Was Sumarokov a Lockeian Sensualist?
On Locke’s Reception in Eighteenth-Century Russia

Despite the fact that Locke occupied a central place in European Enlightenment thought, his works were little known in Russia. Locke is often listed among those important seventeenth-century figures including Bacon, Spinoza, Gassendi, and Hobbes, whose ideas formed the intellectual background for the Petrine reforms; Prokopovich, Kantemir, Tatishchev and perhaps Peter himself were acquainted with Locke’s ideas, but for most Russians in the eighteenth century Locke was little more than an illustrious name. Locke’s one book that did have a palpable impact was his Some Thoughts Concerning Education, translated by Nikolai Popovskii from a French version, published in 1759 and reprinted in 1788.¹ His draft of a textbook on natural science was also translated, in 1774.² Yet though Locke as pedagogue was popular, his reception in Russia, as Marc Raeff has noted, was overshadowed by the then current “infatuation with Rousseau’s pedagogical ideas.”³ Toward the end of the century some of Locke’s philosophical ideas also held an attraction for Russian Sentimentalists, with their new interest in subjective

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¹ The edition of 1760 was merely the 1759 printing with a new title page (a so-called “titul’noe izdanie”). See the Svodnyi katalog russkli knigi grazhdanskoi pechati, 5 vols. (Moscow: Gos. biblioteka SSSR imeni V. I. Lenina, 1962–674), II, 161–2, no. 3720.


Chapter 8. Was Sumarokov a Lockeian Sensualist?

epistemology, but familiarity with Locke’s ideas mostly came second hand via such writers as Addison and Sterne.4

An often cited exception to the Russian neglect of Locke as a philosopher was the short article which appeared in the May, 1759, issue of Sumarokov’s journal The Industrious Bee (Trudoliubivaia pchela) entitled “On Human Understanding According to Locke” (O chelovecheskom razumenii, po mneniiu Lokka). It was the first work in Russia concerning Locke’s most important philosophical opus, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, which argued the sensual basis of human cognition.5 On the basis of this article many scholars have declared Sumarokov to be a follower of Locke and a philosophical sensualist.6 We should state from the start that this in a gross

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Locke’s ideas did have an impact on aesthetic thought earlier in the century, on such as L’Abbé du Bos in France and Johann Christian Gottsched in Germany, but there is no evidence of such impact in Russia. On German Classicist interest in Locke as reflected in a Russo-German journal of the 1730’s and 1740’s see V. P Stepanov, “Kritika man’erizma v ‘Primechaniia k vedomostiam,’” XVIII vek, 10 (1975), 39–48. While Stepanov sees affinities between the ideas expressed here with early Classicism, he finds no evidence of a direct link.

5 On August 26, 1778, P. I. Bogdanovich received 100 rubles from the Translation Society as a down payment toward a translation, but if he completed the book it was never published (V. P. Semennikov, Sobranie, staraiushchee o perevode inostrannykh knig, uchrezhdennoe Ekaterinoi II, 1768–1783 gg: Istoriko-literaturnoe isledovanie [St. Petersburg, 1913], 86, no. 5). A translation of Book IV, chap. 10 appeared in 1782 (see below).

The first full Russian version of Locke’s Essay, entitled Opyt o chelovecheskom razuma, only appeared in 1890, in A. N. Savin’s translation. This translation, newly edited by M. I. Itkin, was republished in D. Lokk, Izbrannye filosofskie proizvedeniia, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1960). A more recent translation appeared in D. Lokk, Sochineniia, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1985). See also note 32 below.

exaggeration, or at best a misleading generalization, insofar as the complex philosophical and theological context that made Locke’s ideas controversial (and, indeed, fully comprehensible) in Western Europe was absent in Russia. The question here, as with many cases of borrowing, translation and adaptation, becomes: what was the nature of Sumarokov’s interest in Locke? How did Sumarokov interpret Locke’s ideas, and to what extent did Locke’s ideas coincide with his own? In this paper, after briefly comparing the texts, I will attempt to put the article on Locke into the context of Sumarokov’s journalistic activity, and then consider Sumarokov’s attitude toward the theological problem raised by Locke’s sensualism. This had been dramatically posed by Voltaire, and his well known interpretation of Locke, with which Sumarokov must have been familiar, provides a context in which to gauge Sumarokov’s views.

The first and perhaps insurmountable problem we face in drawing links between Locke’s ideas and Sumarokov is the nature of Sumarokov’s essay itself. “On Human Understanding” is less than two pages long in modern print. Its two long paragraphs basically summarize Book I, chapters 2 and 3 of Locke’s Essay Concerning Human Understanding. Few sentences or even phrases are translated word for word, but Sumarokov’s essay recognizably reproduces arguments from Locke’s text in the order they appear there, although there are also references to the start of Book II, chapter 1, which reviews earlier arguments. Starting with its title, “On Human Understanding According to Locke,” the Trudoliubivaia pchela article is presented as a statement of Locke’s opinion rather than Sumarokov’s; the essay is not signed, or otherwise labeled, although the May issue ends with the note that Sumarokov composed the entire installment. The article is written in the third person, beginning with the first sentence (“Locke denies innate ideas [Lokko otritsaet vrozhdennye poniatiya]),” although this also implies an approving first person presence, as when “Locke’s incontrovertible opinion

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7 In the French and German translations cited below these are chapters I and 2, with the introduction to Book I (chapter 1 in the original) presented as the introduction to the entire work. Citations from Locke's English text in this article refer to book, chapter and section number as given in John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

8 Trudoliubivaia pchela, 1759, Mai, 320. The essay on Locke may also be found in: A. P. Sumarokov, Polnoe sobranie vsekh sochinenii, ed. N. I. Novikov. Vol. 7 (Moscow, 1781), 322–25 (hereafter cited as PSVS followed by volume and page number); and in N. Novikov i ego sovremenniki (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1961), 350–51. In transcribing the text I have changed ѣ to e, i to и, and eliminated hard signs after final hard consonants.
(neoprovergaemoe Lokkovo mnenie)” is cited. The line between alien and authorial speech, between translation and commentary, is blurred; nowhere does an actual narratorial “I” appear, as it occasionally does in Sumarokov’s moralistic essays. Further complicating the picture, the article was followed by the statement that “A continuation will follow (Prodolzhenie vpred’ budet),” but none ever appeared.

Hence there are no clear grounds for considering the essay anything more than a translation-summary, that may or may not reflect the ideas of its translator. As with the other English materials which appeared in *Trudoliubivaia pchela*, it was most likely based on a French or German intermediary (there is little evidence Sumarokov knew English). Various abridgements of the *Essay* were also available, although most omitted the first book, and there were many discussions of Locke’s ideas in European journals, but it appears as if Sumarokov prepared this summary of Locke’s ideas himself.

Keeping these things in mind, we may speculate on some of the subtle changes of emphasis apparent in Sumarokov’s reading of Locke, although the differences may be due mostly to the simplifications necessary in a condensation on a scale of something like 23:1. While Sumarokov represents Locke’s arguments rather closely, he puts more exclusive emphasis on the sensual basis for human understanding, mostly skipping over Locke’s references to the processes by which the understanding functions (which form the main subject of Book II). In the chapters under discussion, Locke makes his famous case against the notion of innate ideas, “clearing the ground a little” (as he puts it in the prefatory epistle) in order to analyze the operations of the mind, which he insists begin with the famous “tabula rasa.” Sumarokov shifts Locke’s emphasis from the contrast between innate and acquired notions to a continuing opposition between razum (“reason”) and

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“feelings”). What precisely these terms signify is by no means clear, and in general, the terminology with which Sumarokov translates Locke’s linguistically innovative theory (further muddied by the probable French or German intermediary) often leaves a confused impression. Razum usually appears to stand for the faculty of reason, but at times also seems to denote Locke’s “mind”; at others Sumarokov equates razum with understanding (razumenie), reasoning (rassuzhdenie), and even perhaps intelligence. Sumarokov writes:

Sumarokov here emphasizes the fundamental importance of the senses in providing the foundation, the primary material, with which and upon which the mental faculties operate. The discussion here, based on Book I, chapter 2, also echoes Book II, chapter 1, and possibly also chapter 2, which appears to be the starting point in Locke for Sumarokov’s opposition between razum and chuvstva. At the end of 2.1.25 Locke emphasizes the passive nature of the “understanding” as receptor of sensory ideas, “as it were the materials of knowledge,” which must come first. In this sense, razum (understanding)

11 For example, Sumarokov contrasts an educated person to a savage (dikii), noting that they differ not in their razum but in their “upotreblenie chuvstv.” Here razum appears to mean a capacity to reason, some kind of basic intelligence or power of logic (which, as Sumarokov writes elsewhere, even animals and insects have). By contrast, for Locke “reason” signifies the acquired ability to manage sensory and other ideas (perhaps the “upotreblenie chuvstv”). Sumarokov continues, however, asking, “If razum was innate, what would we need science (nauki) for?” Razum here appears to mean not a faulty of reasoning but some sort of innate knowledge itself, those “innate principles” that Locke denies.

12 Note the additional problems in translating such basic terms as “idea” (in Sumarokov’s article variously as vo(o)brazhenie, prosveshenie, poniatie). Because of this, I have not attempted to translate the cited passages from Sumarokov’s essay.
represents or includes the faculty of retention, more precisely described later in Book II as the faculty of memory. However, Sumarokov ignores Locke’s repeated contrasts of sensation to “reflection,” which Locke describes as the second of the two basic operations of the understanding.

This imbalance is clarified somewhat in the next paragraph, where it becomes more explicit that the first section refers to the initial impressions we receive; reason comes into play at a later stage:

Ежели бы врожденное было нравоучение; оно бы вдруг постигнуто быть должествовало, а мы оному научаемся, и сложением многих вображений, до него доходим. Одни несложныя просвещения, чувствами, разом понимаются. Рабенок то, что темнее и что светле, равно как и большой человек постигает. Большой слагая понятие с понятием, и вображение с вображением, о свете разсуждает, а первое вображение, не больше младенца чувствует. (PSVS, 6, 324)

Here Sumarokov contrasts simple and complex ideas (discussed by Locke in Book II), and juxtaposes the immediate comprehension of simple sensual input to the processes by which an adult learns and reasons in a more complex way by comparing and combining ideas.

On the other side of the razum — chuvstva opposition, Sumarokov’s understanding of chuvstva at times also appears to go beyond the simple meaning of the senses, which is Locke’s focus, to also appear to mean feelings, emotions, even passions. In the last section of the essay, Sumarokov categorically states that the desire for happiness is not inborn but derives from chuvstva (whereas Locke first admits that “the desire of happiness and an aversion to misery are innate practical principles” [my italics], but then qualifies this by saying that “these are inclinations of the appetite to good, not impressions of truth on the understanding” [Locke’s italics] — 1.3.3). The next section, on innate moral feelings, pushes the argument even further:

Спроси Христианина, для чево он опасается делать беззаконие: спроси ученика Гоббезиева; спроси языческаго Философа. Первой скажет: Боюся Бога. Другой: Боюся начальства. Третий скажет: Боюся стыда; так им сие узаконение чувства предписали, а не врожденное право. (PSVS, 6, 324)

Sumarokov here modifies the meaning of Locke’s contrast. In Locke the differences in the Christian, Hobbesean, and pagan philosopher’s reasons for behaving well argue against what he calls “universal consent,” that is, Locke contends that innate moral ideas cannot logically exist because people have
differing notions of morality. In Sumarokov’s text, however, proper behavior in each case is laid to emotion (fear) and to the resultant “legalization of feelings (uzakonenie chuvstva).”

In both of these examples, the desire for happiness and man’s reasons for acting properly, Sumarokov seems to describe something more than sensations at work, but rather a more well developed manifestation of the emotional self. Sumarokov appears to be generalizing even farther than Locke from the simple input of the senses to speak of the irrational, animal, passionate self.

We may speculate that Sumarokov is interpreting the opposition between razum and chuvstva along the lines of the conflict between reason vs. passion (also razum and chuvstva), which is such a central problem in his tragedies. The terms in which Sumarokov describes Locke’s psychic processes then may reflect his own understanding as a playwright. His interpretation of razum as “nothing other than only the actions of the soul, set in motion by feelings (ne chto inoe, kak tol’koe deistvisa dushi, v dvizhenie chuvstvami privedennyia)” and the further statement that “All of the soul’s movements are from them [feelings] (Vse dvizheniiia dushi ot nikh [chuvstv]),” as well as the metaphor of the “soul’s movements” itself, seem quite appropriate to the lyric and tragic personae of Sumarokov’s works. While Lockean epistemology and the psychology of Sumarokov’s literary personae may be too disparate to allow useful juxtaposition, from a broader perspective Locke’s groundbreaking emphasis on man himself and the inner workings of the mind (or “soul”) may be seen as quite compatible with the innovations Sumarokov brought to the Russian theater. The potential linguistic confusion between chuvstva (the senses) and chuvstva (emotions) thus may form a bridge between Locke’s empiricism and Sumarokov’s chuvstvitel’nost’ (sensibility). Moral sensibility plays a major role in Sumarokov’s writings on ethics and theology, as it does

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13 Locke himself speaks later of the fear of punishment as a motivation (I. 3. 13).

14 Locke does at one point use the motion metaphor, comparing “the perception of ideas . . . (as I conceive) to the soul, what motion is to the body” (2. I. 10). I. Z. Serman has described the “dushevnyi golos” of his heroes and heroines as Sumarokov’s main innovation as a playwright. See his Russkii klassitsizm: Poeziia, drama, satira (Leningrad: Nauka, 1973), chap. 6. See also Sumarokov’s contrast between razum and serdtse in “O nesoglasii” (PSVS, 10, 315), in which Sumarokov refers to “movements of the heart.”

15 See, for example, “O kazni” in which Sumarokov argues that capital punishment is required not only as justice, and as an example to others, but also as revenge, “in order to alleviate the sensibility (radi utolenia chuvstvitel’nosti) of those who remain alive” (PSVS, 9, 332). Sumarokov sees this desire as grounded in God as the guarantee of justice. In Sumarokov’s writings God and the necessity of an afterlife are often asserted.
in his tragedies, drenched with the tears of his unhappy protagonists, whose stated goal was to “touch the hearts of the audience.”

Sumarokov’s emphasis on the emotions rather than merely the senses may also be true of his presentation of Locke’s description of the conscience:

Совесть основана на чувствах, а не на врожденном понятии, которого нет, и быть не может. Есть ли бы совесть врожденно изобличала; допустила ли бы она до беззакония. Воспитание, наука, хорошая собеседники и прочия полезныя наставления, приводят нас к безпорочной жизни, а не врожденная истина. (PSVS, 6, 325)

On the one hand, Sumarokov emphasizes the importance of *chuvsstva* as the basis for the conscience, whether we interpret this in the simplest sense, that conscience acts upon the basis of sensory input, or in that it represents our passionate self. On the other hand, conscience (as more explicitly stated in Locke) emerges as the product of (in Sumarokov’s words) “education, schooling [science], good partners in conversation and other beneficial instruction,” as the product of a process that combines experience and reason rather than as something innate. In this second view it is nurture rather than nature that makes us what we are and defines our moral impulses.

The insistence on “education, schooling, good partners in conversation and other beneficial instruction” as the way to a virtuous life may be taken as the central editorial concern of *Trudoliubivaia pchela,* and as such go far in explaining why Locke was chosen for translation. “On Human Understanding, According to Locke” stands virtually alone in the journal, which in its yearlong existence published no other original modern European philosophy. Most of the translated prose material—including works by

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16 Sentiment and sentimentalism pervade many of Sumarokov’s works. As Gitta Hammarberg writes perceptively, “Sumarokov’s [Classist] guidelines for the mid-style genres [and, we may add, many of his basic literary positions — M. L.] provide a practically complete description of Sentimentalist poetics as a whole…However, the basic and crucial difference…is the divergent function of such genres within the respective literary systems” (From the Idyll to the Novel: Karamzin’s Sentimentalist Prose Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991, 45).

17 Neither the philosophical direction nor the journal’s pattern of translating have been studied. The best work on *Trudoliubivaia pchela,* by V. Berzina (“Zhurnal A. P. Sumarokova ‘Trudoliubivaia pchela,’” Voprosy zhurnalistikii: Mezhdvuzovskii sbornik statei, vyp. 2, kn. 2 [Leningrad, 1960], 3–37), greatly overstresses its “oppositionist” character.
Part One. Sumarokov and the Literary Process of His Time

Xenophon, Lucian, Aeschines,¹⁸ Maximus of Tyre, Livy, Cicero, Erasmus, Marc-Antoine Muret, Oxenstierna, and G. W. Rabener—falls into the general category of “practical ethics,” popular moralizing philosophy often directed at a young audience. In this context, the piece on Locke represents not an exercise in technical philosophy or in philosophical method, but one of many essays arguing for the dual values of virtue and education. The variety of material also seems to reflect Sumarokov’s opinion, expressed elsewhere in the same issue as the Locke essay, that

многия знания возросли, многие изобретены, многия пали, а некоторые, и может быть, многия изчезли. Все новья умствования основаны на умствованиях древних. Мода меняется всегда, а природа никогда. (PSVS, 6, 335)

(much knowledge has increased, much invented, and much declined, and some, perhaps much, has disappeared. All new philosophizing is based on the philosophizing of the ancients. Fashion always changes, but never nature.)

Philosophical truth, founded on nature, is unchanging, and does not represent an ongoing quest; the accumulation of knowledge is cyclical rather than a teleological march of enlightenment. In this context, Locke emerges not as the instigator of a modern epistemological revolution, not someone who (as in Voltaire’s view) paved the way to a new empiricist philosophy shorn of idealist metaphysics, but as someone who was able to express traditional religious and ethical values in modern rationalist vocabulary.

Voltaire was the most obvious candidate for having introduced Sumarokov to Locke. His presentation of the English philosopher, however, sharply contrasts with that of the Russian and provides the most obvious philosophical context against which we may consider Sumarokov. The thirteenth letter of Voltaire’s Lettres philosophiques (first published 1733–4), had played a major role in introducing and popularizing Locke’s ideas on the continent.¹⁹

¹⁸ Eskhin (Aeschines), not to be confused with Eskhil (Aeschylus), as cited in Svodnyi katalog, IV, 196.

That Sumarokov knew the *Lettres philosophiques* is clear.\(^{20}\) Even more obvious, for the August issue of *Trudoliubivaia pchela* Sumarokov translated Voltaire’s *Micromégas*, in which a disciple of Locke encapsulates Voltaire’s view of the English philosopher. There and in the thirteenth letter, while ostensibly praising Locke’s religiosity, Voltaire somewhat disingenuously turns his incidental remark from the *Essay* concerning God’s ability to make matter think into an attack on theologians who assert the immortality and immateriality of the soul.\(^{21}\) Voltaire thus depicted Locke as a proponent of reason rather than revelation and turned the *Essay* into an important text for the later radical Enlightenment tradition. Locke himself, however, despite his rejection of innate ideas, took a “concordist” position, insisting that reason and revelation were fully compatible.\(^{22}\) While one of Sumarokov’s reasons for publishing the essay on Locke may have been to emulate Voltaire in popularizing Locke, there is no evidence whatsoever that he either took Voltaire’s skepticist view of Locke seriously, or indeed that he considered Voltaire himself to be an opponent of Christianity or revealed religion. In fact throughout his career Sumarokov adamantly defended Voltaire as a believer, denying that he was an atheist or even a deist.\(^{23}\)

\(^{20}\) See my “Sumarokov’s Russianized ‘Hamlet’: Texts and Contexts,” chap. 5 in this volume, in which I demonstrate Sumarokov’s use of Voltaire’s version of Hamlet’s famous monologue from the eighteenth of the *Lettres philosophiques*. Various opinions which Sumarokov expresses in his essays seem to stem from his reading of the thirteenth letter, for example, his echoing of Voltaire’s opinion that Descartes’ metaphysics made “une roman de l’âme” (cf. PSVS, 9, 323). On Voltaire’s possible sources for this phrase, see Bonno, “The Diffusion and Influence,” 424, and Hutchison, *Locke in France*, 211.


\(^{22}\) As Richard Ashcraft has put it, Locke’s belief in undertaking the *Essay* was that “once the old foundation of innate ideas is replaced by a ‘surer’ one, the superstructure of Christianity will stand mightier than ever” (“Faith and knowledge in Locke’s Philosophy,” in *John Locke: Problems and Perspectives*, John W. Yolton, ed. [London: Cambridge UP, 1969], 202). On Locke as a philosopher of ethics, see John Colman, *John Locke’s Moral Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1983); and John A. Passmore, *Locke and the Ethics of Belief* (London: Oxford UP, 1980).

\(^{23}\) See his “Mnenie vo snovidenii o frantsuzskikh tragediakh,” PSVS, 4, 325–54, and my remarks in “Sumarokov’s Drama ‘The Hermit’: On the Generic and Intellectual Sources of Russian Classicism,” chap. 6 in this volume.
The theological problem concerning Locke’s sensualism as it appears in Book I of the Essay arises after the passage contrasting the Christian, Hobbesian, and pagan philosophers reasons for behaving virtuously cited above. The issue is: if morality and conscience are not innate but determined by experience and custom, does this not eliminate God’s role in human affairs? (Locke I. 3. 6). Sumarokov states the problem and answers it in one rhetorical period:

Уменьшается ли тем премудрость нашего Создателя, что нравоучение основано на чувствах, а не на разуме! (PSVS, 6, 324–25)

(Does the wisdom of our Creator really decrease if moral doctrine is based on the feelings and not on reason!)

This half question, half assertion that rhetorically confirms God’s wisdom is as far as Sumarokov sees fit to acknowledge the issue, like Locke (and unlike Voltaire) presenting the sensualist and theist positions as in no way opposed. Like Locke, Sumarokov held to a middle, “compromise position,” and believed in reconciling rationalism and religion. In this fundamental “concordism” Sumarokov adhered to the early Enlightenment tradition represented in part by Locke. Following Feofan Prokopovich, this tradition had a decisive influence on Russian Orthodox Enlightenment theology, which in turn, as I have argued elsewhere, is of crucial importance for understanding the new secular Russian literature. Like Locke, Sumarokov accepted the divine revelation of Holy Writ as the highest authority on questions that are beyond the grasp of reason. Whenever philosophical questions appeared to challenge dogma, Sumarokov, like Locke, tended to move from professions of ignorance to references to Holy Writ. Like Locke, Sumarokov rejected “narrow sensualism,” that is, a purely materialist view of the senses. Sumarokov defended the primacy of the soul over the body and decried those “madmen” (bezumtsy) who say that the soul is but an “outgrowth of our bodily composition (otrosl’ nashego telesnogo sostava),” like the result of clanging two heavy material bodies together (PSVS, 6, 286). This comment is from Sumarokov’s posthumously published essay “The Basis of Philosophy” (Osnovanie liubomudriia) of 1772. In it he attacked a new unnamed “philosophical sect” which accepted the following planks that might well have followed from a skepticist reading of Locke:

24 Until the very recent past, Russian Orthodox Enlightenment theology has hardly been acknowledged, let alone studied. See my discussion in “Sumarokov’s Drama ‘The Hermit’” and other articles in this volume.
Chapter 8. Was Sumarokov a Lockeian Sensualist?

Любити основание разсуждения, и ни какова в нем основания не иметь…
Ни о чем не имети понятия, полагая что все на свете сем не понятно…

(PSVS, 10, 143)

(To love the basis of discussion but having no basis at all for it…To have no notion about anything, presuming that everything in this world is incomprehensible…)

In the same passage Sumarokov further rejects arguments which lead either from human ignorance or from God's immensity to the conclusion that morality does not exist or is a figment of the imagination.

Like Lomonosov and the majority of his Russian contemporaries, Sumarokov firmly embraced the notion (in Locke's words) that God is naturally deducible from every part of our knowledge…For the visible marks of extraordinary wisdom and power appear so plainly in all the works of the creation, that a rational creature, who will but seriously reflect on them, cannot miss the discovery of a Deity. (I.4.9)

In “The Basis of Philosophy” Sumarokov takes an explicitly theist position, and similarly describes God’s wisdom as revealed in the natural world, in terms which seem to paraphrase Lomonosov’s well known “Morning Meditation,” and his own and later variations on the theme, including Derzhavin’s “God”25:

Кто может сумневаться о бытии Божием! Хотя бы и не вошли в самую глубину пространства небесного; но только бы до солнца зрением возлетели, и оттоле возвратившиеся простерли по земле очи наши, и свой собственный состав разсмотрели; какия чудеса и виды премудрости божией и его к родам животных милосердие!…Не ужели Создатель одних ради премудрых явил в устроении нашего мира, премудрость ко славе своей? Солнце составленное всемогуществом божиим из Ефира, плавающее в нем и питающееся им, дает, человекам, скотам, зверям, птицам, рыбам, гадам, древесам, цветам и траве жизнь. Вот и все могущество, и премудрость, и милосердие Божие…Солнце, говоря пифически, погружается в Окияне, к пользе нашей. Разсмотрим со естествословами единый глаз, или едино ухо, вашего состава. Чувства наши и все наши члены, с коликою премудростию, ко крайней нашей пользе устроены! (PSVS, 6, 287–88)

25 In my subsequent work I identify this idea as “physico-theology”; see “The Theological Context of Lomonosov’s ‘Evening’ and ‘Morning Meditations on God’s Majesty’,” chap. 15 in this volume.
Part One. Sumarokov and the Literary Process of His Time

(Who can doubt God’s being! Even if one can’t enter the very depths of heavenly space, if we could only fly up to the sun with our vision, and from there, returning, raise our eyes to the earth, and examine our own constitution, what miracles and views of God’s wisdom and His mercy to the races of animals [we would see]! . . . Did the Creator really manifest His wisdom (to His glory) in the structure of our world for the sake of sages alone? The sun, composed by divine omnipotence out of ether, floating in it and nourished by it, gives life to people, cattle, beasts, birds, reptiles, trees, flowers and grass. Here is God’s omnipotence and wisdom and mercy! . . . The sun, speaking poetically, plunges into the ocean, for our benefit. Let us look with the naturalists (estestvoslovami) at only a single eye, or at a single ear, that are part of our make-up. With what wisdom are our senses and all of our members organized, to our great benefit!)

As in Lomonosov’s poem, for all the miraculous power our senses, and the power which they and reason confer upon as, they are severely limited when seen from the perspective of the Maker of all things. Far from adopting an empiricist approach to strictly material reality, the natural scientist (estestvoslov) is called to poetic ecstasy at an intuitive or revelatory realization of the goodness and utility of God’s universe. The senses here are not so much tools with epistemological limits as gifts to rejoice in. We are to some extent obviously comparing apples and oranges here in trying to compare a poet’s perspective to that of a philosopher, but the basic difference in epistemology, in defining the sources of knowledge, remains. Sumarokov’s basic philosophical concern was with the nature of virtue and the working out of divine justice on earth rather than with a clinical understanding of the processes of reason.

The question here is one of emphasis, for in the Essay Locke also refers to God as the “true ground” of morality, but that emphasis is a crucial one. Certainly, there is a fine line between seeing God in nature (or deducing his presence there), which Locke did, and acknowledging the existence of “innate principles,” which he did not. But Sumarokov crossed that line, that is, he often expressed faith in the existence of innate morality. This is evident from Sumarokov’s prose writings, from his two most “religious” plays, “Hamlet” (1749) and “The Hermit” (1757), as well as from the other materials Sumarokov published in Trudoliubivaia pchela. In “Hamlet,”

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26 Cf. Sumarokov’s contrast between poets and philosophers, PSVS, 9, 323.
27 For both, we should note, the existence of morality itself, whether discovered by reason or faith, whether innate or not, was an objective truth. The solipsism and potential moral relativism of later Russian Sentimentalists was foreign to Locke, although the Sentimentalists shard a basic emphasis on epistemology.
for example, as I have shown, Sumarokov demonstrates the benevolent workings of the divine agency within nature, thus changing the emphasis of Shakespeare’s play.28 Here and elsewhere Sumarokov depicts conscience as a kind of innate, divine knowledge inscribed in human nature by God, a “divine spark given to us (danaia nam iskra Bozhestva)” that “demands that we fix our gaze on nothing except virtue (tребует того, что бы мы на то не устремлялись)” (PSVS, 6, 249).29 Sumarokov’s view of the God-given conscience inscribed in nature was shared by Russian Orthodox enlightenment theologians of his day such as Platon (P. E. Levshin), who also believed that the feelings of conscience “must originate from some innate powers” and took this, together with “our innate desire for a chief good” to be proofs of God’s existence (positions which Locke explicitly rejected).30

Furthermore, most of the other philosophical works chosen for inclusion in Trudoliubivaia pchela present similar traditional Platonic metaphysical arguments about virtue (in contrast to Locke’s anti-Platonic, pro-Aristotelean stance), arguments which stress the divine nature of the soul and the afterlife as basic arguments for virtuous living.31 Yet it should be noted that for many eighteenth-century readers of Locke, he himself was seen as an important defender of God. Indeed Locke’s chapter proving God’s existence from Book IV of the Essay appeared in Russian translation in 1782 (although it has not been identified as such until now) — the only other translation from the Essay to appear in Russian before 1898.32

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28 See my article “Sumarokov’s Russianized ‘Hamlet,’” chap. 5 in this volume, and esp. the description of the workings of conscience, p. 93.

29 In “О неправедливых основаниях,” however, Sumarokov’s discussion of conscience and the way people may deceive themselves and not suffer pangs of regret might seem to contradict this, or at least offer a less rosy picture (PSVS, 6, 334–39).

30 Platon, Metropolitan of Moscow, The Present State of the Greek Church in Russia, trans. Robert Pinkerton (1815; reprint New York, 1973), 30–31; Platon’s emphasis. This is a translation of of Platon’s popular textbook in theology Pravoslavnoe uchenie, ili Sokrashchennaia khristianskaia of 1765, which underwent several editions in the eighteenth century (see Svodnyi Katalog, 2, 422–28). I briefly discuss the similarity in Sumarokov’s and Platon’s views in “Sumarokov’s Drama ‘The Hermit.’”

31 These include: an article from the Spectator on the immortality of the soul (March, 180–87); Oxiesterna’s essays (September, 549–67); and a Socratic dialogue by Aeschines which argues that virtue stems not from learning or nature but is “а certain kind of divine gift (bozhestvennoe nekoe darovanie)” (December, 722–33).

32 It was entitled “О познании Божией бытия,” Vecherniaia zaria, 3 (1782): 18–42; wrongly cited as being from Locke’s The Reasonableness of Christianity in Simmons, English
Do all these things make Sumarokov a Lockean sensualist? By now the myriad problems involved in both defining the term and applying it to Sumarokov should be apparent enough. The fundamental “proof” of this contention is for all practical purposes a translation, and even if Sumarokov may have found Locke’s ideas to be correct, or compatible with his own, this is hardly the definition of a disciple. For all his significant differences from Voltaire, there is far more reason (for example) to consider Sumarokov a follower of that writer. In the case of Locke and Sumarokov, we are dealing with a general cultural amenability, a common broad intellectual and religious outlook (which historically Locke admittedly had done much to shape). If we do choose to refer to Sumarokov as a Lockean, it is important to keep in mind that in the areas that were most important for the subsequent history of Enlightenment thought such as Locke’s empirical method, his exploration of the functioning of the mind, and his attack on scholasticism, Sumarokov and the Russians were hardly interested. Sumarokov’s view of the senses was far less sophisticated than Locke’s, and he seems to have taken the conclusions of sensualist arguments to be obvious rather than as something to be debated. What were obvious were both the sensual origins of all the things that pass through one’s mind, but also the divine rationality of God’s world which was the mission of Russian literature to celebrate.

*Literature, 130.* This is a translation from Latin by Mikhailo Antonskii of the Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Book IV, chap. 10, “Of the existence of a GOD.” The Essay Concerning Human Understanding had appeared in several Latin translations, both the full text (by E. Burridge, 1701; by G. H. Theile, 1742) and Book IV alone (in 1709, 1729, 1741, 1758). See *The Works of John Locke*, 12–13, 68–9, 183.

33 Sumarokov hardly even mentions Locke in his other writings. In the article “O sueverii i litsemerii” he is cited as a great man (PSVS, 10, 162) and in the fable “Dva povara” (1765) he is included in a list with ten other great men including Virgil, Cicero, Descartes and Newton.