

**UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI
STUDIES; A NEW
CONCEPTION OF RELATIVITY
AND LOCKE. PP 5-93**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649395385

University of Cincinnati Studies; A new conception of relativity and locke. pp 5-93 by Henry G. Hartmann

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

HENRY G. HARTMANN

**UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI
STUDIES; A NEW
CONCEPTION OF RELATIVITY
AND LOCKE. PP 5-93**

185

AS
36

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI STUDIES

C575-
1

Ser. II, v. 8, pt. 4

A NEW CONCEPTION
OF RELATIVITY AND LOCKE

*With very kindest regards
H. G. Hartmann*

BY

HENRY G. HARTMANN

University of Cincinnati

PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI
CINCINNATI, OHIO

1914

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction	5

I

GENERAL SURVEY

CHAPTER

I. The Two Fundamental Steps in Locke's Philosophy.....	9
II. Relativity Defined and Locke's Position Indicated in Respect to its Various Formulations.....	15

II

RELATIVISTIC MOTIVES IN LOCKE

III. The Simple Ideas: What Are They?.....	19
IV. The Term-Relation Motive.....	23
V. The Part-Whole Motive.....	32
VI. Locke's Conception of Relation.....	35

III

ANTI-RELATIVISTIC MOTIVES IN LOCKE

VII. Ideas versus Knowledge and Meaning.....	41
VIII. Absolute Knowledge: The Primacy of the "Visible Relation" and of Conduct.....	45

IV

CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIVITY IN LOCKE.

IX. Doctrine of Sorts: Mixed Modes and Substances.....	58
X. Doctrine of Meaning ("Ideas of Relation").....	74
XI. Conclusion	85

RELATIVITY AND LOCKE

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is twofold. In the first place, I seek to offer a new and developed formulation of relativity; and secondly, to present this doctrine in connection with Locke, for whom I thereby hope to gain a renewed and revised consideration.

Relativity has for so long a time been consigned to the rôle of scapegoat in the history of thought that, not unlike the appellation "heresy" in the realm of religion, a stigma has come to adhere to relativity not any more easily counteracted or dispelled. That this should be the case is not wholly without cause; for when we look more closely into this concept, the fact that it has never been subjected to a critical examination is but one of the many singular and surprising features to be enumerated concerning it. My own conviction is, that, if the principle of relativity be given a full and proper formulation, not only would a new and very fruitful starting point in metaphysical inquiry offer itself, but one that in a way effects that closer connection between metaphysics and science so generally expressed in the aspirations no less than in the despair of current thought. The meaning attached to the term relativity must abide its place. I could not attempt its definition at this point without going far afield. I, therefore, leave this matter for the present to speak further of Locke.

While I attach an equal importance to both aspects of the study, the accurate presentation of relativity as it exists in Locke is my more immediate interest. Nor do I aim at urging some mere side doctrine in him, but one that in the slow growth and development of his ideas becomes increasingly central, inclusive, and self-conscious. I frankly confess that this is not the view I held of him a few years ago. Nor is it likely that my older traditional conception of him would have undergone its radical change if conditions had not led me to give Book III of his *Essay* more serious reading than our traditional opinion of it seemed to invite. This Book, supposedly the last of the Books written, in turn became the key for reading the others. I submit the outcome in these pages as a real discovery of Locke.

Locke tells his friend Molyneux that Book III gave him more labor in the writing than the rest of the *Essay*. This fact does

not of necessity insure merit. Yet I mention it as a fact not without its significance, and further, advance the contention that, until Book III was written, Locke never came into full possession of his "new way of ideas"—a philosophical view that not only embraces what is most distinctive in modern pragmatism, but one that presents the relevant metaphysics and system so lacking in pragmatism. I admit Book III does not at first appear to have its specific doctrines writ in italics. Locke himself confesses in respect to this Book: "I should not much wonder if there be in some places of it obscurity and doubtfulness . . . though the thoughts were easy and clear enough, yet [it] cost me more pains to express them than all the rest of my Essay." The fact is that Locke's "new way of ideas" here took its last "new" turn, and its consummate character once clearly grasped, one ceases overnight to view Locke traditionally.

In affirming Locke to be essentially the relativist¹, and not essentially the reputed sensationalist, I expose myself to misunderstanding. He is the sensationalist, as reputed, for those who will not consider Locke beyond the evident sensationalistic implications of his doctrine, and who, in support of their claim, may turn to the British movement in philosophy that arose out of Locke. But let it be remembered that Kant's philosophy also had an origin in Locke, and do I trespass in stating that perhaps Pragmatism owes more to Locke than may be consciously recognized or accepted? So historical outcome pitted against historical outcome avails little in deciding an issue. Nor in denying Locke to be primarily the sensationalist, am I unaware that T. H. Green (not to mention others) has written a critique of him that dare not be ignored. His aim, however, is to show up Locke negatively, not constructively; to show him up in the light of the exclusive sensationalistic precursor of Berkeley and Hume, and in so doing, to expose in him as absurd any departure from this principle and Green's self-imposed dialectics. This sort of criticism is not helpful, however else remarkable the critique may be in its superior merits and mental acrobatics.

To begin with, Locke, instead of abandoning "the historical plain method" to which he pledges himself in his Introduction, in order to pursue the psychological trend of which he stands accused,

1. For a serious attempt at a proper definition of this term I refer the reader to Chapter II.

is in the main so consistent with his original design that I am almost inclined to ignore the first half dozen or more of his chapters in Book II for the havoc they have done in distorting and eclipsing the far more central, consistent, and evolved doctrine existing in his pages. And when, in addition, I find Locke in his psychological digressions expressly acknowledging a departure from his avowed method, I ask myself what blame for all this distortion of our perspective rests with Berkeley and Hume? There is no need, however, for all that to lessen the value of the chapters indicated. Chapter VIII of that Book, in particular, is not the only instance where we find Locke forcing an extreme view; and, hence to discount the exaggeration of his views in this chapter is not any more, nor any less, valid, than to do so with the many other extreme views with which his Essay abounds. Read him where we will, we find, as I shall endeavor to outline, the most one-sided and extreme position brought face to face in his pages with others equally extreme and one-sided; and when we ask where in this jumble of views we are to find Locke, it behooves us to arrest any tendency to frame a too hasty judgment concerning the matter, and, most of all, at the outset, to venture the assumption that Locke did not know his own mind. It requires no great discernment to perceive that Green got his guiding thread, not from Locke himself, but from the traditional view of him. But Locke remains Locke, work the veritable gold mine of his Essay for some of its gold only, or for most of it, or merely for its dross.

The whole matter hinges upon the rôle of the simple ideas. Are they at bottom to be taken as working assumptions or as actual facts? Here Locke in the growth of his thoughts decidedly vacillates, although tradition has obviously failed to follow him. "The historical plain method," at its inception as well as in its constant application, reflects one specific problem: the problem of the One and the Many, in the solution of which, his simple ideas (namely, his sensationalism) are not a *problem* but assumed facts. When he inclines to consider them as more than assumptions, he, with confession, ceases to be the metaphysician and turns psychologist, and then the simple ideas themselves become the *problem*. Yet he writes: "Every mixed mode, consisting of many distinct simple ideas, it seems reasonable to inquire, 'whence it has its unity, and how such a precise multitude comes to make but one

idea, since that combination does not always exist together in nature?" To which I answer, it is plain it has its unity from an act of the mind."² Whether his simple ideas are in fact simple or whether complex, the problem uppermost with him, notwithstanding, will persist: "how such a precise multitude comes to make but one idea." For, as he would say, we do regard charity as one idea, however multitudinous its parts, and so with our notions of man or gold. They have no unity actually existing "in nature;" then "whence do they have their unity?" The sensationalistic interpretation of Locke would imply that the simple ideas rather than the complex ideas engrossed his interest. I venture the opposite contention.

It remains to add that the present study had its initial appearance under the title of "Locke a Constructive Relativist."³ The original study, however, has been subjected to a revision so general as to compel a change from the original to the present title. Chapters II, IV, and XI may be read for the more exclusive treatment of relativity. The study as a whole, however, constitutes a unit.

2. Bk II, ch. 22, sec. 4.

3. Scientific Press, New York, 1912. It appeared as "A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Philosophy, Columbia University."

I

GENERAL SURVEY

CHAPTER I

THE TWO FUNDAMENTAL STEPS IN LOCKE'S PHILOSOPHY

"It is past doubt," says Locke, "that men have in their minds several ideas,—such as are those expressed by the words whiteness, hardness, sweetness, thinking, motion, man, elephant, army, drunkenness, and others: it is in the first place then to be inquired, —How he comes by them?"¹ Locke's position here is clear. He takes existing distinctions in consciousness as the starting-point in his attempted "account of the ways whereby our understandings come to attain these notions of *things* we have."² This position cannot be overemphasized. He accepts the reality of thinking and the reality of distinctions within thought, and his main problem is, not whether such distinctions exist apart from thought, nor what they may chance to be apart from thought, but how such distinctions, as commonly recognized in our experience, come about; what is their ground or basis? And it is my contention that this problem, although given its most specific and most evolved solution in his doctrine of sorts in Book III, receives no less profuse elaboration in every other part of his Essay.

His *first* general attempt to account for such distinctions consists in his well-known contention, that all we know of reality resolves itself into ideas, of which he recognizes two sorts,—simple ideas and complex ideas. Of these, simple ideas are ultimate and underived; the complex ideas a mere aggregation of the simple ideas. Knowledge, in Locke's sense of the word, is in no way involved in the conscious existence of simple ideas, although the organism is involved in the production of some of them (the secondary qualities). Knowledge begins its career only when the simple ideas are brought into union or connection by the mind, and terminates in such products as (1) Complex Ideas,

1. Bk. II, ch. 1, sec. 1.
2. Introduction, sec 2.