

Locke's Finely Spun Liberty

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Introduction

Near the end of the long and often convoluted discussion of freedom in the chapter 'Of Power' in *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, Locke states that in 'The care of ourselves, that we mistake not imaginary for real happiness, is the necessary foundation of our *liberty*' (E 266).¹ He goes on to explain that 'we are by the necessity of preferring and pursuing true happiness as our greatest good, obliged to suspend the satisfaction of our desire in particular cases' (E 266). Locke then adds that the ability to suspend our desires in particular cases is 'the hinge on which turns the *liberty* of intellectual Beings' (E 266). Unfortunately, this hinge has proved a serious stumbling block for commentators. After three hundred years, serious scholarly disagreement remains about even the central orientation of Locke's views on freedom. Locke was aware of the opacity surrounding portions of his discussion of liberty. In letters to several correspondents, he confesses to almost leaving it out of the first edition, fearing that 'the novelty and subtlety of the matter itself ... [would be taken] as the paradoxes of an innovator or the stumblings of an ill-advised wanderer' (CJL/7/252).² As evidence that his worries were not far wrong, Locke adds that amongst his friends, 'more have entered

1 *E: An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, P. Nidditch, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1975), cited by page number. Emphases are in the original unless otherwise noted.

2 See also CJL/4/625. *CJL: The Correspondence of John Locke*, E.S. de Beer, ed., 9 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1976-), cited by volume and page number.

into discussion with ... [me] about this one subject than about all the remaining chapters of the book' (ibid.). My entry into this controversy will be by way of Leibniz, one of Locke's earliest and most astute commentators.

The discussion proceeds as follows. First, I sketch Locke's account of freedom, highlighting the most important differences between the first and subsequent editions of this chapter. This outline will be drawn primarily from the fourth edition of the *Essay*, the edition upon which Pierre Coste's French version (which Leibniz used) is primarily based.³ Locke's revisions raise two major exegetical problems. After introducing these, I turn to Leibniz's reaction to Locke's views on freedom. I argue that Leibniz gets Locke right, and use his suggestions to develop answers to two interpretative problems.

I Locke on Liberty

Pressed by Locke to provide some criticism of the first edition, Irish philosopher and physicist William Molyneux wrote in a letter:

The next place I take Notice of as requiring some Farther Explication is Your Discourse about Mans Liberty and Necessity. this Thread seems so wonderfully fine spun in your Book, that at last the Great Question of Liberty and Necessity seems to vanish. (CJL/4/600-1)

Locke replied that he was not surprised that Molyneux found the 'discourse about liberty a little too fine spun' (CJL/4/625), and set about a wholesale rewriting of 2.21. The result was an expansion from 47 to 73 sections in the second through fifth editions. Locke's reworking of these sections was not restricted to the second edition. This chapter cost him more than any other in the *Essay*. He kept revising 2.21 until the very end of his life; a codicil to his will mentions 'some small alterations which I have made with my own hand' to the chapter on freedom he wanted incorporated in the fifth edition (CJL/8/426).⁴

While the traditional question of whether the *will* is free is unintelligible, Locke states that we can ask why we act as we do. His answer to this

3 While the fourth edition was not yet in print, from 1697 until after Locke's death Coste stayed in the Masham household at Oates, where Locke spent the last years of his life. Coste was thus able to incorporate most of the changes Locke introduced in the fourth edition.

4 Locke's will can be found in CJL/8/419-27.

question underwent radical revision. In the first edition he writes, 'Good then, the greater Good is that alone which determines the Will' (E 251n). This slogan is slightly misleading. First, it is the agent's *perception* of the greater good, not necessarily the objective good, that determines her will to action. Second, Locke understands the good as happiness, which turns out to be a state of pleasure. In any case, Locke replaces his first theory of motivation with the following:

The motive, for continuing in the same State or Action, is only the present satisfaction in it; The motive to change is always some *uneasiness*: nothing setting us upon the change of State, or upon any new Action, but some *uneasiness*. This is the great motive that works on the Mind to put it upon Action, which for shortness sake we will call *determining of the Will*.... (E 249)

Locke offers various reasons for abandoning so 'settled' a maxim (E 252).

First, he notes that, were the maxim true, everyone who seriously contemplated Christianity would be an unfailing Christian in practice. As evidence for his new view, Locke tells of a drunkard who sees the greater good of sobriety, both for this and the next life, yet 'the *uneasiness* to miss his Companions; the habitual thirst after his Cups, at the usual time, drives him to the Tavern' (E 253). Locke is quite clear that his drunkard knows all the relevant facts concerning the good, and acts in spite of them.

What is uneasiness? 'This *Uneasiness* we may call, as it is, *Desire*; which is an *uneasiness* of the Mind for want of some absent good' (E 251).⁵ While there is nothing approximating an analysis of these mental states in the *Essay*, the role they play is clear enough. Whenever we act, we do so to relieve ourselves of something that is unsatisfactory to us. According to Locke's new theory, mere cognition or contemplation of some good is motivationally insufficient for action; we must also desire it. The mental states or feelings that alert us to some present pain or absent good, and that draw us toward action, are varieties of uneasiness.

Appearances to the contrary, while motivated and determined by various forms of unease, we are not simply tugged this way or that by whichever desire has the upper hand. Locke writes that: '... the highest perfection of intellectual nature, lies in a careful and constant pursuit of true and solid happiness' (E 266). We accomplish this pursuit through '*Reason* [which] must be our last Judge and Guide in every Thing' (E 704). Central to Locke's account of rational self-determination is his account

⁵ Locke seems to be of two minds about whether uneasiness *is* desire or is something that is 'always accompanied with that of *Desire*' (E 283).

of the power we have to suspend our desires for ersatz goods or false happiness. Thus, while the most pressing uneasiness often determines the will, it does not always:

For the mind having in most cases, as is evident in Experience, a power to *suspend* the execution and satisfaction of any of its desires, and so all, one after another, is at liberty to consider the objects of them; examine them on all sides, and weigh them with others. In this lies the liberty Man has; and from the not using of it right comes all that variety of mistakes, errors, and faults which we run into, in the conduct of our lives, and our endeavours after happiness; whilst we precipitate the determination of our *wills*, and engage too soon before due *Examination*. (E 263)

How to understand this addition, and its consistency with the theory that precedes it, has proven to be one of the most contentious problems in Lockean scholarship. The suspension doctrine raises two deep interpretive problems.

First, what causes the suspension and subsequent contemplation, and the course the contemplation takes? In particular, is this process to be understood deterministically, or in some contracausal, libertarian fashion? Call this the *compatibilism problem*. Answers to these questions have varied greatly, some finding in Locke's suspension doctrine just the causal break or 'loophole' (a term actually used by two commentators) needed to secure freedom. Others have seen it as Locke's pathway to paradox and incoherence.⁶

Second, Locke takes great pains to reject the widely received view that the will is determined by the perception of the greatest good. Yet in describing the deliberative process we engage in after suspending our desires and evaluating carefully where our true happiness lies, he continually makes claims such as the following '... [a man's] *will* is always determined to by that, which is judg'd good by his Understanding' (E 271). The problem is obvious: this appears to be nothing more than a redescription of the traditional doctrine of motivation Locke is very publicly overthrowing. Call this the *consistency problem*. While the first question has received a lot of attention from commentators, the second has not. My initial approach to these questions will be by way of Leibniz's reading of 2.21.

6 The two 'loophole' theorists are R. Aaron, in *John Locke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1971), 268 and J.D. Mabbot in *John Locke* (London: Macmillan Press 1973), 66. In contrast, T. Webb in *The Intellectualism of Locke: An Essay* (New York: Burt Franklin 1857), claims that the addition of the suspension doctrine to the preceding theory involves 'a latent paradox' (149).

II Leibniz on Locke on Liberty

The *New Essays* is an underappreciated masterpiece, and Leibniz's commentary on 2.21 is one of its richest sections.⁷ Repeatedly, Leibniz summarizes a Lockean argument, and then elegantly states just the right objection, often in no more than a sentence.⁸ I will focus on Leibniz's reactions to three topics: (1) Locke's notion of uneasiness, (2) Locke's rejection of the maxim that the greatest good determines the mind to action, and (3) Locke's suspension doctrine.

In contrast to the censure Leibniz levels at Locke in letters to various academic correspondents, the degree of agreement he extends to Locke's account of freedom is remarkable. This begins in his comments on the chapter preceding "'Of power" and freedom,' where Leibniz's mouthpiece, Theophilus, first comments on Lockean uneasiness. While complaining that *disquiet* (Coste translates 'uneasiness' as '*inquietude*') 'does not express very well what the author has in mind,' Theophilus admits that it 'nevertheless fits pretty well the nature of the thing itself' (NE 164). Yet according to Leibniz, Locke has failed to notice one central fact about human psychology, for:

... wherever there is desire there will be disquiet; but the converse does not always hold, since one is often in a state of disquiet without knowing what one wants, in which there is no fully developed desire. (NE 193)

Leibniz's appropriation of unease thus involves one serious modification, that of submerging disquiet beneath the conscious threshold. Specified in this way, Lockean disquiet is Leibnizian minute (or insensible or unconscious) perception, which is upgraded to passion or desire only when magnified to a level at which we are aware of it.

7 No doubt Leibniz's writing in this work, at times awkward and meandering, has contributed to its relative neglect, even among many Leibniz scholars. Catherine Wilson, on the other hand, writes that '[the] *New Essays on Human Understanding* is undoubtedly Leibniz's best composition: the richest, the most tightly argued, the most fertile in its application to contemporary philosophical problems' (*Leibniz's Metaphysics: A Historical and Comparative Study* [Princeton: Princeton University Press 1989], 232).

8 See, for example, NE 181, where Leibniz refutes Locke's argument that when considering an action, our willing is not free since we cannot avoid willing. NE: *New Essays on Human Understanding*, P Remnant and J. Bennett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1996), cited by page in A/6/6. A: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe* (Darmstadt and Berlin: Berlin Academy 1921-), cited by series, volume, and page. Locke's argument appears in E 245-6.

Leibniz approves of Lockean disquiet, suitably submerged. Does this mean that unconscious perception plays the role in Leibniz's psychological theory that uneasiness does in Locke's? In a recent article, Ezio Vailati argues that it does not, because while 'for Locke, the springs of motivation are to be found in ease and uneasiness ... for Leibniz the springs of motivation are not in ease or uneasiness, but in the apparent good.'⁹ Vailati gives two sources of support for his answer, the fact that Leibniz endorses the traditional maxim that the will is determined by the appearance of the best, and the fact that Leibniz sometimes writes as if disquiet is something added, as a 'dash of spice' to desire. For if disquiet is something added to desire, it is not identical to unease. I will consider these points in reverse order.

That Leibniz sometimes writes as if disquiet is the zest added to desire does not count against the claim that Leibnizian disquiet plays the same motivational role as Lockean unease, for one finds the very same instability, in the same spot, in Locke's theory. They both write at times as if disquiet/unease is desire, and other times as if it something added to it. If anything, this parallel instability or vacillation is weak evidence that the concepts do play the same explanatory role. Vailati's central point, however, is that disquiet cannot be identified with Lockean unease, since to do so would contradict Leibniz's endorsement of the maxim that the greater good determines the will.

Locke's renunciation of the traditional maxim is met, not with criticism, but with guarded approval. Leibniz's first response is 'There is merit and substance in these thoughts.' He then adds:

I would not want them to encourage people to believe they should give up the old axioms that the will pursues the greatest good, and flees the greatest evil, of which it is sensible. (NE 185)

Leibniz is careful *not* to endorse the truth of the rejected maxim. Rather, it receives his lukewarm endorsement on the basis of its moral force. Notice, too, that the 'old maxim' Leibniz affirms is weaker than the one Locke rejects. The version Locke rejects is that the perception of the greater good *determines* the will to action. Leibniz's replacement simply states that the will *pursues* the greatest good.¹⁰ This is not accidental, for

9 'Leibniz on Locke on Weakness of Will,' *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 28 (1990), 217

10 And in a letter to Coste of 19 December 1707, Leibniz writes 'we can always assert, with respect to the will in general, that *choice follows the greatest inclination* (by which I understand both passions and reasons, true and apparent)' (G/3/401-2; AG 194).

Leibniz too rejects the traditional doctrine stated by Locke. I take the version of the maxim they both reject to be that perception of the good totally determines the will, where the determination is understood to be causal. The version of the maxim they both accept is that the perception of the good determines the good, were this is understood to include other determining factors like the intensity of desire, the vivacity of the representation of the good, and so forth. In the *Theodicy*, Leibniz admits that 'it is only God's will which always follows the judgments of the understanding' (310).¹¹ The motivation for Leibniz's defense of the weakened replacement doctrine is theological and philosophical. We have been created by God so that the will is inclined toward the good, while the intellect is inclined toward the true (*T* 309-11). To back away from this spare description would be to impute imperfection to God's creation of our volitional and cognitive structure. Nor would Leibniz want to retreat from this description, for to be capable of freedom is just to have this kind of volitional and cognitive structure.¹²

Rendering disquiet unconscious, in the present context, enables Leibniz to maintain that all of our behavior is determined, even when we are unaware of such causes (*NE* 56, 188). Fullblown disquiet or desire is that which initiates purposeful behavior when we are conscious of acting to remove some dissatisfaction; unconscious disquiet is that which initiates behavior that appears random or arbitrary, such as 'whether to turn left

G: *Die philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz*, C.I. Gerhardt, ed. (Berlin: 1875-90; Reprint Hidesheim: Olms 1965), cited by volume and page. AG: G.W. Leibniz: *Philosophical Essays*, R. Ariew and D. Garber, eds. and trans. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing 1985), cited by page.

- 11 There are two reasons why, unlike God, our wills don't always follow the judgment of the understanding. First, we have finite minds that are disrupted by passions, which in Leibniz's analysis are the confused thoughts or passions caused by our bodies. Second, Leibniz holds that we think using symbols, some of which represent the good only faintly. Both of these claims play a role in Leibniz's explanation of how weak-willed behavior is possible. See *NE* 186-7.
- 12 'The free substance is self-determining and that according to the motive of good perceived by the understanding, which inclines it without compelling it: and all the conditions of freedom are comprised in these few words' (*T* 288). *T: Theodicy*, E.M. Huggard, trans. (New Haven: Yale University Press 1952), cited by section number. The whole issue of how to understand mental determination in these and other early modern philosophers is extremely complicated, and at present still awaits sustained analysis. I explore the issue of Leibniz's internalism in 'Video Meliora Proboque, Deteriora Sequor: Leibniz on the Intellectual Source of Sin,' Leibniz, *Nature and Freedom*, J. Cover and D. Rutherford, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

or right at the end of a lane,' even when we are completely unaware of such motivation (NE 166).

Both Leibniz and Locke are hedonists who believe that striving for true happiness is our duty.¹³ Ease and uneasiness are, motivationally speaking, at the basement level of this psychological model. For Leibniz it is disquiet that 'stimulates the will,' and when raised to a conscious level is 'what the Scholastics call *motus primo primi* ... [which are] truly the first steps that nature makes us take' (NE 189). Identifying disquiet with the scholastic concept of the first motions of the will is Leibniz's acknowledgment that disquiet occupies a similar foundational position in his psychological model.

Leibniz modifies but retains unease, and joins Locke in rejecting the traditional maxim that perception of the greatest good determines the will. How does Leibniz understand Locke's notion of suspension? According to Vailati, Leibniz reads Locke's suspension doctrine as implying that the agent's decision to suspend is undetermined, and thus that it violates the Principle of Sufficient Reason. Vailati writes:

Locke's view that on the spot we have a power to refrain from acting is firmly criticized by Leibniz, for whom, when the moment of decision comes, "everything which impinges on us weighs in the balance and contributes to determining a *resultant* direction, almost as in mechanics."¹⁴

Yet while Leibniz is very clear that since mental states are causally determined, the antecedent dispositions or requisites have to be in place for any action, the quotation given is not directed at Locke's suspension doctrine. Rather, it is aimed at the claim that 'the most pressing' disquiet is what determines the will (NE 193). Against this, Leibniz rightly points out that there is no reason why several weaker disquiets could not unite to 'defeat' a singularly more pressing one. Nevertheless, what Leibniz does say on first commenting on Locke's suspension doctrine is puzzling. He writes:

The execution of our desire is suspended or prevented when it is not strong enough to arouse us and to overcome the difficulty or discomfort involved in satisfying it. This difficulty sometimes consists merely in an insensible laziness or slackness

13 In some remarks on Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, Leibniz writes that reason 'orders us to strive for *happiness*' (G/3/423; L 630). And Locke writes, in a passage we have already seen, that 'the highest perfection of intellectual nature, lies in a careful and constant pursuit of true and solid happiness' (E 266). Locke identifies 'good and evil' with 'pleasure and pain' in (E 258-9, 351).

14 Vailati (1990), 225

which inhibits us without our paying heed to it; it is greatest in people brought up in indolence, in those of phlegmatic temperament, and in those discouraged by old age or failure. (NE 195)

This is hardly a ringing endorsement of the suspension doctrine. Indeed, on first reading this passage, one is inclined to think that Leibniz has uncharacteristically lost the thread, inexplicably making the 'source of all liberty' (E 263) the result of sloth and depression. Rather, Leibniz's treatment here illustrates beautifully one of the differences between these two philosophers. Locke talks of suspending desires when submitting to these desires would not lead to genuine happiness. Leibniz immediately sees that we can also suspend desires that would lead to genuine happiness, a possibility Locke ignores. Comprehensiveness and precision come naturally to Leibniz. Thus, without so stating, he begins with Locke's missing case, where one suspends 'good' desires. When he turns to the case Locke does discuss, the suspension of 'bad' desires, Leibniz offers therapeutic advice on how to get reason involved when we are in the grip of dangerous passions. The key to the suspension of unhealthy desires lies in habits or dispositions acquired before we are tempted. These habits include training ourselves to ask, prior to acting, whether we should suspend the action we are considering, countering 'bad' desires with attractive 'good' ones, and distracting ourselves 'with other matters' (NE 196). Notice that Leibniz accepts suspension as a common fact of our psychology, believes that it plays an important part of our moral lives, and even expands the class to include suspending rational desires.¹⁵

15 In his other writings on suspension, Leibniz tends to focus on the case where we suspend rational judgment or action. This is natural, for if one believes that we have been created with wills inclined to the good, and intellects inclined toward the true, the first question is why we ever go wrong. In a piece entitled 'Against Indifference' by Grua, Leibniz writes:

The mind has a faculty of choosing not only one of two but also of suspending judgment. No appearance of the good is so clear (except that of the highest good) that the mind if it wants is not able to suspend judgment prior to the last decision, and this happens while other thing to be thought are offered to the mind and it is either snatched away to new things without deliberation, or deliberating, it finishes thinking rather of other things (Grua 384).

Grua: *Textes inédits*, G. Grua, ed. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1948; Reprint New York: Garland 1985), cited by page. Leibniz's evaluation of the value of this power of suspension is thus more ambiguous than Locke's, for not only can we use this power for good, but it is also one of the many ways our souls resist 'the truth it knows' (T 311). For other texts on suspension, see (Grua 327; NE 187ff.; T 64).

Does Leibniz read Lockean suspension as indeterministic? After explaining how we can train ourselves to interrupt the contemplation of unhealthy desires, Leibniz states that such acts of suspension, while manifestations of our freedom and self-mastery, always proceed from determinate reasons, and are never the result of ‘the fictitious principle of total indifference or equilibrium’ (NE 196). One might take this as evidence that Leibniz is worried about whether Lockean suspension might be understood in some contracausal fashion. The question of freedom, however, mattered greatly to Leibniz, and he rarely missed an opportunity, both in private and public texts, to contrast his account of freedom with the libertarian alternative advocated by the Molinists and Arminians.¹⁶ And the very next section forecloses on the possibility that Leibniz takes Lockean suspension to be outside the normal nexus of mental causality. There Leibniz has Locke’s mouthpiece, Philalethes, say, ‘I too am in favour of this intellectual determination of the will by what is contained in perception and in the understanding’ (NE 197). This line appears in neither Locke nor Coste, but is Leibniz’s summary of 48 of the *Essay*. Theophilus replies to the line, ‘I like it very much. It shows that the mind has no complete and direct power to block its desires at any time,’ this being Leibniz’s one remaining worry about Locke’s treatment of suspension (NE 197). Section 48 of the *Essay* put to rest any doubts Leibniz might have had about any residual indeterminism in Locke’s account. And when Locke demonstrates that such determinism is compatible with freedom by appealing to the divine case, Leibniz’s commentary briefly becomes an encomium.¹⁷ It is worth noting that despite the differences across their systems on important matters, their theories on freedom are profoundly alike at a quite deep level.

Their accounts of freedom, emphasizing the rule of reason, are rooted firmly in a tradition begun by Plato and developed by the Stoics. They share the assumption that acts which are most basically our own as intellectual beings, and most properly free, are those that are rational. The threat to human freedom, for both of these thinkers, lies with certain natural passions or desires, some of which compete with and disrupt the

16 For a subset of such texts, see (Grua 271, 276-7, 480; G/3/400-3; AG 193-6; T 175, 303).

17 Leibniz, like Locke, thought that orthodoxy and sound philosophy entailed that God’s actions are determined by his nature and the objective value of the choices available to him, and that this, far from destroying divine freedom, perfected it. In addition to NE 198, see Grua 289/AG20; G/3/400-3; AG 193-4). The obvious corollary is that, insofar as we imitate God, our choices are determined and free as well.

dictates of reason. Freedom involves a self-mastery over these baser elements. They both hold that the true good for an individual, her end which is happiness, is identical with *the good* and so will benefit her. Since a well-ordered self or person rationally acts in her own best interest, rational actions are the most free, reflecting as they do our true nature and our good. Subscribing as they do to mental determinism, they both reject 'the freedom of equilibrium,' the so-called 'will to will' model of freedom. Their determinism is explicated, as is not unusual in seventeenth-century philosophy, in extremely mechanical models of motivation and deliberation. They both appeal to the paradigms of freedom, God and the blessed, as evidence for this model of freedom. They are both moderate internalists, because in considered judgments there is a (nonnecessary) connection between evaluation, and motivation and action. Their internalism is 'moderate' because they both acknowledge genuine cases of weakness of will, and thus have accounts of why, in such cases, the knowledge of the good is not ultimately efficacious.

Leibniz reads Locke as a determinist. In the next section, I shall argue that he is right to do so. In a 1703 letter to Thomas Burnett in which Leibniz again lists his disagreements with Locke, he adds that Locke 'says some good things about freedom, but he does not, however, explain it sufficiently' (G/3/291;AG285).¹⁸ If the above thesis is right, Leibniz recognized that Locke's theory of freedom bore more than a family resemblance to his own, and thus devoted his energies in commentary, not to refutation, but to explicating and refining that theory.

III Locke Reconsidered

In his book-length study of Locke's views on freedom, Peter Schouls writes of 'Locke's intention to present a consistent libertarian doctrine' in his chapter 'Of Power.'¹⁹ Schouls is not the first to interpret Locke in this way; indeed, there is a long and noble tradition of such readings, even among Locke's friends and followers. Schouls' treatment, however, has the virtue of being the most comprehensive of such interpretations. His basic claim is that:

18 Leibniz also comments favorably on Locke's account of freedom in a letter to Jaquelot (G/3/473) and in (*NE* 164). Nor does Leibniz mention the issue of freedom in the preface to the *New Essays* when he lists important differences between himself and Locke.

19 *Reasoned Freedom: John Locke and the Enlightenment* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1992), 119

there can be, according to Locke, actions which are absolutely undetermined ... it is their presence which characterizes other actions as "free" in an "incompatibilist" non-determinist sense and ... it is their absence which precludes such freedom and results in ("hard" not "soft") determinism....²⁰

In Schouls' view, the strength of 'Locke's position ... [is that it] allows for the view of the self as "a prime mover unmoved."' ²¹ Schouls and others who read Locke in this way locate the heart of his libertarianism in the doctrine of suspension, which provides just the 'break' in the causal chain necessary to secure freedom.

In assessing this incompatibilist interpretation of Locke, it is helpful to have some specification of the 'prime mover unmoved' view. The reference is to Roderick Chisholm's appropriation of an Aristotelian notion. Chisholm writes:

If we are responsible ... then we have a prerogative which some would attribute only to God: each of us, when we act, is a prime mover unmoved. In doing what we do, we cause certain events to happen, and nothing — or no one — causes us to cause those events to happen.²²

Because it helps in locating Locke's theory, let us add some detail to the above. Richard Taylor, a prominent advocate of the view, puts it as follows. An action is only free:

where no antecedent conditions were sufficient for ... [the agent] performing just that action. In the case of an action that is both free and rational, it must be such that the agent who performed it did so for some reason, but this reason cannot have been the cause of it.²³

So specified, it becomes clear that Locke would reject freedom of the 'unmoved mover' variety. For in the section immediately following the introduction of the suspension doctrine, titled, '*To be determined by our own judgment is no restraint to Liberty*,' Locke writes:

20 Ibid., 121n.

21 Ibid., 148

22 'Human Freedom and the Self,' in D. Pereboom, ed., *Free Will* (Indianapolis: Hackett 1997), 152

23 *Metaphysics* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall 1983), 48

tis as much a perfection, that desire or the power of Preferring should be determined by Good, as that the power of Acting should be determined by the Will, and the certainer such determination is, the greater the perfection. Nay, were we determined by any thing but the last result of our Minds, judging of the good or evil of any action, we were not free. (E 264)

As evidence that such intellectual determination perfects, rather than diminishes freedom, Locke turns in the next section to the freedom enjoyed by the blessed and God. The blessed 'are more steadily *determined in their choice of Good* than we; and yet we have no reason to think they are less happy, or less free, than we are' (E 265). In fact, 'God himself cannot choose what is not good; the Freedom of the Almighty hinders not his being determined by what is best' (E 265).²⁴ Any one who wants 'to break loose from the conduct of Reason,' and from the 'restraints of Examination and Judgment' is a madman or fool (E 265).²⁵

In the face of such passages, those who, like Schouls, ascribe libertarianism to Locke, must attribute it to the agent's mental state:

prior to the rule of reason ... these acts (as well as those of determining oneself to examine, judge, and contemplate) appear to be instances of pure self-determination because they are determined by neither desire nor reason.... These acts are to be situated in an area different from that of unobstructed action dominated by unexamined desire, as well as of unobstructed action ruled by reason.²⁶

Unfortunately, according to Schouls, while this is Locke's position, it is, in the final analysis 'incoherent,' for it is:

24 These passages are hard to reconcile with John Colman's claim that '[we] are, therefore, most free when we choose to do that which we know to be morally right in the teeth of our inclination to do the opposite' in *John Locke's Moral Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 1983), 221. Colman's understanding of Lockean freedom, applied to God and the blessed, has the unfortunate result that they are the *least* free beings around.

Schouls notes '[that] Locke's position on human freedom is fundamentally one of pure voluntarism may seem to conflict with his statement on divine freedom' but replies that 'the "necessity" under which God finds himself would, for Locke, not be different from that of human beings' (Schouls, 167n.). The last claim, at any rate, is exactly right, which is why Locke is not a pure voluntarist with respect to either *divine* or *human* freedom.

25 These arguments are extremely Leibnizian in spirit. For (some of) Leibniz's claim that God's choices are determined and free, see A/2/1/117; L 146-7 and Grua 289; AG 20-1. For Leibniz's claim that breaking free from reason's constraints would be a fool's paradise, see A/2/1/117; L 147 and A/6/3/135.

26 Schouls, 155

that of the libertarian who cannot reconcile the absolute *freedom* of pure voluntarism with the autonomy of mastery to be achieved through *submission* to reason.²⁷

Happily, there are important reasons, internal to Locke's account, which preclude such a reading.

Convinced that Locke is a champion of freedom understood in a libertarian fashion, Schouls must postulate some mysterious 'area' where actions are 'determined by neither desire nor reason.'²⁸ According to this reading of Locke, we exercise this kind of freedom in our power of suspension. Yet careful study of Locke's psychological model reveals Locke's rejection of any such possibility. In one of his asides describing how to avoid rash and unwise choices, Locke writes:

To check this Precipitancy, our Understanding and Reason was given us, if we will make a right use of it, to search, and see, and then judge thereupon. Without Liberty the Understanding would be to no purpose: and without Understanding, Liberty (if it could be) would signify nothing. (E 278)

The point, of course, is that in Locke's view any freedom not guided by reason is a fool's paradise (E 265). Since there is no room in Locke's analysis of liberty for freedom not guided by desire or reason, such talk signifies 'nothing' (E 278).²⁹

In addition to the above, two texts in particular tell against Schouls' reading. In Section 48, which follows the introduction of the suspension doctrine and attempts to help us understand that doctrine, Locke adds:

every Man is under a necessity by his constitution, as an intelligent Being, to be determined in *willing* by his own Thought and Judgment, what is best for him to do: else he would be under the determination of some other than himself, which is want of Liberty. (E 264)

Two things are noteworthy about this passage. First, Locke identifies our agency with our rationality. This, in turn, casts serious doubt on the claim that the real 'core' of our freedom is some 'pure self-determination' prior to rational reflection. The second recalcitrant text for Schouls' reading is more explicit. In a summary near the end of the chapter, Locke acknowledges 'that Liberty by some, is placed in an *indifferency* of the Man, antecedent to the determination of his *Will* (E 283). Locke then asks for

27 Ibid., 175

28 Ibid., 155

29 'And he that is at liberty to ramble in perfect darkness, what is his liberty better than if he were driven up and down, as a bubble by the force of the wind?' (E 279).

the location of this '*antecedent indifferency*' and offers a constructive dilemma. It cannot be after the intellect deliberates, because the will always follows the judgment of the understanding. The only other possibility is to locate indifferency prior to rational reflection. This is the very view Schouls attributes to Locke, when he claims 'that Locke's position requires there to be a set of acts in which freedom manifests itself in situations that are prior to the rule of reason.'³⁰ Of this horn of the dilemma, Locke writes:

to place Liberty in an *indifferency*, antecedent to the Thought and Judgment of the Understanding, seems to me to place Liberty in a state of darkness, wherein we can neither see nor say any thing of it; at least it places it in a subject incapable of it, no Agent being allowed capable of Liberty, but in consequence of Thought and Judgment. (*E* 283)

Both of these passages were added to the fifth edition, and were prompted by an exchange of letters on freedom between Locke and Philippus van Limborch in 1701-2.³¹ Van Limborch, the grand-nephew of Episcopius, was the chief professor at the Remonstrants' seminary in Amsterdam. In touch with many of the leading theologians and philosophers of the day, among them Jean LeClerc, Henry More, and Ralph Cudworth, he was also one of the leading defenders of the Arminian understanding of freedom. Locke had met van Limborch during his stay in Holland. By the time of their exchange on freedom, they had been friends for nearly twenty years, and their letters are marked by obvious affection and mutual respect.³² This correspondence is particularly helpful since both men go to some pains to explicate central terms, and because the friendship was deep enough to tolerate honest disagreement.³³

Van Limborch initially thinks that he agrees with Locke's teaching on freedom, that is, he reads Locke as a libertarian. Locke sees the mistake, and corrects him. Late in the exchange, van Limborch focuses on what is at issue between them. Van Limborch is willing to make some concep-

30 Schouls, 155

31 See Coste's letter to Leibniz in (*G*/3/398).

32 Van Limborch, for example, entrusts his son's emotional and commercial welfare to Locke when the son came to England after a business deal nearly ruined him in Holland.

33 Indeed, Locke makes his expectations quite clear to van Limborch on several occasions during this exchange: 'You see how freely I deal with you, expecting the same freedom from you in return' (*CJL*/7/329). He makes a similar remark later; see *CJL*/7/402.

tual and terminological concessions to Locke. What he will not compromise on is that an action is free only if it is indifferent, where this is understood in the following way: '[i]ndifferency is that energy of spirit by-which, when all requisites for acting are present, it can act or not act' (CJL/7/367).³⁴ Van Limborch then adds that he thought Locke endorsed this definition, citing the Section 47 suspension doctrine (CJL/7/370).³⁵ Notice that this Molinist conception of freedom is precisely the conception Schouls is attributing to Locke. Locke answers, asking 'whether the judgment of the understanding, or cognition, is one of the "requisites for acting"' (CJL/7/407). If it is included, there will never be any free actions according to the above definition, for once considered, the action 'is determined by the preference of the preceding judgment of the understanding' (CJL/7/408). If the judgment of the understanding is not included, Locke asks van Limborch to:

consider whether, while you want in this way to make a man free, you are not simply making him a blind agent; and whether, in order to make him free, you are not taking away from him understanding, without which any sort of Liberty cannot exist or be supposed to exist. For liberty does not belong in any way whatsoever to things destitute of cognition and understanding. (CJL/7/408)³⁶

34 This is a near quotation of Luis Molina's famous definition in the *Concordia*, 'that agent is said to be free, who, all the requisites for acting having been posited, can act or not act, or so perform one action that he is able to do the contrary,' in *Liberi Arbitri cum Gratiae Donis, Divina Praescientia, Providentia, Praedestinatione et Reprobatione Concordia* (Ona and Madrid: J. Raeneck 1953), 14.

35 Van Limborch was not the only early reader of Locke to misread Lockean suspension as indeterministic. In his *A Careful and Strict Inquiry into the Modern Prevailing of the Freedom of Will*, published in 1754, Jonathan Edwards writes that anyone who supposed 'that these [libertarian] difficulties and absurdities may be avoided, by saying that the liberty of the mind consists in a power to suspend the act of the will, and so to keep it in a state of indifference...is [making] a great mistake' in P. Ramsey, ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press 1954), 209-10. Edwards does not mention Locke by name in this context, so it is an open question whether Lockean suspension is to be included in this attack on the Arminian notion of freedom. Edwards was profoundly influenced by Locke's *Essay*, and on many issues was a Lockean. My own view is that Edwards thought Locke's introduction of suspension, at the least, invited appropriation by Arminians, and was not among Locke's best thoughts on freedom. Edwards goes so far as to be skeptical of the very existence of suspension as a feature of our psychology: 'this *suspending* of volition, if there be properly any such thing...' (ibid., 210).

36 Having now explained as clearly as possible his grounds for this view, Locke seems to have judged that the discussion had advanced as far as it was going to, given their fundamental differences; consequently he writes little more on freedom thereafter to van Limborch.

Locke, seeing that as close a reader as van Limborch misunderstood his position, incorporates some of his replies into additions to the fifth addition.³⁷ According to Coste, the 48 and 71 passages we have been examining are among the additions written as a direct result of the van Limborch exchange. After listing the corrections Locke made as a result of the correspondence, Coste writes to Leibniz that:

As to the rest, Mr. van Limborch could not make him [Locke] accept liberty of indifference, so strongly held by the Arminians. It is to make him [van Limborch] see the absurdity that Mr. Locke inserted this last addition in the book. (G/3/398)

'This last addition' was the Section 71 constructive dilemma (examined above) directed against a libertarian understanding of the liberty of indifference.³⁸

I take the weight of these considerations as settling the compatibilism question. This leaves the consistency question, which is quite pressing given Locke's repeated claims in 48ff. that our will always follows our

Unfortunately neither Colman nor Schouls, the two most systematic expositors of a libertarian reading of Locke, take the van Limborch correspondence into account in their treatments of Locke on freedom.

37 After Locke's death, Coste sent Leibniz the additions to the fifth edition, and reported on the Locke/Limborch exchange. Leibniz's answering letter to Coste can be found at (G/3/400-4; AG 193-6).

38 These additions introduce an interesting scholarly question of their own. Consider the following two fifth edition sentences:

... every Man is put under a necessity by his constitution, as an intelligent Being, to be determined in *willing* by his own Thought and Judgment, what is best for him to do... (E 264).

... it be certain that in all the particular actions that he *wills*, he does, and necessarily does will that, which he then judges to be good (E 270-1).

In the early sections of editions one through five, when an agent 'is not at *Liberty*, that Agent is under *Necessity*' (E 238). Thus in Locke's preferred terminology, *necessity* means, not 'causally determined,' but simply 'not free.' Yet this new species of necessity is compatible with freedom. A conservative reading of the above is that, to distance himself from libertarian construals of his view, Locke is, in the above passages, using 'necessity' for 'causally determined.' On this reading, Locke's changes are merely terminological. However, if, as in the earlier sections, 'necessity' means more than 'causally determined,' then Locke is attributing an even stronger modality to our cognitive and decision making structure, in particular to the relation between willing and judging, and thus embracing an even more robust version of compatibilism. Unfortunately, by the time of his exchange with van Limborch, Locke's poor health kept him from doing much philosophy, and so these new thoughts, whether (merely) terminological or conceptual in nature, remain unexplained.

judgment of the understanding. The question is why such claims are not equivalent to the claim that the will is determined by the perception of the greatest good, the traditional doctrine of motivation that Locke denies after the first edition. I know of four *prima facie* plausible explanations.

The first and simplest explanation is that the passages in Section 48 and following that seem to endorse Locke's first edition view are simply carry-overs of material from that edition, which he carelessly left in or did not sufficiently revise. Take the passage in Section 50 which states:

If to break loose from the conduct of Reason, and to want that restraint of Examination and Judgment, which keeps us from chusing or doing the worse, be *Liberty*, true Liberty, mad Men and Fools are the only Freemen. (E 265)

This nicely supports the first edition view that the will is determined by the perception of the best, and is in fact a carry-over from that edition.³⁹ According to this explanation, Locke simply left in some material he should have excised. Plausible or otherwise, this reading cannot stand, for Locke adds, 'a man ... necessarily does will that, which he then judges to be good' (E 270-1) to the fifth edition.⁴⁰ While Locke may have carelessly left in some problematic texts from the first edition, it exceeds credulity to suppose that he kept adding, even into the fifth edition, claims that patently contradict his new theory of motivation. The carry-over explanation fails because it cannot account for Locke's repeated claims that willing necessarily follows the judgment of the understanding.

A second possibility is that Locke's suspension doctrine presupposes the medieval distinction between the freedom of exercise (or contradiction) and the freedom of specification (or contrariety). The former is the freedom to enter into an act of willing or not willing; the latter is the freedom with respect to which action is willed, once a choice to act has been reached.⁴¹ At least one of Locke's contemporaries, one Henry Lee, reads Locke's arguments in Sections 24-5 as presupposing this distinction.⁴²

39 See E 255-6n.

40 See also the letter to van Limborch of 12 August 1701 (CJL/7/405-6).

41 For Thomas' explication of the distinction between *ad exercitium actus* and *ad specificationem actus*, see *Summa Theologica* II Qs. 9 and 10.

42 Lee's work, entitled *Anti-Scepticism: or, Notes Upon each Chapter of Mr. Lock's Essay concerning human Understanding*, and published in 1702, is almost a chapter by chapter commentary on the *Essay*. Lee, like many of his contemporaries, attacks the skepticism he sees pervading the *Essay*. His reading of 24ff. can be found in *Anti-Scepticism* (1702; fac. New York: Garland Press 1978), 103.

Importing the distinction to Section 48, one could claim that our ability to suspend, our freedom of exercise, is undetermined, while which act we choose once we have decided to act, our freedom of specification, is determined.⁴³ Read this way, the fifth edition claims that willing necessarily follows the judgment of the understanding are true of the freedom of specification, but not of the freedom of exercise, and thus that Locke is perfectly consistent. This is an intriguing possibility, and initially seems a natural way to read much of what Locke does say about suspension. In 52, Locke takes up the question of what causes suspension, and writes:

Whatever necessity determines to the pursuit of real Bliss, the same necessity, with the same force establishes *suspence, deliberation*, and scrutiny of each successive desire, whether the satisfaction of it, does not interfere with our true happiness, and mislead us from it.... This we are able to do; and when we have done it, we have done our duty, and all that is in our power; and indeed all that needs. For, since the *will*, supposes knowledge to guide its choice, all that we can do, is to hold our *wills* undetermined, till we have examin'd the good and evil of what we desire. What follows after that, follows in a chain of Consequences linked one to another, all depending on the last determination of the Judgment. (E 267)

Both Colman and Schouls are forced to read the necessity in the above quotation as normative in character, that is, as simply implying a moral ought.⁴⁴ Once interpreted in this way, it is easy to read the rest of Section 52 as stating that our decision to suspend and consult where our true happiness lies is undetermined, even while our decision consequent to examination is not.⁴⁵ Despite its surface plausibility, this interpretation is ultimately untenable.

First, it is far from clear that the necessity that 'determines to the pursuit of real Bliss' is merely normative. God is the happiest and freest being, and 'God Almighty himself is under the necessity of being happy'; further 'God himself cannot choose what is not good' (E 265). Locke's view is that we have been constituted as rational beings to be naturally determined to *pursue* true happiness. This does not entail that we always attain true happiness, and his story about why we often fall short changes after the first edition. Second, Locke does not say that our acts of suspension are undetermined; rather he says such suspension keeps

43 Some scholars read Thomas' views on freedom in this way. See, for example, a short commentary entitled 'Liberty with Limits' in the Blackfriars edition of the *ST*, I II Qs. 6-17.

44 Colman, 219 and Schouls, 151-2

45 Parts of 56 (E 270-1) can also be read in a like manner.

'our wills undetermined, till we have examin'd the good and evil of what we desire' (E 267), which is fully compatible with our acts of suspension being deterministically caused. Last and most decisive, this interpretation of suspension as (indeterministic) freedom of exercise presupposes that such acts of suspension are indifferent in van Limborch's libertarian sense. Late in his exchange with van Limborch, Locke unambiguously rejects this possibility:

to speak freely, that antecedent "indifferency" of a man, by which he is supposed, before the determination or decree of the will, to have liberty to determine himself to one or other of opposites, *seem to me not to have any bearing at all on the question of liberty.* (emphasis added; C/JL/7/328)

Locke not only denies such indeterministic suspension, but claims that, were such actions possible, they would have *nothing* to do with human freedom. The remarks to van Limborch preclude imputing to Locke the medieval distinction between the liberty of exercise and specification as a way out of the consistency problem.

A third explanation of why Locke seems to reassert the traditional maxim of the perception of the good determining the will, after so publicly rejecting it, relies on properly distinguishing the scope of the claim. According to this interpretation, while in the second edition Locke rejects the theory that value judgments determine the will for *all* actions, he reasserts it for the subclass of cases where the person suspends and deliberates. Locke now claims that whenever we suspend and deliberate, the result will be that our uneasiness aligns with our judgments about what would be best.⁴⁶ This is an ingenious reconciliation. There are two problems, one philosophical, the other textual. The philosophical worry is why anyone, including Locke, would think that suspension and deliberation magically guarantee that we act according to the dictates of reason. The textual worry is that this reading flies in the face of the case of the weak-willed (but cognizant) drunk that Locke introduces precisely to show why his first edition view is false. Further textual evidence is provided once again by his correspondence. Van Limborch too was troubled by the consistency problem. Locke replies that van Limborch 'confuse(s) the last judgment of the understanding with mature and right judgment.' He goes on to explain:

46 I take Stephen Darwell, one of the few commentators to take up this question, to be defending something close to this third explanation. See *The British Moralists and the Internal Ought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995), 165.

this is the last judgment of which I am speaking. I am speaking of that judgment which in every volition immediately precedes Volition; which is in reality the last judgment, whether it has been well pondered and recast by mature deliberation, or is extemporaneous and sprung from a sudden impulse; and equally determined the will, whether or not it is in accordance with reason. (CJL/7/411)

The third explanation fails because it erroneously assumes, as did van Limborch, that in Locke's usage, the last judgment of the intellect applies only to the result of deliberative ratiocination.

The preceding interpretations of the relation between Locke's first and latter thoughts on the relation between judging and willing fail. If I am right, the real explanation is fairly simple, and Locke's own language bears much of the responsibility for the confusion surrounding this issue. Some review may prove helpful. In the first edition view, value judgments are motivationally efficacious and so are sufficient for action. According to these first thoughts of Locke, there is a necessary connection between the mere perception of an act that would further our true good or happiness, and our willing that action. For Locke took the traditional doctrine to entail the claim that we *always* act in accordance with our perception of the (objective) best. The fact that not all the citizens of Europe are practicing Christians proves this view wrong, so from the second edition onward, he stands with Ovid as against Socrates, quoting from *Metamorphoses*, '*Video meliora proboque, Deteriora sequor*' (E 254).⁴⁷ Realizing that his first account was incomplete, Locke offers a fuller story, incorporating uneasiness as the missing causal link in his model of mental activity. Our future good, not being present, cannot act on our wills (at least directly) since 'tis against the nature of things, that what is absent should operate, where it is not' (E 254). In this psychological analogue of impact mechanism, there is no attraction (or motivation) at a distance. What does 'impact' the will is desire or uneasiness, and so Locke now distinguishes desire from will, as he did not in the first edition. The link between willing and judging is desire or uneasiness, which is what motivates us to the present good. Uneasiness, in turn, is affected by our judgments concerning the goodness (pleasure) or badness (pain) of the options available to us. When Locke claims that 'a man ... necessarily does will that, which he judges to be good' (E 270-1) he does not mean by 'good,' 'the objective good' or the product of 'mature and right judgment,' but only what appears pleasurable to him at the

47 'I see the better way and approve it, but I follow the worse way.' This quotation also appears in *Theodicy* 154, with Leibniz's endorsement.

moment.⁴⁸ For what appears pleasurable to an agent at the present might run quite contrary to her all-things-considered judgment concerning her ultimate pleasure or happiness. An advantage of Locke's 'fuller' account is that it can handle cases of weakness of will in a way that his minimal first edition account could not, and so reflects certain facts of our actual psychology.⁴⁹ Locke could have been clearer about his new view of motivation and action, and its relation to its ancestor. In particular, he could have precluded a fair bit of confusion by distinguishing the objective, long-term, *good* of the first edition view, from the *good* which determines the will in the new view, namely, that which, at present, appears most pleasurable and which may be the result of an impulsive and irrational desire. Be that as it may, his remarks in the second — fifth editions about the relation of judging and willing are not simple restatements of the first edition view, but rather the expression of a more complex and psychologically sensitive model of mental activity.

48 As he puts it to van Limborch, '[for] an action of willing this or that always follows a judgment of the understanding by which a man judges this to be better for here and now' (CJL/7/410).

49 One might claim that some cases of weakness of will, and in particular those of choosing the lesser good while staring at the greater one, are precisely those cases that undermine my solution to the consistency problem. Consider Locke's drunkard. Moved by uneasiness he goes to the tavern although 'he has in his view' the greater good which he 'confesses is far greater than the tickling of his palate with a glass of wine or the idle chat of a soaking club' (E 253). In Locke's account, (a) goodness is happiness, i.e., a state of pleasure, and (b) the greater the goodness the greater the happiness and pleasure, and (c) the greater the goodness, the greater the perception of happiness and pleasure. My reading, combined with (a) - (c) entails, (d) what is perceived to be the greater good, and hence the greater pleasure, at the very moment it is so judged must not appear to be the greatest pleasure of the available options. Since (d) is absurd, my solution to the consistency problem is false. Fortunately (d) does not follow from the interpretation I am recommending, for Locke maintains that in the kind of case under consideration, (c) is false. (c) is false when, under the influence of present desires for his companions and cups, the drunkard's perceptions of the pleasures of the greater good of sobriety and the life to come are occluded by the promise of present pleasure. This is why Locke can repeat Medea's lament that 'I see the better way, but pursue the worse way,' and maintain that since 'every intelligent Being really seeks Happiness, which consists in the enjoyment of Pleasure, without any considerable mixture of uneasiness; 'tis impossible any one should willingly put into his own draught any bitter ingredient, or leave anything in his power, that would tend to his satisfaction, and the completing of his Happiness, but only by a *wrong Judgment* (E 274-5). I am indebted to an anonymous reader for the *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* for calling a version of the above objection to my attention.

IV Locke's Account — A Sketch

Since Locke's account of human agency has been subject to such radically different interpretations, a brief summary might prove useful. We are created by God to aim for our own happiness. However, in the face of the drunk who knows drinking is bad for him, and other everyday cases of weakness of will, Locke abandons his first edition view that the mere *perception* of the good determines our will. When not satisfied with our present state, the immediate 'mechanism' that affects our will are varieties of uneasiness, desires to alleviate some pain or gain some absent good or pleasure. And for the most part we act to satisfy the most pressing unease in a way that is judged to be attainable. But we, like God and other intellectual beings, have wills that are structured so that we don't have to immediately surrender to our most pressing desires. Rather, we have the power to suspend acting on our first-order desires when we recognize that those desires will not further our real happiness. If on reflection, we see that satisfying a first-order desire would not contribute to our real happiness, we form a second-order desire not to have the original desire motivate us.⁵⁰ This process of suspending first-order desires or uneasinesses is caused by the attitudes and reasons a person has. Since by training, education, and the judicious use of reason we shape these 'springs of action' and our very character, we are responsible for making ourselves the agents that we are. Accordingly, absolutely central to the Lockean program for true happiness or salvation is the power we have to change our tastes and desires. This involves suspension of our present desires until we rationally examine the true pleasures and pains involved; this also involves repetition of healthy activities until its pleasure is increased, and explains Locke emphasis in moral training and unprejudiced intellectual perspicacity.⁵¹ Actions not in a person's interests are explained as a miscalculation between long-term happiness and short-term pleasures.

The doctrine of suspension, then, is 'the source of all liberty,' for us, but only given '*the weak and narrow Constitution of our Minds*' (E 276). In

50 The terminology, of course, is Harry Frankfurt's from 'Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person,' *Journal of Philosophy* 68 (1971) 5-20. I use it because it states in more precise language and detail what is, in essence, a Lockean story about desire and willing.

51 For both Locke and Leibniz, the road to true freedom is paved with proper cognition. For such passages in Leibniz, see (G/3/403; AG195; Grua 327, 481; NE 187ff.; T 64). For more on Locke's views on the relation between intellectual and moral training, see *Some thoughts concerning education*.

contrast, God and the blessed have no need to suspend their first-order desires that are not in keeping with their true happiness, since all their desires are already perfectly ordered and directed. Given our cognitive and volitional imperfections, we are not so fortunate. This is why the power to suspend our first-order desires, to evaluate, adjudicate, and decide to act on the right desire, is essential to our freedom. As Locke puts it:

That in this state of Ignorance we short-sighted Creatures might not mistake true felicity, we are endowed with a power to suspend any particular desire, and keep it from determining the *will*, and engaging us in action ... [until] we are ... sufficiently assured of the way. (E 265-6)

The value of our ability to suspend in Locke's account then, is not, as Schouls and others have suggested, that in this power we act as 'a prime mover unmoved,' the *sine qua non* of libertarian freedom. Rather, our ability to suspend is only instrumentally valuable, by allowing us to will that which will promote 'true felicity.' In other words, our ability to suspend, if we exercise it, provides elbow-room within which our liberty can be exercised. When Locke says that our liberty 'therein lies,' he does not mean that it 'therein *consists*.' In Locke's view, the power to suspend is not liberty, but rather provides the space within which liberty can be exercised, given our cognitive and volitional imperfection. On this point, Locke's language is extremely suggestive. He writes that suspension is 'the hinge on which turns the *liberty* of intellectual Beings' (E 266); he also calls suspension 'the great inlet ... [in the] exercise of *liberty* Men have' (E 267). Hinges and inlets provide access to what is desired, but are not themselves intrinsically valuable.⁵²

Before closing, I would like to remark on one more feature that has contributed to the confusion surrounding Locke's account of freedom. Locke has, in my view, two senses of freedom, which he does not properly distinguish for his readers. The first sense is this: 'Liberty is a power to act or not to act according as the Mind directs' (E 282). This is the standard and familiar compatibilist account of freedom that we find, for example, in Hume. However, there is another sense of freedom in Locke, that we see in the following:

'tis as much a perfection, that desire or the power Preferring should be determined by Good, as that the power of Acting should be determined by the Will, and the certainer such determination is, the greater is the perfection. (E 264)

52 For Locke's sensitivity to the nuances of language and metaphor, especially in connection with the problem of freedom, see *CJL*/7/406.

According to this second sense of freedom, an action is free to the extent that it is rational and in accordance with the objective good.⁵³ This is the freedom God and the blessed enjoy, and it is that to which we aspire. The first variety of freedom is merely the inlet to rational freedom. The second is what really matters for Locke.

V Summary

I have argued for two conclusions in this paper. First, that following Leibniz's lead, we can interpret Locke's remarks as a fairly unified theory. In particular, we can and should read Locke as claiming that human freedom requires determinism. 2.21 is Locke's quite remarkable attempt to satisfy our *prima facie* conflicting intuitions that free actions must have determinant causes, many of which we are responsible for, and that free actions are avoidable. Second, I have claimed that Leibniz's and Locke's theories of freedom are of the same family, which is remarkable given their differences on nearly every other front.⁵⁴

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53 Fully delineating these two senses of freedom in Locke is beyond the scope of this paper, which was written before I came across Gideon Yaffe's *Liberty Worth the Name: Locke on Free Will* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2000). Those interested in exploring this distinction further should consult chapters one and two of Yaffe's excellent book.

54 Early versions of this paper were read at the Midwest Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy at the University of Chicago, a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar in Syracuse, and at Trinity College, Hartford. I am indebted to my audience on those occasions for helpful comments and questions. I am particularly grateful to Jonathan Bennett, Andy Bettel, Vere Chappell, David and Mary Norton, Robert Sleigh, Catherine Wilson and two anonymous readers for the *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* for comments that improved the paper.

