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The Blueprint of Locke's Remedial Use of Language

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The present article forms a continuation of the author's investigation into Locke's particular's interest in the use and abuse of words and its more general significance both for an appreciation of Locke's intellectual profile as a whole and for the way in which we tend to think of scientific practice and our related interests in scholarship from distant times at large. This means that the issues developed in the following pages rather presume a consultation of the first part of this investigation from before[1]. In all cases, a short summary of the related views that the issues developed at this place presuppose and build upon is as follows. An overview of the concrete development of Locke's related interests and views throughout his lifetime suggests that quite much of what is of importance for our topic should be better conceived in terms of a set of evolving intertwinements between such issues as those that we usually associate with a polity's faring, ecclesiology, and the reach of the human intellect, or "human understanding", as Locke mostly had it said. As a matter of fact, paying attention to intertwinements of this kind seems to account both for some particular traits of Locke's three most famous writings as well as for the greater expansion of his interests following the times of the new constitutional settlement in England that became known as the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688-1689. The adoption of the same viewpoint also suggests that Locke's distinctiveness for his times and ever after can be best sought for through a minute scrutiny of his views on the functioning and the particular traits of the human intellect as such, for which case we went through the different parts that eventually found a place in the published version of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Following this, we concluded with a yet more analytical focus on the three chapters of the latter book devoted to what Locke came to identify as the more specific "inconveniences" or "failures" of words and language, on the one hand, and the range of "remedies" to which these were taken to be susceptible, on the other. What this entire account leaves us now to discuss is how it might relate to Locke's other writings throughout the years and whether we may be eventually rendered capable of drawing any further conclusions about Locke's mode of thought in general upon this key and about related interests for the times ever since.

The use and abuse of words throughout Locke's writings

As soon as one passes to consider the extent of relevance of this account of "failures" and "remedies" of words for the rest of Locke's intellectual production, one finds various issues in need of resolution in advance. In the first place, Locke himself is well aware in the same pages as previously discussed that it would be impossible for any such "remedies" to eliminate every "failure" once and for all, and especially in the long run of the free use of words and the accordingly resulting and ever-evolving state of language, since, as he has it said at another crucial point elsewhere «use [...] is the law that decides

[1] The text discussed at this point has been scheduled to form part of a forthcoming collected volume on *Locke and the Sciences*.

what is correct in speech»[2]. Adding to this, it is not hard to tell by now how much labour was put into carefully itemizing all these issues and how improbable it would be both for their author as well as for anyone else to be expected to apply them in either full consciousness or to an utmost extent in every related circumstance. Even more discomfortingly, it would not be hard for pressing Locke readers to tell that the discreet, longtime hiding and once intellectually peerless figure they have been studying from various kinds of distance occasionally appears at first sight to be defensively opting beyond the application of his own remedial advice, as is particularly the case the further one moves away from the topics that were actually studied as objects of "philosophy" or "science" back then, an issue about which his study of the "failures" could have afforded him with the knowledge to do so if required. Even so, Locke was widely recognized for his elevated intellectual capacity already during his lifetime and ever since, and has provided a strong point of reference for many others who dealt with according issues in some notable depth. The more straightforward reason for all this interest and recognition has been no other than the advancing argumentative and definitional resonance that Locke did manage to convey with his writings, a venture the value of which Locke held high enough for him to go on constantly seeking to improve his formulations and lines of thought on all topics, his published writings included, till his very last days. Various themes could be more readily brought up in these respects, such as the definitional language of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* at large, or the detailed reasonings provided for the elevation of issues like toleration, organized society, and the places that standardized justice, consent and trust can have as part of a civil government. Nonetheless, these would either take us closer to considering a more literal application of the previous advice or to issues whose reasoning and definitional subtlety has gone on being greatly examined by other authors and established disciplines throughout the times. What seems to be more interesting to note here instead has to do with two issues which take us beyond this point and which can thus allow us to gradually complete our investigation in the resonance of the examined views in Locke's *oeuvre* in more general terms.

The former of these has to do with what we can take to stand as a broad correspondence to the remedial use of "showing" that we came across above as of particular service when one opts to move beyond the given use of language. We noted that one part of this "remedy" meant to strive to present an idea as directly to the addressees' senses as possible, for which case the correspondence to note is no other than the ubiquity of the language of the "plain" and the "evident" throughout Locke's writings already since the Oxford days. In fact, this kind of language features widely in the "essay on infallibility", the

[2] J. Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* [*Epistola de Tolerantia*], trans. by W. Popple, in J. Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration and Other Writings*, ed. by M. Goldie, Indianapolis, Liberty Fund, 2010, pp. 1-67, p. 66. Note that this is the literal translation of Locke's original Latin of the *Epistola*, which is actually a line from Horace; whereas Popple's translation delivers the same sentence as «use [...] is the supreme law in matter of language».

brief consideration of which has already allowed us to imply that what was meant to be done away with consisted in overly qualified interpretations in any kind of affairs that kept the latter at a distance from the greatest part of ordinary intellects. Against this case, Locke – both in this text and ever after – has very often recourse to modes of expression drawn from the literal acts of seeing and observing which were meant to facilitate the readier understandability that his own positions were aiming to convey to practically any addressee who could conceive of the basic workings related to the sense of eyesight[3]. Adding further to the same effect also, it is not hard to tell that the entirety of Locke's works, including his accounts dealing with concrete human affairs, were similarly carefully crafted with a concern to render available a complete vocabulary that could both itemize and keep the issues discussed as consonant as possible with the attested physical realities of our existence that a close student of the "natural philosophy" of the times and place could accept.

This being the case with Locke's appeal to the senses, we might be able to start passing some resolution as to some overarching features of his writings that have largely riddled many retrospective readers. The first of them has to do with Locke's introductory presentation of the *Essay* as a work that proceeds through what he termed a «historical, plain method»[4], a statement that many retrospective readers took to have been close to an open contradiction in terms, since today's mainline understandings of "history" allude to inquiries that further individuate the lives and fates of human groups and persons in their very distinctness from one another or from their given world at large, whereas "plainness" may nowadays easily convey the rather opposite impression of an acceptance of an imposed homogenization of all related forms of experience on the basis of some common physical attribute that pertains to the entire human species. Nonetheless, neither applies to Locke's usage of the terms. In the latter of the two respects, the same paragraph of the text explicitly states both before and after the brought designation of the "method" that

[3] Related instances in J. Locke, *Infallibility* [*Is it Necessary that an Infallible Interpreter of Holy Scripture be Granted in the Church? No.*], trans. by J. C. Biddle, in J. Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration and Other Writings*, ed. by M. Goldie, Indianapolis, Liberty Fund, 2010, pp. 141-145, include: «blindness is certainly inevitable, where Heaven itself does not have enough light to guide our steps»; «will the eyes of the blind heed [Christ's] words which open ears are unable to grasp?» [two scornful comments on the effects produced by priests who were taken to get overly interpretive upon God's Scriptural words and deeds]; «that there has been no infallible interpreter has been sufficiently shown by the disagreements of Christians among themselves about divine matters»; «it is obvious enough to anyone, however slightly acquainted with ecclesiastical history, that even in the Church of Rome [...] opinions [...] differ enormously»; «God has proclaimed in the clearest and most unambiguous terms what he wanted men to know and believe»; «there are other things in Holy Writ, things most necessary to salvation, so clear and unambiguous that virtually nobody can doubt them, for to hear is to understand them» (pp. 142-144). Note also that Locke already holds by then (1661) that «to interpret is nothing else but to bring out the meaning of obscure words and to express unfamiliar language clearly in words of everyday speech» (p. 144).

[4] J. Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. by P. Phemister, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008 [1689-1690], I.1.2.

the work does not purport to reduce the examined topic to any assumptions about the properties of physical matter but rather proceeds on a more stepwise observational key «to consider the discerning faculties of a man, as they are employed about the objects, which they have to do with», that is, first and foremost, with the practical functioning of ideas in the mind, and, in the wake of this, with the according consequences of the case for our acceptances with respect to the validity of different kinds of knowledge and assent. This being so, it might be better if we considered "plainness" as a device that was meant to keep the contentions of the discussed issues as close as possible to the evolving record of observations that relate to them. As a matter of fact, such a view actually runs largely parallel with the very ancient signification of "history" that Locke and the "natural philosophers" of the times mostly had in mind, which consisted for the latter group into drawing consequences on the basis of a close following of the evolving course of a disease[5]. Other than that, the connotations conveyed by the modern-day primary sense of "history" is an issue that Locke certainly does not leave beyond consideration when using the term, as one can tell out of his recurring appeals to such particular "historical records" for the further ascertainment of some of his accordingly more particularly-focused views, intimating thus that the consonance of Locke's views with what such records could suggest was an issue of some apparent concern from his part, which actually went far enough to have "historical" antecede "plain" in the discussed designation[6]. Nonetheless, Locke is at the same time far from eager to restrict his intellectual edifice to any predominant or exclusive dependence upon any individual accounts and records of the kind as these were available in his times, since he explicitly takes such tellings for the ages past to be often characteristically underpremised or incomplete, and thus rather far too readily susceptible to tell differently as to the texture of particular issues in the future in relation to the impressions that these may occasionally

[5] For the ancient record of uses of "history" and cognate terms for the designation of inquiries related to the physical world, animals, Galen's medicine, and even for the designation of observation, inquiry and examination at large, next to the better known designations of the same etymological root for the services of an umpire, a referee or a judge, on the one side, and for the recounting of distinctive human deeds of the times past, on the other, see the entries «historia», «historeo», «histor» and cognates, such as «historisma», which actually stood for a patient's clinical history, in H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. S. Jones, eds, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 2011 [1843/1940] <http://www.tlg.uci.edu/lsj/> (visited 2 March 2023), p. 842.

[6] Other than Locke's frequent recourse to accounts of regional history, which included both numerous incidents related to his homeland and many discussions of histories of nations as geographically distant from his place as Peru, a quite suggestive case of Locke's appeal to history as a concretizing device that could allow for strengthening appreciations in terms of "plainness" is provided in his refutations of Robert Filmer's appeals to incidents from the Holy Scripture as vindicatory of his "patriarchal" doctrine in Book I of *Two Treatises of Government*, in the wake of which Locke minds for a closer individuation of the particular series of concrete acts that these Scriptural passages can be taken to report than the one that Filmer's interpretation of them allowed as an appeal to "the history itself" or to "Scripture history" from Locke's part. See J. Locke, *Two Treatises of Government - Student Edition*, ed. by P. Laslett, third edition, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988 [1689-1690/1960], I.11.113-118, pp. 154-168.

appear to emit in their more immediately given form[7]. This being so, it might not be amiss in case we also conceived of Locke's conjunction between "plainness" and "history" as a means for safeguarding the resonance of both outlooks against narrowly conceived appeals to either through a call for fostering a predisposition to regularly mind for considering the workings of the one in the light of the other. In any case, the language of the "plain" was certainly a far more crucial issue as to Locke's main objective at his present, which consisted in rendering his views fitter to be widely accessible to and thus capable of meeting the approval of the ordinarily competent understandings of anyone interested to take them into some careful consideration. This allows us, in turn, to shed some light on another feature of Locke's texts that might estrange some modern standards, which we have already once introduced. We refer to the recurring tendency of Locke's to place at the beginning of several writings, with the *Essay* and *Two Treatises* being particularly characteristic instances, a compact version of the inadequacies of the position he purports to confute that largely utilizes grounds the full rationale of which is explicated at the remainder of each piece[8]. In case our argument has been sound enough up to this point, what can be said about this unusual ordering in the internal economy of the discussed texts is that the feature seems to reflect an eagerness of Locke's to put his views to the most practical and immediate test of "plainness" that one could think of for the standards of the confrontational atmosphere of the times. This is so since such restatements of the views of the opposite side on the basis of Locke's own carefully processed vocabulary can be

[7] On this issue, see a relatively posterior expansion of a chapter in Book II of *Two Treatises* that restates in more general terms an issue drawn out of Locke's refutation of Filmer's relevant arguments in Book I in between the parts of the text discussed in the previous footnote (see J. Locke, *Two Treatises*, cit., I.11.144-145). This has to do with a refutation of the validity of appeals to historical records for the placement of the earliest origins of government to monocracies and, even more demandingly than that, to any kind of unbreached sequences of "patriarchal" rule within families. Against the former case, Locke suggested that «government is everywhere antecedent to records», which are also taken to be «accidental», and that people «begin to look after the history of their founders, and search into their original» only quite some time after «they have out lived the memory of it». Even so, Locke actually does not neglect to consider the evidence that could be extracted out of such available records as those related to the more plural-based foundings of Sparta, Rome and Venice in order to conclude that both «reason [is] plain on our side» and that «the examples of history [are] showing» that the «first erecting of governments» alludes to his own views that will be examined below. As for the historical grounding of a governmental "patriarchy", a similar rationale is used, which highlights the under-recorded "plainness" of the ever-recurring instances where a rulership different than that of a father can be taken to have been brought forward by the involved family groups, such as in the events of absent or weak male heirs or in the even weightiest case when different families are eventually found in need to settle a commonly-affecting course. See *ibid*, II.8.100-110. See also the fully accordant paragraph in the *Essay* on the limits in the «credit and use of history» available at those times, for which Locke yet does not neglect to note: «I think nothing more valuable than the records of antiquity: I wish we had more of them, and more uncorrupted» (J. Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, cit., IV.16.11).

[8] See J. Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, cit., Book I; *Two Treatises*, cit., Book I; as well as *Infallibility*, cit., pp. 141-142.

taken to have been originally meant as addresses that could be regarded as clearly-stated enough for them to extract some acceptance of the presented case even by that part of the reading audience who would dispose of only a limited amount of time, interest or inclination to such writings.

Let it be so with the cases discussed so far. We have also noted that not all ideas can be taken to have such a referential standard to be found in nature as what the appeal to the senses implies, or that this standard cannot always be found or established quite easily, particularly to the extent that there is no science or philosophy in place to mind for its ongoing accessibility and appropriately reasoned sanction. Hence, this is where one seems to pass to the second section of Locke's remedial use of "showing", which had to do with using synonyms or with naming a subject of acquaintance to the addressees. The suggested correspondence here can be taken to be found, in the first place, in Locke's recurring variance of expressions when dealing with one and the same issue even in the course of one and the same piece of writing, as we also repeatedly came to note that the case has been even in the three chapters of the *Essay* closely examined above. Other than a means of self-protection against far too readily deprecating censors in place, the case seems to have been also used by Locke as a way to work constructively with the given polyphony of his addressees, since this mode of writing could allow the latter to find some greater resonance to their own modes of expression and thought on the one or the other topic. What is important to note here, though, is that wherever Locke's expressions vary in this way, the number of the components that make up each variance is kept small and their overall arrangement is meant to ease readers into sensing a strong "concurrence" between them, as Locke sometimes puts it for more fully attestable issues[9], indicating thus both a more straightforward overall design in the original elaboration of the presented views as well as an interest to strengthen the suggested matches between the particulars over time either by improving the directness of their reasoning and formulations, wherever possible, or by seeking to integrate further elements to their constituencies. Relatedly also, it might not be wrong in case one suggested some fittingness within this part of the remedial use of "showing" for Locke's complementary adoption of a more affective tone in his writings in occasions where the acceptance of his views were proving to be a yet more delicate issue to bear for his most immediate readers, as was particularly the case with the delicately curated language of the *Epistola de Tolerantia*, for which we have noted that it was authored at a moment when toleration was receiving its greatest blow of the times, and with the few lines in the *Second Treatise of Government* that apparently stand beyond the firmly reasoned refutation of "innate notions"

[9] See characteristically Locke's chapter at the *Essay*, *Of the Degrees of Assent*, where one reads that «where any particular thing, consonant to the constant observation of ourselves and others in the like case, comes attested by the concurrent reports of all that mention it, we receive it as easily, and build as firmly upon it, as if it were certain knowledge; and we reason and act thereupon with as little doubt as if it were perfect demonstration» (J. Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, cit., IV.16.6).

when suggesting that a sacred command that is contained in Christianity's Holy Scripture and concerns retribution against unjust violence that affects self-preservation is «plain [...] writ in the hearts of all mankind» as part of the law of nature[10].

The cases that we went through right above have been already taking us far beyond the *Essay* and can thus allow us to pass to the ultimate and most demanding test of the resonance of the remedial advice for Locke's entire *oeuvre*, which brings us to the highly elaborate ways some of the most important words in his weightiest writings on civil affairs are used. This is so because this is where Locke can be more readily charged as causing unnecessary inconvenience or confusion, if not straightforward contradiction, both for the standards of his times and for those of his own. We shall treat Locke's standing in relation to these two kinds of standards one after the other.

As far as the former standards are concerned, the case can be brought to the fore as soon as we turn our attention to the wording with which Locke ad-

[10] In the latter case see Locke, *Two Treatises*, cit., II.2.11; with the distancing being brought up in Laslett's accompanying page footnote. As for the "first" *Letter*, paying attention to a specific passage can allow us to take some fuller note of the more general function of pertinent issues for Locke's mode of thought in the overall. Specifically, quite some time ahead of the discussion of the different kinds of "care" that we examined at the article's first part, one finds the following lines being placed right in the midst of a paragraph otherwise discussing before and afterwards the non-infringement of the «rights and franchises» related to the «civil enjoyments» of people of other denominations as part of every person's "duty of toleration": «nay, we must not content ourselves with the narrow measures of bare justice. Charity, bounty, and liberality must be added to it. This the Gospel enjoins; this reason directs; and this that natural fellowship we are born into requires of us» (J. Locke, *Letter Concerning Toleration*, cit., p. 20). Such a discreet and relatively interspersed posing of issues that move beyond the elaboration of «narrow measures» like that of «bare justice» in this paragraph and in the rest of its thematic unit in the text is quite typical of Locke's ongoing utilization of them as a rather accompanying force that keeps bearing fruits of its own quite much beyond the main argumentative spotlight of the flow of the text. This being so, the case intimates towards quite recognizable Aristotelian – if not ultimately Platonic – intellectual dues for its conception, as one can also tell, by adding some further Stoic and Ciceronian keys, out of the explication of the «charity and forbearance» that the *Essay* recommends for the cases of knowledge by probabilistic assent into the maintenance of «peace, and the common offices of humanity, and friendship, in the diversity of opinions» (J. Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, cit., IV.16.4). In all cases, this range of issues can be taken to have been rendered more in line with Locke's more immediate concerns through his appropriation of "the judicious Hooker" in several large quoted passages in *Two Treatises* that emit a characteristically likewise tone. T. M. Bejan in her *Locke on Toleration, (In)civility and the Quest for Concord*, in «History of Political Thought», vol. 37, 3, autumn 2016, pp. 556-587, and *Mere Civility: Disagreement and the Limits of Toleration*, Cambridge (MA), Harvard University Press, 2017, rather highlights "charity" out of such sets and suggests that what she takes to stand for Locke's interests in "civility" at large echo the concerns of *eirenic* humanists to foster an all-embracing "concord" in the wake of the first waves of the Reformation conflicts. This is said, in turn, to amount to a relative raise in the demandingness on the preconditions of toleration from Locke's part that eventually leads to exclusions of thirds and thus to a degree of compromise in his suggested project in the overall. In all events and other than the entire case, the investment of Locke's summaries of positions to be confuted with a certain dose of irony at the beginning of some of his texts previously discussed can be read in a similar key to the one suggested at this point.

dresses some of the themes for which Hobbes' readers would have already been in possession of a particularly rigidly reasoned account that had quite recently arranged them in a markedly resonant order and with far less distance from their given understandings than the one found in Locke's texts. Specifically, where Hobbes' readers would hear of and understand more easily about a "sovereign" and a more logically abstracted "sovereignty", one finds very characteristically already in Locke's early and suggestedly more Hobbist-drawn "two tracts on government" an overarching concern to refer to the actings of the same person in place as those of a "civil magistrate" instead, whereas discussions of "magistrates", "civil magistrates" and their sensible roles retain an accordingly ongoing presence in Locke's pertinent writings throughout the decades, *Two Treatises of Government* included[11]. Nonetheless, by the time one reaches the latter work, it is not hard to tell that such persons are far from receiving an exclusive emphasis in the course of the unfolding of the overall account. This means that even though "magistrates" are still presented as having an important and quite detailed set of powers at their disposal, what becomes at least as crucial at this point is to reason for the arrangement of these powers in a way that allows for a more encompassing and relatively more open-ended consideration of the standings of all persons, entities and factors of various other kinds that are taken to form part of the ongoing administration of a composite civic structure, undertaken in the light of both some more elementary acceptances about underdeveloped potencies that form part of human living and of a keener awareness of the ever-evolving shifts in the performance and fate of the different components of this set[12]. Similarly also, where readers

[11] See J. Locke, *Two Tracts on Government*, ed. and trans. by P. Abrams, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1967, where the "civil magistrate" or "magistratus civilis" features as the subject of the very posing of the "question" to be disputed in both the English and the Latin "tract". Other than that, in *Infallibility*, cit., that is, between the previous pieces, even though the «highest and greatest power [of] the right of making laws» appears at the opening sentence, "magistrate" is nowhere mentioned, but some strong analogies with the actings of the church are easy to be inferred, since the issue that is left unresolved by the end of text is «how much is to be granted to each individual and how much to the authority of the church» (p. 145). The "magistrate" returns all along the text of J. Locke, *An Essay Concerning Toleration* [or: *The Question of Toleration Stated*], in J. Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration and Other Writings*, ed. by M. Goldie, Indianapolis, Liberty Fund, 2010, pp. 105-139, but this time this person is early on described with «the whole trust, power and authority vested in him» solely «for the good, preservation, and peace of men in [...] society» (pp. 105-106), and one hears mostly about where it makes no sense for the magistrate to intervene and about how limited and specific the intervention should be even on issues where this is taken to make sense. As for the "first" *Letter Concerning Toleration*, cit., the case for the "civil magistrate" or "magistrate" remains quite much the same, but this time it is brought up only in between some pages discussing the suggested general standings for individual believers and the "religious societies" on the issue, while the main discussion of the "duty of toleration" afterwards begins with what befits "private individuals" and ecclesiastics and leaves the far more extensive case of the "magistrate" for the end.

[12] Specifically, other than a few appearances of "magistrate" at the *First Treatise*, the introductory chapter of the *Second Treatise* posits "political power" as its topic, which is further put as «the power of a magistrate over a subject» right afterwards and taken to be in need to be

of Hobbes and of some other learned authors of the times would be already getting inclined to think of such ruling structures less as recognizable "commonwealths" and rather as more unqualifiedly given "states", Locke maintains in the latter work that he finds "commonwealth" to be a more fitting transcription of the prototype Latin term *civitas* in English than any unnamed alternative he could think of, while leaving open the case that others could find a better name in the future and occasionally further intimating towards the Greek term "polity" throughout the work[13]. As for "state", this also persists in *Two Treatises* and its uses keep suggesting the more unqualified givenness cited above, but these pass above all to the general acceptances that precede the discussion of the suggested organization of commonwealths, since they have to do, first and foremost, with another concept with which Hobbes' readers would have also been largely acquainted, namely, the elementary "state of nature", which is presented in Locke's version as having a relatively functioning potential for societal living that was not to have been brought forward in its respective depiction by Hobbes during the French and British civil wars[14]. As for the overcoming of the "state of nature", what one does find instead of a "state" or "civil state" is a predilection of Locke's to refer to the emergence of "civil society" or "political society" for the case[15].

distinguished from other «powers» such as that «of a father over his children», prior to a further equation of it with that of «a ruler of a commonwealth» at the end of the same paragraph (J. Locke, *Two Treatises*, cit., II.1.2). Other than that, "magistrate" has a low explicit presence in the chapters to follow, which becomes more dense only close to the late chapters, where again the circumscription and specification of roles is at issue, and which is also a time by which one has also come across, other than the separation of "political power" into the "legislative", the "executive" and the "federative" power, far more numerous references to "princes", "governors", and "rulers", as well as some eventual references to "inferior magistrates" next to "chief magistrates". For the occurrences of "magistrate(s)" see especially II.2.9; II.2.11; II.7.83; II.7.89; II.11.137; II.15.172; II.15.174; II.18.202-210; and only one reference at the closing chapter *Of the Dissolution of Government* (II.19.228). For an emphasis on what this outlook can be said yet to leave to the executive power of the times and place in practice see M. Goldie, *Locke and Executive Power*, in *The Lockean Mind*, ed. by J. Gordon-Roth, S. Weinberg, New York, Routledge, 2022, pp. 446-455.

[13] J. Locke, *Two Treatises*, cit., II.10.133. Note also that "polity", which occasionally appears in the rest of the work but nowhere in this short chapter, also features at the very title of Hooker's treatise that Locke repeatedly quotes throughout the text, that is, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, published in various forms between 1594 and 1666.

[14] J. Locke, *Two Treatises*, cit., II.2.; see as well the discussion of what is designated as "property" in a markedly expansive sense of the word in II.5., which serves to provide a fuller justificatory basis for both the relative functionality of the "state of nature" and its eventual overcoming.

[15] *Ibid.*, II.7-9. Add to this also that Locke's attempt to mind against the narrowing of reflection that allusions to the existing civic structures of his times in terms of "state" can be further inferred out of several other employments of "state" of his. For characteristic instances see the allusion to the two "powers" that are taken to be present «in any state and society of men» at the opening sentence of the "essay on infallibility" (*Infallibility*, cit., p. 141), as well as the passing of the second part of the "essay concerning toleration" to circumstantial issues related to «the state of England at present» for the magistrate's consideration (*Essay Concerning Toleration*, cit., p. 122), and even a few momentary Machiavellian circumlocutions in the *Second*

To close this first set of particularly demanding uses of words, one should next lend some space of its own to "war", with the brute realities of which not only Hobbes' readers but practically all contemporaries of Locke's times would largely go on living on a recurring basis. In this case, Locke again develops a quite elaborate form of reasoning that builds on premises alluding to a view that wars presuppose the existence of societies of a certain standing, in the wake of which either one, more, or, in the worst case, all individuals turn against others, with such occasions said to be more readily offered in the outlook characterizing the "state of nature" rather than that of "political societies". In either case, the resulting "state of war" is presented as being of a more contingent and aftermath character in relation to the givenness of "political" and other and more elementary forms of society, which could be also taken to mean the detachment of war from being a virtually omnipresent attribute of the dismal "state of nature" that had been previously crafted by Hobbes[16]. Even so, what is further interesting to note is that Locke can be also taken to provide instances of a consideration of the extent to which the capacities and potencies that wars afford one with could be of service for the personal and general concernments he was interested to advance. In these respects, one finds a brief insertion of such a service of war even in the largely peace-making tone of the *Epistola de Tolerantia* in a passing set of allusions early in the text suggesting that a proper Christian believer should opt for a «war upon [one's] own lusts and pride» instead of «the extirpation of sects»[17]; whereas similar instances can be inferred out of the ways that the powers of the magistrates in place are determined and assessed in *Two Treatises of Government*[18]. This being so,

Treatise, such as an early trope interrogating the «right [of] any prince or state» (*Two Treatises*, cit., II.2.9.).

[16] J. Locke, *Two Treatises*, cit., II.3.

[17] J. Locke, *Letter Concerning Toleration*, cit., pp. 8, 10; in the former of the two passages, Popple substitutes «vices» for «pride».

[18] See particularly J. Locke, *Two Treatises*, cit., II.14, titled *Of Prerogative*, and actually the only of its kind in the advancing portion of the *Second Treatise* to be identified as part of the earliest draft version of the text from 1679, in which, even though particular attention is taken to avoid any reference to physical coercion – and actually even to "magistrates" –, "prerogative" is quite much itemized in a key that foreshadows the discussions of the reach of legitimate action related to "states of emergency" in modern-day democratic settings and that actually strongly alludes to their archetype in the actings of "dictators" backed by armies in the late Roman republican times, since "prerogative" is initially defined as the «power to act according to discretion, for the public good, without the prescription of the law and sometimes even against it» (II.14.160), and eventually summarized as «nothing but the power of doing public good without a rule» (II.14.166). Other suggested emphases on the same issue by M. Goldie, *Locke and Executive Power*, cit. Compare also the next four chapters (II.15-18), all of which are meant to highlight different kinds of infringements of the reach of magistrates. The last among these, Chapter XVIII, discusses "tyranny" as a rather diametrical opposite to "prerogative"; the previous two chapters deal with foreign "conquest" and domestic "usurpation" respectively as similarly analogues to one another as to their illegitimacy, which relates to the original assumption of power; and the introductory chapter of this set is again a brief 1689 insertion that itemizes "despotical power" as an excess of "political power" in more general terms that seem both

it might not be that hard by now to suggest the presence of a discreet rationale behind the overly qualified uses of language for this specific set of words, which had to do with an interest to reckon at one and the same time both with acknowledging the considerable extent of resonance in the way these terms were used in broadly appealing modes of thought of the time and place and with elaborating ways in which these could go on retaining their utility when brought under the lights of yet more expansive concerns than those that originally set them in place.

Finding one's way with Locke's mode of writing by assuming this viewpoint might be also offering a key for the disentanglement of some of his yet more delicate uses of words in the same texts, and especially in *Two Treatises of Government*, for which the observance of Locke's own standards would be even harder, if not at times impossible, to defend in full. This brings us to occasions where one finds repeated alterations between two close but still importantly different words for the conveyance of a seemingly single idea or line of thought and vice versa without any explicit accounting for such moves back and forth, some of which, very interestingly, have to do with the furthest-reaching grievances and challenges that could be raised against the civil affairs of the times.

A first instance can be found in Locke's discussion of "paternal power" in both the *First* and parts of the *Second Treatise*, an issue that actually provided the original occasion for the entire drafting of *Two Treatises* in the early 1680s, which was a time when prominent Tory circles rallied behind an expansive version of a "patriarchy" derived out of Robert Filmer's related posthumous publications as the justificatory basis for the functioning of the constitution they were wishing to uphold in the ensuing confrontations of the times[19]. In these respects, Chapter VI of the *Second Treatise*, which is specifically devoted to the issue, begins with a straightforward statement of the need to replace the old wording with "parental power" as a means for doing away with the undue imbalances that "father" and "paternal" tended to convey and goes on to ascertain that the "law of nature" or "reason" suggests that the two conjugal partners have virtually no difference in their – carefully demarcated – powers against their offspring[20]. Even so, what could be by now a relatively anticipated concern to deal with the given polyphony of the times leads Locke to declare that "parental power" and "paternal power" will be used as synonyms in what follows, and the text makes this usually quite clear. Nonetheless, not only is "paternal power" far more frequent between the two, but it is also actually the one used in both the chapter's title and when the relations of this power against "political power" and the so-called "despotical power" are brought un-

to foreword the illegitimate cases of the following chapters and to formalize the preceding partial discrediting of slavery suggested below.

[19] The case has been classically brought to the fore by P. Laslett, *Introduction*, in J. Locke, *Two Treatises*, cit., chap. 3-4.

[20] J. Locke, *Two Treatises*, cit., II.6.52ff. It might be of some interest to add at this point also that "he" and derivatives often alternate with "one" throughout the text.

der joint consideration; whereas instances can be also found where "paternal power" and even "father" go on being used on a key that is far from favouring or allowing for a ready application to mothers as well[21].

A case with far too many analogies is presented also in Locke's interspersed discussion of slavery in various places in the *Second Treatise* and elsewhere. Specifically, at the beginning of the former piece we read about the need to distinguish the "political power" of a magistrate over a subject from a range of other "powers", among which those of a master over a servant and of «a lord over his slave» are mentioned[22]. Following this, one finds chapter IV being dedicated to "slavery", the «perfect condition» of which is said to be «nothing else, but the state of war continued, between a lawful conqueror, and a captive», and which ceases «once compact enter between them, and make an agreement for a limited power on the one side, and obedience on the other»[23]. And by the time we reach the discussion of the contradistinctive outlook of "political societies" further later on, "slave" is reduced into a «peculiar name» for one among the different conditions under which the names «master and servant» have been used throughout history, consisting in the name ascribed to «captives taken in a just war» instead of the more readily accountable case of "servants", which designates free persons drawing compacts for providing specific services[24]. This way of posing the issue suggests an interest to circumscribe slavery into a more contingent feature of human affairs, since not only is it placed beyond the "freedom" of the "state of nature" and nowhere does it form a particularly explicit part of any kind of society, but even where slavery is taken to have been instituted, its conditions could be interpreted as being particularly strict, since it is only a "just war" the one said to be bringing it into place, and even under this circumstance options for doing away with it are still mentioned, as one can tell out of the aforesaid allusion to a compact that ceases it along with the entire "state of war", as well as out of another passage that leaves some room to reflect, where it is still left «in [the slave's] power, by resisting the will

[21] See particularly, in the former respect, J. Locke, *Two Treatises*, cit., II.7-8, II.15., and, in the latter, II.6.69. It is further worth observing that at the beginning of the chapter that immediately follows "paternal power", the ordinary understanding of "family" of the times is further individuated into yet more elementary "societies" than what the aforesaid discussion of the relations between parents and offspring more readily conveys. Specifically, the first and most elementary society considered is the "conjugal society" between «husband and wife», in the discussion of which a short imputation towards a yet more elementary society of «conjunction between male and female» finds a place, whereas the "society between parents and children" is seen as a successor to the former, next «to which, in time, that between master and servant came to be added». What deserves to be noted is that such elementary societies, particularly the former, are addressed in a similar key to the one suggested throughout this paragraph. See II.7.77-83ff. For a recent reconstruction of Locke's views on the yet more sensitive issue of male to male relations throughout his writings with according findings see B. Smith, *Assessing "Unnatural Lusts": John Locke on the Permissibility of Male-Male Intimacy*, in «History of European Ideas», vol. 49, 1, 2023, pp. 1-17.

[22] *Ibid.*, II.1.2.

[23] *Ibid.*, II.4.

[24] *Ibid.*, II.7.85.

of his master, to draw on himself the death he desires» so long as the master has not already taken away the slave's life before that[25]. Nonetheless, it is yet made clear at the same time that once persons get captivated into slavery in the designated manner, their conqueror retains a «right by nature» to take away the life spared to them during captivity for as long as the master wishes, since the "state of slavery" thus set up leaves slaves with no property upon their lives or any other assortment and thus beyond the protective boundaries afforded by the law of nature and the laws instituted in its succession[26].

Appreciations at this point are far from easy. Judgements will certainly go on being raised on the extent to which part of these formulations allows to be read or would have even served as offering justification for inequitable ideas and practices that have long lost any respected traction by now[27]. Be it so, it

[25] *Ibid.*, cit., II.4.23.

[26] *Ibid.*, II.7.85. A case that brings the treatments of both slavery, the gender dimension and their limitations into some further relief is provided quite some time before the *Two Treatises* through Locke's degree of secretarial and administrative involvement with the then newmade colony of Carolina that had been granted by the Crown to Cooper and a multiple of another seven shareholding "Lords Proprietors" in rather absolutist terms by the mid-1660s. Specifically, Locke served initially as a secretary to the original shareholders and assumed at the very least a scribe's role in the conglomeration of the administrative demands expressed for the colony. This led above all to a text reflecting multiple authorships that has become known as *The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina*, first multiply drafted and published in 1669 and subsequently subjected to several draft and published revisions until 1698. Even though the text displays, on the one side, a safeguarding of the absolutist hold all the way down from the "Lords Proprietors" to the colony's governor, to other persons receiving new titles of honour and to the owners of enslaved persons, several of the provisions were largely experimental – and thus far from fully implemented for the times – in devising a partly elected Parliament and other forms of active engagement for the colony's male freeholders that seemed to favour a more even spread of the involved property and decision-making shares in the long run, including even some inheritance laws that favoured women in the absence of direct male heirs. Even so, slaves, for whom an effort was made to be circumscribed solely to «Negro[es]», were essentially recognized only as having the "charity" allowance of joining and choosing between Christian churches and remained otherwise totally bound to their masters' disposal till the very end of the revisions of the text. See J. Farr, *"Absolute Power and Authority": John Locke and the Revisions of "The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina"*, in «Locke Studies», vol. 20, October 2020, pp. 1-49, and D. Armitage, *John Locke, Carolina, and the "Two Treatises of Government"*, in «Political Theory», vol. 32,5, October 2004, pp. 602-627. In the wake of such grave limitations, what can be also brought to attention is some evidence of further initiatives of Locke's for the circumscription of slavery while in the Board of Trade and Plantations in the 1690s. These may have also included the similar provisions of a 1698 document the attribution of which to Locke has remained disputed, namely, a constitutional text accompanied with «an essay towards [...] remedies» for the neighbouring colony of Virginia, a place where even the hereditary bondage to slavery seems to have been also formally repealed to an extent for some years. See H. Brewer, *Slavery, Sovereignty, and "Inheritable Blood": Reconsidering John Locke and the Origins of American Slavery*, in «The American Historical Review», vol. 122, 4, October 2017, pp. 1038-1078.

[27] In continuation of the previous footnote, consider the extent to which Carolina settlers with an interest to defend their narrower *status quo* against further directives from metropolitan England would occasionally rally behind different published versions of the *Fundamental Constitutions* – even to the extent of appealing to an abidance to earlier versions against subsequent ones – in order to occlude further changes, which amounted in the case of slavery into an interpretation of the text as allowing owners to restrain themselves to a merely benevolent form

might not be amiss in case one suggested a general orientation of Locke's towards a fairer reconstruction of the world he was given in characteristically concrete terms that were meant to mind at one and the same time both for keeping in touch with what the sensitivities and affordances of his more immediate addressees could withstand in the short term and with alluding to the greater potency for reconstruction under more favourable circumstances that these issues seemed to allow when conceived in the light of their individual self-standingness. As a matter of fact, this standpoint seems to be vindicated in case we turn next to the wording employed with reference to the overcoming of the "state of nature", a case with no such stark sensitivities to mind for. Doing so reveals that even though we previously noted that when Locke approximated a more definitional language for the "commonwealth" it was the Latin ideal of *civitas* the one to be brought forward rather than the Greek "polity", a term conveying both the openly reconstructive practices of the ancient voting assemblies and a more distilled ideal to keep in mind ever since, this time the preference turns the other way round. Specifically, the title of Chapter VII is *Of Political or Civil Society*[28], and "political society" is the one that goes on being predominantly used throughout the text, with the definitional passages for indistinctly both alluding to the establishment of an extent of joint reconstruction of the kind, since it is said that the generated outcome for the number of persons who have quit their individual executive power of the law of nature and resigned it to "the public" is that every one such person «authorizes the society, or which is all one, the legislative thereof to make laws for him as the public good of the society shall require; to the execution whereof, his own as-

of slaveholding. See Farr, *"Absolute Power and Authority"*, cit. An echo of the case can be said to have resurfaced in some respects in the recent academic exchange on the *Two Treatises* between J. Olsthoorn and L. van Apeldoorn, with their *"This Man is My Property": Slavery and Political Absolutism in Locke and the Classical Social Contract Tradition*, in «European Journal of Political Theory». vol. 21, 2, April 2022, pp. 253-275, and *The Value of Methodological Pluralism in the Study of Locke on Slavery and Absolutism: A Rejoinder to Felix Waldmann*, in «Locke Studies», vol. 21, 2021, pp. 88-104, on the one side, and F. Waldmann, *Slavery and Absolutism in Locke: A Response to Olsthoorn and Van Apeldoorn*, in «Locke Studies», vol. 21, 2021, pp. 1-9, on the other, with the former eventually suggesting that Locke's line of reasoning against absolute rule does not provide grounds against what they seem to aggregate as seventeenth and eighteenth century "moderate absolutist" theories, from abroad first and from within the British Empire later on, that would allow for – if not welcome – a divinely-sanctioned "despotic" dominion over slaves to the extent that the latter were not physically harmed, and with the latter having clarified in between that Locke was nowhere close by intention to advance any absolutist or despotic form of rule of this kind or any other in authoring the work, which was committed instead into countering the more concretely influential advocacies of the case in place related to Filmer and Hobbes.

[28] J. Locke, *Two Treatises*, cit., II.7. Note that in the nowadays commonly available version of the text, namely, the somewhat modestly self-styled "student edition", the table of contents that supplements Locke's preface for the entire *Two Treatises*, has the title of this chapter with a comma after "political" that does not feature at the respective place in the main text. See *ibid.*, *The Preface*, p. 139.

sistance (as to his own decrees) is due»[29]. This being so, it might not be also that amiss in case one suggested as deserving some further inquiry the extent to which other groups of two or three wordings used in *Two Treatises* and elsewhere can be said to convey similar features, such as "liberty" and "freedom"; "propriety" and "property"; "dominion" and "sovereignty"; "law of nature", law as sanctioned by the divine and "the law of reason"; and "consent", "agreement" and "trust".

It is probably about time to conclude our attempt at reading Locke by considering whether and how we can make sense of his overall concernment with the use of words. In these respects, it is not hard to tell by now that this interest has been thoroughly present and sustained throughout the writings examined and the several decades across which their production spans. Specifically, we have seen that the case was so even before Locke became engaged with anything among what eventually found a place in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, which is where the related advice reached to be itemized in particularly detailed terms, and we have suggested both that this kind of advice seems to have assisted its author in the ongoing elaboration of his views, and that it can as well be possibly taken as not having been always or completely followed, particularly in case one is interested to become strict concerning a most exacting implementation of the suggestions. However, our analysis so far has been also intimating to a general congruence in Locke's mode of thought on the issue, the most challenging cases included, and this seems also to further accord with the formation of Locke's more general mindset throughout his lifetime. This being so, one can be led to suggest that a yet more elementary interest may assist in accounting for the concernment with the use of words and its variations, for which case we can turn to Locke's preoccupation during the Oxford period and for some time afterwards with the workings of medicine, both as that branch of "natural philosophy" in which he eventually became more greatly interested from a student's point of view and as a practising profession that could allow him to deliver concrete outcomes for individual cases

[29] *Ibid.*, II.7.9., and particularly II.7.87ff, with the definition found in II.7.89. To add some further reinforcement to this reading, the very short chapter that we previously discussed for the transcription of *civitas* as "commonwealth" (II.10), which was actually a 1689 addition to the text, begins with a pithy discussion of a series of the different "forms of government" or "forms of commonwealth" that people in society eventually come to introduce, with the very first of them to be brought up being that of a "perfect democracy" as more readily evocative of certain analogies to some of the circumstances preceding the formation of such societies (10.132); whereas by the time "commonwealth" is brought to be defined at the end of the list of "forms", this is again straight on specifically asked to be «understood all along to mean, not democracy, or any other form of government, but any independent community which the Latins signified by the word *civitas*» (10.133). Add to this that the long sentence that forms the opening paragraph of *The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina* sets as part of the document's list of purposes, while appealing to the crown, the existence of the stake of «a numerous democracy» that the "Lords Proprietors" «may [hereby] avoid» (*The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina*, in J. Locke, *Political Essays*, ed. by M. Goldie, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 160-181, pp. 161-162).

beyond the laboratories and the lecture halls[30]. The strongest evidence of the case is no other than the ubiquity of "remedies" when Locke designates his pertinent suggestions and views[31]. Even so, in order to avoid misunderstandings it should be made clear that this is nowhere close to implying any actual adoption of techniques that belong to surgery or to the more general professional treatment of the physical bodies of living persons for the administration of third domains. What seems to have been rather of interest, or of consequence at the very least, for Locke should be probably sought in the acquisition of a predisposition to treat any issue in general both by means of drawing from the workings of what we would nowadays think of as a sufficiently consummate and regularly advancing "groundwork science", on the one side, and by keeping in mind the requirement to achieve characteristically concrete and solidly functional outcomes in practice, on the other. Further pieces of evidence for the case can be brought to corroborate this view. Consider, first, Locke's discipleship while in London with Thomas Sydenham, a physician known for pioneering a remedy-centred medicine rather than attending to the practices prescribed by the general treatises of the times. Add to this also, right afterwards, Locke's insistence to earn a delayed bachelor of arts in medicine by 1675, following which he left London on the whole in order to reside in France, home country to the highly learned for the times and to an advanced school of medicine in Montpelier that also partly drew Locke's interest for some months, that is, quite some time before Shaftesbury eventually requested his return in 1679 to ask for his assistance in refuting Filmer's adherents. Nonetheless, since neither *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* nor any other of Locke's subsequent works are medicinal thematically or in any other recognizable sense, it is not hard to infer that the retention of such a longtime investment in medicine and the ongoing appeal to "remedies" ever afterwards would barely make any profound sense unless the subject was seen as being of at least some qualified kind of relevance to what could be conducive for an optimal administration of third domains, and especially those lacking an operational "groundwork science" that could match the offerings of the medicine of the times. And for a final argument in support of the view presented at this point, it might be also permissible to maintain that itemizing Locke's interest in medicine as inclusive of the dual predisposition suggested above seems to fur-

[30] An appeal to medicine as an exegetical device for Locke's intellectual profile was also invoked by Laslett (*Introduction*, cit., p. 86), who noted, in turn, the long existence of this view in various readers and interpreters of Locke throughout the ages from Dugald Stewart in the late Scottish Enlightenment times and onward.

[31] Add to this as well that the entire "first" *Letter* is introduced in even more emphatic terms than Locke's usual manner of expression by Popple at the preface *To the Reader* that he drafted and annexed to the English edition without acknowledging his own authorship of that part of the text, since we find the *Letter* being called a «thorough cure» that offers «more generous remedies than what have yet been made use of in our distemper» for the «miseries and confusions» that characterized the acts of the English government of the times and the more general «narrowness of spirit on all sides» in matters of religion. See W. Popple, *To the Reader*, part of J. Locke, *Letter Concerning Toleration*, cit., pp. 3-4.

ther accord with his previously examined distribution of concerns into both keeping in touch with the more readily existing states of affairs on various issues, on the one hand, and suggesting various self-subsisting routes for the overcoming of any encountered forms of uneasiness or discontent in any of these, on the other.

This being so, one is still left in need of considering the extent to which Locke did indeed follow his "remedial" advice or not. In case our argument stands so far, it might not be unfair to say by now that the general orientation of Locke's use of language remains pretty adamantly "remedial" in the distilled or prototype sense that we have just recovered, but some further explication seems to be apt in order to take note of what this means for Locke's workings the more one moves closer to concrete issues. On the one side, Locke's investment of the labours of his entire lifetime in the preparation of carefully composed writings whose reasoning and more general consonance he kept improving till the very end attests both a preference to rely on and a belief in the potencies that a carefully weighed use of language affords, for which case his itemization of the even more specific "remedies" that were eventually laid down at the *Essay* could only but strengthen the affordances that could contribute to such cause, as we went on to suggest by paying attention to some undernoticed features of Locke's general mode of writing. Nonetheless, as soon as we moved to a range of issues further beyond any generally accepted sanctioning for the times and where greater discretion seems to have been more apt, the minute use of the examined words partly appeared closer to the "failures" of language rather than the "remedies", for which case it might be plausible to argue that these can be also taken to be in tune with a remedial orientation as well, since not only do such "failures" seem to keep serving remedial goals in the long term wherever the acceptances and sensitivities of the most immediate addressees made straightforward adoptions not easily endorsed, but a care seems to have been also shown in making the complex positions adopted for such issues as congruent with the rest of the provided reasoning as possible, or, as some medical professionals could perhaps have it said, to ease the pain on some open wounds.

Endeavours of our times

In order to pass into forming a view as to what there is that a deepening of our acquaintance with Locke, in general, and with the aspects of his thought that we sought to itemize above, in particular, can provide, we should next turn to a wholly different range of topics. Specifically, one should first discuss what has been the fate of Locke's work after his lifetime and so far as well as consider to some extent what the fate of other intellectual figures and projects with similar features has tended to be, more generally speaking. The second among the last two issues allows us to remind ourselves that Locke has been far from the only person to undertake ventures of the examined kind. To be precise, not only does one recurrently find individual polymaths of a comparable reach

throughout most, if not all, adequately developed and diversified civilizational settings, but also several more independently standing sciences have come to be more regularly established throughout the times, and even "philosophy" as such or in more qualified terms occasionally resurfaces, as seen by its proving able to deliver some notable instructiveness to and emulation by thirds. Furthermore, some interests in truth and some potencies to protect it have been also sometimes finding a place among any of these sets. As a matter of fact, all of these cases were soon to flourish extensively right after Locke's lifetime and can be said to accompany us in certain respects up to present. As far as Locke's own place in this picture is concerned, even though neither were the sciences reestablished in the way his full rationale would more readily endorse nor were his individual published works appropriated in ways that would suggest a respectively unconditional accordance with his views, it is common knowledge by now that Locke had a massive readership as a near contemporary intellectual authority to be seriously consulted throughout the century to come, at the very least[32]. The case included not only many apparent individual emulations of considerable portions of his works by learned intellects of the following decades, such as David Hume in Britain's metropole and Thomas Jefferson at the increasingly detached North American lands, but also the incremental edification of sciences and objects fit for philosophical investigations through the dense activities of various and rapidly proliferating intellectual circles that went on reading Locke next to many other authors from both their present and past. For better or for worse, most readers of this kind were far from being in possession of Locke's particular ordeals. In fact, many of them were that much engaged in advancing prosperity through the sciences or in achieving political goals for their present and future that they would not display any keen appreciation for the ecclesiastical and the other preservation-minded authors of the previous times with whom Locke had been spending such a great portion of his energy, although the more mindful among them would reserve a careful eye on their workings as well. As for the systematic study and knowledge of the workings of the ancients that Locke so considerably revered, this would also expand and keep having a more generalized impact of its own among the highly learned of the same period, as would be even more substantially the case from the nineteenth century and onward. Even so, by that point the greatest part of the general audience had been that deeply habituated into thinking that most of the related issues rested that much on changing convention, if not straightforward choice, that even pronounced appeals to nature, therapy and humanity as such started being regarded less as an intellectual assistance to and

[32] For various aspects of Locke's readership throughout the times and places see C. R. Arcenas, *America's Philosopher: John Locke in American Intellectual Life*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2022; S. J. Savonius-Wroth, P. Schuurman, and J. Walmsley, eds, *The Continuum Companion to Locke*, London, Continuum, 2010; M. Goldie, ed., *The Reception of Locke's Politics*, 6 vols, London, Pickering & Chatto, 1999; and J. C. D. Clark, *"Lockeian Liberalism" and "Classical Republicanism": The Formation, Function and Failure of the Categories*, in «Intellectual History Review», vol. 33, 1, 2023, pp. 11-31.

more as a restraint against various goals and aspirations, which meant, among other things, that direct interest in Locke would subside as well, particularly for persons other than those interested in philosophy or other forms of broad erudition, or those who would seek to appropriate his name and appeal to his works in order to make them fit retrospective political narratives that have been tending to favour more particularizing forms of engagement with his person.

Transcribing this state of affairs to what we have retrieved as Locke's remedial use of language could more readily lead to the opinion that this minimally commented feature of its author's work should have been of an even lesser resonance for thirds than the more pronounced interests shown to it, or at least that in all cases this should be so by now. However, a further expansion of our view can quite easily show that Locke was again neither alone nor that inconsequential in what has to do with this issue as well. Consider, first, for instance, how much of a difference or distance can be necessarily taken to exist in this respect between the specifics of Locke's advice and Socrates' reported introductory plea to Gorgias' circle to agree to keep their speeches short and to adhere to addressing the issues raised in rather determinate terms before accepting to converse with them[33]. This is nowhere but the only case where advice of this kind has been thought important enough to be recorded long before Locke, and many other instances arise as soon as one pays adequate attention to them as a topic deemed to be distinctive in its own right[34]. To restrain

[33] See Plato, *Gorgias – A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary*, ed. by E. R. Dodds, Oxford, Clarendon, 2002 [1959], 447a-449c, following which Gorgias initially accepts that the object of his «art» (*techne*) or «science» (*episteme*) of rhetoric consists in «speeches» or «words» (*logoi*), and upon Socrates' further probing that other arts also engage either partly or fully with «words» – or «*the* word», that is, «reason» (*logos*) – in order to sanction what constitutes for each one of them their individual «object» (*hon*, *ti*) or «actual thing» (*pragma*), Gorgias identifies the object of rhetoric as persuasion, and eventually as persuasion related to what is just and unjust. In the wake of this response, Socrates continues his ongoing pleas to «understand» (*hupolamvanein*) what Gorgias maintains by suggesting that since such a rhetorist acceptedly does not hold or teach any knowledge or truth about the objects of the other arts or about justice as such, this seems to be rendering a person of this kind rather prone to deliver injustice in relation to the objects of the other arts and those in knowledge of them; see 449c-461b.

[34] Among them the dissertation that Aristotle seemingly appended to his *Topics* under the title *On Sophistical "Refutations"* can be found, in which the workings of a part of the fallacies used by the sophists are scrutinized. For a general consideration of what would stand somewhat closer to Locke's "civil use" of language as the long textual register of the varying "art of conversation" from Europe's ancient ages to those of Italy, France and Britain from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries and with a greater emphasis on the transmission of Cicero's model of tactfulness see P. Burke, *The Art of Conversation in Early Modern Europe*, in Id., *The Art of Conversation*, Cambridge, Polity, 2007, pp. 99-136. In a comparable key, Bejan in *Mere Civility*, cit., takes her cue from the long recurrence of appeals in the modern-day United States to the language of the "civil" as a device of some fittingness for the issuance of corrective – if not occasionally altogether generative – commendations beyond the existing functionings and workings of what counts as more narrowly or immediately "political", "moral" or "social" in different settings and presents altogether "civility" or what she mostly itemizes as a highly elementary or "mere civility" as a "conversational virtue" of a similar potency that had a post-

ourselves to some particularly interesting selections from some more recent times, one could add perhaps some testimony afforded by John Stuart Mill, a careful reader of Locke's *Essay* next to various other earlier and later writings of a similar reach, who, despite having formed the view that several contentions of the *Essay* were no longer in line with the "state of knowledge" of his own times, went into the labour of authoring as early in his intellectual trajectory as 1832 a short but rigid review on a then recently published book on the alleged "use and abuse of political terms" in the learned scholarship of his contemporary and older times, in which several features are of particular note with respect to our own topic. Specifically, even though Mill was in a position to be strict enough with the reviewed author to suggest that the very title of the book could give the wrong impression of doing away with «the liberty to employ terms» at ease, it is suggested that the reviewed author's end is «to prevent *things* essentially different, from being confounded, because they happen to be called by the same *name*» (original emphases). Following this, the flow of the text repeatedly integrates remarkably close modes of expression to quite much of the *Essay*'s detailed advice analyzed above while introducing concrete weaknesses of the reviewed author, which also include a criticism of his tendency to deprecate far too readily the learned authorities at stake on the basis of their varying applications of terms. In fact, the maltreatment of «Locke's *Essay on Government*» is the one to be singled out, which also provides Mill the chance to present a more weighed appreciation of the general texture of the latter piece. As for the end of the review, this actually calls for composing a «treatise on the ambiguities of the moral sciences» as a more serviceable project for the times instead, since this could contribute to a reconciliation of the «half-truths» of the many «exclusive and one-sided systems» of the learned already in place[35].

Three further references can bring us yet more fully at home with our own times. Moving some decades ahead, one finds Wilhelm Dilthey's critical engagement with a much convenient merge of Auguste Comte's sociology and Mill's *System of Logic* in his ventured *Introduction to the Human Sciences* (1883) being prefaced with an appeal to the same characteristic wording and style that had been once brought forward when the ageing Gottfried Leibniz prepared a detailed dialogue as an adaptive response to the *Essay* of his friend in correspondence Locke[36]. The stake of the time and place by then had become to

ancient resurfacing of its own during the Reformation and went on to inform in various ways a matrix of such influential and departing seventeenth century attitudes to toleration as those of the archetypal Puritan minister Roger Williams at the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations that he came to found, on the one side of the ocean, and the more mediated views on related issues ascribed to Hobbes and Locke, on the other. See also her *Locke on Toleration*, cit., and *Hobbes against Hate Speech*, in «British Journal for the History of Philosophy», forthcoming, pp. 1-18.

[35] J. S. Mill, *Use and Abuse of Political Terms*, in J. S. Mill, *Essays on Politics and Society – Part 1*, ed. by J. M. Robson, introd. by A. Brady, *Collected Works*, vol. 18, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1977, pp. 3-13.

[36] In the latter respect see G. W. Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, ed. by P. Remnant, and J. Bennett, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012 [1765].

justify a carefully demarcated intellectual province for what we would now call the humanities and social sciences against the advancing academic and intellectual credit of the so-called "natural sciences". In the aforesaid book and in various sequel writings Dilthey undertook a highly synthetic enterprise that sought to bring together into some memorable coherence individual contentions drawn out of a wide range of authors and disciplines, for which case it would not be amiss to say that the exhaustion of the general currency of some aspects of the key contentions seems to have nowadays dragged away from the general view the resonance that certain other features of the synthesis had managed to bring to the fore. In what has to do with our own topic, we should note that Dilthey presented the human sciences as enjoying the privilege of a more elementary and rather unificatory original premise than the natural sciences, which was said to be found in the prime immediacy of human consciousness, as this was taken to have been argued not only by the area's veneered philosopher Immanuel Kant but also, to some extent, by Locke and Hume earlier than that; whereas the outcome of this counterdistinction would amount to the widely discussed acceptance of a difference in method between the two disciplinary sets, with the "natural sciences" being ascribed the method of externally "explaining" individual physical facts by means of subsiding them to uniformities and with the human sciences being said to proceed instead by means of internally "understanding" or at least by "interpreting" their subject matter more readily as a conceived ensemble[37]. The reader of these contentions to note amidst the voluminous methodological discussions that kept raging at the time and place was no other than Max Weber, whose own lifetime would end rather soon while processing an importantly lucid moderation of the given terms in what he came to frame as an "sociology of the understanding". This allowed for more carefully itemized rooms, among other things, for "immediate understanding", fostering a "concept formation" to convey ideas fit to function as recurring or replicable "types", "interpreting" and even "explaining" as devices that could facilitate the study of – the always «individually significant» – human actions and their assortments in its characteristically ongoing

[37] W. Dilthey, *Introduction to the Human Sciences*, ed. by R. A. Makkreel, and F. Rodi, trans. by M. Neville, and others, *Selected Works*, vol. 1, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1989 [1883]. The origination of the distinction between the two methods in these terms is due to the Rankean-bred historian Johann Gustav Droysen's sharp 1852 review of Henry Buckle's overstated aspiration to institute a scientific history with his *History of Civilization in England* by means of appealing to the example of the advances of the natural sciences in order to suggest the historians' need to take up uncovering the workings of general laws out of the particularities of their subject matter. In the wake of this view and while passingly noting that Buckle even goes so far as to allude that his method purports to advance «plain[ness] to human understanding», Droysen suggests that the science of history has a far more distinctive – though yet inarticulate by then – method than the natural sciences and ascribes to the latter the interest to speculatively "develop" laws or to "explain" facts as parts of them and to the former a more composite and ultimately irreducible "understanding" of human workings, principally vested in a rather Kantianesque vocabulary and general perspective. See J. G. Droysen, *The Elevation of History to the Rank of Science*, in J. G. Droysen, *Outline of the Principles of History – with a Biographical Sketch of the Author*, ed. and trans. by E. B. Andrews, Boston, Ginn, 1897 [1867], pp. 61-89.

«struggle for self-evidence», the resonance of which would greatly contribute to the following golden age of the social sciences in the twentieth century and would even reach to provide fertile methodological analogues for the workings of other academic disciplines in the humanities as well.[38] As for a final point of reference to note, one could turn to the rather independent workings of another retrospectively highly influential figure, this time from the United States, namely, Charles Sanders Peirce and his far too similar concern – though not with fully even conclusions – to devote one of his best-known essays on «how to make our ideas clear» (1878), in which he presented his case as elaborating positions due to Descartes and Leibniz by means of bringing them closer to the more concrete-based level of reflection that had become possible through the ongoing advances of science by his times.[39]

Having arrived at some of the most influential figures in the high erudition of the more recent times, one might have some good reasons to tell by now the great element of truth that there is in the saying that much of the most telling labours of each age tends to stand on the shoulders of earlier giants. In what has to do with our own topic, this means that it is quite often the case that the practitioners who are mostly taken to succeed into mastering or developing further a certain discipline or our hold of an individual topic are the ones who also sought to obtain a most competent, careful and systematic understanding of how one or far more numerous persons among those previously

[38] See M. Weber, *Collected Methodological Writings*, ed. by H. H. Bruun, and S. Whimster, trans. by H. H. Bruun, London, Routledge, 2012., and M. Weber, *Economy and Society – A New Translation*, ed. and trans. by K. Tribe, Cambridge (MA), Harvard University Press, 2019 [1921]. For one instance that suggests a part of the range of the methodological analogues that Weber's work helped in making popular for those schooled in the twentieth century humanities at large, one can turn to the early and quite longitudinal methodological discussion brought forward by Q. Skinner, which actually bore the title Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas (*History and Theory*, vol. 8,1, 1969, pp. 3-53), and where a tension is staged between the headline's first two terms. Specifically, the piece takes largely advantage of the different technical significations that the term "meaning" had acquired in various academic disciplines by then – that is, mostly, in Weber-alluding social sciences, on the one side, and in the academic genre that gradually gathered traction as "analytic philosophy", on the other, and with substantial dues in both cases to transcriptions in English of the German term *Sinn* ("sense") as this characteristically appeared in foundational reference sources for both trends – in order to suggest in an analogously technical language that none of these adoptions as such could cover what was presented as requisite for an adequate "understanding" of texts in the history of ideas. The key for the latter was identified as to be found in the complex – and thus ultimately focusedly historically-researched – recovery of the "intention" characterizing each author of such texts, which thus happened to allude to the same term that Weber had once actually recourse to in his tripartite explication of what was to be conveyed when referring to *Sinn* (*Economy and Society*, cit., p. 79).

[39] C. S. Peirce, *How to Make Our Ideas Clear*, in C. S. Peirce, *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings – Volume 1 (1867-1893)*, ed. by N. Houser, and C. Kloeser, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1992, pp. 124-141. It is further worth noting that just ten years after Peirce and five years after Dilthey, John Dewey would also devote one of his first books to a close analysis of Leibniz's previously discussed work and its relation to Locke; see J. Dewey, *Leibniz's New Essays Concerning the Human Understanding: A Critical Exposition*, Chicago, Scott Foresman, 1902 [1888]).

engaged with them had already dealt with respective issues. Even though the practical necessities and the essential preoccupation of all of us with the more general advancement of our interests are far too inexhaustible and ever-generative of different priorities, ongoing challenges and unanticipated turns for a simple adherence to the old ways to be always able to afford a satisfying solution for every purpose, the important outcomes that this kind of personal investment of one's time and effort has had in the coming up with some of the most acclaimed treatments for a series of particularly hard to administer affairs has been recurring far too often to be short of some distinctive merits. This being so, in the remaining paragraphs we shall seek to shed some light on the specificities of this kind of merits as well as to provide some more general reasons for the retention of a more permanent investment in related studies.

Turning first to the specifics to be expected out of studying an acknowledged classic, Locke could perhaps provide us yet another service, this time as an example the concreteness of which we have already brought in close view. Specifically, a recapitulation of the ways we have already seen his work as having been of resonance after his lifetime allows us to note, first and foremost, a close interest in the adoption, adaptation and otherwise close engagement with arguments and lines of reasoning on individual issues out of his voluminous work, which certainly served those who have gone on engaging with them by means of having provided them with a carefully processed set of instruments that could foster or inform their own reasoning, thoughts and deeds in a relatively straightforward manner, even if such engagements would almost by necessity involve partial and imperfect matchings with the infinity of everyone's purposes, some occasional misunderstandings of what was actually said or meant, and some eventual refutations of it in favour of alternative options, as was especially the case when different priorities or other modes of addressing the same issues were gaining traction in different times and places. As a matter of fact, this kind of interest can even pass to some more generic issues that might be similarly retrieved out of the works of such authors, as we have noted that the case might have been with Locke's own discussion of the "use and abuse of words" at some points. Be it so, what might be perhaps of yet some further interest has to do with what seems to be gained out of a reader's more general habituation with making careful sense of the words and deeds of Locke and other authors of a respective intellectual reach, which can be said to consist in the gradual assumption of a least straightly definable mindset or *ethos* that can be taken to pass from such authors to their readers. This can be said to amount to the formation of a general attitude or perspective from the readers' part that goes on variously informing their reflection and conduct far beyond any conceivable level of consciousness from their behalf. Needless to say, this is nowhere close to implying that any such reader has assumed each and every noteworthy aspect of the author(s) read or that – despite the noblest of intentions of any among the former that one could think of – they may end up being insurmountable in their readings themselves or believing that they have exhausted all that can be ever of an interest in such texts. Quite on the contra-

ry, what we aim to emphasize here is that such a formation of an *ethos* tends to operate far beyond a reader's immediate conception and bears consequence once such readers are brought to address third topics. For instance, the author of this article has been arguing for some time that the mode of writing that has been characterizing the history of ideas and associated political theory that dear Professor Dunn has crafted throughout his already long-spanning career can be taken to display some habits of mind and lines of thought that a careful Locke reader could have more easily come to mentally process as part of her or his readings[40]. This, again, nowhere implies that Locke was meant to be applied to this kind of research or that such writings could ever reflect how a seventeenth century mind would engage with such largely unavailable intellectual endeavours for his time, and actually also bears for us the additional advantage of keeping Locke safe from fixed associations with issues that were not evidently his own. Nonetheless, undertaking the pains to come up with a careful understanding of Locke can be said to afford such readers with a readiness to consider some issues while engaging with third topics that other persons who also engage with them might not be always equally prone to take immediate note of[41].

The three itemizations of an interest in the classics to which we have come down, that is, close scrutiny of individual arguments and modes of reasoning of an already acknowledged intellectual strength, retrieval of similarly crafted modes of proceeding with more generic issues related to the ways individual arguments may stand together, and the least exhaustible formation of a predispositional *ethos*, seem to generate as many issues as they were meant to tackle. Starting with the more elementary level, one should always keep in mind that practicality and any other duly justified form of soundness are the ultimate standards on the basis of which appreciations of the ongoing administration of any individual issue seem bound to rest. This being so, shifts, novelties and revisions of any given means of proceeding with the latter are to be both ever-rising and plural, which means, in turn, that any strong insistence in the old solutions runs the risk of falling short against any other means that have been effectively devised either independently or after any extent of reckoning with the former according to every occasion, as could be the case for our own topic with the proliferating initiatives for "linguistic justice" or with various undertakings offering carefully processed advice or exploring the means and prerequisites for guarding against particular forms of *malfaisance* in the discussions that

[40] For book-length instances see particularly J. Dunn, *Setting the People Free: The Story of Democracy*, London, Atlantic, 2005, and *Breaking Democracy's Spell*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2014. The initiation of a commentary in K. Bizas, *Cambridge Classics in the History of Ideas: Main Studies and Commitments of Method in the Work of Quentin Skinner & John Dunn*, doctoral dissertation, University of Jyväskylä, 2020.

[41] Needless to add, the case can be also said to partly afford an exegetical key for those interested in what has been distinguishing Professor Dunn's contributions to the history of ideas in relation to some among the many fruitful workings of other practitioners in the same and other related fields, several of whom can be also shown to have shared similar advantages *vis-à-vis* thirds through drawing from other key authors of earlier times.

administer the joint ventures of our own times, from the so-called "fake news" to other sources of misinformation and far beyond. In these respects, what can be said in favour of not neglecting the old givens is that these can certainly facilitate both the dissemination and the assessment of any other ventures falling into their scope. The former is so since the study of what we have been designating as the classic sources of one or more genres is already that deeply entrenched as a global common ground so as to be allowing nowadays for reserving some room for the strengthening of the acquaintance of considerable audiences with less known undertakings that befit or are of relevance to a certain object, which also carries the advantage of urging both the already pronounced and the least known approaches to find ways to make their workings more transparent to each other. This brings us to the second of the two facilitations that an appeal to the classics can have, which has to do with the fact that such sources usually tend to reflect a quite broad or at least a long-tested referential scope, whereas this is far from always the case with the more specialist or more undersighted undertakings. This means that having a sound knowledge of the classics can allow for a fuller appreciation of both the extent to which undertakings of the latter kind are indeed as fully or as readily applicable beyond their particular settings as the established ways have been, and of the possible occasions where in some respects one finds rather old wines in new bottles, as both sides may end up discovering. Also, it might be worth suggesting that one – though by no means not the only – particularly useful means for either facilitations can be found in case a historical connection between the two sides exists and becomes scrutinized, since this can help concretize more easily what is to count as same and different between them. As for a third advantage of keeping the study of the classics intact, this can be found in the fact that it can allow for keeping within a relatively accessible reach both the immense depths of experience, knowledge and skill that these sources convey and the respective contents of all the other undertakings that have been already associated with them throughout the times independently of the ever-changing and ever-circumscribed priorities that might gain prominence in different times and places.

There is just one final range of issues about the study of the classics that we should address. This has to do with the fact that it appears to be almost by necessity the case that despite the generality of reference and application that such authors can be largely ascribed to have been striving for, various aspects of their views have been or might at least more readily appear in retrospect to be too tightly attached to quite specific social groups and cultural settings, which has often led to far too partial treatments, if not explicit exclusions, of all or part of what lies beyond these. This being so, strengthening diversity, studying shortcomings, and even adding other canons or points of reference of various kinds is highly welcome, but since we have been implying that dispensing with the given referential sets at large would amount to losing advantages comparable to those of having a common calendar or standardized measures in

physics and elsewhere, it might be better to expand on how such sources can be of service specifically regarding such highly sensitive issues.

A first case can be taken to be when we usually find such authors discussing various aspects of human functioning or human living in rather general terms and with some generally accepted profoundness in their reasoning while applying them in practice only for specific groups, such as whites, males or settlers, and treating other groups such as women and enslaved persons as not susceptible to a same treatment for one reason or the other. This has been, for instance, the case in previous times with arguments delicately advancing rationales in favour of the establishment and expansion of voting rights, various other weighed social, administrative, political and economic innovations and reforms, or with accounts highlighting cultural and intellectual ingenuity and value in past and present on a similar key. In all these respects, the common ground afforded by the study of and even a referentiality to the classics can be said to be capable of exercising a "reparative" or "redistributive function" either through testing the extent of a logical expansion of the general reasoning to the inclusion of the formerly excluded or by means of welcoming an ongoing engagement with diversity in the ways suggested above. Even though the ultimate judgement of the ongoing outcomes of such undertakings is mostly to belong to all those with a legitimate entitlement to the placings of the underprivileged or the underserved, what can be said in some further favour of the classics is that such openness to seek points of contact can both allow the latter to go on offering any kind of missing service to the former and provide the underserved with the option of and some good reasons for not entering into the added labours of departing from the affordances of the given world in order to devise worlds of their own from scratch.

Be it so, it is not hard to tell that not all established points of reference can be characterized by such an unreserved acceptance of a profoundness in their views, despite any subtlety of their part that has been taken at any time to have been distinctive enough to give them a place in the sources to be studied by those keen to nurture or train their intellect, or that perhaps such an acceptance is not always that easily found in many. This is particularly the case with authors who have been turned into prey for raging moral crusades and struggles for national or regional firsts in their name or against it, or with those known to have had so tight connections with convicted regimes and ideologies of a recent past that conceding them anything close to the precious title of a classic would probably result in nothing but harm to the current affordances of an esteemed name. This being so, what can be said about the former among these two kinds of sources is that keeping up some accessible cognizance with the views of the opposing sides of the "crusades" can allow for the mutual elucidation of the very soundness of both the authors' views in either side and of the "crusades" themselves, which can contribute, in turn, into leaving open the possibility to reconsider what is or what still remains of such a resonance in these authors or in the "crusades" for them to keep delivering any among the services of the common grounds. As for keeping up some consideration of the

latter and more clearly non endorsable kind of sources, this could always remain conducive to the avoidance of an impoverishment of one's intellectual matrix with respect to some crucial bearings of the late age and with keeping track of the reasons and ways thirds of all kinds have gone on finding or losing interest in them. In either of the two cases, whenever overall acceptances are not to be expected or approved, one way for testing whether such sources are to retain a place among the established referential sets and in what form is to study the insights that have been taken to be their distinctive trait on a rather comparative key. Specifically, one could either test the extent of a possible recovery of analogous insights out of less known sources that can be of acceptance to thirds, which could thus safeguard the general accessibility to the insights themselves, or bring the contents of such sources next to those of the more widely accepted points of reference with the intent to itemize carefully the failures involved. Other than that, keeping up some more individual focus on sources of this kind as such might better not be totally abandoned, since a sound knowledge of these can still be of some service to careful readers on a key similar to the one that characterizes the military strategists of victorious polities who go on studying the techniques of opponents and defeated regimes, that is, as a means for strengthening the readers' capacity to generate responses to analogously liminal challenges.

Readers who have been generous enough with their time to consider this article from beginning to end might be leaving with an appreciation that the underlying rationale to be derived out of the examined issue is that there seem to be far more than one single road to knowledge, just as human living seems not to be exhausted under single interests and needs. Be it so, this does not mean that every single road is as sound or as telling as any other. Some of them might be contradictory to other considerations that a more connected view helps to bring to light; some might also be contradictory to themselves once more thoroughly examined; and even though one may end up considering that it might be too unnecessary to stick to some old roads or too mindless to simply let them go, bringing any newly devised or underseen roads next to the old can only but strengthen all kinds of (re)assessments about what is to count each time as weighty or inconsequential for our present and for the times ever after. In all these cases, it might not be hard to tell by now the many mediating roles that the study of the classics can have for anyone interested in seeing beyond the narrow scope of their most immediate affairs. In particular, this can allow not only for gaining a readily shared access to the affordances of a wide range of itemizations of issues already deemed worthy to reflect upon throughout the times, but also for the ongoing testing and expansion of any itemizations of issues to be drawn out of third settings and sources against a much wider referential scope than the one that these tend to enjoy when they are left in isolation. This being so, we seem to have come full circle as to what the classics can give to and receive from others once a sustained dialogue has been set in place. Could it have been the case that a reserved seventeenth cen-

tury figure would show some contentment with any of this? Perhaps others could be keen to join and tell how things stand on their own.

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– The Blueprint of Locke's Remedial Use of Language

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ABSTRACT
The article consists in the closing section of an investigation into Locke's interest in the uses and abuses of words as a topic that allows for gaining access to some more overarching features of his outlook as a distinctively competent polymath from his time and ever since. Following a brief summary of the perspective brought forward in the preceding section of the survey, the first main part of the piece turns to a selection of instances of Locke's retention of a concern for the issue throughout his major works. The second part tests the extent to which the recovered mode of work could have something to offer in the light of the objectives that contemporary scientific practice and related scholarship is generally taken to serve.

KEYWORDS
John Locke; Philosophy of language; *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*; *Two Treatises of Government*; History of Locke's reception.

SOMMARIO
Il modello dell'uso correttivo del linguaggio in Locke. L'articolo presenta la parte conclusiva in un'indagine sull'interesse di Locke per l'uso e l'abuso delle parole come tematica che consente di mettere in luce caratteristiche più generali proprie della prospettiva poliedrica di un autore straordinariamente esperto del proprio tempo e non solo. Dopo una breve sintesi dell'argomento presentato in una precedente pubblicazione, la parte principale del saggio si concentra su una selezione di casi in cui Locke ha mantenuto interesse per questo tema nelle sue opere principali. La seconda parte del contributo analizza fino a che punto la modalità di lavoro individuata possa avere caratteri specifici da offrire per gli obiettivi che la pratica scientifica contemporanea e la relativa ricerca si propongono di conseguire.

PAROLE CHIAVE
John Locke; Filosofia del linguaggio; *Saggio sull'intelletto umano; Due trattati sul governo;* Storia della ricezione di Locke.