

walkersThe wise dog The two hermits
On giving and takingThe seven selves
War The fox The wise king Ambition
The new pleasureThe other language The
pomegranate The two cages The three
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temple The blessed city The good god
and the evil god "Defeat" Night and
the madman Faces The greater selfCruci-
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人类理解论

文思博要·英汉对照

An Essay Concerning Human Understanding

【英】洛克
 编译：谭善明 徐文秀

追踪世界思想大师的人生之路
 记录思想史的珍贵文库
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陕西人民出版社
 Shaanxi People's Publishing House





图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

人类理解论: 英汉对照/[英] 洛克 (Locke, J.) 著; 谭善明 徐文秀编译.

—西安: 陕西人民出版社, 2007

(文思博要·英汉对照)

书名原文: An Essay Concerning Human Understanding

ISBN 978-7-224-08012-4

I. 人… II. ①洛…②谭…③徐… III. 英语—汉语—
对照读物 ②认识论 IV. H319.4:B

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字 (2007) 第042907号

人类理解论

An Essay Concerning Human Understanding

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书籍装帧: 品位书装工作室

内文设计: 易玉秦

图文制作: 王 博

艺术总监: 王晓勇

出版发行: 陕西人民出版社

地 址: 西安市北大街147号 邮编: 710003

制 版: 陕西华夏电脑设计制版有限公司

印 刷: 陕西彩云印务有限公司

开 本: 787mm×1092mm 18开 15印张 2插页

字 数: 217千字

版 次: 2007年5月第1版 2007年5月第1次印刷

书 号: ISBN 978-7-224-08012-4

定 价: 22.80元

编者的话

在帝国主义国家以坚船利炮轰开中国大门之前，我们几乎还不知道有这样一种与我们迥异的人存在。他们与我们外貌不同，这让我们产生了种种仇恨的联想。我们视其为妖魔，用故老相传抵御妖魔的手段与之对抗。今日，我们难免会想，在当日的侵略者眼中，我们所采用的是否是一种巫术？以巫术对抗现代文明，难怪我们会一败涂地，只是当年，有多少志士空耗了血泪？

痛定思痛，有识之士开始思考，使东西方的发展差距如此之大，其根本原因何在？答案就是理性精神。

西方的理性精神源自古希腊，古希腊哲学中所谓的“爱智慧”，即体现了对理性的推崇。理性精神在西方持续发展，虽有中世纪的低迷，但在文艺复兴和启蒙时代后冲破了种种精神钳制，使西方爆发了真正意义上的思想革命。自此，人类对自身的理性产生了极大的信赖，人类理性代替上帝的意志成为“万物的尺度”。理性意识的高涨使人们重视现世人生价值，造就了自由进行创造的进取精神，使得西方无论在理论还是在实践上，都踏上了健康蓬勃的发展道路。

与西方重视个人价值与实践的理性精神相比，中国的传统思想太过于“内求于心”。我们所强调的个人体验与涵养缺乏思辨、超越、分析、实证，除了提升个人修养，为社会定制道德规范外，对社会实践并不具有指导意义。

这种东方式的精神，使得17、18世纪，当西方世界在理性精神指导下蒸蒸日上时，中国却陷入了柏杨先生所谓的“文化酱缸”之中，思想界是“一塌糊涂的污泥”，看不到些微的光芒。而相应的，科学与文化也只有承袭，难得创新。毋庸讳言，若无外力介入，强迫国人“睁眼看世界”，或许今日的中国，仍然以为自己处于不与外界通人烟的“桃花源”中呢！

回顾来路，感喟再三。为此，在《文思博要》首批十种获得良好的反响之后，我们又择取十种图书：《理想国》《乌托邦》《人性论》《权利意志》《菊花与刀》《人口原理》《艺术哲学》《宽容》《人类理解论》《伦理学》，汇为《文思博要》第二批，以饷读者。这十种图书为不同时代、不同文化领域的杰作，但都



闪耀着西方理性精神的光芒。相信阅读之后，读者非但能在语言学习上更进一步，其思维的宽度与广度也将会得到极大的拓展。

约翰·洛克（John Locke, 1632—1704）是17世纪英国唯物主义经验论的巨子，著名的哲学家、政治家和教育思想家。在西方近代思想史上占有重要地位。

洛克于1632年出生于英国，从小受到严格的教育。他的父亲是清教徒，在内战期间为议会军队而战。1646年洛克在威斯敏斯特学校接受了传统的古典文学基础训练。1652年克伦威尔主政期间，洛克到牛津大学学习，并在那儿居住了15年。1656年洛克获得学士学位，1658年获硕士学位。后来他还担任过牛津大学的希腊语和哲学老师。在牛津期间，洛克对当时盛行于校园内的经院哲学不感兴趣，反而比较喜欢笛卡尔的哲学以及自然科学。他在36岁时曾入选英国皇家学会。1666年洛克遇到了莎夫茨伯里伯爵，并成为他的好友兼助手。在此期间洛克开始了其一生最重要的哲学著作《人类理解论》的创作。1675年洛克离开英国到法国住了三年，结识了很多重要的思想家，后来又回到伯爵身边担任秘书。1682年莎夫茨伯里伯爵因卷入一次失败的叛乱而逃往荷兰，洛克也随行。伯爵在翌年去世，而洛克则在荷兰一直呆到1688年的光荣革命。在荷兰期间洛克隐姓埋名，完成了包括《人类理解论》在内的多部重要著作。1688年洛克返回伦敦，并在次年写了两篇十分重要的政治论文。他的《人类理解论》也在1690年发表。晚年的洛克大部分的精力都投注在《人类理解论》这部书上，不过此时也认识了包括艾萨克·牛顿在内的几位科学家。洛克终身未娶，于1704年溘然长逝。

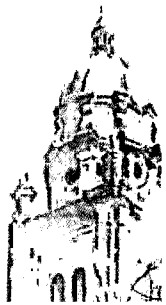
他早期在牛津所受到的影响，包括阅读笛卡尔著作，使他下定决心致力于对困扰他那一代人的哲学问题提供哲学理解。他的论著包括不同主题，《基督教的合理性》、《论宽容》、《关于降息和货币增值的思考》，这些都表明他在公共事务中的参与度。在1690年，当他五十七岁的时候，洛克出版了令他作为哲学家和政治理论家而闻名于世的著作《人类理解论》、《政府论两篇》，虽然此前的哲学家就人类知识有过不少著述，但是洛克是第一位彻底探询人类心灵范围和限度的学者。《人类理解论》表明洛克力图把他的实践的和理论的兴趣和能力结合起来的方式。其中的一些观点对后世产生了极大的影响，例如：人类都是平等的，独立的，拥有生命、健康、自由和财产的天然权利。

洛克的出发点是探询“人类知识的起源、确度和程度”，他设想，如果他能够描绘出知识由什么构成，并且知识是如何获得的，那么他就能确定知识的限度，并且决定是什么构成了理智的确定性。他的结论是知识局限于观念，这个观



念不是柏拉图的理念或形式，而是由我们经验的对象所造成的观念。观念的起源就是经验，经验有两种形式，感觉和反省。我们的一切观念，毫无例外地，要么通过感官达到我们，使我们经验到了外在于我们的世界，要么通过反省达到我们，这是一个内在于我们的经验。洛克想更为清楚地指出的是，我们只有先有了感觉经验才能有反省经验。因为反省仅仅在于心灵注意到了它自己的运作，但是只有当心灵被提供观念后它才能够开始运作，而这些观念只能来自于感觉。这就意味着每个人的心灵最初就像一张白纸，在这上面只有经验能够书写知识。这就是他著名的“白板说”。他认为，是感觉和反思提供给我们一切理性和知识的材料，我们的心灵由此对外在的物象有所了解。

洛克的哲学思想虽然并没有一贯性，且有很多漏洞，不过却对后来的哲学家有很大的影响。洛克开创的经验主义被后来的贝克莱以及休谟等人继续发展，成为欧洲的两大主流哲学思想。洛克的政治思想对后来的政治发展起到了极大的作用。洛克的自由主义被美国奉为神圣，成为民族理想。他的思想深深影响了托马斯·杰弗逊等美国政治家，并且在美洲引发了一场轰轰烈烈的革命浪潮。洛克的影响在法国则更为剧烈。伏尔泰是第一个将洛克等人的思想传到法国去的人，法国后来的启蒙运动乃至法国大革命都与洛克的思想不无关系。



Classical Gems

An Essay Concerning Human Understanding

Contents

Book 1	Neither Principles nor Ideas Are Innate	8
Chapter 1	Introduction	8
Chapter 2	No Innate Speculative Principles	16
Chapter 3	No Innate practical Principles	26
Book 2	Of Ideas	40
Chapter 1	Of Ideas in General, and Their Original	40
Chapter 2	Of Simple Ideas	46
Chapter 3	Of Simple Ideas of Sense	48
Chapter 4	Some Further Considerations Concerning Our Simple Ideas of Sensation	50
Chapter 5	Of Perception	60
Chapter 6	Retention	66
Chapter 7	Of Discerning, and Other Operations of the Mind	70
Chapter 8	Of Complex Ideas	80
Chapter 9	Of the Modes of Thinking	82
Chapter 10	Of Modes of Pleasure and Pain	86
Chapter 11	Of Power	94

目 录

9	第一卷 没有天赋的原则和观念
9	第一章 导论
17	第二章 人心中没有天赋的原则
27	第三章 没有天赋的实践原则
41	第二卷 论观念
41	第一章 观念通论及观念的起源
47	第二章 简单观念
49	第三章 专属于一个感官的观念
51	第四章 对简单观念的进一步考察
61	第五章 知觉
67	第六章 把握力
71	第七章 人心的分辨能力及其他作用
81	第八章 复合观念
83	第九章 思想的各种情态
87	第十章 快乐和痛苦的各种情态
95	第十一章 能力



Classical Gems

An Essay Concerning Human Understanding

Contents

Chapter 12	Of Mixed Modes	118
Chapter 13	Of Our Complex Ideas of Substances	126
Chapter 14	Of Relation	140
Chapter 15	Of the Association of Ideas	148
Book 3	Of Words	162
Chapter 1	Of the Signification of Words	162
Chapter 2	Of General Terms	166
Chapter 3	Of the Names of Mixed Modes and Relations	174
Chapter 4	Of the Names of Substances	184
Chapter 5	Of the Imperfection of Words	202
Chapter 6	Of the Abuse of Words	214
Chapter 7	Of the Remedies of the Foregoing Imperfections and Abuses of Words	228
Book 4	Of Knowledge and Probability	236
Chapter 1	Of Knowledge in general	236
Chapter 2	Of the Extent of Human Knowledge	240
Chapter 3	Of Truth in General	254
Chapter 4	Of Maxims	258

目 录

119	第十二章 混合情态
127	第十三章 复合的实体观念
141	第十四章 关系
149	第十五章 观念的联络
163	第三卷 论词语
163	第一章 词语的意义
167	第二章 普通名词
175	第三章 混合情态和关系的名称
185	第四章 实体的名称
203	第五章 词语的缺陷
215	第六章 词语的滥用
229	第七章 上述各种词语缺陷和滥用的 补救方法
237	第四卷 论知识及其可能性
237	第一章 知识通论
241	第二章 人类知识的范围
255	第三章 真理通论
259	第四章 定理



Book 1 Neither Principles nor Ideas Are Innate

Chapter 1 Introduction

An Inquiry into the understanding, pleasant and useful. Since it is the understanding that sets man above the rest of sensible beings, and gives him all the advantage and dominion which he has over them; it is certainly a subject, even for its nobleness, worth our labour to inquire into. The understanding, 'like the eye, whilst it makes us see and perceive all other things, takes no notice of itself; and it requires art and pains to set it at a distance and make it its own object. But whatever be the difficulties that lie in the way of this inquiry; whatever it be that keeps us so much in the dark to ourselves; sure I am that all the light we can let in upon our minds, all the acquaintance we can make with our own understandings, will not only be very pleasant, but bring us great advantage, in directing our thoughts in the search of other things.

Design. This, therefore, being my purpose to inquire into the original, certainty, and extent of human knowledge, together with the grounds and degrees of belief, opinion, and assent; I shall not at present meddle with the physical consideration of the mind; or trouble myself to examine wherein its essence consists; or by what motions of our spirits or alterations of our bodies we come to have any sensation by our organs, or any ideas in our understandings; and whether those ideas do in their formation, any or all of them, depend on matter or not. These are speculations which, however curious and entertaining, I shall decline, as lying out of my way in the design I am now upon. It shall suffice to my present purpose, to consider the discerning faculties of a man, as they are employed about the objects which they have to do with. And I shall imagine I have not wholly misemployed myself in the thoughts I shall have on this occasion, if, in this historical, plain method, I can give any account of the ways whereby our understandings come to attain those notions of things we have; and can set down any measures of the certainty of our knowledge; or the grounds of those persuasions which are to be found amongst men, so various, different, and wholly contradictory; and yet asserted somewhere or other with such assurance and confidence, that he that shall take a view of



第一卷 没有天赋的原则和观念

第一章 导论

对理解的研究是愉快而且有用的。因为，正是理解把人放到其余一切有感觉的生物之上，使人具有优越性并能对其他生物进行统治，所以，这个主题确实值得研究，即使只就其高贵性而言，也值得我们付出努力。理解，就像眼睛一样，它使我们观察并感知其他的事物，却不注意自己。因此，它如果想置身己外，把自己变成研究对象，那是需要一些技艺和辛劳的。但是不管有什么困难挡住了研究的道路，不管有什么东西使我们在黑暗中摸索，我仍然确信，我们的思想中所能具有的所有看法、我们对理解所得到的全部知识，不但使人十分愉快，有利于我们在探求其他事物时，指导思想前进的方向。

纲要。我的目的既然在于研究人类知识的起源、确切性和范围，还有信仰、意见和认同的基础和程度，所以，我现在不会从物理方面来研究心理，不花费力气去探查人心的本质内容；不会研究由于我们身体或精神的哪些变更，使我们的感官产生了感觉，使我们的理解中有了观念；也不会研究是否那些观念在形成时全部或部分地依赖于物质。这些思辨虽然是新奇和有趣的，可是我把它们全部抛弃，因为它们不在我的纲要之中。我现在的目的只在于研究一个人在观察各种对象时，他的辨别能力的作用。如果我能做到以下这些，就可以设想我的努力没有白费：按上述历史的、简明的方法，我能稍微说明我们的理解如何得到所有的那些观念，能用一定方法来度量知识的确切性，并且能够说清，人们那些各种各样甚至完全矛盾的信仰，都有什么根据。不过，在别处我曾坚信不疑地断言，如果



Classical Gems

An Essay Concerning Human Understanding

the opinions of mankind, observe their opposition, and at the same time consider the fondness and devotion wherewith they are embraced, the resolution and eagerness wherewith they are maintained, may perhaps have reason to suspect, that either there is no such thing as truth at all, or that mankind hath no sufficient means to attain a certain knowledge of it.

Method. It is therefore worth while to search out the bounds between opinion and knowledge; and examine by what measures, in things whereof we have no certain knowledge, we ought to regulate our assent and moderate our persuasion. In order whereunto I shall pursue this following method:

First, I shall inquire into the original of those ideas, notions, or whatever else you please to call them, which a man observes, and is conscious to himself he has in his mind; and the ways whereby the understanding comes to be furnished with them.

Secondly, I shall endeavour to show what knowledge the understanding hath by those ideas; and the certainty, evidence, and extent of it.

Thirdly, I shall make some inquiry into the nature and grounds of faith or opinion: whereby I mean that assent which we give to any proposition as true, of whose truth yet we have no certain knowledge. And here we shall have occasion to examine the reasons and degrees of assent.

Useful to know the extent of our comprehension. If by this inquiry into the nature of the understanding, I can discover the powers thereof; how far they reach; to what things they are in any degree proportionate; and where they fail us, I suppose it may be of use to prevail with the busy mind of man to be more cautious in meddling with things exceeding its comprehension; to stop when it is at the utmost extent of its tether; and to sit down in a quiet ignorance of those things which, upon examination, are found to be beyond the reach of our capacities. We should not then perhaps be so forward, out of an affectation of an universal knowledge, to raise questions, and perplex ourselves and others with disputes about things to which our understandings are not suited; and of which we cannot frame in our minds any clear or distinct perceptions, or whereof (as it has perhaps too often happened) we have not any notions at all. If we can find out how far the understanding can extend its view; how far it has faculties to attain certainty; and in what cases it can only judge and guess, we may learn to content ourselves with what is attainable by us in this state.

Our capacity suited to our state and concerns. For though the comprehension of our



有人观察人类的意见及其对立状况，同时考察他们如何欢喜地接受意见而又专断地主张各种意见，或者就有理由怀疑世上根本就没有真理，或者说人类没有充分的手段来获得关于真理的确切知识。

方法。因此，我们有必要搜索出意见和知识的界限；同时，我们应当知道采取什么措施来规范我们对不确切事物的认同，并调整我们的信仰。为此，我将按照下述的方法进行：

首先，我将研究人能意识到的那些观念或意念（随便你怎么称呼它）的根源，同时，探讨理解得到那些观念的方法。

其次，我将努力指出，通过这些观念理解能够得出什么知识，同时指出这些知识的确切性、证据和范围。

第三，我将对信仰或观念的本质和基础进行研究，在此，我要把对尚未确知的那些命题的认同视之为真。同时，我们还需要研究认同的各种根据和程度。

知道理解的范围是有用的。如果通过对理解的性质的调查，我能发现它的各种能力，并且知晓它们可以达到的境地，它们同什么事情相适合，又在何时不能为我们利用，那么，我想我的研究一定可以使忙碌的人变得谨慎些，不再妄言他不能完全了解的事情，使他在超出我们的理解范围时停下来，安于不知我们思想范围所不能及的那些东西。当然，是在我们考察发现它们不能达到之后。这样，我们就不会再像以前一样，假装无所不知地提出问题，来争辩我们理解所不知道的事物，来争辩我们心中并不能清楚感知到的事物（这些事情或许经常发生），这使我们自己和其他人都感到困惑。如果我们能查明理解到底能达到多远，它在什么范围内才能达到确切性，同时，在什么情况下它只能臆测或者猜想——我们就可能会满足于我们在目前状态中所能达到的境界。

我们的能力是同我们的处境和利益相适合的。虽然我们的理解能力远远跟不



Classical Gems

An Essay Concerning Human Understanding

understandings comes exceeding short of the vast extent of things, yet we shall have cause enough to magnify the bountiful Author of our being, for that proportion and degree of knowledge he has bestowed on us, so far above all the rest of the inhabitants of this our mansion. Men have reason to be well satisfied with what God hath thought fit for them, since he hath given them *pana pros zoen kaieusebeian*, whatsoever is necessary for the conveniences of life and information of virtue; and has put within the reach of their discovery, the comfortable provision for this life, and the way that leads to a better. How short soever their knowledge may come of an universal or perfect comprehension of whatsoever is, it yet secures their great concernments, that they have light enough to lead them to the knowledge of their Maker, and the sight of their own duties. Men may find matter sufficient to busy their heads, and employ their hands with variety, delight, and satisfaction, if they will not boldly quarrel with their own constitution, and throw away the blessings their hands are filled with, because they are not big enough to grasp everything. We shall not have much reason to complain of the narrowness of our minds, if we will but employ them about what may be of use to us; for of that they are very capable. And it will be an unpardonable, as well as childish peevishness, if we undervalue the advantages of our knowledge, and neglect to improve it to the ends for which it was given us, because there are some things that are set out of the reach of it. It will be no excuse to an idle and untoward servant, who would not attend his business by candle light, to plead that he had not broad sunshine. The Candle that is set up in us shines bright enough for all our purposes. The discoveries we can make with this ought to satisfy us; and we shall then use our understandings right, when we entertain all objects in that way and proportion that they are suited to our faculties, and upon those grounds they are capable of being proposed to us; and not peremptorily or intemperately require demonstration, and demand certainty, where probability only is to be had, and which is sufficient to govern all our concernments. If we will disbelieve everything, because we cannot certainly know all things, we shall do much what as wisely as he who would not use his legs, but sit still and perish, because he had no wings to fly.

Knowledge of our capacity a cure of scepticism and idleness. When we know our own strength, we shall the better know what to undertake with hopes of success; and when we have well surveyed the powers of our own minds, and made some estimate what we may expect from them, we shall not be inclined either to sit still, and not set our thoughts on work at all, in despair of knowing anything; nor on the other side, question



上变化万千的事物，但我们仍有充分的理由来赞美仁慈的造物主。因为他赠予我们知识的程度和比例，远远超出这个世界上其他的物种。人们有理由感谢上帝的赐予，因为上帝已经给了人们“舒适生活的必需品和进德修业的门径”。并且使人们有能力发现让生活更舒适的物品，和让生活更美满的途径。纵然人们的知识不能普遍或完全地了解一切事物，但他们仍有足够的光亮来知悉他们的造物主，并看见他们自己的职责。人们应该找到充分的问题来使自己的心灵忙碌，并运用自己的双手，来创造幸福并感到快乐，而不是因为自己没有伟大到可以把握一切而冒昧地抱怨自己的天分，抛弃手中的幸福。如果我们能用自己的思想来研究那些对我们有用的东西，我们便没有什么理由来抱怨自己心灵的狭窄，因为正是心灵供给它们这种用途。如果我们仅仅因为有一些东西是我们知识范围之外的，便低估自己的知识，并且不肯发挥它们，使它达不到上帝赋予的程度，那是非常幼稚和不可原谅的。正如一个懒散的仆人，如果没有阳光就不会在蜡烛光下工作，那实在是不能宽恕。我们心中所燃的蜡烛已经足够我们用的了。我们用这光所得到的发现就应该使自己满足了。理解的用途，应当是按照适宜于我们才能的方式和比例，在它们能使我们在了解的条件下研究它们；同时，若是我们只能得到可能性，而这些已经足够支配我们的利益，则我们也不应该专横地要求论证，来寻求确切性了。如果我们因为不能知道所有的事情，便不相信所有的事情，则我们的做法，就像一个人因为没有翅膀飞翔，便不肯用腿走路而坐以待毙那样“明智”了。

我们知道了自己的才能，便可医治怀疑和懒惰。当我们知道了自己的力量时，我们便会知道做什么事情更有成功的希望。同时，当我们充分了解了我们心灵的能力，并且评估了我们由这些能力能够得到什么时，我们便不会因为不能无所不知而停滞不前，而且不肯将思想投入到工作中。也不会因为一些事情是不好理解的，就怀疑一切，而否认所有的知识。一个海员知道了他的测线的长度，就



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everything, and disclaim all knowledge, because some things are not to be understood. It is of great use to the sailor to know the length of his line, though he cannot with it fathom all the depths of the ocean. It is well he knows that it is long enough to reach the bottom, at such places as are necessary to direct his voyage, and caution him against running upon shoals that may ruin him. Our business here is not to know all things, but those which concern our conduct. If we can find out those measures, whereby a rational creature, put in that state in which man is in this world, may and ought to govern his opinions, and actions depending thereon, we need not to be troubled that some other things escape our knowledge.

Occasion of this essay. This was that which gave the first rise to this Essay concerning the understanding. For I thought that the first step towards satisfying several inquiries the mind of man was very apt to run into, was, to take a survey of our own understandings, examine our own powers, and see to what things they were adapted. Till that was done I suspected we began at the wrong end, and in vain sought for satisfaction in a quiet and sure possession of truths that most concerned us, whilst we let loose our thoughts into the vast ocean of Being; as if all that boundless extent were the natural and undoubted possession of our understandings, wherein there was nothing exempt from its decisions, or that escaped its comprehension. Thus men, extending their inquiries beyond their capacities, and letting their thoughts wander into those depths where they can find no sure footing, it is no wonder that they raise questions and multiply disputes, which, never coming to any clear resolution, are proper only to continue and increase their doubts, and to confirm them at last in perfect scepticism. Whereas, were the capacities of our understandings well considered, the extent of our knowledge once discovered, and the horizon found which sets the bounds between the enlightened and dark parts of things; between what is and what is not comprehensible by us, men would perhaps with less scruple acquiesce in the avowed ignorance of the one, and employ their thoughts and discourse with more advantage and satisfaction in the other.

What "Idea" stands for. Thus much I thought necessary to say concerning the occasion of this Inquiry into human Understanding. But, before I proceed on to what I have thought on this subject, I must here in the entrance beg pardon of my reader for the frequent use of the word idea, which he will find in the following treatise. It being that term which, I think, serves best to stand for whatsoever is the object of the understanding when a man thinks, I have used it to express whatever is meant by phantasm, no-

