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LOCKE

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*The Cambridge Companion to*  
**LOCKE**

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Edited by Vere Chappell

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## CONTENTS

<i>List of contributors</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>Note on citations</i>	ix
Introduction	1
VERE CHAPPELL	
1 Locke's life and times	5
I. B. MILTON	
2 Locke's theory of ideas	26
VERE CHAPPELL	
3 Locke's philosophy of body	56
EDWIN MCCANN	
4 Locke's philosophy of mind	89
JONATHAN BENNETT	
5 Locke's philosophy of language	115
PAUL GUYER	
6 Locke's theory of knowledge	146
ROGER WOOLHOUSE	
7 Locke's philosophy of religion	172
NICOLAUS WOLTERSTORFF	
8 Locke's moral philosophy	199
I. B. SCHNEEWIND	
9 Locke's political philosophy	226
RICHARD ASHCRAFT	

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vi Contents

to Locke's influence	151
HANS AARSTEEF	
<i>Bibliography</i>	290
<i>Index of names and subjects</i>	316
<i>Index of passages cited</i>	324

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viii Contributors

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## NOTE ON CITATIONS

References to Locke's works are made parenthetically, using an abbreviated title of the work or its source.

The editions of or sources for Locke's works that are cited, with abbreviations given in brackets, are the following:

- [B] Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library.
- [C.] *The Correspondence of John Locke*, ed. E. S. de Beer, 3 vols. [1976-].
- [D] *Drafts for the Essay concerning Human Understanding, and Other Philosophical Writings*, ed. Peter H. Niddich and C. A. J. Rogers, 3 vols. [1990-].
- [E] *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Niddich [1975].
- [EL] *Essays on the Law of Nature*, ed. W. von Leyden [1954].
- [L] *The Life of John Locke*, by Peter Lord King, new ed. 2 vols. [1830].
- [QL] *Questions concerning the Law of Nature*, ed. and tr. Robert Horwitz, Jerry Strauss Clay, and Dorian Clay [1990].
- [T] *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett, 2nd ed. [1967].
- [TE] *Some Thoughts concerning Education*, ed. John W. Yolton and Jean S. Yolton [1989].
- [W] *The Works of John Locke*, new ed., corrected, 10 vols. [1823; repr. 1964].

In the case of major works and collections, the abbreviated title is followed by an array of numerals designating internal divisions - volumes, books, parts, chapters, sections, and so forth - and then a page number, preceded by a colon. Thus a reference to Book II, Chapter xxii, Section 47, page 263 of the *Essay concerning Human Understanding* is made as follows: E II.xxi.47. 263. A reference to Volume VII, page 140 of *Locke's Works*

(which is a reference to *The Reasonableness of Christianity*) is made thus: W VII: 140.

Letters written by and to Locke are cited using the numbers assigned to them in the de Beer edition of Locke's correspondence, followed by "C" and the volume and page number of that edition, thus: Letter 1320: C VI: 113.

Manuscript material in the Bodleian Library, which includes nearly all of the surviving Locke *Manuscripts*, sometimes is cited by title (if there is one), followed by "B" and the Bodleian catalogue designation for the manuscript in question, and then a section, folio, or page number, thus: Journal 1677: B MS Locke f.2: 46.

Some of this manuscript material, however, has been published, and it is often the published version that is cited. One major source is Lord King's biography: a citation of something in it includes a title (if there is one), followed by "L" and the volume and page number of the 1830 edition of King's work, thus: Deas: L II: 133-39.

Other material from Locke's manuscripts has been published in separate books and journal articles. Of special importance are an early work in Latin on the law of nature, and two early drafts – designated *Draft A* and *Draft B* by Locke scholars – of the *Essay concerning Human Understanding*. Two versions of the former have been published (with different English titles), one by von Leyden, the other by Horwitz et al.; these are cited using "EL" and "QL," respectively. There are also two published versions of each of the drafts: in this Companion it is the Clarendon edition of both drafts, edited by Niddich and Rogers, that is cited, using "D," thus: Draft A 43: D I: 75.

Other published versions of material from Locke's manuscripts are cited using Locke's name as author, followed by the date of publication, and then a page number preceded by a colon. A reference to an early paper by Locke on infallibility, for example, that was published in 1977 by John Biddle in the *Journal of Church and State*, appears thus: Locke 1977: 301.

Works by authors other than Locke (and his correspondents) are also referred to parenthetically, using the name of the author, the publication date of the work or edition cited (followed by "a," "b," "c," etc. to distinguish publications in the same year), and a page number preceded by a colon. A reference to page 86 of John Yolton's *John Locke and the Way of Ideas*, published in 1956, is made thus: Yolton: 1956: 86.

All information about cited works and sources is given in the Bibliography.

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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO  
LOCKE

## Introduction

The main subject of this book is Locke's philosophy, in the current academic sense of that term. So construed, philosophy is a special field of inquiry, marked off, even if not very clearly, from other fields and in particular from the various empirical sciences. Locke certainly practiced philosophy understood in this way. But he did not think of himself as any kind of intellectual specialist. He rarely even used the word "philosophy" as many seventeenth-century thinkers did, to signify the whole domain of intellectual endeavor: his favorite word for that was "science." And in addition to his work in philosophy, he pursued substantial inquiries in other disciplines: chemistry, medicine, economics, public policy, education, and theology. Still, there is no doubt that Locke's most significant as well as his most influential achievements were in philosophy, and it is as a philosopher that he is chiefly interesting to scholars today.

Philosophy, in our current view of it, is divided into various more or less distinguishable subfields, yielding, at the first level of division, logic, epistemology, metaphysics, and moral philosophy; and then, by subdividing these, such specializations as the philosophies of language, science, mind, and religion, ethical theory, and political philosophy. Locke worked actively in nearly all of these areas. It is true that the overall subject of his two most important books, the *Essay concerning Human Understanding* and the *Two Treatises of Government*, is, in the one case, epistemology and, in the other, political philosophy. But there are also significant excursions, in the *Two Treatises*, into general moral philosophy, and in the *Essay*, into ethical theory and the philosophies of language, science, and religion, and especially into what we call metaphysics, though Locke

would have been uneasy with that label, reeking as it did to his nose of the stale hallways of medieval schools.

In this book, separate chapters are devoted to Locke's work in each of several subfields of philosophy: metaphysics, subdivided into philosophy of body and philosophy of mind (Chapters 3 and 4, respectively); philosophy of language (Chapter 5); theory of knowledge, which covers a portion of epistemology (Chapter 6); philosophy of religion, which normally includes topics in metaphysics as well as epistemology, though it is mainly the latter that are treated here (Chapter 7); general moral philosophy (Chapter 8); and political philosophy (Chapter 9). There is also a chapter dealing with Locke's theory of ideas (Chapter 2), designed to provide some background for the discussions of the chapters following it. The issues addressed in this chapter are taken nowadays to fall within epistemology and philosophy of logic. But for Locke they would have been assigned to "Semiotics" or "the Doctrine of Signs," which is one of the three main divisions of "Science" he specifies in the last chapter of the *Essay* [E IV.xxi.4: 720–21]. (Locke's other two divisions are "Practics" or "Ethicks" and "Physics, or natural Philosophy," albeit "in a little more enlarged Sense of the Word" which allows it to apply to "Spirits" as well as bodies [E IV.xxi.2–3: 720].)

It is not, however, any systematic arrangement of these various subfields within philosophy that has dictated the order of these chapters. The first six of them, Chapters 2 through 7, are placed in the order (more or less) in which the subjects they cover are treated by Locke in the *Essay*: Chapter 2 deals with issues discussed in Book I and in parts of Book II, and Chapters 3 and 4 with matters considered in other parts of Book II; Chapter 5 corresponds to Book III and Chapter 6 to the earlier portions of Book IV; and the bulk of Chapter 7 is concerned with questions that Locke takes up in the later portions of Book IV. The subject of Chapter 8, moral philosophy, is discussed by Locke at several places in the *Essay*, and also in other works: notably, the early *Essays on the Law of Nature*, the *Two Treatises*, and *The Reasonableness of Christianity*. Chapter 9, finally, on Locke's political philosophy, is devoted to the central argument of the *Second Treatise*.

Not every currently recognized subfield of philosophy is such that Locke significantly contributed to it. Formal logic and aesthetics are two to which he did not. He also avoided explicit discussion of

questions of general ontology, which is another branch of metaphysics in addition to the philosophies of mind and of body – although many answers to these questions are implicit in his discussions of other topics, so that quite a rich theory of “being in general” could perhaps be constructed from them. A further branch of metaphysics is (natural) theology, the philosophy of the gods or God. To this Locke did give considerable attention, not only *passim* in both the *Essay* and *Two Treatises* but in several other works, including two specifically dedicated to it, *The Reasonableness of Christianity* and *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St Paul*. But Locke’s work in this area was not very original, a lot of it is more apologetical than philosophical, and after a few decades even Christian theologians stopped being very interested in it. A few aspects of this work are mentioned in Chapter 7 of this *Companion*, but no separate chapter has been assigned to it.

In addition to the eight central chapters on Locke’s philosophy, this volume contains an opening chapter on his life and intellectual context, and a closing one (Chapter 10) on the influence of his thought upon subsequent thinkers.

Although Locke’s work in fields other than philosophy is not specifically examined in this book, there are brief descriptions of some of it in Chapter 1. Furthermore, some excellent extended studies of it have been produced by scholars in recent years. Locke’s work in chemistry and natural philosophy (in the unenlarged sense) is reviewed by Frank 1980, that in medicine by Dewhurst 1963 (but see J. R. Milton’s “Note on Sources” in Chapter 1). The best account of Locke’s contribution to economics is Kelly 1991; and Tarcov 1984 and Yolton and Yolton 1989 are illuminating on his views on education. Valuable discussions of (some aspects of) Locke’s theology are provided by Wainwright 1987, Spellman 1988, and Marshall 1990. Locke’s treatment of religious and political toleration, which constitutes his most extensive venture in the field of what would now be called public policy, is fully examined in Horton and Mendus 1991.

The current state of Locke scholarship, in philosophy no less than in these other fields, is one of robust good health. The study of Locke has certainly shared in the growth of the whole scholarly industry in the twentieth century and particularly in the past thirty years or so. And the intellectual habits of scholars in general have changed for the better. Students of work such as Locke’s are now

more astute philosophically than their predecessors were; they read texts more carefully; and they are more interested in the historical circumstances, material as well as intellectual, in which their subjects did their thinking.

But there are special factors that seem to have boosted Locke's popularity as a target of scholarly interest. Of prime importance has been the coming to light of the rich trove of unpublished material in the Lovelace Collection. Among other things, this has prompted a new critical edition of Locke's works, the Oxford Clarendon Edition, several volumes of which have now been published – most notably, Peter Niddich's *Essay* and E. S. de Beer's eight-volume collection of Locke's whole (known) correspondence. These new editions have in turn encouraged new efforts of interpretation and historical research: progress builds upon progress.

Locke scholarship has also benefited from the industry and dedication of Roland Hall, founder and editor of the *Locke Newsletter* (Hall 1970a), co-author (with Roger Woolhouse) of a comprehensive bibliography of twentieth-century work on Locke (Hall and Woolhouse 1987), and maintainer of the annual list of "Recent Publications" on Locke (Hall 1970b). Two further bibliographies, covering different ground, have been published recently by John Attig and by Jean and John Yolton: the one lists Locke's own writings (Attig 1985), the other secondary writings produced between 1689 and 1982 (Yolton and Yolton 1985). All in all, the research tool needs of Locke scholars have been unusually well provided for.

The editor trusts that the vitality and quality of current Locke scholarship are amply demonstrated by the essays that make up this volume.

## 1 Locke's life and times

John Locke was born on August 28, 1632, into a family of very minor Somerset gentry. His father, John Locke senior, owned some houses and land in and around Pensford, a small town some seven miles south of Bristol. He supplemented his income from this by practicing as an attorney and by taking a series of minor administrative posts in local government.

Locke's family seems to have had puritan sympathies, and after the outbreak of the Civil War his father served as a captain in one of the parliamentary armies, in a cavalry regiment commanded by a very much more substantial figure among the Somerset gentry, Alexander Popham. Popham's regiment served under Waller, was defeated at the Battle of Devizes in July 1643, and subsequently dispersed.

Locke's father's association with Popham, whom he continued to serve in his professional capacity and from whom he leased part of his land, had one consequence of enormous benefit to his son. Popham, since 1645 the member of Parliament for Bath, had sufficient influence to recommend boys for places at Westminster School, at that time the foremost school in England. Locke entered Westminster in 1647. The education there was centered almost entirely around the ancient languages, first Latin, then Greek, and finally, for the most academically proficient pupils, Hebrew. Locke made sufficient progress with the last of these to be able to compose an oration in Hebrew shortly before he left the school.

Westminster had a long-established connection with Christ Church, Oxford, whereby at least three studentships at the College were filled every year from among those boys who held scholarships at the school. These studentships, which were approximately the



equivalent of fellowships in the other colleges, were tenable for life, though they could be forfeited on a number of grounds, notably marriage. Locke was elected in May 1652; he took up residence in Christ Church in the autumn of the same year.

The curriculum that Locke was required to follow differed hardly at all from that which had irritated and bored the young Thomas Hobbes fifty years before, and Locke reacted to it in the same way. He acquired an intense dislike of the scholastic method of disputation and of the logical and metaphysical subtleties with which it concerned itself. Locke made sure that he fulfilled the not very exacting requirements for his degrees (B.A. February 1656, M.A. June 1658), but otherwise he seems to have spent much of his time reading lighter literature – plays, romances, and literary letters, much of it translated from French.

It is unclear whether at this stage in his life Locke had any definite intentions as to what career to pursue. He was admitted to Gray's Inn in December 1656, but nothing seems to have come of this; Locke's later thought is strikingly uninfluenced by any apparent knowledge of the common law. Most undergraduates intended a career in the church. There is some evidence that Locke's father had some such aim in mind, and Locke himself may have contemplated this as late as 1663, but in the end he rejected the idea of ordination.

Another possibility was medicine. Several of Locke's notebooks show that in the late 1650s he started taking detailed notes from a large number of medical works. The quantity and character of this material indicates something more than casual interest. In 1658–59 Locke may not have decided firmly on a medical career, but he was clearly investigating it as a possibility.

The study of medicine inevitably led to natural philosophy. Locke read Harvey's *Exercitationes de Generatione Animalium* in about 1658, and began exploring the problems of chemistry, taking detailed notes from the writings of Daniel Sennert. At about this time, probably early in 1660, he first met Robert Boyle.

Exactly when Locke first became acquainted with the ideas of the mechanical philosophy cannot now be determined. There is no evidence that he had any links with the group of innovators associated with John Wilkins at Wadham – unlike his precocious contemporary at both Westminster and Christ Church, Robert Hooke. If he had read anything by Descartes, there is no trace of it among his surviving

papers. From 1660 onward, however, Locke augmented his medical studies with a thorough course of reading in the new mechanical philosophy, starting with Boyle's recently published *New Essays Physico-Mechanical touching the Spring of Air*. He read widely among Descartes's works, concentrating especially on the *Dioptrics* and the *Meteors* (in Latin translation) and the *Principia Philosophicæ*, especially Parts III and IV; he also read at least some of Gassendi's *Synagoga Philosophicæ*, though probably not very much.

Locke's attention at this time was not however held solely by medicine and natural philosophy. The rather precarious political stability achieved by Cromwell had disappeared with his death in September 1658. Locke welcomed the Restoration of Charles II and the reestablishment of strong – indeed authoritarian – government in church and state. Between November and December 1660 he wrote a short treatise, intended as a reply to a work by another student of Christ Church, Edward Bagshaw, in which he affirmed the power of the civil magistrate to determine the form of religious worship [Locke 1967: 117–73]. This was followed in 1661–62 by two further works, each written in Latin and set out in the form of a scholastic disputation. One gave a more general and abstract defense of the thesis already argued against Bagshaw (Locke 1967: 183–241); the other rejected the Catholic position that it is necessary that the Bible should have an infallible interpreter (Locke 1977). Locke was at this time reading much Anglican theology, and was following the classical Anglican tradition of engaging in polemics on two fronts, against both the church of Rome and the Protestant dissenters.

At this stage of his life Locke's religious opinions were probably still broadly orthodox. He survived the post-Restoration visitation of the university, apparently without difficulty, and it is hardly likely that anyone would have advocated a policy requiring the imposition of a religious orthodoxy that he did not himself accept. In contrast with the situation twenty years later, he was clearly well thought of by the dean and chapter. In the early 1660s he was appointed to a succession of college offices: praelector in Greek (1661–62), praelector in rhetoric (1663), and finally censor of moral philosophy (1664). In the spring of 1661 he became a college tutor; he was responsible for the general welfare of his pupils, and helped impart to them the same kind of education that he had himself been given a

decade earlier. He also conducted scholastic disputations of a strictly traditional kind: one set of these survive and have been published with the title *Essays on the Law of Nature*.

During this time Locke continued to read widely in medicine and natural philosophy. He took detailed notes at the lectures on medicine given in 1661–62 by Thomas Willis (Willis 1930) and in 1663 attended a class in chemistry given, under Boyle's auspices, by the German chemist, Peter Stahl. There was at this time much interest in physiological problems. Locke was a friend of Richard Lower, who, in conjunction with Boyle, Hooke, and Willis, was engaged in trying to understand the nature of respiration. Locke followed these investigations closely and recorded notes and queries about them in his commonplace books.

Locke's life at this time would seem to have been well occupied, if a little humdrum. In 1665 an opportunity for something quite new came up, and Locke promptly seized it. Sir Walter Vane was being sent to Cleves on a diplomatic mission to the elector of Brandenburg, and Locke was offered the post of secretary. The mission left England in November and returned the following February. As an act of diplomacy it proved futile, but it is clear from his letters home that Locke greatly enjoyed his first journey abroad, and the experience of staying in a community in which the members of different churches lived together without disorder may have helped him change his mind about the practicability of religious toleration.

Once back in Oxford, Locke resumed his studies in chemistry and in physiology; it is probably at about this time that he drafted a short work in the form of a scholastic disputation on the purpose of 'respiration.' In the summer of 1666, however, he met someone who was to change the entire course of his life.

Anthony Ashley Cooper, then Lord Ashley but from 1672 earl of Shaftesbury, had been chancellor of the exchequer since 1667. He was not in good health, and had come to Oxford to drink the water, conveyed there by cart, from a remote but newly fashionable rural spring. Ashley's physician in Oxford was David Thomas, Locke's chief collaborator in his chemical experiments, and it was probably through Thomas that the two men were introduced. Each was favourably impressed by the other, and by the time that Ashley left Oxford, the beginnings of a firm friendship had been established.

In the late spring of 1667 Locke left Oxford for London, to become

a member of Ashley's household at Exeter House in the Strand. This was to be his place of permanent residence for the next eight years.

Locke's activities in London remained as diverse as they had been in Oxford. He continued to read extensively in medicine, but he was now able to supplement this theoretical education with clinical experience. Shortly after arriving in London he made the acquaintance of the physician Thomas Sydenham. Locke accompanied Sydenham on his rounds and made records of his advice and recommendations in various of his notebooks. The two men collaborated closely. Locke's papers contain a large number of drafts and fragmentary essays on various medical topics. The most interesting of these from a philosophical point of view is a short tract, "De Arte Medica." When first discovered in the nineteenth century this work was supposed to have been written by Locke, primarily because the manuscript is in his hand; more recently it has been ascribed to Sydenham. There are at present no decisive grounds in favor of either alternative.

"De Arte Medica" expresses a profound skepticism about all hypotheses concerning the nature of disease, and consequently advocates a purely empirical approach to medical practice. Nothing in it is incompatible with the known medical philosophies of either Sydenham or Locke. Sydenham had never been an admirer of the mechanical philosophy, or of the kind of corpuscularian explanations so indefatigably advocated by Boyle and his colleagues in the Royal Society. Locke's general approach remained close to that of Boyle, but he became much more skeptical about the prospects of our ever being able in practice to use corpuscularian principles to give a satisfactory explanation of the properties of particular bodies.

Locke's medical skills were put to a severe test in the summer of 1668. Lord Ashley's generally poor health had been growing worse, and Locke advocated and on June 12 superintended (though did not of course actually perform) an operation to drain an abscess on his liver. Ashley made a good recovery and thereafter saw Locke as the person who had saved his life.

Locke continued to pursue his scientific as well as his medical interests. It was fashionable to dabble in chemistry, and Lord Ashley maintained a laboratory in Exeter House. In November 1666 Locke was elected a fellow of the Royal Society, but though he was quickly appointed in a committee for experiments and twice served on the

council (1669–70, 1672–73), he seems to have attended few meetings and to have contributed little to the work of the society.

Just as Locke's hitherto largely theoretical approach to medicine had been broadened by his association with Sydenham, so his rather academic, quasi-scholastic interest in politics was inevitably modified by his entry into the household of one of England's ablest politicians. Within a year of coming to London, Locke had written a short *Essay concerning Toleration*,<sup>3</sup> which expressed views very different from those put forward in the *Two Tracts* of 1660–62. He also developed an interest, hitherto absent, in economic questions. The outcome was a treatise with the title *Some of the Consequences that are like to follow upon Lessening of Interest to 4 Per Cent*, begun in 1668, and further added to in 1674. Nothing was published at this time, but Locke kept the manuscript and put it to use in the economic controversies of the 1690s.

In 1669 Ashley involved Locke in the affairs of the recently founded colony of Carolina. In August of that year the first group of settlers to leave from England took with them an elaborate constitutional document, the *Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina*. It is extremely unlikely that Locke was the author of this, but it is possible that he had a hand in the original drafting, and he was certainly involved in suggesting alterations and improvements (Milton 1990). Locke continued to serve the lords proprietors of the colony in a secretarial capacity until he left England for France in 1675.

At least since the autumn of 1668 Ashley had been paying Locke an annual allowance of £80. In the autumn of 1670 an opportunity arose to shift the burden to the public revenue. Locke was appointed a registrar to the commissioners of excise, at an annual salary of £175. Of this, £60 was needed to pay a clerk, who presumably performed whatever duties were required. Locke lost this useful source of income in the spring of 1675. It was replaced by an annuity of £100, which he purchased from Shaftesbury.

In the light of his later publications it is remarkable that in the 1660s Locke seems to have spent very little time reading anything on epistemology or metaphysics. It is of course unlikely that he made notes on every book that he read, and it is certain that at least some of the commonplace books in which he did record his notes have not survived; nevertheless the disparity between the extremely copious notes taken from books on medicine, natural science, travel

and theology, and the almost total absence of anything on philosophical topics is very marked. In 1670 Locke was not yet a philosopher, as we would understand that term. He was however shortly to become one.

The origins of the *Essay concerning Human Understanding* are described by Locke with tantalizing brevity and a kind of studied vagueness in a well-known passage in the "Epistle to the Reader." Locke describes there how, at an unspecified but evidently fairly distant time in the past, he and a group of five or six friends had met in Locke's chamber to discuss some other quite remote topic, and had found themselves becoming entangled in a mass of wholly unanticipated perplexities. It then occurred to Locke that they should inquire instead into the capabilities of the human understanding itself. He therefore set down "some hasty and undigested thoughts on a subject I had never before considered," which he took to the next meeting.

Two surviving works dealing with epistemological topics show that this meeting cannot have taken place after 1671. The shorter, given the Latin title "Intellectus humanus cum cognitionis certitudine, et assensus firmitate" but written in English, is now generally known as *Draft A*. A reference within the work shows that Locke was in the middle of writing it on July 11, 1671. Its first few pages may well correspond to the hasty and undigested thoughts taken by Locke to the meeting with his friends. The longer work, entitled "An Essay concerning the Understanding, Knowledge, Opinion and Assent" but now known as *Draft B*, contains no dates other than the year 1671 on the title page, but is certainly later than *Draft A*. Both works were left unfinished, and both clearly leave unsolved some of the main problems that led to their being written.

During the years 1671–75 much of Locke's time was occupied by administrative activities of various kinds. In March 1672 Ashley was created earl of Shaftesbury, and in November of the same year he was appointed lord chancellor. The administration of the considerable quantity of ecclesiastical patronage that came with this office was devolved upon Locke, who was given the post of secretary for presentations; he held it until Shaftesbury was dismissed in November 1673. As if in anticipation of this, Locke had in the previous month become secretary to the Council for Trade and Plantations. In December he was made treasurer as well. He held these posts,

which involved a considerable quantity of work, until the council was itself dissolved in December 1674. The combined salary of £600 per annum was never paid.

In November 1675, his administrative responsibilities at an end, Locke crossed over to France for a stay that was to the end to last nearly three and a half years. It was not his first visit to that country. In the autumn of 1673 he had spent a few weeks in Paris, but though he presumably acquired some ability to communicate in French, he was not yet able to read that language with any ease. There are no citations from any works written in French among Locke's papers before November 1675.

On arriving in France Locke began, apparently for the first time, to keep a journal, a practice he was to continue until the end of his life. In later years the number of entries grew smaller, especially after 1689, but the very well-filled volumes covering the years in France make it possible, for the first time in Locke's life, to construct an almost day-by-day account of his movements and activities.

On January 2, 1676 (N.S.), Locke arrived at Montpellier, where he was to stay for a little over a year. He made several acquaintances, notably two eminent Protestant physicians, Charles Barbeyrac and Pierre Magnol, and the Cartesian Pierre Sylvain Régis; he also engaged a tutor to teach him French for one hour a day, and began reading books written in that language.

While at Montpellier Locke resumed his philosophical inquiries. His journals contain a substantial number of entries on philosophical matters, these being especially frequent for the period from June until September 1676, when Locke had retired to Cellesceuve, a village some three miles west of Montpellier.

In February 1677 Locke left Montpellier, and traveled in a leisurely manner to Paris, by way of Toulouse and Bordeaux, arriving there at the beginning of June. He was to remain in Paris, apart from a second journey through provincial France in the late summer and autumn of 1678, until his return to England.

In Paris Locke continued, at least intermittently, to work on philosophy, drawing up a list of French versions of Descartes's works, and copying into his journal a long memorandum containing critical comments on the writings of Descartes's various followers. He also became acquainted with two Cassendists, François Bernier and

Gilles de Launay, though there is little evidence that he ever had much interest in the details of Gassendi's own philosophy.

It is also clear that Locke was working on the *Essay* during this period. One of the items that he left behind in Paris in July 1678 was a folio volume described as "Essay de Intellectu." This cannot be either *Draft A* or *Draft B*. References to this volume appear elsewhere among Locke's papers: it is with him in England in 1679 and 1680, and in Holland in 1684 and 1685.

The England to which Locke returned in May 1679 was in a state of acute political crisis. The revelation of the Popish Plot, a conspiracy to assassinate Charles II and replace him with his Catholic brother, James, had burst upon an already discontented nation in the August of the previous year. The plot was itself a pure fabrication, but few of Locke's contemporaries were prepared to discount entirely the detailed mendacities devised by Titus Oates and his associates, especially after the discovery of the genuinely treasonable correspondence of James's secretary, Edward Coleman, and the murder – still unsolved – of the magistrate charged with investigating the whole matter, Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey. Charles had dissolved the old Cavalier Parliament, elected in 1660; its replacement was due to meet for the first time in May, the month of Locke's return. For the next four years, until his flight to Holland as a political refugee, Locke was to be concerned primarily, though never exclusively, with politics.

The events of the years 1679–83 fall into two phases. At first Shaftesbury and his associates attempted to use constitutional means to exclude James from the throne. Exclusion bills were passed by the House of Commons in May 1679 and November 1680, but Charles extinguished the first by dissolving Parliament, and allowed the second to be defeated in the House of Lords. The turning point came in March 1681. The new Parliament met in Oxford, but was dissolved within a week, before a third exclusion bill had time even to complete its course through the Commons. As it slowly became apparent that Charles had no intention of ever summoning Parliament again, the Whig party split; the moderates became inactive or crossed over to the other side; the radicals, led by Shaftesbury, began to think with increasing seriousness about the possibilities of insurrection.

Charles rightly saw Shaftesbury as his most dangerous opponent.



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