Locke and Leibniz on Judgement: the First-Person Perspective and the Danger of Psychologism

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Abstract

The Cartesian first-person point of view regarding the certainty of our judgements seems to imply a form of subjectivism. Locke's solution to this problem is to widen the scope to a third-person point of view on the notion of judgement, thereby shaping the modern notion of belief. As a result the distinction between the normative notion of judgement and the empirical notion of belief are no longer distinguished, and epistemology and philosophy in general are threatened by a form of psychologism. Leibniz's solution to Cartesian subjectivism is to strengthen the idea of first-person knowing. For Leibniz, the first-person point of view is essentially a logical point of view, and the act of judgement plays a crucial role in logic. As the act of judgement is not confused with the empirical notion of belief, and asserted and unasserted propositions are clearly distinguished, there is no threat of psychologism in Leibniz's logic.

Topics: Locke, Leibniz, reason, judgement, logic, knowledge, particles, proposition, psychologism.

1. Introduction¹

In our time philosophers prefer to speak about 'belief' rather than 'judgement'. 'Judgement' is thought to be an old-fashioned term suited to a rationalist tradition and an out of date psychologistic logic. *Belief* is generally understood to be a primitive notion, and *judgement*

¹ I thank Christian Barth for comments on an earlier version.

may then be explained as *occurrent belief* (cf. Schwitzgebel 2015). The notion of *belief* is central to philosophy of mind and epistemology, and is generally understood as the mental state in which one takes a proposition to be true. Beliefs may have grown in us in any way that may be accounted for by empirical means. Belief in this sense is an empirical notion.

Recent literature on assertion can be understood, though, as a revival of the notion of judgement. Whereas belief is a mental *state*, assertion is primarily a speech *act*. Judgement is also primarily an act, and either *assertion* or *judgement* can be taken as primitive, while the one is explained in terms of the other. Although an older generation of philosophers is used to explain the speech act of assertion in terms of belief (Searle 1979), such an approach is now seldom defended. One of the most convincing arguments against a belief account of assertion is given by Timothy Williamson. If someone makes an assertion, an interlocutor is entitled to ask 'How do you know?' (Williamson 2000). This may mean that one is entitled to make an assertion only if one knows the asserted proposition to be true (idem). Or one may claim that being able to give a ground is enough for such an entitlement (Schaar 2011a). If the asserter is not able to give a ground, the assertion needs to be withdrawn. There thus seems to be a tight relation between assertion and ground or reason, just as there always has been a tight relation between judgement and reason, as I will explain in section 5. Whereas belief is an empirical notion, assertion and judgement are normative notions, as they are to be understood in terms of knowledge or ground.

John Locke, in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), was the first philosopher to use the term 'belief' synonymously with 'judgement' in a systematic way (see section 3). Does a neglect of the distinction between judgement and belief bring in a form of psychologism in philosophy? In this paper I will address this general question by comparing the different accounts of judgement given by Locke and Leibniz. Leibniz's reading of Locke's *Essay*, starting in 1695, is especially relevant to understand the differences. After 1700, with the French translation of Locke's *Essay* having appeared, Leibniz gives a detailed comment on all sections in the *Essay*, intended to publish them in dialogue form as the *Nouveaux Essais*. It was finished at the end of 1704, though published only in 1765. Notwithstanding the fact that Leibniz's basic account of logical and epistemological notions differs on crucial points from Locke's. Locke's notion of judgement oscillates between a normative notion and an empirical notion of belief, and there is thus a danger of psychologism in Locke that Leibniz was well aware of.

This difference between Locke and Leibniz may help us to understand a fundamental problem in modern philosophy, for it seems that we have lost something by substituting the notion of judgement by that of belief. The notion of judgement is needed in logic, because logic aims at an answer to the question how one should judge and reason. As one can see in Frege's ideography, the presence of the normative notion of judgement in one's logic does not imply a form of psychologism.² Introducing the empirical notion of belief into logic, though, would reduce a normative notion to an empirical one, and logical questions to psychological questions. In logic, we are not interested in what people actually believe, but in the question what one ought to judge.

The red dread in this paper is that judgement and knowledge may be studied from two points of view. In modern analytic philosophy, we generally study these notions from a third-person point of view. We primarily aim to understand what it is for someone else to judge, belief or know. We ask such questions as: Under what conditions is one entitled to attribute belief or knowledge to someone else? Knowledge is understood in terms of knowledge *attribution*, and the same holds for belief. Typical questions that arise when one understands knowledge from a third-person, empirical point of view are: are our faculties and methods reliable? Does the first-person justification an agent gives entitle us to call the agent's belief knowledge? One thus deals with knowledge and belief as an empirical phenomenon in the world, and thereby hopes to be able to give a more objective account of these notions than when studying them from a first-person point of view.

We study judgement or knowledge from a first-person point of view, when considering the question what it is for oneself to make a judgement or to know. This first-person point of view is generally associated with the Cartesian thesis that we have infallible knowledge of our own mind and that we know our own mind better than other minds. As we no longer defend the Cartesian thesis, the first-person point of view is generally understood to result in a subjectivist philosophy. Both Locke and Leibniz each reacted to the Cartesian method in their own way, not by neglecting the first-person point of view, but by arguing that we need to balance the first-person point of view by something else. An analysis of their views will enable us to address the main question of the paper: In what sense does the first-person point of view imply a form of subjectivism or psychologism, and in what sense may it be

 $^{^{2}}$ In Schaar (2018) I have argued that the presence of the judgement stroke, a sign that a judgement has been made, in Frege's logic does not imply a form of psychologism.

understood as a necessary element in our investigations of normative notions such as judgement and knowledge?

2. Locke on Knowledge: the First-Person Point of View

The aim of Locke's *Essay* is to determine 'the Extent of humane Knowledge,' in opposition to opinion (E I.i.2: 43), in order to determine 'the Bounds between Opinion and Knowledge' (E I.i.3: 44). Knowledge, which is infallibly certain, is possible in mathematics, but is in our practical life not attainable: we may there rely on probable opinion, which is enough for our preservation. Besides the faculty of knowledge, Locke is in need of a second faculty in order to explain error: the faculty of judgement, which is concerned with probabilities. In this and the next section I explain that Locke's distinction between knowledge and judgement can be understood in terms of the distinction between first- and third-person perspective.

For Locke, knowledge is 'the perception of the connexion and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our Ideas.' (E IV.i.2: 525). The term 'perception' is ambiguous: it may either mean the act of perceiving or the perceived (dis)agreement. Which meaning is intended in the explanation of knowledge? A bit further on, Locke says: 'when we know that *White is not Black*, what do we else but perceive, that these two *Ideas* do not agree?' (E IV.i.2: 525). He thus gives the *act* of perceiving as an example. And, when Locke explains the faculty of knowledge in terms of its actualisations, he writes: '*Knowledge*, whereby [the Mind] certainly perceives, and is undoubtedly satisfied of the Agreement or Disagreement of any Ideas' (E IV.xiv.4: 653). The notion in terms of which knowledge is explained is thus: *the act of perceiving*.

There are three types of knowledge, according to Locke, and thus three types of perceiving: intuitive, demonstrative and sensitive knowledge. In intuitive knowledge, 'the Mind perceives the Agreement or Disagreement of two *Ideas* immediately by themselves, without the intervention of any other ... the Mind ... perceives the Truth, as the Eye doth light.' (E IV.ii.1: 530-31). Intuitive knowledge is infallibly certain. Locke's visual metaphor reminds one of the Cartesian criterion of truth and absolute certainty: whatever I clearly and distinctly perceive is true and absolutely certain. In this sense, intuitive knowledge is a first-person notion of knowledge: 'I think, we may as rationally hope to see with other Mens Eyes,

as to know by other Mens Understandings.' (E I.iv.23: 101).³ Intuitive knowledge is immediate in the sense that the two ideas in the known proposition are not mediated by a third idea. We directly perceive the agreement or disagreement. Locke's question is not whether we, from a third-person point of view, are able to determine whether an agent is perceiving or knowing. Only the knowing subject can answer the question whether he perceives the ideas of white and black to disagree. Intuitive knowledge also includes knowledge of our own existence and of our mental acts and appearances. There are thus for Locke first truths of reason as well as first truths of fact, although it takes Leibniz to make the distinction (NE 434). Locke says of the intuitive knowledge of our own existence: 'it neither needs, nor is capable of any proof.' (E IV.ix.3: 618), a point famously generalised to all primary truths by Leibniz (NE 434).⁴ Whether it concerns relations between ideas, or our own existence, Locke explains intuitive knowledge from a first-person point of view.

In demonstrative knowledge, the act of perceiving is mediated by other ideas, called *proofs*: 'where the Agreement or Disagreement is by this means plainly and clearly perceived, it is called *Demonstration*.' (E IV.ii.3: 532). Each step in the process of reasoning involves an act of mentally perceiving, and the conclusion is thus obtained by means of an act of demonstration. Whether there is demonstrative knowledge is something for the knowing agent to determine; demonstrative knowledge is thus a first-person notion, too. As mathematics and morality are demonstrative sciences, there is no doubt that a first-person point of view plays a role in Locke's *Essay* as far as demonstrative knowledge is concerned. The truths of mathematics and morality are to be proved on the basis of primary truths, which are the result of an intuitive act of perceiving.

When an idea is 'actually coming into our Minds by our Sense', and we 'inferr the existence of any thing without us, which corresponds to that *Idea*', we have sensitive knowledge, or, at least, what 'passes under the name of Knowledge' (E IV.ii.14: 537). By sensation we perceive the existence of particular things actually present to our senses (E IV.iii.5: 539). As there is, according to Locke, 'a very manifest difference between dreaming of being in the Fire, and being actually in it.' (E IV.ii.14: 537), the knowing agent is in principle able to determine whether he has sensitive knowledge. Although Locke admits that sensitive knowledge is less certain than intuitive or demonstrative knowledge, whether one

³ As Nicholas Jolley puts it: 'For Locke, as for Descartes, knowing is knowing for oneself; no one else can know for me.' (Jolley 2016, 59)

⁴ As Tyler Burge notes: 'The formula of basic truths and axioms, neither needing nor admitting of proof can be found *verbatim* in Leibniz, from whom Frege surely got it.' (Burge 2000, 362)

has sensitive knowledge can, in principle, be determined by the knowing agent, and sensitive knowledge is thus also a first-person notion.

Although Locke's primary notion of knowledge, the act of perceiving, may be called justified, the justification is not something added to the act of perceiving, for it is precisely the act of perceiving that gives the justification. In a similar way, one may say that knowing as act of perceiving is true, for an act of perceiving is infallible, on Locke's account: truth is not an extra element to be added to the act of perceiving in order to have knowledge. For Locke, truth is implied in the act of perceiving. Although every piece of knowledge is thus true and justified, knowledge as the act of perceiving is not explained in these terms, precisely because it is a first-person notion. It thus differs in an important sense from our modern understanding of knowledge. No external notion of truth is part of Locke's concept of knowledge.⁵ Is Locke's first-person point of view on knowledge able to prevent a subjectivist account of knowledge? I come back to this question in section 4.

According to Locke, by comparing the ideas in one's mind, one is able to determine the (dis)agreement between the two ideas. This means, though, that we have knowledge only of our own ideas. This makes the extent of knowledge very restrictive, as Locke himself points out, for it gives us no knowledge of the external world. As a result, Locke takes the realm of probable judgement to be of greater interest.

3. Locke on Right Justified Judgement: the Third-Person Point of View

As the act of perceiving is infallible, according to Locke, the faculty of judgement is needed to account for error:

Judgement, which is the putting *Ideas* together, or separating them from one another in the Mind, when their certain Agreement or Disagreement is not perceived, but *presumed* to be so; which is, as the Word imports, taken to be so before it certainly appears. And if it so unites, or separates them, as in Reality Things are, it is *right Judgment*.' (E IV.xiv.4: 653).

⁵ This section is a reformulation in terms of the first-person perspective of some of the results of my paper 'Locke on Knowledge and the Cognitive Act' (Schaar 2009).

In the act of judgement we might be mistaken. Locke's fallibilism does not imply a form of scepticism: if it conforms to reality, our act of judgement is right. I come back to the notion of right judgement below. In the quote, Locke explains the act of judging as an act of presumption, a legal term, as Leibniz rightly notes, meaning that one accepts provisionally but not groundlessly, while waiting for a proof to the contrary (NE 457). We may judge without grounds, in which case Locke calls it *mere opinion*, but we ought to judge on the basis of reasons. Whereas in knowledge the proofs can be found by intuition, which means that they are intrinsic to the content of our act of knowing, in judgement the arguments are 'extraneous to the thing I believe' (E IV.xv.3: 655). This means that in judgement the reasons will not give the reason why something is true; judgements regarding the natural world will never be able to provide an understanding of why the natural laws hold. Before it makes a judgement,

The Mind ... ought to examine all the grounds .. for or against any probable Proposition ... ballancing the whole, reject, or receive it, with a more or less firm assent, proportionably to the preponderancy of the greater grounds of Probability (E IV.xvi.5: 656).

Our epistemic judgements are always provisional, waiting to be corrected when new evidence becomes available. Although Locke does not explain judgement in terms of reasons or grounds in the first quote above, there is a clear connection between the two notions: one is only entitled to make a judgement upon due balancing the account of reasons. I come back to the relation between judgement and reason in section 5.

Locke's category of judgement is a complex one. Apart from the fact that Locke uses the term 'judgement' for the faculty of judgement, the term may also have different meanings when it concerns the actualisations of such a faculty. In the first place, Locke understands the act of judgement to be an all or nothing affair: there is assent, dissent, and suspension of judgement. Furthermore, Locke understands judgement also as involving degrees. Judgement in this sense is to be understood as conviction. The degree of conviction ought to be in proportion to one's grounds. It may thus reach from belief, conjecture and guess to doubt and disbelief (E IV.xvi.9: 663). Thus, Locke's concept of *judgement* does not only include (1) the act of judging and (2) mere opinion, in contrast to knowledge, but also (3) conviction or belief, in its varying degrees. Finally, it includes (4) the notion of religious faith, faith being our assent to revelation (E IV.xvi.14: 667). Depending on the context, Locke uses 'faith', 'opinion', 'belief', 'assent', and 'judgement' interchangeably (cf. Schaar 2008). As Locke is

the first to give both the term 'belief' and the notion of belief a central place in philosophy, Locke's account may have considerably contributed to our modern notion of belief, which involves all the ambiguities that Locke himself used with definite purposes in each case.

Natural science cannot be called a 'science' in the strict sense: we can attain there no knowledge in the sense of understanding. Yet, the judgements we make there are crucial to our survival. For Locke, judgement is far more important than knowledge. Whereas knowledge is concerned primarily with our ideas alone, in our investigations of the world we have to use the faculty of judgement. What we need in natural science and in practical matters of life is justified true judgement. Because the grounds are external to the judgemental content, the judging agent can be in error concerning the grounds and the truth of his judgement.

Locke uses the fallibility of our judgements in one of his arguments for religious toleration in his Epistola de Tolerantia (Locke 1689, 123; cf. Schaar 2012, 56). As the magistrate is as fallible in his judgement concerning religious matters as any other human being, he might be mistaken in his faith, and is therefore not entitled to force his faith upon others. On the one hand, for Locke, each individual has to judge for himself, for each will individually held accountable for his faith when standing for God. In this sense, Locke's account of judgement is individualistic (cf. Jolley 2016, ch. 4). On the other hand, although our judgement may be justified and right, our judgement is fallible, and gives us no entitlement to force our judgement or faith upon others. Only God can know whether our judgement is right. God's point of view on our judgements is pre-eminently a third-person point of view on our judgement: his is a God's eye point of view. For Locke, whether one's judgement is right can thus, in the end, only be determined from an external, third-person point of view. Combined with the fact that he uses 'judgement' interchangeably with 'belief', and that he considers first-person knowledge to be less relevant, we may conclude that Locke has influenced our modern, third-person understanding of judgement, knowledge and belief: the most we can obtain with respect to the world is justified true belief, not a first-person insight or understanding.

4. Leibniz's Logical Point of View

Leibniz criticises Locke's strict definition of knowledge in terms of perception, and thereby also criticises his absolute distinction between knowledge and judgement. For Leibniz, there

is also knowledge of likelihoods (NE 373), that is, we can often measure the degrees of probability in empirical matters. Furthermore, truths of fact about sensible things outside us can be verified by means of truths of reason (NE 375): optical appearances can, for example, be explained by geometrical principles insofar as we study the way these phenomena are linked to each other. Optics and magnetology are good examples of empirical sciences: 'from a few assumptions grounded in experience we can demonstrate by rigorous inference a large number of phenomena' (NE 453). As in Locke, Leibniz's concept of knowledge is primarily first-person: Leibniz takes mathematical knowledge to be the model of science, and mathematics is based on insights and demonstrations, resulting from a first-person act of insight or proving. There is an important difference with Locke, though, in the role the first-person perspective plays in Leibniz's concept of knowledge.

Like Descartes, Locke takes infallible certainty to be essential to knowledge, and he takes clear and distinct perception as a criterion for truth and certainty. As a visual metaphor is used to elucidate knowledge, there is a danger that knowledge becomes a purely psychological notion. Locke's explanation of knowledge in terms of perception is not precise enough, according to Leibniz, for the perception may be confused (NE 452), especially because for Locke mathematical ideas have their foundation in the sensual. Neither is clarity enough as a criterion of truth, for we often make mistakes regarding the question whether a perception is clear and distinct. The rules of common logic are not to be despised as criteria of the truth of propositions (Leibniz 1684, 425). We need formal features, and these are 'accessible to ourselves and to others' (Leibniz 1675, 3). All mistakes in reasoning will become visible, because they are shown in a wrong combination of characters. Error arises when we violate the rules governing the formation of expressions ('Scientia Generalis. Characteristica' XV, GP VII, 205). In this sense, a first-person perspective needs to be balanced by a universal language, where reason is made public. It is true that the main aim of the universal language is not communication, but the improvement of our own thinking, making the deep structure of thought visible. It is also true that Leibniz's ideal is to prove by meditation alone, and not by means of blindly applying the rules of the calculus. At the same time, Leibniz's ideal of such a language opens up the first-person perspective for others aiming at knowledge. As soon as one has acknowledged the axioms and definitions of a science, as well as the basic principles of Leibniz's universal language, one is able to calculate blindly, and thus come to new results by mechanical means.

Purely considered from a first-person point of view, the universal logic also provides something more than certainty. Locke's focus on the question what things we know first in the temporal order leads to an arbitrary and huge amount of first truths, truths we all know by intuition, according to Locke, that is, by an act of perceiving the (dis)agreement of the ideas. Two plus two is four is considered by Locke to be a first truth, for we can determine its truth with infallible certainty without the use of other truths. The point of arithmetic, though, is not to establish the certainty of arithmetical truths, but to understand how they can be proved from the appropriate axioms and definitions (cf. Frege 1884, §6, under reference to Leibniz, NE 413-14). Essential to scientific knowledge is the natural order of our knowledge (NE 411) and of truths:

[I]n the natural order .. we are not concerned ... with the sequence of our discoveries, which differs from one man to another, but with the connection and natural order of truths, which is always the same. (NE 412, quoted with approval in Frege 1884, § 17).⁶

Because Locke does not make a distinction between the temporal and the natural order of truths, his first-person view of (scientific) knowledge is psychologistic and subjective, for the temporal order may differ for different men (cf. Frege 1879, preface). We may obtain the natural order by demonstrating arithmetical truths such as two plus two is four, that is, by proving them from axioms and definitions. The axioms come first in the natural or explanatory order in the sense that they give the reason why the other truths are true. Such an order is common to all men and intelligences in general (NE 276), and it reflects the order and connection of things. Because such an order shows the reason why a proposition is true, Leibniz's epistemic quest concerns understanding rather than Lockean certainty (cf. Wilson 1967, 356). This is not to say that Locke does not aim at capturing knowledge as understanding; it is rather that he fails at its aim because he relies too much on the metaphor of perception, and takes self-evidence to be nothing but trifling obviousness. For Leibniz, knowledge as understanding means bringing different truths in an explanatory order, rather than focusing on isolated certainties. This way, one may find the kernel from which other truths may be proved, but which cannot itself be proved; for, proving cannot go on to infinity. The kernel contains the general principles of 'our thoughts, serving as their inner core and as their mortar.' (NE 84; cf. Frege 1893, p. vi). The smaller this kernel of axioms the better, as

⁶ Although the influence of Leibniz on Frege's logic may be disputed, Frege carefully read the *Nouveaux Essais* when presenting the philosophical account of his ideography in the *Grundlagen der Arithmetik* (1884), as Tyler Burge (2000) has pointed out. Especially, Frege's critique of the traditional notion of judgement and truth in 'Der Gedanke' (1918) seems to be influenced by Leibniz's critique of Locke's position (NE 396).

there is thus a better survey. We thus can see from which primary principles everything is derived.

Leibniz agrees with Locke that every particular identity statement is self-evident (Leibniz prefers the simple 'évident', as 'évident par elle-même' is not common in French, NE 408, IV.vii.2). For Leibniz, though, their self-evidence is based on the self-evidence of the law of identity: 'we shouldn't here be contrasting the axiom with the example ..., but rather regarding the axiom as embodied in the example and as making the example true.' (NE 413). The self-evidence of particular identity statements is thus based upon the self-evidence of the axiom of identity, and in this sense these truths are not wholly independent, in contrast to what Locke claims (E IV.vii.10: 597). Self-evidence consists for Leibniz not simply in clearly perceiving that the ideas agree, for we may understand that A is A is self-evident also when we do not have a clear idea of A. Such a proposition is evident or known ex terminis - from the terms – as soon as they are understood, Leibniz writes under reference to Scholastic philosophers, but in the case of A is A, we do not have to understand what A is in order to determine its truth: A is A is true because of the law of identity, which is, according to Leibniz, somehow part of its particular instances, providing the reason why they are true. The law of identity is an axiom: it is a primary truth in the sense that it is (1) immediate – not mediated by a third idea, and (2) indemonstrable, that is, (1) it can be known without demonstration, and (2) it is not capable of being demonstrated by any truth prior in the epistemic, explanatory order (NE 406-408; cf. NE 434).

Evidence can also be used for mediate truths. Evidence as luminous certainty ('une certitude lumineuse') is a certainty 'because of the way we can see how the ideas to be linked together' (NE 445). The connection of the ideas can thus be made exact by definitions, axiomatic identities, and demonstrations (NE 452). The luminocity gives a certain perspicuity, 'geistige Durchleuchtung', as Frege puts it (*NS*, 171), providing insight and understanding in the way these truths are related to each other.

From Leibniz's point of view, Locke's account of scientific knowledge is merely of psychological value, and his conception of geometry does not surpass that of the Egyptians (NE 452). Locke cannot explain the generality and necessity of mathemantics. Leibniz's first-person perspective on knowledge gives us a picture of knowledge as understanding without reducing understanding to mental perception. Understanding is relating ideas and truths to each other and thereby coming to know the reason why something is true. Even in the case of an axiom, though a borderline case because it cannot be proved, one may distinguish a reason why it is true, Leibniz says. In case it is a primary truth of reason, that is, an identity, the

reason is that it is known by itself: 'thus for every truth there is a reason, either because the connection between the predicate and the subject is self-evident (evident *per se*), as in identities, or because it can be explained by an analysis of the terms.' ('Itaque cujuscunque veritatis reddi potest ratio, connexio enim preadicati cum subjecto aut per se patet, ut in identicis, aut explicanda est, quod fit resolutione terminorum.' Leibniz 1679, 295, 296). Elsewhere, Leibniz says that 'of every truth (which is not immediate or identical) it is possible to give a reason' (Leibniz 1688, GP VII, 199). Below, in the next section, where the distinction is made between explicable and inexplicable reasons, it will become clear that Leibniz is not contradicting himself: although we cannot *give* a reason, this is not to deny that there *is* a reason.

As far as scientific knowledge is concerned, Locke's focus on the temporal order of truths makes it impossible for him to understand that scientific truths need to come in an order that is to provide first-person understanding. Locke's central epistemic question, how one has arrived at certain truths, is not free from psychologism. Leibniz's first-person account of knowledge of necessary truths, aiming at understanding, sharply separates the psychological question of how we come to know a certain truth from the logical question how these are grounded in the logical, demonstrative order of truths. Leibniz's notion of logical order is at the same time an order to be determined from a first-person point of view: necessary truths, though ultimately grounded in the existence of a necessary substance, can only be obtained by turning inwards, for 'the pattern for the ideas and truths ... are engraved in our souls.' (NE 447). Locke's perceptual metaphor makes the mind too passive, and, Leibniz adds, Locke is thus not able to explain how we can have knowledge of general, necessary truths (NE 49). We rather need a first person that is cognitively active: I am not a writing-tablet, or like wax (NE 110). This may be an unfair criticism, as for Locke in the act of perceiving the mind compares two ideas, and in judgement the mind has to weigh the pros and cons, but it is true that Locke is not able to prevent a form of psychologism.

5. Judgement and Reason

Although Locke and Leibniz give a different role to judgement in their epistemology, we see that both stress the relation between judgement and reason. We have seen that judgement is for Locke like balancing the account of reasons (E IV.xv.5: 656; cf. E II.xxi.67: 278). Leibniz develops Locke's point by arguing for a logic that acknowledges degrees of probabilities:

'balances ... are needed to weigh likelihoods and to arrive at sound judgements regarding them' (NE 466). Besides the metaphor of a balance, Leibniz gives the metaphor of 'games that combine chance with reason' (Leibniz 1688, 267; GP VII 201): both indicate the possibility of an exact estimation of the degrees of probability. For Locke, our dim light of reason will never give us the certainty of knowledge regarding probabilities, but for Leibniz this does not mean that we cannot come with exact measures and probabilities regarding predictions of future events.

In general, and not merely with respect to probabilities, for Leibniz, 'judgement consists in the scrutiny of propositions in accordance with reason.' (NE 141). 'A reason is a known truth whose connection with some less well-known truth leads us to give our assent to the latter.' (NE 475). In the ideal case, the epistemic reason for our judgement is the reason or ground of the truth itself in accordance with the natural order of things and the explanatory order of truths. As the Aristotelian tradition, well known to Leibniz, puts it, the *ratio cognoscendi* for our judgement would also provide the *ratio essendi* for the truth of the judged proposition. For Leibniz there is thus an essential connection between judgement and reason.

Locke's first definition of judgement, quoted at the beginning of section 3, does not mention 'reason'. In the chapter on Reason, though, Locke clearly relates judgement to reason, where a reason is for Locke an idea: '*Judgment*, is the thinking or taking two *Ideas* to agree, or disagree, by the intervention of one or more *Ideas*, whose certain Agreement, or Disagreement with them it does not perceive, but hath observed to be frequent and usual.' (E IV.xvii.17: 685; cf. E IV.xv.3: 655). In judgement, there is always a third idea involved providing the reason for the judged proposition. Because there is no direct perception of the relation between the two ideas in judgement, there is always a third idea needed, which functions as middle term in a syllogism. Acts of judgement are thus essentially acts of (probable) inference. Such a third idea, though, may be completely accidental to the content of the judgement, as when we make a rash judgement, resulting in mere opinion (E IV.xvi.3: 659).

At first sight, it seems that Leibniz acknowledges acts of judgement for which there is no reason: judgements of taste, judgements about colours – I am persuaded that a flower seems yellow to me.⁷ It is not true, though, that these judgements are completely without reason, according to Leibniz:

⁷ Leibniz uses the term 'judgement' in a more strict sense, as essentially related to reason, and in a wider sense including assent to primitive truths. Cf. Barth (*forthcoming*, note 39).

But the reasons for our persuasion are of two kinds: some can be explained, the others are inexplicable. Those I call explicable can be proposed to others by a distinct reasoning; but inexplicable reasons consist only in our consciousness or perception, and in an experience of inner feeling which we would not be able to make others partake, if we do not find the means to make them feel the same things in the same way. For example, we are not always capable of telling others what it is that we find agreeable or disagreeable in a person, in a picture, in a sonnet, or in a stew. (Leibniz 1690, 311)

The reasons for these judgements are inexplicable: we cannot explain them in more basic terms (Leibniz 1690, 311); and we cannot explain them to others. In a similar way, the reason for a first truth of reason, an identity, is the experience of the fact that we see that the two terms of the relation of identity are identical. Each has to see for himself that this is an identity, and there is nothing more to be explained. It is true that in the case of an identity, being a truth of reason, the reason is the same for everyone; the identity is evident *per se*, as we have seen above. Still, each has to make the truth evident to himself in order to grasp the identity as a known truth. For Leibniz there are reasons that cannot be told to others; each has to see for himself, and in this sense knowing a basic truth is essentially first-person. As far as judgement is concerned, Locke demands that reasons are explicable to others. Judgement as balancing an account is, for Locke, being accountable to others; the judging agent is an accountant, and the books should be open to others. Not only Locke's notion of *right* judgement is third-person, also his notion of *justified* judgement is third-person – others should be able to evaluate whether one's judgement is justified, as can most clearly be seen in the discussion of faith.

As both Locke and Leibniz consider faith to be a form of belief or judgement, the above applies to matters of religious belief. For Locke, faith falls under the category of judgement, and faith is thereby not only fallible, but also connected to reason. One's faith, being *firm* assent, may not be very sensitive to arguments, but it should be. Locke's central argument for mutual toleration is that it may improve one's faith. By learning from other religions, one can hear the grounds these believers have for their faith, and one is thereby able to improve one's own faith (Locke 1689, 59, 79; cf. Schaar 2012, 60-62). Faith and judgement are involuntary; therefore, faith cannot be commanded. At the same time, one is responsible for the faith one has. For, each of us can influence the process towards judgement and faith, and it is precisely in this process that we collect the arguments *pro* and *con*. Leibniz summarizes and agrees: 'a

man is not responsible for having this or that opinion at the present time, but ... he is responsible for taking steps to have it or not have it later on. So that opinions are only voluntary in an indirect way.' (NE 456).

In the fourth edition of the *Essay* from 1700, the edition that formed the basis of Coste's translation into French, and that was used by Leibniz in his extensive reworking of the *Nouveaux Essais*, Locke added a chapter on *Enthusiasm* (E IV.xix: 687-706). The enthusiast takes his persuasions as coming directly from God. How are the enthusiasts to be blamed if faith is involuntary? Their problem is that they neglect the rational aspect of faith. What is their reason that it is a revelation from God? 'If they say they know it to be true, because it is a *Revelation* from GOD, the Reason is good: but then it will be demanded, how they know it to be a Revelation from GOD.' (E IV.xix.11: 702). In the end their reason is merely that they strongly believe it to be true. To them it should be replied that either God will make a truth known through natural reason, or he will give us 'some Marks which Reason cannot be mistaken in. *Reason* must be our last Judge and Guide in every Thing.' (E IV.xix.14: 704).

Leibniz's comments on the chapter show that he is, like Locke, critical of those people who use their powerful imagination aroused by passion to form sects:

Their disputes show, at the least, that their inner witness needs outer verification if it is to be believed (NE 507)

At the same time, and in contrast to Locke, he seems to allow for utterances directly inspired by God:

Still, such inspired utterances could bring their proofs with them; this would be the case if they truly enlightened the mind through the important revelation of some surprising truth which was beyond the powers of the person who had discovered it, unless he had help from outside. (NE 507)

In the next chapter, Leibniz explains how this can happen: 'inward grace will be making up for the absence of rational grounds for belief' (NE 510). '[T]hose who claim they find a divine inner light within themselves, ... base themselves on inexplicable reasons.' (Leibniz 1690, 311). Michael Losonsky has shown that the contradiction in Leibniz is only apparent. In the second case, what is at stake is 'the epistemology of religious belief from, roughly speaking, an internalist and first-person perspective.' (Losonsky 2012, 718). One has in such a

case 'divine faith', faith inspired by God, 'a primary truth of fact that is immune from further justificatory requirements' (idem). It is based on reason, but not an explicable reason accessible to others. From a first-person point of view, one is fully rational when accepting such an inspiration from God. From a third-person point of view, though, 'this alleged inner light is scarcely reliable' (Leibniz 1690, 311). 'The way these people clash with one another should further convince them that their alleged "inner witness" is not divine, and that other signs are required to confirm it.' (NE 507). The terms 'alleged' and 'reliable' show that Leibniz is now speaking from a third-person point of view. So, there is no contradiction involved, and it shows that Leibniz was aware of the distinction between the first- and the third-person point of view. The first-person point of view is not open for Locke here, because for him faith falls under judgement, and there are no direct, inexplicable reasons for judgement. One is essentially held accountable by others. As there is no human being who can provide the standard for right faith for us, there is nothing but human, fallible faith. Only on Judgement Day our faith will be evaluated.

6. Judgements, Propositions, and the Particles

There is in the third book of Locke's *Essay* a fascinating chapter on particles, and such particles also play a role in Leibniz's universal language. Particles may be the signs of mental acts, and they may therefore be relevant for the question whether there is a role for a sign of judgemental force in the universal language, and thus for the question whether the distinction between asserted and unasserted propositions is reflected in the philosophical grammar. But, there is also a risk of psychologism, when particles signifying mental acts become part of logic.

For both Locke and Leibniz, particles form a wider category than the Scholastic notion of syncategorematic term. The latter is a purely semantic notion: a syncategorematic term is explained as a term that can have meaning only together with other terms. The broader notion of particles may have been influenced by the rhetorical, humanist tradition, with its sensitivity for the different uses of language. Particles may be syncategorematic terms, like 'All', 'not' and 'or', and they may be signs for relations between sentences. According to Locke, some signs, such as 'Is' and 'Is not', stand for the mental act of affirmation or negation, which connects the parts of propositions, the Ideas, into a proposition. Other particles, like 'but', are signs of the actions of our mind in discourse, uniting several Affirmations and Negations 'in one continued Reasoning or Narration' (E III.vii.2: 471). For Leibniz, the particles may also show the correct analysis of the ideas in a proposition: '[P]articles connect not only the component propositions of a discourse, and the component ideas of a proposition, but also the parts of an idea made up of other ideas variously combined.' (NE 330). In the latter case, particles are of importance for our capability to give a new demonstration through a new analysis of the ideas involved: analysis of concepts and new definitions do not result in trifling propositions, but is fruitful and gives us new insight, because it makes new demonstrations possible.⁸

As Robert McRae has noted, for Locke, the importance of the particles lies not with logic, but with philosophy of mind (McRae 1988, 157). For Leibniz, though, the particles are primarily a part of logic. Particles play an important role in the universal language, because they reveal the various forms of the understanding (NE 330, 333). What are these forms? Not all linguistic words have a counterpart in the universal language: 'Genders are of no significance in philosophical grammar' (NE 330). What particles do we need in the universal language, and how do we determine their precise meaning? Take Leibniz's example 'Peter and John are learned'. We have to find a counterpart in the universal language for 'and'. From the proposition that Peter and John are learned, it follows that Peter is learned and that John is learned. We may thus infer each of the members of the conjunction from the sentence in the example. The meaning of the particle 'and' in the universal language should reflect these possible logical inferences. A possible valid inference becomes 'apparent from the characters themselves' (Leibniz 1686, 144). Only those words in natural language that are logically relevant will be represented by particles in the universal language. And these particles are to be understood in terms of possible inferences. For Leibniz, the forms of understanding expressed by the particles are those forms that are logically relevant. A similar point is made by Frege in his *Begriffsschrift*. The distinction between the passive and the active form of a sentence does not have any influence on the possible inferences we can make with it, which means that the distinction is not reflected in Frege's ideography (Frege 1879, §3).

⁸ There is here an agreement with Frege's idea of fruitful definitions (1884, §88). There is an important difference, though, between Leibniz and Frege regarding the analysis of contents and the possibility of new definitions. For Frege, analysis applies to judgeable contents, and, regarding the same judgeable content, it may yield different functions with a different number of arguments, thereby making a proper account of relations and multiple quantification possible. For Leibniz, analysis applies not to the judgeable content as unity, but to the concept functioning as subject-term; it thus applies to pre-given concepts or terms.

There is a point where the topic of particles connects with the role of a first-person perspective in logic. For Frege, the sign for assertive force, the judgement stroke, is essential to logic, for there is no other way for us to express that a content is true (Frege 1915, 271, 272). Furthermore, the judgement stroke is a sign that the writer himself makes the judgement; a distinction between an asserted and an unasserted proposition is thus reflected in logic. The judgement stroke, though, does not include a name for the judging agent, because no empirical fact is described. The sign is unique, showing, not describing, that a judgement is made. Because all axioms and theorems in Frege's ideography are preceded by the judgement stroke, his logic is essentially first-person. This need not imply a form of psychologism, because the judging agent is not an empirical notion. The asserter makes a truth-claim, and thereby claims that the content can correctly be asserted by anyone understanding the content or having made the demonstration. It is not relevant that Frege has made these assertions. To put it another way, the judging agent in Frege's logic is not an empirical subject, but a logical subject (cf. Schaar 2018). As Leibniz is generally understood as making the distinction between asserted and unasserted propositions (cf. Barth *forthcoming*), one may ask the question whether the distinction is reflected in Leibniz's universal language by a particle similar to Frege's judgement stroke.

Already at first sight, some of Leibniz's particles show a congeniality with Frege's sign for assertive force. Leibniz acknowledges 'Adverbia Assertionis', such as 'Whether' (An), 'Yes' (Ita), 'Certain' (Certe). 'An is a means of asking which sign of assertion or pronouncement has to be posited.' (Leibniz 1686, 153). The particle 'an' is a sign for interrogative force, more specifically, a sign for asking a whether-question. And when we have found the answer to such a question, we are entitled to use the particle 'Yes' in front of the proposition: 'to every proposition which counts as an answer one of the signs of affirmation and denial must be prefixed' (idem). The act of judgement may thus be understood as an inner saying yes or no (Nuchelmans 1983, 221). And there are several epistemic modifications of assertive force, like *certe* or *forte*. In contrast to logical systems that are mere *calculae*, a sign of asserted force is needed in a logic conceived as universal language. As Ita is a sign for the act of judgement, the judging agent is taken account of within Leibniz's universal language. Such a sign of assertive force is not to mean that the writer, here Leibniz, has actually made the judgement, for that would be a mere psychological fact. The 'Yes'- sign is to be understood as a non-semantic sign, a sign that whoever understands the system until now, and has accepted the relevant axioms, definitions and demonstrations, will be entitled to make the judgement at this particular moment. Leibniz's

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understanding of the particles is primarily a logical one, but it exceeds the scholastic, semantic understanding of these terms insofar as it reflects an interest in the *use* of language in its full logical sense. Leibniz's account of particles for assertions and questions exceeds, though, Frege's use of the judgment stoke. For Leibniz also introduces a sign of interrogative force.

Leibniz is able to relate questions and judgements to each other in his logic. They have a common core, the proposition, so that each judgement can be understood as answer to a whether-question (NE 368).⁹ Questions come in two sorts: the *whether*-, or yes/no-questions, and the *wh*-questions (idem, 'by whom and how?', including the important 'why'- questions). This interest in assertions and questions seems to be motivated by Leibniz's interest in the art of controversies. The main aim of the universal language is to present the natural order of things, but it can also be used to solve controversies concerning contingent truths which cannot be decided by the calculus. Here the language is in need of signs for the different acts put forward in a dialogue. As we would put it today, speech act theory can play a role in a logic of controversies. Leibniz also makes room for the idea of a dialogue in some of his explanations of fundamental logical notions like *demonstration*: 'To "demonstrate" is to reason from what ought to be granted. Those propositions "ought to be granted" which those who speak with one another have agreed to grant' (Leibniz 1676, 55).¹⁰ He then elucidates these notions in terms of 'speaker' and 'hearer'.

Besides Michael Losonsky, Christian Barth has recently written on judgement in Leibniz (Barth *forthcoming*). According to Barth, 'Affirmative judgements make propositions available as premises for future reasoning in response to a whether-question' (Barth forthcoming, section 2.2). Each answer to a question can function as a reason, a known truth (NE 475) for other judgements to be made. And, we may add, if these answers are the right answers to a why-question we thus obtain the explanatory order of truths, and thereby the natural order of things.

Because Leibniz has a sign of assertive force he is able to make visible the distinction between asserted and unasserted propositions in his universal language. He acknowledges that

⁹ In NE 356 it seems that questions have a special content, *themes*, which are midway between ideas and propositions. This holds for questions in general; the *whether*-questions have a proposition as their content, while the *wh*-questions have a non-propositional theme as their content, that is, a proposition where a part is left blank, also called *problems* by the mathematicians (NE 368).

¹⁰ Apparently *to convince* is also a logical term: 'To "convince" is to reason from what is granted' (*ex concessis rationari*, Leibniz 1676, 54).

different acts, judging and questioning, may have the same proposition as their content. The presence of a sign for assertive force in the universal language shows that Leibniz's notion of proposition differs in an important sense from Locke's concept of proposition. In 'Locke and Arnauld on Judgment and Proposition' (Schaar 2008), two notions of proposition are distinguished, and it is argued that Locke's notion of proposition is an example of the second, traditional notion:

- (1) the modern notion of proposition, to be represented by a *that*-clause (or in Latin by an *accusativus cum infinitivo* (*ACI*) construction);
- (2) the traditional notion of proposition, a declarative sentence together with its meaning or its mental counterpart, which is not to be represented by a *that*-clause, but by a full declarative with the declarative mood.

Because the latter notion includes (the meaning of) mood, it is not apt to account for the fact that we may have different propositional attitudes with the same content. On Locke's account, questions, orders and judgements are made manifest by interrogative, imperative, respectively, declarative sentences, and there seems to be no common core, besides the ideas involved. For Locke, there is no straightforward account for different propositional attitudes, as he does not have the modern notion of proposition. This is not to say that Locke is not able to make the distinction between asserted and unasserted proposition: a full declarative sentence need not be used to make a judgement.¹¹ The mental act that unifies the ideas into a proposition need not be an act of judging (or perceiving). Although the standard view is that Locke needs the act of knowing or judging to unify two Ideas into a proposition, I have used the above distinction between the two notions of proposition to argue that the standard view is incorrect (cf. Schaar 2008). Locke allows for propositions that are not yet judged or known: if the mind proceeds rationally, it '*ought to examine all the grounds of Probability ... for or against* any probable Proposition, before it assents to or dissents from it' (E IV.xv.5: 656).

¹¹ Jennifer Marušić presents a somewhat different view of Locke's position. She argues that Locke is able to distinguish between an asserted and an unasserted proposition insofar as Locke allows for a distinction between a proposition judged by oneself and a judgement made by someone else without oneself judging the relevant proposition, for 'Locke and the Port-Royalists implicitly distinguish between performing an act of affirmation or denial and conceiving of *someone else's* act of affirmation or denial.' (Marušić 2014, 274). An interpretation that could be put in terms of the difference between first-person and third-person point of view introduced above.

Leibniz, in contrast, acknowledges that the same proposition may be the content of a judgement and of a question as well. He is also willing to express the proposition A is B as A's being B (that A is B, tò A esse B). In this sense, there is in Leibniz a forerunner of the modern notion of proposition, also in the sense that the proposition is independent of language and individual thoughts.

For Leibniz, the distinction between asserted and unasserted proposition is of crucial importance. If one makes the proposition ultimately dependent upon a mental act of unifying, as in the case of Locke, whether this is an act of judgement or any other mental act, one makes the bearer of truth and falsity dependent upon the human mind. In his argument against Locke's notion of proposition as being either verbal or mental, Leibniz claims that truths are independent of language and the human mind. We need a notion of truth-bearer that is independent of the signs we use, whether these signs are verbal or mental (NE 397). Does Leibniz also acknowledge that false propositions are independent of the human mind? Yes. In the earlier dialogue on the connection between words and things, one of the characters claims that truth and falsity belong to possible thought, not to actual judgements or thoughts (Leibniz 1677, 190). Although these possibilities are in us only in an implicit way, they are actualities in God's mind, for God thinks everything that does not contain a contradiction. Leibniz's notion of cogitatio possibilis was recognized by Bernard Bolzano as a forerunner of his notion of Satz an sich (Wissenschaftslehre, 1837, I, § 27), and it may thus also be considered as a precursor of Frege's Gedanke. From Leibniz's point of view, the traditional notion of proposition, being dependent on language and the human mind, is not able to account for the objectivity of logic. Instead, he proposes a modern notion of proposition as independent of language, but this does not mean that the notion of judgement, and a corresponding sign of assertive force, is excluded from the universal language.

Conclusion

The Cartesian first-person point of view regarding the certainty of our judgements seems to imply a form of subjectivism. Locke's solution to this problem is to widen the scope to a third-person point of view on the notion of judgement, thereby shaping the modern notion of belief. As a result the normative notion of judgement and the empirical notion of belief are no longer distinguished, and epistemology and philosophy in general are threatened by a form of psychologism. Leibniz's solution to Cartesian subjectivism is to strengthen the idea of firstperson knowing. For Leibniz, the first-person point of view is essentially a logical point of view. As the act of judgement is not confused with the empirical notion of belief, and asserted and unasserted propositions are clearly distinguished, there is no threat of psychologism in Leibniz's logic.

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