of the term (i.e. ideas 'within the mind') and things themselves 'without the mind' are equally what he thinks of and talks about. They are equally objects of his consciousness and his intentional objects. Therefore, he can treat them all as ideas in the widest sense of the term. In this sense he is an idealist. However, this sort of Lockean idealism is not Berkeley's. The latter is based on the denial of the former's 'twofold existence', which is, as I showed on occasions, the hidden basis of the latter.²⁴ How to clarify this dialectic is just one more problem for us to ponder.

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²⁴ For this, see esp. my *Locke, Berkeley, Kant*, chs. 6 and 7.