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## Introduction

### A REASONABLE NARRATIVE FROM MYSTERIOUS PREMISES

ANY HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY that covers the rise of deism or the rise of natural religion in England will inevitably juxtapose John Locke (1632–1704) and John Toland (1670–1722). John Locke was perhaps *the* great mind of his time and his magnum opus, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (*Essay*), still piques the interest and draws the scrutiny of historians, philosophers, and theologians alike. Because Locke looms so large and draws the focus of so many, those who became attached to him in one way or another were effectively saved from the indefinite limbo of historical obscurity. This is the case with John Toland. His work *Christianity Not Mysterious* (*CNM*) is best known for its use of Lockean principles with a few modifications in a scathing critique of the then-current religious establishments. While Locke cultivated religious mysteries with his epistemological ploughshare, Toland beats it into a sword and lops away the mysterious fruits of revelation growing above the soil of reason. Thus Toland is the first of a generation of so-called deists who use and modify Locke's epistemology to promulgate natural religion and critique Christianity, or so the story goes.

It is not just the philosophical differences between Locke and Toland that make an exploration of Toland enticing, but also the personal characteristics attributed to him in the histories of philosophy. In these accounts we are often introduced to Locke the Reputable and Toland the

Disreputable. Whatever other adjectives one might apply to Locke, such as heretical or orthodox, he is consistently portrayed as brilliant and honest. He is the venerable gentleman at Oates earnestly trying to make sense of religion and reason come what may. Portrayals of Toland, while various, are rarely complimentary. For instance, Leslie Stephen introduces Toland with the following description:

From his earliest days Toland was a mere waif and stray, hanging loose upon society, retiring at intervals into the profoundest recesses of Grub Street, emerging again by fits to scandalize the whole respectable world, and then once more sinking back into tenfold obscurity. His career is made more pathetic by his incessant efforts to clutch at various supports, which always gave way as he grasped at them.

And subsequently, where Stephen discusses *CNM* as being the root cause of the embittered debate between Locke and Edward Stillingfleet (1635–99), he calculates, “we may fancy Toland chuckling with all the vanity of gratified mischief.”<sup>1</sup>

With such descriptions of Toland circulating in important historical works such as Stephen’s, it is easy to imagine in *CNM* the significant and cleverly subtle epistemological deviations from the *Essay* that are alluded to in Toland scholarship. The converse is true as well. But before adopting the contours of this narrative a few basic questions are in order. How, exactly, do Locke’s and Toland’s epistemologies differ? Tiresome quick descriptions, such as that Locke accepts religious mysteries and Toland does not, simply lack definitive boundaries and create more questions. Locke can be a large, quick, and elusive quarry. And if Toland is tethered to him, Locke must be caught before trying to measure the distance between the two.

## OVERALL ARGUMENT

This book will compare the epistemologies of John Locke and John Toland based upon Locke’s *Essay* and Toland’s *CNM* and their related works. In so doing, it will also evaluate Bishop Edward Stillingfleet’s comparison of the two works. This book contends that the differences between Locke and Toland with respect to their epistemologies are not based upon or evidenced by their respective categorizations of propositions, but rather on Toland’s attempt at working out the implications of Locke’s epistemological principles in conjunction with Toland’s interpretations of certain

1. Stephen, *History of English Thought*, 1:101–2; 1:111.

biblical passages and certain theological preferences and presuppositions. Had Locke ordered propositions according to his preferred consideration of reason, his categorization of propositions would be the same ascribed to Toland. The resultant, substantial differences between Locke and Toland in their understandings of epistemology are connected with Toland's definite or likely rejections of theological and philosophical positions that Locke does not dismiss: post-New Testament original revelation and miracles, non-materialism of the soul, and prior-to-the-close-of-the-New-Testament divine revelation requiring a supernaturally bestowed faculty and private miracles for believers.<sup>2</sup>

## THE STATE OF THE PROBLEM

John Toland penned numerous books on a variety of topics in his nearly three decades of writing, but the book that brought him the most notoriety was his very first, *CNM*.<sup>3</sup> In it he borrows heavily from John Locke's *Essay*, a book that by then had made a considerable and largely favorable impression on the educated.<sup>4</sup> Bishop Edward Stillingfleet, who was in a heated debate with the Unitarians at the time, spied in Toland's *CNM* what he thought was a defense of the Unitarians against him on certain points and an attack on the doctrine of the Trinity. Stillingfleet also noticed the numerous Lockean appropriations in *CNM*. In *A Discourse in Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity (Discourse)*, Stillingfleet fixes his guns on *CNM* and parts of Locke's

2. Toland would reject any claim of a private miracle that occurred in the presence of an unbeliever that was not to have been done by the God of the Bible and for the purpose of helping the unbeliever with her unbelief. John Locke does not specifically discuss the claims of believers in non-biblical religions regarding miracles done in favor of their religion.

3. Toland, *Christianity Not Mysterious*, 2nd ed. This is a slightly enlarged version of the original and anonymously published first edition. From here onward, the page numbers of *CNM*, 2nd ed., will be referenced parenthetically. The first edition of the work will be referenced in the footnotes when needed. Works directly related to *CNM*: *Apology*, *Defence*, and *Vindicius*. The second edition of *CNM* is also printed with the *Apology* in 1702.

4. Locke, *Essay*, 3rd ed; Rogers, introduction to *The Philosophy of Edward Stillingfleet*, 1:vii–x. According to G. A. J. Rogers, Stillingfleet only owned the second edition (1694) of the *Essay*. But the 1695 edition is essentially a page for page reprint of the 1694 edition. Both have been consulted and there are no important differences that are of concern here. Also, the third edition (1695) is the latest edition that John Toland would have been able to consult prior to the publication of *CNM*. Also consulted is the critical edition of the *Essay*, edited by Nidditch. From here onward the book number, chapter, and section of the third edition (1695) will be referenced parenthetically. Other editions of the work will be referenced in the footnotes when appropriate.

*Essay* from which he sees Toland building his case for the notion that we can only have certainty of clear and distinct ideas and only reason about them. While Locke himself was not charged with heresy, Stillingfleet accuses Locke of paving the way—albeit unwittingly—for it. That is, Stillingfleet believed that Toland had shown the unorthodox conclusions of the foundational, epistemological principles of the *Essay*, to which Locke, its very author, only loosely adhered. Locke felt he and his *Essay* were under fire, and despite advice to the contrary, two of the great theological and philosophical minds of their generation became embroiled in a rigorous debate. John Toland essentially became a bystander in this particular controversy, allowing Locke to clarify grossly misinterpreted parts of *CNM* for Stillingfleet.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the glaring mistakes Locke points out in Stillingfleet's understanding of the notions of ideas, certainty, and knowledge found in the *Essay* and Toland's *CNM*, Toland is still to this day portrayed somewhat as Stillingfleet paints him. While originally portrayed by Stillingfleet as having brought the *Essay*'s foundational principles to their true unorthodox end, namely that certainty can only be had by and reasoning could only be done with clear and distinct ideas, Toland is now portrayed as having largely borrowed from the *Essay* and having adapted it to his own heretical ends. This altered picture stands because most are skeptical of or deny the accuracy of Stillingfleet's reading of Locke and the *Essay* in light of Locke's defense, but for some reason assume that the bishop's reading of Toland's *CNM* is correct.<sup>6</sup>

5. Stillingfleet, *Discourse*, 2nd ed. There are no pertinent differences between the first and second editions that concern this book. The subsequent works in or referencing the debate are, in order of dissemination: Locke, *Letter to Edward*; Stillingfleet, *Bishop of Worcester's Answer*; Locke, *Mr. Locke's Reply . . . Answer to His Letter*; Stillingfleet, *Bishop of Worcester's Answer to Mr. Locke's Second Letter*; Locke, *Mr. Locke's Reply . . . Answer to His Second Letter*.

6. If these scholars are not simply assuming Stillingfleet is correct in his reading of Toland—that he claimed certainty can only be had with clear and distinct ideas—there is no compelling evidence that they have investigated the matter. In fact, most do not demonstrate that they even grasp what clear and distinct ideas means. Sullivan, *John Toland*, 76–77. The following quote of Sullivan suggests a lack of understanding of Locke's notions of ideas and certainty central to the Locke-Stillingfleet debate's launch: "Toland was faithful to Locke in insisting that, in order to acknowledge anything, one must have first a clear and distinct idea of it" (76). As will be shown this is inaccurate. On the next page, Sullivan makes it clear he thinks Stillingfleet's reading of Toland on clear and distinct ideas is correct (77). Beiser, *Sovereignty of Reason*, 250–51. Beiser oddly finds Locke's explanation of ideas "more peculiar and obscure" than Toland's. The only thing that I can think of that can account for that is that he thinks Stillingfleet has read Toland correctly and not read Locke correctly. His explanation of Toland's use of clear, distinct, and adequate ideas is clearly flawed as will be shown (250n77). He later states that certainty can only be had with clear and distinct ideas. There he describes

Scholarly assessments of Toland tend to abound with a few major, intertwined problems related to this prevailing view that Stillingfleet correctly read *CNM* and that Toland did greatly diverge from Locke despite the fact that both built on similar foundations. Supporting or resulting from this view are three common assertions often made regarding the juxtaposition of Locke and Toland: 1) Toland appropriates the foundational principles of Locke's *Essay* to a significant degree, 2) Locke accepts above reason propositions, while Toland does not, and 3) Locke accepts divine revelation and Toland rejects, or essentially rejects, divine revelation by subordinating it to reason.<sup>7</sup>

These three assertions, which are related to the prevailing view of *CNM*, are teeming with problems. Assertion one—that Toland appropriates the foundational principles of Locke's *Essay* to a significant degree or that Toland is dependent on Locke—is vague but widely held.

Assertion two—that Locke accepts above reason propositions, while Toland does not—is the most widely known. There is seemingly clear textual evidence that Locke accepts “above reason” things and Toland rejects them. On the one hand, Locke discusses above reason propositions in multiple places (IV.xvii.23; IV.xviii.7–8) and affirms them. On the other hand, the full title of Toland's *CNM* is *Christianity Not Mysterious: or, A Treatise Shewing, That There is Nothing in the Gospel Contrary to Reason, Nor Above It: and That No Christian Doctrine Can Be Properly Call'd a Mystery*. In fact, it seems as though this textual evidence clearly supports the prevailing view that Toland, the disciple, attacked his master. But, due to the lack of specificity of assertion one, an imposing assumption actually undergirds assertion two. The assumption is that Locke and Toland are operating with

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clear and distinct ideas as being ideas that can be described in “clear and simple terms,” an imprecise and unhelpful definition (251). Helm, “Locke on Faith and Knowledge,” 58–59. Helm operates with the understanding that Stillingfleet has read Toland correctly (58–59). Helm is one of the few scholars who think Stillingfleet could be correct about Locke (59). Biddle, “Locke's Critique of Innate Principles,” 419–20. It appears as though Biddle agrees with Stillingfleet's assessment in his portrayal of Toland's *CNM*. While citing Toland's *CNM* for support, that which he brings out is not explained in context but rather pieced together to comport with Stillingfleet's reading of *CNM*.

7. Toland scholarship supporting the three assertions: Sullivan, *John Toland*; Beiser, *Sovereignty of Reason*, 220–65; Leask, “Personation and Immanent Undermining”; Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought*, 1:18–21; Fouke, *Philosophy and Theology*, 23, 81–86, 221–40, 237–38; Cragg, *Church and the Age of Reason*, 78, 160; Cragg, *Reason and Authority*, 67, 78, 83; Welch, *Protestant Thought*, 1:36–38; McGuinness, “Christianity Not Mysterious and the Enlightenment”; Stephen, *History of English Thought*, 1:94–118; Turner, *Without God, Without Creed*, 51–63; Biddle, “Locke's Critique of Innate Principles”; Higgins-Biddle, introduction to *The Reasonableness of Christianity*; Randall, Jr., *Making of the Modern Mind*, 285–89; Lucci, *Scripture and Deism*, 72–73, 81–82.

the same notion of reason in Locke's acceptance of things that are above reason and Toland's rejection of things that are above reason. Yet, as will be demonstrated, Locke operates with two rather distinct understandings of reason in the chapters of the *Essay* that are most often juxtaposed with *CNM*. What is more, no one has attempted an in depth explanation of Toland's understanding of reason, which is needed to be able to compare it to Locke's. To operate as if it is the same as Locke's is not only presumptuous but problematic since Locke's understanding of reason is one of the most contested topics in Locke scholarship. In addition, in Locke scholarship there is general confusion precisely as to what above reason propositions are.<sup>8</sup> To even begin to get a handle on Toland's understanding of reason, the center of his epistemology, one would have to seriously explore the more fundamental aspects of his epistemology such as ideas and certainty, which few have attempted.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, due to the lack of comparison of Locke's and Toland's foundational, epistemological principles and their respective views of reason, assertion three is made—Locke accepts divine revelation and Toland rejects, or essentially rejects, divine revelation by subordinating it to reason. In fact, some incorrectly identify above reason propositions and revelation making assertions two and three identical.<sup>10</sup> But of those who understand

8. The complex categorization of scholars into various groups based on the similarities of their treatments of Locke that is undertaken in chapter 3 will not be rehearsed here. Most of the explorations of Locke's reason are more specifically about the relationship between reason and faith or reason and revelation. Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought*, 1:18–21; Welch, *Protestant Thought*, 1:35–36; Sullivan, *John Toland*, 79; Cragg, *The Church and the Age of Reason*, 13; Copleston, *History of Philosophy*, 5:69–70; Randall, Jr., *Making of the Modern Mind*, 285–89; O'Higgins, *Anthony Collins*, 52; Uzgalis, "Anthony Collins"; Kuehn, "Reason and Understanding"; Biddle, "Locke's Critique of Innate Principles"; Leask, "Personation and Immanent Undermining"; Ashcraft, "Faith and Knowledge"; Sell, *John Locke*, 97; Polinska, "Faith and Reason"; Losonsky, "Locke and Leibniz"; Helm, "Locke on Faith and Knowledge"; Snyder, "Faith and Reason"; Woolhouse, *Locke*, 140–43; Jolley, "Locke on Faith and Reason"; LoLordo, *Locke's Moral Man*; Ayers, *Locke*, 1:121; Wolterstorff, *John Locke and the Ethics of Belief*; Wolterstorff, "John Locke's Epistemological Piety."

9. As said above, most assume Stillingfleet has a correct read on Toland, but not on Locke. Leask is one scholar who has attempted a more in depth comparison of Locke and Toland on ideas, among other topics. Leask, "Personation and Immanent Undermining."

10. A possible example of this is *ibid.*, 243–44. This book attempts to give Leask the most charitable reading possible and will thus give the alternative to this reading of his article. Technically speaking, revelation reports things that humans could have, at least, arguably, discovered on their own whereas above reason things, curtly stated, are beyond our discovery. The two terms may have a synecdochic relationship depending on the writer.

above reason propositions to be a subset of revelation or think the two to be overlapping somehow, they appear to think assertions two and three are mutually supportive for one reason or another.

Together the three assertions are coherent and they give a slightly more detailed explanation of the prevailing view's claim that Toland did greatly diverge from Locke. But while Locke scholarship is fraught with detailed analyses that work toward answering important questions that bear on the relationship between Locke and Toland, this is clearly not the case in Toland scholarship. It is riddled with reliance on second-hand information on and readings of Toland, which is likely due to the prolixity of the Locke-Stillingfleet debate and *CNM's* hard-to-follow style. The potentially fatal assumptions that *CNM* claims that certainty can only be had with clear and distinct ideas and that Toland and Locke have the same notion in mind when using the term reason are only two of several. Another significant assumption that is made that reinforces one of the assumptions named above is that when Toland says that faith is knowledge, by knowledge he means the Lockean knowledge that only comes about by intuition and demonstration.<sup>11</sup> This is incorrect and just reinforces the popular, but incorrect Stillingfleet reading of Toland that he teaches that only certainty can be had by clear and distinct ideas. It also reduces Christianity to a natural religion of morality since morality is demonstrable according to Locke's *Essay*.<sup>12</sup> Two other very important terms used by Toland that are not investigated thoroughly enough are experience and evidence. When Toland says that experience is the means of information, which serves as the common stock of all of our knowledge, some incorrectly understand him to mean experiences in the contemporary, modern-day vernacular. In other words, they think that Toland is advocating a verifiability criterion such that if one cannot verify something it cannot be believed.<sup>13</sup> On a related issue, evidence,

11. *Ibid.*, 245; Sullivan, *John Toland*, 126; Lucci, *Scripture and Deism*, 81–82; Beiser, *Sovereignty of Reason*, 251–52. Beiser is possibly tripped up by Toland's calling faith knowledge. Champion, *Republican Learning*, 79–80. Champion portrays Toland as not being so concerned with theology: "Toland, as we will see, was concerned with epistemological certainty too, but the context for the performance of that certainty was not theological but a broader social community" (79). Champion's work is appreciated as it is a very interesting historical account of Toland, but it does not say much about the philosophical and theological points made by *CNM*. Cf. Champion, "Enlightened Erudition and the Politics of Reading."

12. Locke, *Essay* IV.iii.18. There he explicitly notes that he thinks "*Morality amongst the Sciences capable of Demonstration*."

13. Beiser, *Sovereignty of Reason*, 250–52; Leask, "Personation and Immanent Undermining," 245. The verifiability criterion is connected to Toland's calling faith knowledge in Leask and possibly in Beiser.

an extremely important term in *CNM*, is taken wrongly to mean empirical proof, which greatly distorts what Toland is attempting to convey.<sup>14</sup> In short, there are numerous problems in Locke and especially Toland scholarship, some named above, which have caused Locke and Toland to be viewed as very similar in some respects but greatly different in others.

This book also will interact with two historical narratives found in Locke and Toland scholarship, one involving Toland and the other involving Locke and Toland, which quickly and undeservedly became matters of “fact.” The first is that Toland was actually a pantheistic materialist his entire life and thus *CNM* and its related works are a cover of sorts to his true religious, or irreligious, views. Variations of this view have been commonplace since its first mature promulgation in Robert E. Sullivan’s *John Toland and the Deist Controversy*.<sup>15</sup> Despite the fact that Rhoda Rappaport clearly shows how Sullivan’s greatest piece of evidence for his view is based on circular reasoning, few seem to care.<sup>16</sup> It fits too well with Toland’s mischievous persona.

The other historical narrative, which is accepted as a matter of fact though based upon a mere suggestion without any further investigation, originated from the pen of John C. Higgins-Biddle. He thinks it possible that Locke had a copy of *CNM* prior to its publication. If so, Higgins-Biddle reasons, Locke’s observation of its epistemological connections to his *Essay* and its deistic conclusions might have caused him to write *ROC*, in part, to show his *Essay* does not end up in deism, but, on the contrary, is against it.<sup>17</sup> The conjectured motivations for Locke’s writing of *ROC* pertaining to Toland lose their force when it is seen that the gulf between the *Essay* and *CNM* is not as wide as once thought.

14. Beiser, *Sovereignty of Reason*, 254.

15. Sullivan, *John Toland*, 43–47, 114–19; Beiser, *Sovereignty of Reason*, 243–44; Champion, *Republican Learning*, 35, 250–56; Berman, “Deism, Immortality, and the Art”; Berman, “Disclaimers as Offence Mechanisms”; Berman, “Toland, John”; Fouke, *Philosophy and Theology*, 12, 187; Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, 609–14; cf. Berman, *History of Atheism*.

16. Rappaport, “Questions of Evidence.” Rappaport cites Giancarlo Carabelli as making the possible connection between Toland and the *Two Essays*. Giancarlo Carabelli, *Tolandiana*, 20–21; L.P., *Two Essays*.

17. Higgins-Biddle, introduction to *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, xxvii–xxxvii; Biddle, “Locke’s Critique of Innate Principles.”

## METHODOLOGY AND OUTLINE

The aim of this book is to understand the religious epistemologies promulgated in the *Essay* and *CNM* and grasp in what respects they differ.<sup>18</sup> Thus, this book will focus primarily on the *Essay*, *CNM*, their respective defenses, and *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (*ROC*), which Toland was likely able to read prior to the publication of his two 1696 editions of *CNM*, and *ROC*'s two vindications. While all editions have been consulted, the third edition of the *Essay* (1695), the second edition of *ROC* (1696), and the second edition (enlarged) of *CNM* (1696) are the editions of choice.<sup>19</sup> Caution will be exercised by checking earlier editions against the choice versions in case a particular thinker actually had only an earlier edition of another's work. While both thinkers have numerous other works apart from those with a historical link to the uproar caused by *CNM* for both Toland and Locke, these are the ones of interest. While each thinker was likely changing his opinion on points throughout his writing career, the defenses and vindications of their 1695–96 religious works will be approached as conveying honest commentary on their thoughts, at least, as they stood during this two-year window, when *ROC*, *CNM*, and the third edition of the *Essay* were published. Moreover, due to the abundant citations from and references to the *Essay* and *CNM*, these works will be parenthetically referenced.

Another important figure's works that come into play in this book are those of Bishop Edward Stillingfleet pertaining to his debate with Locke,

18. While the evidence points to these works being indicative of Locke's and Toland's personal epistemological and religious opinions, the merits of this book do not hinge on it. It will be primarily shown that Locke's *Essay* and Toland's *CNM* are much more individually coherent and comparatively consistent than anyone has previously thought or demonstrated.

19. *ROC* came out prior to Toland's *CNM*. Locke became embroiled in a verbose debate with John Edwards that resulted in two vindications of *ROC* penned also by him. Cf. Locke, *Reasonableness of Christianity*, crit. ed. This Higgins-Biddle's critical edition of *ROC* is based upon, but not slavishly, the "Harvard copy" of *ROC*. The Harvard copy is a first edition *ROC* that contains Locke's notes, emendations, and corrections. Higgins-Biddle, introduction to *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, cxxxiv. I have researched both and there are no pertinent differences that are of importance for this book. The page numbers of the second edition (1696) are recorded in the footnotes. The following work was published along with the second edition (1696) of *ROC*: Locke, *Vindication*. Not long after Locke published: Locke, *Second Vindication*. For a work aimed at reconciling what are thought to be discordant aspects of *ROC* and the *Essay*: Marko, "Promulgation of Right Morals." Moreover, there are other important works pertinent to the *Essay* found in Locke's *Posthumous Works* such as *Of the Conduct of the Understanding*, *A Discourse of Miracles*, and *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Galatians, Romans, 1 & II Corinthians, Ephesians*.

especially his *Discourse* (the second edition is the edition of choice). The fact that Stillingfleet only had the second edition (1694) of Locke's *Essay* is not important as there is little difference between the second and third editions. Regardless, as stated before, all editions will be consulted. There will also be works and letters discussed from those beyond the focus figures of Locke and Toland, such as John Tillotson (1630–94), Anthony Collins (1676–1729), William Molyneux (1656–98), and Matthew Tindal (1657–1733); but Stillingfleet is the most important figure outside of Locke and Toland. It was his *Discourse* that forever associated the two in the histories of philosophy.

There will be substantial interaction with secondary scholarship that investigates the epistemologies of Locke and Toland. There are several sources that investigate both figures on key elements and there are other resources that concentrate primarily on one or the other. Some of the more significant figures who will be interacted with are Nicholas Wolterstorff, Nicholas Jolley, Alan P. F. Sell, Violetta Polinska, John C. Higgins-Biddle, Richard Ashcraft, Paul Helm, Robert E. Sullivan, Ian Leask, and Frederick Beiser. There are numerous others, but those named prove to be especially helpful dialogue partners.

Most of the investigated Stillingfleet, Locke, and Toland scholars and this book's understanding of their views will be discussed in depth in each chapter's state of the question section and during the course of the argument. While the actual interpretation of Locke and Toland is the primary focus of the book, understanding how long-held and popular erroneous views appeared and perpetuated is an important historiographical accent to the book. It was definitely one of the most intriguing aspects of the research and writing process. In short, patient exposition of related Stillingfleet, Locke, and Toland works *and* demonstration of the careful dismantling of scholarly arguments are both necessary to disabuse scholarship of such long-held erroneous readings of Locke and Toland and the resultant, general narrative that has found its way into every account mentioning the two.

This book consists of five chapters. The next chapter investigates the Locke-Stillingfleet debate. The lack of investigation into this important debate seems odd and is probably the most significant source of confusion regarding the interpretation of *CNM* and the *Essay*. Until one understands what both Locke and Toland are saying about ideas and certainty, one cannot expect to make the right connections when investigating their notions of reason, faith, and revelation. The key questions that will be asked in the chapter are the following: 1) Is Stillingfleet correct in connecting Locke and Toland and does he get them right?; 2) How and why do Locke and Toland respond the way that they do?; and 3) What are the salient points of this

debate's historical reception? Chapter 2 argues that Stillingfleet is correct in asserting agreement between Locke's and Toland's notions of ideas and certainty but misinterprets what both thinkers are conveying about these notions when he treats them in the *Discourse*. While Locke's clarifications on ideas and certainty made in the course of the debate are helpful, the controversy as a whole and its reception leaves little resolved regarding a comparison of Locke's and Toland's respective epistemologies.

Chapter 3 focuses solely on the religious epistemology of John Locke. It builds upon the epistemological investigation of Locke started in chapter 2 and is necessary for allowing a point-for-point comparison with Toland's epistemology in chapter 4. The primary questions being asked in chapter 3 are: 1) According to Locke, what is reason?; 2) What is its relationship to faith?; and 3) What is its relationship to revelation? The chapter argues that to understand Locke's description of reason, and thus the relationships between reason and faith and reason and revelation, one must acknowledge that in the *Essay* Locke primarily conceives of the mind employing the faculty of reason working in reason's proper office or scope, which entails the considerations of natural as well as supernatural sources of information (the propositions of the latter trumping the probable propositions of the former) and a corresponding proper faith that pertains to probable (uncertain) propositions from the same sources. In *Essay* IV.xviii, however, he conceives of the mind employing reason in a diminished office, or concerning only natural sources, and a corresponding vulgar faith, concerned with only supernatural sources; but he does this partly, at least, to show that such an antithetical framing of the two fails to maintain definitive boundaries. As a result, faith in or assent to a proposition from *any* source and the determination of divine revelation as such morally *ought* to be the result of the mind employing its power of reason in its full scope or office.

Chapter 4 aims at exploring the same questions asked in chapter 3, but regarding Toland, and an additional point-for-point comparison with Locke started in chapter 2 and made possible by the epistemological investigation of Locke done in chapter 3. Chapter 4 argues that the differences between Locke and Toland with respect to their understandings of reason, its related faculties, faith, and revelation are not based upon or evidenced by their respective categorizations of propositions, but are based upon Toland's attempt at working out the implications of Locke's epistemological principles in conjunction with Toland's interpretations of certain biblical passages and certain theological preferences and presuppositions. Had Locke ordered propositions according to his preferred consideration of reason, his categorization of propositions would be the same ascribed to Toland. The resultant, substantial differences between Locke and Toland in

their understandings of epistemology are connected with Toland's definite or likely rejections of theological and philosophical positions that Locke does not dismiss: post-New Testament original revelation and miracles, non-materialism of the soul, and prior-to-the-close-of-the-New-Testament divine revelation requiring a supernaturally bestowed faculty and private miracles for believers.<sup>20</sup>

Chapter 5 concentrates on conclusions and implications. Part I of the chapter revisits the argument laid out in the book and the new narrative that arises from it. Part II focuses on a number of historical implications. In that respect a series of sifting questions for categorizing thinkers in the narrative of the rise of natural religion in England will be suggested, corresponding suggestions for the study of certain figures will follow, and implications for the well-accepted Biddle hypothesis regarding the writing of *ROC* will be articulated. Part III discusses this book's findings on doctrines and propositions said to be above reason, while IV focuses on the implications of Locke's and Toland's hermeneutics regarding the influences of biblical criticism and the natural sciences. Comments related to Toland's alleged mischievous persona and corresponding claims that he employed a covert style of writing will be made in Part V. Finally, part VI will make suggestions for a study that could build upon this book to give a fuller sense of Locke's and Toland's prolegomena.

20. Again, Toland would reject any claim of a private miracle that occurred in the presence of an unbeliever that was not to have been done by the God of the Bible and for the purpose of helping the unbeliever with her unbelief (*CNM* 151). John Locke does not specifically discuss the claims of believers in non-biblical religions regarding miracles done in favor of their religion.