

Thesis on

*The Origin of Ideas. April, 1854 A.D.
Written by George C. M. Kidwood.*

*Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu
— nempe nisi intellectus ipse.*

The word Idea according to the Speculative Philosophy of the day, expresses the, objects, notions, conceptions, &c. with which the Intellectual powers of Man, are exercised; whether they be those primitive ideas immediately presented to the Mind, or secondary ones produced by the complex actions of our Intelligence on its primary conceptions: — in a word, "whatever the Understanding may have for its object;"

An Essay on the "Origin of Ideas" is therefore an attempt to answer the question — whence is it that the objects of the Intellect proper are derived? what is the source of the objects of Perception, Attention, Memory, Reflection, Imagination, Reasoning, Judgement, &c. In other words whence is it that we acquire our knowledge: — for all knowledge is the mass of notions, which the mind forms of Things, no matter what resemblance or not, there may be between the Thing cognized & the notion or Idea the Intelligence has of it; or by what medium — where medium is at all granted — the communication is maintained, which induces the mind situated somewhere or another, to have a correspondent perception of Things, with the senses at the periphery.

However boundless & complicated the enquiry may appear to the uninitiated, we have only to approach it more nearly, ~~when~~^{to} we find it has a simplicity about it equal

Locke

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to its interest & the issue incapable as it may seem of such a
limitation is narrowed to the alternative — are Ideas
innate or dependent on Experience.

It would be as superfluous to work over the old problem,
as an attempt at new argument would be presumptuous.
The Controversy is settled; therefore without begging the
question, it may be at once stated that, Ideas as above
defined are derived from experience, are objects furnished
to the Intellect proper through Sensation & this unan-
imous verdict of metaphysicians is aptly expressed in
the celebrated maxim of the Schools nihil est in intellectu
quin prius fuerit in sensu. The task I wish to propose to
myself is to try & show, that any opposition to this theory
has been more apparent than real; that there has been
a misunderstanding about words, not a difference of
opinion; that it has never been held by any one, attrib-
uted to many, that Ideas understood as objects operations
of the Intellect proper, are innate; that Plato & Locke
so far from being opposed to each other, may be considered
as a continuation of each other, the former propounding
the true doctrine of the Intellect proper, called by him Ideas
& therefore innate of a necessity, the latter the doctrine of
the objects of the Intellect proper — of Ideas in our sense
of the word & therefore of course dependent on experience.

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& the two both together, in first & second parts of one volume
as it were, unfolding to us the nature & the laws of the
whole Intellectual being of man - by Intelligence &
Knowledge - our educated intellect properly
may so speak. That those therefore who have arrayed
Plato & Locke against in antagonism, must have misun-
derstood the one or the other - perhaps both; those writing
against the former from mistaking his doctrine; wasting
their arguments & ridicule, like cannon discharged after
the manner of Turkish acquaintance squadrons, against
an army of phantoms; those opposed to ^{Plato} from mistaking
Locke, committing a blind suicide, or else wilfully
perverting ^{Locke's} his doctrine; have used his good name to lull
suspicion against an insidious attempt to undermine
religion, by ^{wildness} substituting under covert of the same word Idea
arguments against one meaning of Idea, ~~the same arguments~~
against another meaning of Idea; thus deviously taking
up their ground on a sliding predicate, they were able
to support their assertions, by a force of reasoning & ^{an} accu-
mulation of illustrative detail, by which all special
principles must be ~~supported~~ necessarily approached,
but which if the general principle be false, will only
make its fall & ruin more ~~complete~~, as soon as dis-
cussion & analysis have been brought to test it. Thus

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Dezgrando better read in Locke than in Plato, & forgetting the different signification which in the course of time came to be attached to the word Idea, expends every resource of argument & ridicule in demolishing Platos Innate Ideas under the hallucination that he meant Innate Knowledge not Intelligence, while Condillae on the other hand better read in Plato than in Locke, misunderstands Locke (most likely never read him) & supposing that he meant by Ideas the same as Plato, declares that the Mind itself, the Intellect proper is dependent on Sensation for its Being. Had he brought this forward as an independent theory Philosophers would have had simply to upset it, but when he proclaims himself the disciple of Locke counts & ridicule might justly mingle with our arguments were it not that all minor considerations yield to the indignant sentiment aroused against the man who with the "Encyclopedistes" was the means of bringing Locke into dispute, not only on the continent but even at home; It is not such a doctrine incompatible with a belief in the immortality of the soul; it is covert infidelity, which, while by an abuse of the arguments of the Essay on the Human Understanding, turned them against religion, used the name of Locke like Mockauna's silver veil to hide the hideous ~~truth~~^{mass} beneath

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If these Innate Ideas be not, one of two theories on the Origin of Ideas, but a separate system of Ideas, is not their consideration excluded from this paper by the definition of Idea with which the paper commenced? we have by that definition to do with Knowledge not Intelligence? The exclusion however is only one of definition, & not natural & never could have happened, (as it was never meant to) ~~unless~~ a specific signification, had gradually come to be attached to a word having a generic sense when first used.

Ideas, once meant the Intellect itself & its objects: An essay on their origin would take both into consideration: and any one who would write me now, would be presumed to do so still, although according to strict Letter, the latter are only signified: to make this clear translate the title of this essay into French "sur l'origine de nos connoissances" "connoissances" at once embraces the Intellect itself & its objects & that is what we English in reality mean by Idea when we use it in reference to the "origin of Ideas": only on account of the specific sense attached to the word & ~~while~~ ^{our} persisting in retaining the same word ~~while~~ ^{while} neglecting to dis-ordinate it by a separate specific meaning, we by the letter exclude the consideration of the Intellect proper from an Essay like the present.

Keeping these facts & opinions in mind, as a compass or guiding

posts I will now fairly start on my journey; to trace out
the sources & history of the various theories of ideas, or rather
the varied developments of the same theories; being an ab-
stract of what I have read & noted in several books, only in
process of transferment from my note book into this essay
mentally sublimed over into my own words & accompanied by a
running commentary to enable me ^{as opportunity offers} to interweave any opinions
of my own that may be evolved without ~~prejudicing~~ with
those depending "I's", which any other mode of procedure
would necessitate.

Abstract questionings like the present seem inherent, & are
recognised even in the mind of the child, as soon as the
simplest modicum of culture has roused its latent con-
sciousness & turned the mind in upon itself, with an
unflagging curiosity. We may expect then to find among
the most ancient nations & even in their rudest conditions
some traces however vague, of the agitation of a meta-
physical question like the present. India however is the only
ancient nation of "the first class of antiquity" from which we
have been enabled to derive any experience on this point.
In their metaphysical works, Sir William Jones, Schlegel,
Colbrooke & other Oriental scholars tell us that there are
not the mere rudiments, but the perfectly elaborated
& fully developed counterparts, of all the great systems

of Philosophy, in latter times successively promulgated
by Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Arceles, Des Cartes, Locke
Berkeley, Hume, Kant & the Scottish School of Common
Sense. Thus in the Samchya of Capila, the head of the
oldest sect of commentators on the Vedanta, we find acc-
ording to Sir W. Jones the metaphysical system of Pytha-
goras; but as Cousin says that it exclusively develops
the Theory of Sensation, I am at a loss to reconcile I sup-
pose Sir W. Jones could only have meant that part of it
which bore on Theology, which ~~at~~ distinctly teaches the
immortality & immutability of the soul. This doctrine
of Sensation then is the counterpart of Locke's, although
Cousin ^{who never mistook Locke's doctrine} seems to have viewed it in the same light as Indilac
viewed Locke & charges him with heterodoxy, as making
the Soul dependent on Sensation & therefore by implication
finite; for in the words of that Epicurean Pope Leo X
"redit in nihilum quod ante fuit nihil." The next founder
of a philosophical sect in India is Gotama. His ^{doctrine} system
is called the Nyaya or logical, being a system of
metaphysics & logic, more in conformity with the common
sense of mankind than any other of Indian growth;
admits the actual existence of material substances in
the popular acceptance of the word, which is a great point
gained in the prosecution of the doctrine or rather laws of Yeha.

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& besides comprising a body of sublime ethics & a refined
psychology propounds the syllogistic method of reasoning,
with distinct names, for the ^{three} artificial divisions of a
proposition. As this essay will avoid entering into the
discussion, about the derivation of the civilization of
Greece from the East, it might be thought out of place
to mention it at all, but there is a tradition connected
with Gotama's system so pertinent to the question that
before going any further I cannot refrain from quoting it
it is mentioned by Prohmani in his Dabitan "that in the
Punjab & other Persian provinces it is commonly reported
that among other Indian curiosities which Callisthenes trans-
mitted to his Uncle was a technical system of logic
which the Brahmins had communicated to the inquirers
Greeks" & which Mahomedan writers suppose to have
been the groundwork of the celebrated Aristotelian method.
Be this as it may enough it clearly proves, that the Hindu
mind is capable of attaining the highest realization of
mental excellency, & that if art & science were reached in
India, the perfection which it attained in Greece, it was
not that the Grecian intellect was of a higher type than
in Hindia, but that the free institutions & popular religion
of the Hellenic races, were more propitious to the vigorous
expansion of thought & the development of a refined

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civilization, than the political & sacerdotal despotisms
of the East. With whatever natural capabilities Heaven
may endow a race, it avails not, when crushed under
the double tyranny that India has ever been subject to,
—an hereditary Priesthood & satraps independent of
the central power, for such in fact the rajahs of
India really were, despite the imposing sound of
"The Mogul Empire" & the uncontrolled power boasted
by the Emperors Baber & Akbar. The root of the evil
no doubt lay in the tyranny of the domestic relations, the
father reigned the petty despot of the hearth & board,
to strengthen their authority, they concentrated it in a
single hand & became joint conspirators with the King
& priest; but these again erected on their suicidal
creations, for Montaigne says, "men first make
the institutions & then the institutions make the men,"
religion being administered by a caste, it was but
in the natural course of things that immorality should
result, when woman becomes an object of unbridled
lust, at once a mistress & a slave, distrust & enmity
are sown among men & all experience teaches, that
in the evils which result, it is not worse for to lose
faith in God than in our fellow men. To such me-
lancholy & contingent conditions & not to a Law of

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nature must be attributed the inferiority of the Asiatic
to the Greek: his development was arrested by a blight
from without & not from inherent weakness.

In opposition to the statement that family tyranny is
the great support of the despotism of governments, & of
which Turkey, India & China offer such palpable illus-
trations, the example of Rome may be cited, - but could
those Romans ever have been truly free, who so tamely
betrayed their Republic & so servily bowed their necks
to the Imperial yoke of the Caesars.

To return however to the Schools of India; the last & most
famous of them is that of Vyasa & Jamini whose school
systems are distinguished by the names of the first & second
'Mimamsa', a word which like Nyāya denotes the
operations & conclusions of reason about its objects, although
Vyasa's part is more commonly called the Vedānta,
being composed of a series of disquisitions on texts
taken from the Vedas. The Vedānta propounds a doctrine
analogous to those of Epicureanism & Platonism &
the Greeks & which have been viewed in this country
by Berkeley. Vyasa holds, perceptibility & existence
as convertible terms, that matter the supposed of figure
impenetrability &c. has no essence independent
of mental perception & that all appearances are illusory

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But if the metaphysics of Pyasa be erroneous from
running into a wild spiritualism, the Buddhists
have equally committed themselves to a false position by
a diametrically opposite course; for they deny the exis-
tence of Spirit altogether, & teach that matter alone
exists. Thus in the Six Philosophic Schools of India
we find comprised all the metaphysics of the old Academy
the Stoa & the Lyceum. Is it possible that they could
have been independently evolved in Greece? It would be
impossible without Innate Knowledge, but as Innate
Knowledge could not ever & as one only out of these six
systems can be the true one, five of them at least must
have sprung from some other source. But from whence
imported - from Egypt or Asia? Metaphysical
Philosophy seems never to have been indigenous to Egypt,
& was certainly never naturalized there. We must con-
clude then that to India, through the channel of Persia
& Assyria, the Greeks are indebted. Sir W. Jones says
"that it is not possible to ~~read~~ read the Vedanta
without believing that Pythagoras & Plato, derived their
sublime theories from Eastern fountains." & intimate
communication through Assyria was of much earlier
date than has generally been supposed, & as shown in
modern times, a commerce in their material is always

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the precursor of a commerce in the prevailing ideas or
modes of thought of nations; in fact at least this influ-
ence was direct & Layard in his great work on Nineveh
states, that it is related in Eusebius, that Sennacherib
actually built a temple at Athens in commemoration
of his own mighty deeds. This is a most curious fact.

Believing then that the Greeks received their first im-
pulse from the Eastern Schools let us proceed to record
the development these systems underwent in their new
conditions. It was a maxim of every sect of ancient
philosophers that nothing could proceed from nothing—
ex nihilo nihil— ubi viderimus nihil posse
creari de nihilo, tum quod sequimur, jam rectius
vide perspiciemus. To avoid therefore what they thought
the absurdity of a creation from nothing, they were obliged
to hold the eternity of matter, whether it were (1) an
absolute & independent eternity of matter; (2) or an
emanation from the essence of the creator as taught
by the Brahmins, Orphens & Pythagoras, & with an op-
posite sense by the Buddhists or (3) lastly by a belief in
the non-existence of a material world or idealism.
But if matter be eternal is it also unintelligent. Epi-
curus was content with Chance — as an arranging power
but others saw, that intelligence being as demonstrable

as matter itself, because without the former the latter could not be, we are forced to admit a principle of intelligence. From the union of the Intelligent with Chaos, was the universe produced; the newly passive matter being unfolded into all the variety of beautiful being, by the plastic energy of the Intelligent Agent. But is not this a creation from nothing, in words only, does it differ from the Mosaiic tradition & the dogma *igni de nihilo nil* shows its own falsity, by the absurdity of the self contradiction to which it leads. Pythagoras says, that matter before acted on by the Intelligent principle may be compared to pure arithmetical numbers before they are rendered visibly figures. This Unity — one — Unity an abstract conception resembling incorporeal matter or monads; one is a thing — capable of being numbered, perceived & reflected on. Matter then is not, till acted on by intelligence. Is not this simply — creation from nothing? But that is a discussion alien to this paper & I have only thus by a circumlocution introduced it to you ^{to you} palpably, than I could have in any other way done, what was anciently meant by the word Idea & thus furnish a key for the better understanding of this theory on the origin of Ideas. It does not all

This mean that Matter is the expression, the material
expression of a spiritual intelligence of an idea &
that Idea must of course have been innate. Monad is
the symbol of God. Nature is the expression of God, in
fact according to our Christian theology, & anticipated
in some measure by Plato, Nature is created by the
Word or Wisdom of God: for says Plato The Universe
was created by the Word or Intelligent Agent of God
& *Logos* *τὸν Θεόν*. The numbers or monads of Pythagoras,
Plato called Ideas & both were synonymous with the
Intelligent principle. Idea then with Plato had a very
different meaning from that attached to it by us. His
Idea was not derived from without, it was not
an object of perception, it was the perceiving or Intelligent
principle itself & he declared that our knowledge more
depended on this innate intelligence or Ideas (*τὸ ὄντως
ἴσθαι*) than on the evidence of the senses, for of course the
senses were of no avail, without a basis for our con-
ception of these Innate Ideas, whereas they on the con-
trary are quite independent of the sense, for their ex-
istence. Yet his opposers, reasoning about these Ideas
as if they meant the various entities the sum of which
constitute knowledge, have spared no effort to heap ridicule
on a theory Plato never advanced & others in turn mis-

taking Plato's opposers, but not Plato, the disagreeing with him, have used or rather abused all their arguments & upheld the monstrous dogma that the Intellect itself is dependent on Sensation.

The bond or link of the First Cause was the Matrix of these Innate Ideas, the Intellectual Archetypes or patterns of all things, which with any part of incorporeal matter produced form, rendering what was previously an abstract conception an object of perception & contemplation.

^{Platonic} Any Idea then, is the intelligent agent, or unity or monad by the material expression of which form or one is produced. This Idea is of necessity innate, for it is simply the Intelligent Agent that called the Universe into being & Intelligence itself being ~~an~~ eternal, the archetypal ideas composing it, must have been before experience, for experience being derived from without, must necessarily have been subsequent to those objects, which were called into ~~existence~~ being by pre-existent Ideas. Such Innate Ideas we cannot deny; & as far as Intelligence is innate in Man, they must be predicated of him, but in him they only constitute the foundation on which it is possible to build the temple of knowledge not knowledge itself a vital power which can enable a man to take advantage of the conditions surrounding him in his present state. There are truly Archetypes, or innate Ideas of all things,

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according to which all things are, but according to the narrower
signification of the word, expressing those notions the forms
of which constitute human knowledge, we must deny
minute ideas of such knowledge, we do not possess the
most dreamy reminiscence, an innate idea ever so
obscure, for not only is there no proof of such in man, but
moreover there is no need of such Ideas for man in his
present state. While then Plato was right in teaching the
doctrine of minute Ideas as the archetypes of all things, he
is said to have erred in making them the entities of human
knowledge & the elements of our intellectual reasonings
& practical conclusions. But he would never have been
charged with this error if the modern ^{meaning} use of the word had
not been applied to the use Plato made of it; so that Plato
was all along quite right & it is only through ignorance
that such sweeping condemnation has been passed on
his doctrine. He employed it to denote the forms of the
intelligible world in contrast to the unreal represen-
tation of the sensible & while he proved that the former
were the basis of knowledge, he seems never to have
turned attention to the latter, as the elements of knowledge
itself & to prove as Locke did that they were dependent
merely, tho' to the candid reader, he certainly does
so by implication. Des Cartes borrowed the term by applying

it to the objects of our consciousness in general, but not till
it had been further delegated from the sphere of divine
intelligence to the atmosphere of human sense, was Plato's
doctrine misconceived by many & condemned by some.
Locke employs it in its Cartesian sense, & to this contraction
of its application, & ignorance of the history of the word is owing
all misunderstanding, which have made men who were really
agreed appear to take opposite sides, & arrayed Plato &
Locke in antagonism. We must be careful then to dis-
criminate those Ideas the aggregate of which constitute
our knowledge from those Ideas, the archetypes flowing
from the eternal Spring of Divine Intelligence. In speak-
ing of Plato I have continually used the word "divine intelligence"
but Plato's own expression is "divine reason", but that is obvi-
ously an improper combination. Intelligence itself cannot
reason with itself, tho' it may reason both on its own
as "come let us reason together". Reason is a dialectic
or analytic faculty, by which the conceptions of the imagi-
nation & the discoveries of the understanding receive a
definitive form. But to say of Supreme Intelligence
that it imagines - ~~even~~ must be repugnant to
every feeling understanding. But this parenthetically.
If Plato erred in any thing it was his not providing against
the error, posterity were likely to fall into in regard to his doctrine,

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is not himself discrediting for men, between the conceptions
of the eternal mind itself & those assumed by us from ex-
perience, which, while it has brought ridicule on him from
those who cared still more, has given to the disciples
of his professed disciples an air of mystery, the imag-
ination has too often run riot where reason could not
follow & a philosophic enquiry too often ended in a
dream of poetry, but at the same time it cannot be denied
that their "sublime speculations, seem much better fitted
to nurture a high tone of honour & right affections, to elevate
the moral taste & to breathe over the whole conduct of life
somewhat of a higher poetry of thought and feeling than
a philosophy which addresses itself exclusively to the
colder principles of reason". It is mounting from the material
to the realms of the spiritual from "Nature up to Nature
God" "There amidst the decline of freedom & the corruption
of manners, just before the date when with the fall of Athens,
the beautiful Ideal of sensuous life faded mournfully away,
there on that verge of time stands the consoling Plato, preparing
philosophy to receive the Alexandrian dispensation, by opening
the gates of the Infinite & proclaiming the immortality
of the soul, & the Grecian genius finally accomplishing its
mission as the visible Iris, melts into the Roman rain-
bow announcing a more sacred covenant & spanning

with its arch "The streams of the Neathen Grass" - Sir E. W. Lytton.

Aristotle was not satisfied with Plato's Ideas & thought to reconcile them to fact, conceiving all of them to be developed from experience. External objects excite the senses & the mind like a looking glass reflects unsubstantial or unreal images of them, the reflection however being a real resemblance. This unreal image he called a phantasm to distinguish it from the Ideas of Plato & as Aristotle believed in an intelligible world as well as a sensible world, so there were in the mind Phantasms of virtue & vice, as well as of valleys rivers, trees & birds &c. but still all knowledge whether mediate or immediate was derived from experience, the latter by experience of particulars & mediately still by experience we acquire universals.

Epicurus contended that these images thrown off from external objects are as real as the material objects from which they emanated, this theory he borrowed from Democritus; they were said to be ever flying off from all bodies & disperse themselves through the air, the films of the various qualities of matter striking against their appropriate senses excite in the sense themselves perceptions which correspond perfectly to the objects themselves, as well as to the representations of the imagination, which are very subtle perceptions & more forcible in their combinations, than those of

direct representations from external objects, to these real & substantive perceptions of the mind, or effigies of external things because the name of Idea or Species to discriminate them from the phantasms of Aristotle & the Intellectual Archetype of Plato; this perpetual tide of alternate waves of different qualities of matter, as odour, taste, colour, form, &c - are immediately conveyed by the sentient channel to the chamber of the mind or sensory, without any injury to their texture or properties, in the same way as electricity, magnetism & caloric pervade all bodies without losing their identity & as the dormant heat can by external forces be roused into activity so these laid up effigies can be excited to memory. Heretofore an imaginary intelligible world showing off images; it is from the sensible or material world alone, that the mind through the external senses, derives every branch of knowledge, physical or moral. Now as I before said that we had not a single innate idea, we must no longer argue with Epicurus that from experience alone do we derive knowledge of virtue & vice. Conscience depends on education. Is an Idea derived from experience. If it were innate it would be universal & not vice & quibus in its operations. It might be said, that when there is no conscience it has been obliterated, but then there

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to be found many persons of the most exalted moral nature,
& with conscience, alive to the most refined perceptions of
right & wrong. no two of whom will yet agree on, many
a conceivable ~~outside~~ point of duty. That could not be if
conscience were an implanted Intelligence, Faculty or Sense
it must be the result of education, which is imperfect & therefore
liable to err. Sincerity of purpose & not skill in discrimination
is the essence of conscience & its olive bearing witness.

But that our ideas of such things, or of any thing, are efficient
of things external to us, is another question. Were it so then in
the case of imagination the powerful imagination of a
fire would warm you as much, as a tolerably hot
real fire itself; for to say that imagination is only a
more subtle Sensation of reality is to say that the direct
perception of an external object, & sensation & imagination,
& memory & belief are only different ^{the} degree of strength
& vivacity in the idea. "Suppose" says Reid "the idea
to be that of a future state after death - one man believes
it firmly, which means no more than that he hath a strong
or lively idea of it, another neither believe, or disbelieves,
that is he has a weak or faint idea. Suppose now another
firmly believes there is no such thing I am at a loss to know
whether his Idea be faint or lively; if it be faint, then
there may be a firm belief where the idea is faint, if

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The idea be lively, then the belief of a future state & the belief of no future state are one & the same " & if the vivification be the more fortuitous combination of perceptions differing from direct perceptions only in degree then there is at once a future state & no future state a heaven & no heaven, an earth & to those who wish the contrary no earth. Now in refutation of the dogma that our ideas of things are species of the things Dr Keattie in his delightful little book, has been so facetious in attacking Hume for a similar doctrine (tho' Hume held it for an opposite purpose) that I cannot do better than quote him " If every idea be a copy of the impression whence it is derived, then the idea of red should be a red idea, the idea of a roaring lion a roaring idea the idea of an ass a hairy long eared idea, patient of about 2 muck addicted to whistles; the idea of extension would be an extensive idea, that of solidity solid ice. — Such says Dr Keattie, " is the credulity of Scepticism"! in concluding his lively burlesque of Hume's assumed theory. Whilst Plato, Aristotle & Epicurus were thus endeavouring to legitimately solve the problem of the origin of ideas, another class of inquirers, not having patience enough to unravel the entangled web, through all its darkened mazes, or dissatisfied by the depths of their arguments, gave it

in despair & not being able to comprehend the light of day 23

They resolved to doubt of its existence, & preferred thus forward to walk only by the light of their own dark lanterns, because they thought were within the grasp of analysis & explanation; they deliberately plunged into the Great Dismal of Universal Scepticism & striving to satisfy curiosity at the expense of truth, sank below the level of their doubts.

Of this sect Pyrrho & Arcesila are the most celebrated. Pyrrho losing his wits on the atomic theory of Democritus, soon came to the belief that there was no such thing as reality or truth, to him the whole external world was a mere show "built of such stuff as dreams are made on" "Therefore says he if a cart ran against him or a dog attacked him, or if he came upon a precipice, he would not stia foot to avoid the danger giving no credit to his senses"

Yet this great Pyrrho, never seems to have been so anxious to inculcate his doctrines into his disciples, but that they were ever ready to snatch him from the danger & on one occasion, himself so far forgot his principles "as to get into a passion with his cook, who had not roasted his dinner to his mind, that with the spit in his hand he thrust it upon it he pursued him even unto the market place" & charged the offender home by his nose, which to have offered sufficient evidence must have been a long

as Glauconbergius's own. Reid says, he forgot his principles on "some occasions, but when he find that this great sceptic lived to the patriarchal age of four score & ten, no other commentary is needed on his principles. His practice could have corresponded but little with the philosophical doctrines, he inculcated for our guidance. But in every other respect, his was a most true & accomplished understanding, he was the high priest of his native town & so respected & a citizen that he was exempted from all taxation; how very careful should we therefore be in criticising the faults of great minds, the inconsistencies of which are ever the stumbling blocks of envious little people's understandings. The real cause of his scepticism was not founded on an examination of Nature herself, but taking the dogmas of Aristotle & others for the true solutions of the problems in nature, he proved the falsity of these, but failing to distinguish between Aristotle & Nature herself, because the former was an inconsistency he concluded the other to be a sham.

Arcesila was the founder of the middle Academy the spirit of which was diffidence "tending to circumscribe the pretensions of philosophical reasonings, without denying the possibility of certain or at least of probable knowledge!" Plato had always relied more on the evidence of his intellectual

archetypes, than on the evidence of the senses themselves,
 he ever trusted these, (in reality) forms of imagination in
 preference to the objects of the external world, believing that
 what he conceived to be his innate intelligence, was less
 liable to imposition than his external senses. Anaxilas
 carrying with sincerity this part of Platos system to its
 legitimate length, came like Pyrrho to doubt of the reality
 of the material creation & at length doubted of the evidence
 of this innate intelligence itself. "No man can be cer-
 tain of anything" is his great saying. Then certainly I
 could not have been certain of even this; for a person who
 says he knows nothing, negatives a knowledge of essential
 & if there be truth in nothing at all, how can he know what
 he has to be certain of & what uncertain of, can reason dis-
 tinct those very senses, to which in our present state she
 owes her very operations & activity; shall the very knowledge
 we derive from experience distrust those very senses which
 gave it being & without which it could never have existed.
 If the senses from which we derive our knowledge are, the
 knowledge we derive must also be wrong, to say they are
 false & not to be trusted is therefore erroneous. The Proposition
 undermines itself. So it is absurd to urge ought against
 the senses, without which we would be powerless to object
 & if we do urge, what we object to objection would itself be wrong

for how can sweet water flow from a polluted fountain
if the integrity of the several parts be injured, then must
the completeness of the whole be impaired.

But such scepticism never took root, it flourished out its
ostentatious opening, but having no real vitality it drooped before
the rising truth & was washed up. Man kind was searching
for happiness, absolute purity they felt to be impossible,
they instinctively felt they were approaching a better era,
every experiment had hitherto failed, but now the time
had come for the realization of some thing better & beyond
the present self, in their impatience the Romans actually
deified Augustus, the year of whose death saw the birth
of our Saviour. Tibertius would have had our Saviour
deified at Rome but that is ^{co}incident more curious that
striking, for it was only the result of Rome's natural policy.

It was the crisis between ancient & modern times, the
central point of our history & as the old world was like
"Hion nodding to its fall" above the ruin & the obscurity
a new light was seen to rise from the East, that east itself
the birth place of precedent sciences & philosophies, which
the truth contained in which being centuries ago assimilated by
this new star, they became one with watch that in its
progress towards its culminating point, has been, the
perhaps unobtrusively the business of the modern historian

The Roman world embraced the divine Plato as a matter of consequence, but during the dark ages, of the Church, Aristotle became the sovereign favourite & it was only after the revival of Literature that any of his contemporaries came in for a share of power over our understandings.

Not a century after the somewhat harsh reformation of Luther Des Cartes was born. 1596 during the lifetime of the great Bacon, Galileo, Shakespeare, Tasso & ... a perfect gallery of talent in every branch of then known Science, Literature & Art - followed by equally great names in the following century Locke, Leibnitz, Spinoza, Machiavelli, Berkeley, Voltaire Rousseau &c. These were the spirits of the Reformation, for although at first the boiling could not brought nothing but scum to the surface, it was only to boil ~~them~~ it over into the fire, & to release the good from the neutralizing presence of the evil.

Then it now began to acquire its wanted influence & in the vindication of its majesty men began to acquire a laudable reliance on their own powers & a wholesome disregard of the opinions - the dogmatic opinions of their leaders, an honest independence however, which is not inconsistent with the greatest reverence. The claim of infallibility was done away with forever, Aristotle was doubted as well as the Pope & what Luther had done for

The latter, Bacon with all the earnestness of Lutter, & the subtlety of Galvin accomplished for the Stagyrte & his Lawes. Des Cartes taught that images or resemblance of external things are presented to the mind & these he called Ideas. He did not believe in an intellectual world like Plato but supposed the mind to have a large stock of innate Ideas of its own implanted by the hand of Nature & not derived from the world without. Such Ideas, are Innate Ideas, Knowledge & not Innate Ideas constituting Intelligence like Waters. The principle innate Ideas are those of God, of matter of consciousness, of thought. But if Des Cartes puts all these Ideas on an equal footing as to nature, he strangely confuses his system. Innateness of course is innate ^{it is universal} one of Platos Ideas. whereas a knowledge of God, of matter & are not universal. Locke used the word as Des Cartes meant it in reference to, God, matter &c. & of course opposed him & refuted him. Others used it in relation to Des Cartes application of it to consciousness & turned Lockes arguments against the one, & used against the other denied Innate Ideas, as meaning innate knowledge, but also & this was the error - being deceived by Des Cartes confusion of the term came to the conclusion that Intelligence itself is derived from experience. This is the school of "Sensation Exclusive" & is no less opposed to Locke than to Plato.

28
The Innate Ideas of ~~Locke~~ Des. Cartes, are all to be depended
on as eternal & unchanging truths. These constitute real
Knowledge, they flow from the mind itself & they can
never deceive us. as the senses must according to Des. Cartes.

in reporting to the mind of the external world; these innate
ideas are alone trustworthy & must ^{even} decide questions which
can be reasoned on through means of the external senses also.
If Des. Cartes could not trust his outward senses when was he
going to get all the proofs that were to settle all the doubts
of Scepticism. He intended his rationalism for ever to remove
all doubts & zealously sought for proofs for everything. He
could find not for he could not trust his senses & so was
forced to fly to innate Ideas, half of which instead of
being really innate as Conscience, which is no more than
Intelligence ever derived from experience as the Idea of Matter
Space, God. It was the very preamble of his system that his
doubts should remain unless he could remove them by proof
& from his dilemma he could only appeal to the veracity
of his Creator, thus giving to his enemies a great advantage.
"God said he has given me innate Ideas, tho' the senses
do not demonstrate the external world correctly, we have
no need of them for innate Ideas are sufficient, The
Senses may deceive me, but God cannot." But as the
the Senses are as much the gift of God as these Innate

Ideas, why should God more deceive in the former than in the latter. But what overthrew his whole system is to ask him as Hobbes did. Where are the proofs of Innate Ideas? You at once come forward to clear up all obscurities to settle all disputed points, you find no proofs for them but instead of boldly declaring yourself an Infidel as I do, you invent Innate Ideas, & satisfy yourself with these that you are, that there is a material world & that God is. But where are the proofs of these Innate Ideas? This great Deceiver to commence his whole system over again so that Malebranche the most earnest of Cartesian's was driven to the confession, that he doubted whether these Innate Ideas could extend to the knowledge of an external world or give anything beyond a knowledge of God & our own existence. Now the way in which Des. Cartes set about proving his own existence, is a type of his whole mode of reasoning. He begins by doubting of his own existence, but settles the doubt thus "Cogito — ergo sum"! But Des. Cartes said he would doubt of everything till he could prove it. How then could he predicate anything yet he takes the first position "Cogito" for granted! & taking an unproved ^{premiss} ~~premiss~~ for granted makes it the proof of the second position. Alas, this is a double error but not the only one in this notorious enthymeme

The proof is not parallel with the medicals, because it implies that when he ceases to think he is not. Reid observes "He may as well have said I am doing nothing & therefore I am" & that when he was doing something he had ceased to exist; the Proposition proves nothing at all except the perplexity honest Dr. Luter must have been in. His system however, was indirectly turned against religion, for honestly though incorrectly having granted to the infidel Philosophers of the day, that the senses could not be trusted & inventing furate Ideas to prove the existence of a deity as soon as these were shown to be impossible, the Infidels raised a shout of triumph - the Deism had done all he could to prove Gods existence, this last stronghold is gone - there is therefore no proof of a God. An illogical as well as an unprincipled conclusion. But Infidels were never known to respect that reason, by which they profess to test everything - if it be opposed to their notions; it is not a truth that they care for; but vengeance against a dispensation & while they profess to find great difficulty in coming to such & such a conclusion, if it be likely to support Deism, gravely swallow, the most absurd & monstrous lies, if there is any hope of its being turned against the Deism faith. The text that suits not with his doubling opinion

No plain to others is obscure to him.

32

And Judgment dumb & blind to loose its way
Winks hard & talks of darkness at noon day"

I said unprincipled for not only was it an error of the
mind - which let us charitably suppose, might have
been unsound, ^{but} it was a moral delinquency - for they
made their unbelief a rule of practice & tho' they themselves
might have been moral enough, they could not have ans-
wered for the conduct of their fellow citizens, had they persuaded
them to live without God in the world. And even if they
were not bad logicians to come to such a conclusion, they
were at least unpatriotic members of the Commonwealth
to promulgate doctrines so subversive of order & morality
Lord Holmbooke strongly insists on this point "that tho'
tho' nothing should be allowed to abridge the liberty of private
judgement & tho' the servant should be outwardly, yet
we are bound to yield due deference to received opinion
& due compliance with received customs must be held,
especially with opinions, which it were dangerous to oppose
& customs from which we cannot deviate without giving
offence & doing hurt to society. In all these cases, our
speculations may indeed be free, in all others only, our
practice should be so." Yet Lord Holmbooke published
five volumes of imbecile scepticism - nay in many
places of positive blasphemy - under the name of Phil-

sophy, indeed in every relation into which he was brought 33
with external circumstance, his practice was even diamet-
rically the opposite of his precepts, & the author of the
"Patriot Prince" & the noble digression on "Parties" was the
most disloyal of subjects & the most unprincipled of
spirit of the faction which he lead.

Besides because we cannot admit Innate Ideas, must
be therefore reject a Duty & Laws of right & wrong. Is not
experience sufficient "In the invisible things of him from the
creation of the world, are clearly seen, even his eternal
power & Godhead" & no arguments have as yet been
brought against the credit due to our senses, which a
child could not refute. Thus it is said a circle at a
little distance appears oval, but this is not a deception
of the senses, but a Law of Nature. & owing to the medium
of the atmosphere, the effect of which they seem to ignore
as much as the Paraphorals, & far from proving the
fallacy of the evidence of our senses, it is one of the
strongest proofs of their trustworthiness. To distrust the
senses is a palpable absurdity & a Philosophy, which seeks
to establish scepticism by doubting such obvious truths,
can be supported by sophisms alone & while it may
seem to exhibit the acuteness of the sceptic, it does so
at the expense of disgracing reason & human nature &

makes mankind Yahoos." & if a man's mind is not sufficiently sound to discriminate when his ideas of external objects, are true or liable to an error "let him not run the risk of getting entangled in metaphysical toils, if he can find no other way of escape, let him bravely cut the knot he cannot unloose, damn metaphysics & dissuade all others from meddling with it," "for," continues Reid "I have been lead into bog & quagmires by following an ignis fatuus, what can I do better than warn others to beware of it."

But even supposing that Innate Ideas & Experience alike are rejected as witnesses. There is still revelation.

The belief of a God is not Innate, because it is not universal. Some may not be able to trace an Intelligent Cause from Intelligent effects, but still revelation remains. We cannot disbelieve that, for the difficulties which hamper its disbelief are greater than those which attend a belief in that fact. "Revelation is not abstractly impossible nor so improbable, as to beggar credibility, & it cannot be supposed that an all wise King would create intelligent agents & then turn them loose, without a hint ever so slight as to His will & their duties."

There need our notions of right & wrong be innate if we have not acquired them by revelation & primitive

tradition, we can learn them from Experience. For by
the effects of two sets of actions, according as they are hurtful
or beneficial, we can come to a knowledge of good & evil
that which in its consequences was pernicious ^{to society in general} would be called
evil, that which was beneficial in its effects to all would
be called good. Private gain, at the expense of public
sacrifice would be a vice. Individual suffering or
sacrifice for the public good would be virtue. This would
be an instinctive appreciation, then philosophy would come
& by its refining process advance these vulgar instincts
into abstract principles, into abstract right & wrong,
in harmony with the archetypal Ideas of them, which
have been like all other truths from eternity. Thus
the appreciation of Beauty ~~is~~ is instinctive, but we
have not yet generalized our experiences sufficiently
~~well~~ to know what it is that influences us; thus have
arisen the various false theories of association; notwithstanding
these ^{are} all the while eternal laws of beauty as of morality
& by which the world was moulded, from an organic
surge of chaotic elements into the likeness of God & when
our instinctive sensations have been analysed, then will
principles of beauty be established derived by us exclusively
from ^{experience} ~~intelligence~~ & yet in every way parallel to the
archetypal Ideas of beauty inherent in the Eternal Intelligence

In the Elements of our Knowledge then there is no need of Innate Ideas, & we must agree with Locke that Ideas which constitute the elements of our Knowledge & of which words are the circulating medium are all derived from experience "the simple purely the work of Nature, the understanding being passive in receiving them, the complex formed by the understanding itself, which being once stored with simple ideas of sensation & reflection, has the power to repeat, to compare & to combine them in an infinite variety & so at pleasure can make numerous complex ones. And it is not in the power of the most exalted wit or enlarged understanding, by any quickness or beauty of thought to invent or frame one new or simple Idea, not received in by our senses from external objects." How different is this from the Encyclopedists doctrine of Sensation - Locke admits as Innate the power that Understands, they believed that the Understanding itself depended on Sensation for its Being. So while we admit that there were no Innate Ideas in the Cartesian sense, we must also admit that there were no Ideas dependent on Experience in the sense ^{meant} by Condillac, & of the Origin of all our Ideas hold that those meant by Plato, were as truly & demonstrably innate, as those signified by Locke were derived from Experience exclusively.

Condillac, holds, that our "connoissances", subjective &
 objective are dependent on experience, De Cartes that they
 are both innate & both are equally wrong. Plato holds
 that our subjective ideas are innate & touches not the
 objective. Locke demonstrates that our objective ideas
 are dependent on sensation, & admits the subjective to be
 innate but only by implication, & Locke & Plato are
 both right, tho' each confined himself to half the subject only,
 they both together furnish ^{us} with a perfect system on the
 origin of Ideas, & ^{the result of} their conjoined labours, might be aptly
 expressed in the pertinent language of Leibnitz, that
 "There is nothing in the intellect, but what is derived from
 the senses — except the intellect itself."

"Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu
 — nempe nisi intellectus ipse."

George C. M. Kidwood.