

6. LOCKE

Locke's account of human freedom and of the factors that determine our behavior is more detailed and subtle than those of the philosophers we have considered so far. This account attracted considerable attention at the time of its first publication in the *Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690); and it was a major force in shaping thinking on the subject, especially in Britain, for a good century afterwards. Locke's treatment of freedom has not, however, been studied much by twentieth-century scholars, despite a lively interest in other areas of his work. The reasons for this neglect are not hard to fathom. Locke originally presented his views on freedom and motivation in a chapter of the *Essay* (Chapter xxi of Book II) that was long, dense, and poorly organized. He then revised this chapter extensively for the *Essay*'s second edition in 1694, and made significant further changes in it for the fourth and fifth editions, published in 1700 and 1706, respectively. In some cases these changes reflected substantial changes of opinion on Locke's part. But instead of recasting his whole discussion, or even replacing selected portions of it with freshly-written material, he kept almost everything he had already published, and simply inserted new passages at various points in the existing text. The result is a patchwork, replete with apparent inconsistencies, the ordering principles of which are hidden at best. Only with the 1975 publication of the Clarendon edition of the *Essay*, edited by Peter Nidditch, has it been possible for readers to tell, from a single source, what parts of Locke's discussion were written when, and thus distinguish the different stages of his thinking, whence the various lines of argument he pursues can be identified and sorted out.¹³

In common with the other leading philosophers of the seventeenth century, Locke was a compatibilist: he not only believed both in freedom and in determinism but explicitly denied that these two preclude each other. In the *Essay*, however, he presents his views on freedom and what he calls 'the determination of the will' more or less independently of one another. He introduces the idea of freedom (or liberty) early in Chapter xxi of Book II, the official subject of which is *power*. Power in general, Locke says, is an attribute of an individual substance, by which it is able to do or suffer something. The power is active when it enables the substance possessing it to perform an action of some kind; it is passive when it makes the substance liable to be affected in some way. Will is an active power belonging to rational agents; volition or willing is the exercise of this power, that is, the action that having a will enables an agent to perform. Volitions are actions in their own right, but every volition is ordered or directed to some further action of the same agent - what might be called the target of the volition. A volition, more specifically, is either a volition to do or a volition not to do something - to forbear doing it.

When an agent wills to do something, and does it, and does it because she has willed it, she is said to have acted in accord with her will, and her action (that is, the target action) is voluntary. When an agent doesn't do something she wills to do, or does something else instead of that, then her forbearance or alternative action is involuntary, and she is said to have forborne or acted against her will. Also involuntary are actions performed merely without being willed, though these are not done against the will of the agent. Only the actions of rational agents are voluntary, since only such agents are capable of willing. But involuntary actions are performed by non-rational as well as by rational agents. Indeed, all of the actions of beings without reason or thought are involuntary.

Locke first defines freedom as the property of a rational agent whereby he has the power to act or not to act 'according to the preference or direction of his own mind' (*Ess.* II.xxi.8: 237), that is, in accord with his will. It might appear from this that Locke, like Hobbes, identifies free with voluntary agency - that being free for him just consists in doing or being able to do what one wills. And so a number of commentators have taken him to do. But in fact his position is that voluntariness is merely a necessary condition of freedom. This is the point of his famous example of the man locked in a room with someone he longs to be with. The man 'stays willingly' in the room, that is, his doing so is voluntary. But his staying is not free because, being locked in, 'he is not at liberty not to stay, he has not freedom to be gone' (*Ess.* II.xxi.10: 238). Hence 'where-ever any performance or forbearance are not equally in a Man's power; where-ever doing or not doing, will not equally follow upon the preference of his mind directing it, there he is not *Free*, though perhaps the Action may be voluntary' (*Ess.* II.xxi.8: 237). And again, 'where-ever ... compulsion takes away that Indifferency of Ability on either side to act, or to forbear acting, there *liberty* ... presently ceases' (*Ess.* II.xxi.10: 238). Locke's freedom, therefore, includes this liberty of indifference as well as what Descartes and others have called the liberty of spontaneity: freedom means having a choice in addition to choosing. To be free an agent must not only do something because she has willed it, and thus be able to do what she wills; she must also be able, by willing, to do something other than that - her action must be avoidable, she must have an alternative to it.

Things that lack freedom, for Locke, are necessary; the word 'necessary', at least in the chapter on power, just means 'not free'. Necessity, like freedom, is properly a property of agents; but Locke sometimes calls actions with respect to which an agent is 'under necessity' 'necessary actions'. (Although he never makes the parallel move from 'free agent' to 'free action', there is no reason for him - or for us - not to use the latter expression in stating his position.) An action may be necessary because it is done by an inanimate or otherwise non-rational agent; or because its (rational) agent either is compelled by some irresistible internal or external force to do it against his will, or else merely fails to exercise his will with respect to it. Thus all involuntary actions are necessary for Locke. But likewise necessary are those voluntary actions which an agent cannot avoid doing because of internal or external constraints which prevent him from performing any alternative action, including that of merely forbearing the action he does.

It is important to note that no action is necessary for Locke simply by being the effect of antecedent causes. Locke's use of 'necessary' thus differs from that of Hobbes and other 'classical' compatibilists - Calvin and Hume, for example.¹⁴ For the latter, 'necessary' (when applied to actions) means 'causally determined', and in this sense, they maintain, an action can be necessary *and* free: that is what makes them compatibilists. For Locke, on the contrary, since 'necessary' means 'not free', the same action cannot be both free and necessary. Is Locke then an incompatibilist with respect to freedom and necessity? Is the freedom he advocates the 'freedom from necessity' extolled by Bramhall and his fellow-Arminians? No, for Locke's disagreement with Hobbes and company is only verbal. He believes, as they do and the Arminians do not, that all human actions are causally determined, and hence that all free actions are. So Locke must himself be a compatibilist, and indeed, as we shall see, he so declares himself to be, on several occasions.

Locke claims that it follows from his view of freedom that the 'long agitated' question, '*Whether Man's Will be free, or no*', is 'unintelligible'. It makes no more sense to say that the will is, or is not, free than to say that one's sleep is swift or his virtue square. This is so because '*Liberty*, which is but a power, belongs only to Agents, and cannot be an attribute or modification of the *Will*, which is also but a Power' (*Ess.* II.xxi.14: 240). This point, that there is a kind of 'category-mistake' involved in attributing freedom to the will instead of to the man or person which is the true subject of human action, was not original with Locke: the same point was made earlier by Hobbes and by the Cambridge Platonist Cudworth.¹⁵ But it is Locke's version of it that has become famous; and it is he who usually is credited with it in standard histories of philosophy.

Having disposed of the will as a subject of freedom, Locke concedes that those who ask 'whether the *will* be free' may have a different question in mind. What they may mean to ask is not whether the will itself has the property of freedom, but whether an agent possessing a will is free to exercise it: '*Whether a man be free to will*' (*Ess.* II.xxi.22: 245). For though Locke distinguishes voluntary actions, actions that take place 'consecutive to willing', from the volitions which prompt or give rise to them - the former are overt and physical, the latter covert and purely mental - he nonetheless takes the latter themselves to be actions: they are actions of willing (or acts thereof: Locke draws no principled distinction between actions and acts). And he acknowledges that certain philosophers - he has the Arminians in mind - not only do admit free volitions, but contend that no genuine freedom is possible unless volitions are free. For such philosophers, Locke observes, 'a Man is not free at all, if he be not as free to will, as he is to act, what he wills' (*Ess.* II.xxi.22: 245). Whether there is any such freedom or not Locke regards as a perfectly intelligible question, and he forthwith proceeds to consider it.

In fact Locke construes the question here in two different ways: what he actually considers are two distinct questions. One is whether a man is free 'in respect of willing any Action in his power once proposed to his Thoughts'. The other is whether 'a Man be at liberty to will either Motion, or Rest; Speaking, or Silence; which he pleases'. It is clear that this distinction of questions is based on the Scholastic distinction between the will's freedom of exercise and its freedom of specification, or between the liberty of contradiction and the liberty of contrariety, although Locke does not mention this distinction, by either name. Nor does he dwell upon the difference between the two questions. Since his answer to both turns out to be negative, it suffices for him to conclude simply that a man is not free with respect to his willing, or that no volition is free. But Locke reaches this negative conclusion by different arguments in the two cases, and it is instructive to examine these arguments separately.

Locke takes up the first question, whether agents have the freedom of exercise with respect to their willing, in Section 23 of the Chapter xxi. His conclusion is that once a man considers an action, or starts deliberating about it, he 'cannot be free' in respect of willing it. He argues for this conclusion by claiming (1) that such a man is logically bound either to do or not to do the action in question; (2) that he cannot do it without willing to do it; (3)

that he cannot not do it without willing not to do it; and hence (4) that it is ‘unavoidably necessary’ that he will either to do it or not to do it, and so unavoidable that he perform some action of willing, as opposed to not willing at all: there is no logical room for him not to will something.

This is pretty obviously a bad argument - unusual for Locke. The obvious flaw in it was spotted by Leibniz. Leibniz agrees, speaking through Theophile in the *New Essays*, that ‘it is necessary that the action about which one is deliberating must exist or not exist’. But he denies that ‘one necessarily has to decide on its existence or non-existence’, since ‘its non-existence could well come about in the absence of any decision’ (Leibniz apparently grants that its existence would not ensue if it were not decided on). In particular, Leibniz has Theophile say, ‘one can suspend one’s choice, [as] happens quite often, especially when other thoughts interrupt one’s deliberation’ (*Nouv. ess.* II.xxi.23).

It might seem surprising that Locke should have missed such an obvious point. Even more surprising is the fact that he himself acknowledges the very power of suspension that Leibniz uses against him. He does not do so in his original version of the Chapter xxi, in which the argument under discussion first appeared. But Locke’s doctrine of suspension (as we shall henceforth refer to it) is a prominent feature of the revised version of this chapter that came out in the *Essay*’s second edition - and also of all subsequent versions. And Locke made no change in his argument for this edition, or for the third or fourth editions either. Finally, in revising his chapter again for the fifth edition, he did add some qualifications to his text, having been brought by his Arminian friend Philippus van Limborch to see a connection between the doctrine of suspension and his denial of freedom in willing. But Locke evidently failed to see any such connection in the interim period.

We shall have more to say later about Locke’s doctrine of suspension, and about his correspondence with Limborch on the subject of freedom. First we need to consider Locke’s answer to the second of the questions he raises regarding the freedom of willing. This is the question whether an agent has the freedom of specification with respect to his volitions, the freedom, for example, to will to rise from one’s chair as opposed to willing to stay seated. Locke addresses this question in Section 25 of Chapter xxi. ‘To ask’, he says, ‘whether a Man be at Liberty to will either Motion or Rest; Speaking, or Silence; which he pleases, is to ask, whether a Man can *will*, what he *wills*; or be pleased with what he is pleased with’. And those who answer this question affirmatively, he continues, ‘must suppose one Will to determine the Acts of another, and another to determinate that; and so on *in infinitum*’; which is, he concludes, an ‘absurdity’ (*Ess.* II.xxi.25-26: 247).

The argument that Locke is relying on here is hardly explicit, but it appears to go something like this: (1) an agent *m* is free with respect to an action *d* only if *m* wills *d*; (2) *m* wills *d* only if there is an act of willing *w*, done by *m*, which determines *d*; (3) hence [by (1) and (2)], if *d* is itself an act of willing, then *m* is free with respect to *d* only if *m* wills (via *w*) an act of willing (viz. *d*); (4) if *d* and *w* are acts of willing and *w* determines *d*, then *w* and *d* are distinct, that is, they belong to different ‘Wills’; (5) hence [by (1), (2) and (4)], if *m* is free with respect to *d* and *d* is an act of willing, then ‘[the acts of] one Will ... determine the Acts of another’; (6) *m* is free with respect to *d* only if *m* is free with respect to *w*; (7) hence [by (1), (2), (4), (6) and parity of reasoning], *m* is free with respect to *d* only if there is another act of willing *v*, done by *m* and distinct from *w*, which determines *w*, and ‘so on *in infinitum*’.

If the foregoing is indeed what Locke intended, then he is one of the earliest purveyors of a pattern of reasoning - an *argumentum ad regressum* - that has since been a favorite of anti-libertarians, from Edwards to Ryle. As stated, Locke’s argument is valid, and its operative premises are (1), (2), (4), and (6). (1) and (2) follow from Locke’s definition of free agency and his understanding of voluntary action, respectively. Premise (4) is an instance of the principle that the will is determined by something other than itself (whence ‘no will determines itself’ - call this the ‘heteronomy principle’), which Locke affirmed in almost these words in his initial version of Chapter xxi (*Ess.* 1 II.xxi.29: 248n) and did not repudiate in any later version. Premise (6) is an instance of the principle that a free action derives or inherits its freedom from the volition which determines it (whence no action is free unless its determining volition is free - call this the ‘inheritance principle’). This, however, is not a principle that Locke affirms. Furthermore, it is a principle that is typically held by the very Arminian thinkers - by Hobbes’ antagonist Bramhall and by his own correspondent Limborch, for example - that Locke is attacking in this section: indeed he comes close in a later section (*Ess.* 1 II.xxi.33: 257-8n and *Ess.* 2-5 II.xxi.50: 266) to explicitly denying it. This fact pulls the sting from his reasoning here, for it means that he cannot consistently use it against its intended target. Thus it turns out once again that Locke has no sound basis for concluding that no agent has freedom with respect to his willing, either the freedom of exercise or that of specification.

Basis or no, Locke maintained his position on the freedom of willing through the *Essay*'s first four editions. And even in the fifth edition, where under pressure from Limborch he relented, conceding that 'yet there is a case wherein a Man is at Liberty in respect of *willing*' (*Ess.* 5 II.xxi.56: 270), he made no change in his argument of Section 25.¹⁶ The problem thus raised for the proper interpretation of Locke's thought again turns on his doctrine of suspension, for the case mentioned in the passage just quoted is that of a man who, while deliberating, 'may suspend the act of his choice from being determined for or against the thing proposed' (*ibid.*). Locke introduces this doctrine as he is presenting his 'second thoughts' (in the *Essay*'s second edition) not on freedom but on the factors that determine the will. Before broaching that subject, however, we must lay out his views concerning determination in general.

In general, when Locke says that x determines y he means that x causes y . Since he holds, as we have noted, that everything that happens in the world is the product of antecedent causes, he holds that everything, including every human action, is determined. In this he is in agreement with Hobbes and Spinoza (and indeed with Descartes, Malebranche, and Leibniz). But unlike these philosophers, Locke offers no defense of this doctrine of universal causation; indeed he only rarely mentions it in the *Essay* (e.g. at *Ess.* IV. x.3: 620; but see *Works* IV 61 and *Drafts* I 31-2).

Locke also takes for granted, with little notice, a conception of the human will - or rather of volitions, which are the acts or exercises of the will - which was shared by nearly every thinker who considered these matters in medieval and early modern times. According to this conception, volitions are crucial links in the causal chains that connect human behavior, not only with its physical environment, but also with the creative act or acts of God by which (they all believed) the whole universe first came to be. Volitions for these thinkers have two different causal roles. On the one hand, they are the causes of the voluntary actions that follow them, the actions they determine. On the other, they are the effects of other factors which precede and determine them, both 'motives' within the mind and 'nature' and 'circumstances' outside it. In the former role, no volition was supposed to be the sole cause of any voluntary action, or thought to be sufficient therefor. Volitions were taken to be the last links in extended chains of antecedent causes; or better, to be members, in Hobbes' phrase, of 'concourses' of partial causes which themselves belong to series of like concourses all stretching back to God. But volitions are nonetheless, for Locke as for the other thinkers of his day, genuinely causal factors which help both to prompt and to shape or 'specify' voluntary actions, and whose occurrence is necessary for such actions.

Locke does not have much to say about volitions in their role as causes of voluntary actions. It is their other role, as effects, especially of motives or mental factors, that draws his attention in the *Essay*. Over half of the long chapter on power in the first edition is filled with his discussion of 'what determines the will'; and in the second and following editions, this discussion is significantly expanded: it was on this question that the most important changes in Locke's thinking occurred.

He begins this discussion in the first edition by stating the principle, noted earlier, of heteronomy: 'the Will ... is determined by something without it self' (*Ess.* 1 II.xxi.29: 248n; this statement dropped out of subsequent editions, but Locke certainly did not give up the principle). He then asks what determines it, and in due course answers that 'Good ..., the greater Good is that alone which determines the Will' (*Ess.* 1 II.xxi.29: 251n). Since good is identified with happiness and happiness with pleasure (and evil with misery and pain), it follows that what really determines the will is pleasure (and pain, in a negative way). But even this is not the bottom of the matter. For most of the things we do, Locke points out, are motivated not by present pleasure but by the expectation or hope of pleasure to come; and what 'makes us will the doing or omitting any [such] Action ... *is the greater Good* appearing to result from that choice in all its Consequences, as far as at present they are represented to our view' (*Ess.* 1 II.xxi.37: 269-70n). But in order for some good to appear to result from the represented consequences of an agent's future choice, the agent must envisage those consequences and estimate the pleasure they will bring. And this requires the use of his understanding to perform intellectual operations: to make judgements and form beliefs. Thus Locke's basic position in the first edition of the *Essay* is that it is some cognitive or intellectual factor, some 'judgement of the understanding', that finally determines the will and causes our volitions - at least in the majority of cases.

That this is indeed Locke's meaning was seen by William Molyneux, who in a letter charged his friend with 'seeming to make all Sins to proceed from our Understandings', adding that 'it seems harsh to say, that a Man shall be Damn'd, because he understands no better than he does' (*Corr.* IV 600-1). Molyneux is accusing Locke, in effect, of intellectual determinism. (Molyneux was evidently a disciple of the libertarian William King, author of the celebrated *De origine mali*, whose criticisms of the *Essay*'s account of freedom he forwarded to Locke: see

Corr. IV 540.) Locke later confessed that Molyneux's reaction to his position reinforced doubts he himself had had about it, and encouraged him to seek an alternative. It was the 'second thoughts' resulting from this effort, he says, that caused him to revise his chapter on power for the *Essay*'s second edition.

Locke's new view of motivation is certainly quite different from its predecessor. What determines the will, he now says, is not 'the greater good in view: But some ... *uneasiness* a Man is at present under' (*Ess.* 2-5 II.xxi.31: 250-1). This uneasiness is an occurrent feeling, a kind of pain: it is the feeling that constitutes desire (or at least always accompanies it). In his earlier account Locke had drawn no clear distinction between desiring and willing. Now he pronounces them 'two distinct Acts of the mind', each with its own kind of object and distinctive phenomenal character (*Ess.* 2-5 II.xxi.30: 249-50). What happens when an agent performs a voluntary action, according to Locke's new view, is that she first desires something, and then wills an action designed to attain the object of this desire. Her desiring determines her will, in the sense of causing an act of volition, which in turn produces the action. To desire something, Locke stresses, is not merely to envisage it; it is to feel the pain of not having it. And it is only this feeling of pain, this uneasiness, he says, that actually touches the will, so as to 'set us on work'. Thus 'tis uneasiness alone [that] operates on the will' (*Ess.* 2-5 II.xxi.37: 254); only uneasiness 'immediately determines' its choice (*Ess.* 2-5 II.xxi.33: 252).

In Locke's new account, therefore, what determines the will is some present feeling, and not any cognitive or intellectual state of the agent. So it appears that the intellectualism - if not the determinism - of his earlier position has been repudiated. Such indeed has been the judgement of several commentators. But this appearance is deceptive. For while it is true that a new, non-intellectual factor has been added to the motivational situation in Locke's second view, it is not true that determination by intellectual factors has been removed from it. For agents' judgements of the good and bad attaching to the actions they project continue to play a critical role in the motivation of these actions.

In the first place, desire itself contains an intellectual element for Locke. Desire must include a feeling of uneasiness, but it also must have an object, and the desirer must be aware of this object. That is, she must cognize or conceive the thing she desires, and she must conceive it as something good, a source of pleasure - which is to say, she must believe something about it. Second, it is a significant tenet of Locke's new position that desires are capable of being generated by antecedent conceptions and judgements of the goodness of the object desired. Thus 'due, and repeated Contemplation', he says, is capable of bringing some absent good, which we have recognized as such but have not judged to be essential to our present happiness, 'nearer to the Mind', of giving 'some relish' to it, and raising 'in us some desire; which then beginning to make a part of our present *uneasiness*, ... comes in its turn to determine the *will*' (*Ess.* 2-5 II.xxi.45: 262). In this way, Locke continues, 'by a due consideration and examining any good proposed, it is in our power, to raise our desires, ... whereby [that good] may come to work upon the *will*, and be pursued' (*ibid.*). It follows, he later notes, that it is within 'a Man's power to change the pleasantness, and unpleasantness' of things (*Ess.* 2-5 II.xxi.69: 280). This is not the view that Locke had taken in his original version of Chapter xxi. Indeed, he explicitly maintained the contrary, saying that it is not 'in [anyone's] choice, whether he will, or will not be better pleased with one thing than another' (*Ess.* 1 II.xxi.28: 248n).

Another feature of Locke's new version of Chapter xxi provides even more telling testimony to the importance of intellectual operations in motivation. This is the doctrine of suspension, which made its first appearance there. Locke's new view is that what moves us to will is always some particular uneasiness. But it is a fact of our lives in this world, he observes, that we are beset with a 'multitude of wants, and desires', and thus with 'many uneasinesses', all competing for the will's attention, so to speak, at the same time. Which of these then is the one that wins this competition? 'It is natural', Locke answers, 'that the greatest, and most pressing [uneasiness] should determine the *will* to the next action'. And so it does, he continues, 'for the most part; but not always. For the mind [has] a power to *suspend* the execution and satisfaction of any of its desire, and so all, one after the other', and thus keep the will from being determined. That there is such a power Locke claims is 'evident in Experience', a datum that 'every one daily may Experiment in himself'. But the point of suspending one's desires is 'to consider the objects of them; examine them on all sides, and weigh them with others'; and thus 'to examine, view, and judge, of the good or evil of what we are going to do'. In many cases such suspension results in a change in the content or relative strength of the agent's desires, and her will is determined differently from the way it would otherwise have been. But in every case, once, 'upon due *Examination*, we have judg'd, we have done our duty' as rational beings, 'all that we can, or ought to do, in pursuit of our happiness' (*Ess.* 2-5 II.xxi.47: 263-4).

Thus Locke's contention is that by suspending her desires an agent is often able to bring her will under the control of her thought and judgement, even if she cannot always do so. This control is not direct: it must be mediated by desire, since only desire is capable of determining the will immediately. But when a volition is produced by a desire that after a process of suspension and examination has been modified or generated by some action of the understanding, then it is ultimately that action that is responsible for the volition. It is the agent's judgement as to what is good or bad for her to do that ultimately determines her will. So again from this perspective it is clear that Locke is still essentially an intellectual determinist in the *Essay's* second edition, even though he there takes the whole business of motivation to be more complicated than he had initially supposed it to be.

That Locke himself saw no fundamental change in this aspect of his position is shown by the fact that, in his new version of Chapter xxi, he not only retains but reinforces several remarks that he had made in defense of intellectualism in the old one. Not only is it 'not an imperfection in Man, [but] the highest perfection of intellectual Natures', he says in the first edition, to have our wills determined by our judgements of good. It also is no 'restraint or diminution of Freedom, ... not an Abridgment, [but] the end and use of our Liberty' (*Ess.* 1 II.xxi.30: 251-2n; note the explicit compatibilism of this last statement); and he carries on in this same vein for three more sections (to *Ess.* 1 II.xxi.33: 259n). In the second edition Locke repeats this whole discussion almost verbatim, while interjecting several new comments designed to strengthen or vivify it, especially ones reflecting the new doctrine of suspension. Thus at the end of the section in which this doctrine is introduced he maintains that 'tis not a fault, but a perfection of our nature to desire, will, and act according to the last result of a fair *Examination*' (*Ess.* 2-5 II.xxi.47: 264). Again in the following section, in another explicit statement of his compatibilism, he declares that 'were we determined by any thing but the last result of our own Minds, judging of the good or evil of any action, we were not free' (*ibid.*). And finally, in a passage added to that same section for the *Essay's* fifth edition, Locke says that '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: else he would be under the determination of some other than himself, which is want of Liberty' (*ibid.*). It is hard to imagine plainer statements of intellectual determinism than these.

As should be evident from the foregoing survey, Locke's doctrine of suspension is entirely in harmony with his account of determination, not only in the *Essay's* second edition but in the first as well. Its relation, however, to his account of freedom, in both editions (for this account hardly changed from the one to the other), is problematic. We have already noted that this doctrine controverts a premise of one of Locke's arguments for the proposition that agents have no freedom with respect to their volitions. This is the argument to the specific conclusion that there is no freedom of exercise with respect to acts of willing. But is the doctrine of suspension inconsistent with this conclusion itself? And is it inconsistent with the conclusion of Locke's regress argument, that there is no freedom of specification with respect to volitions?

It might be supposed that these questions are moot, in view of Locke's admission to Limborch, also already noted, that the possibility of suspending one's choice in a process of deliberation entails that 'yet there is a case wherein a Man is at Liberty in respect of *willing*' (*Ess.* 5 II.xxi.56: 270; here Locke does not distinguish the freedom of exercise from that of specification). But this is not so, for Locke may have been mistaken in making this concession to Limborch. As an Arminian, Limborch was himself convinced, not only that agents could freely determine their volitions, but that no overt voluntary action could be free unless the volition that produced it was free: he believed in and frequently professed the inheritance principle cited earlier (see, e.g., *Corr.* VII 368-9). And Limborch thought that the doctrine of suspension committed Locke to this Arminian view (see *Corr.* VII 370). But it is not at all clear that it does. Limborch must have supposed that an agent who suspends her choice in mid-deliberation does so voluntarily, that is, by an act of willing. (And Locke would surely have agreed with this: he would not have thought that a suspension of choice is something that just happens to one during deliberation.) But this volition is a volition to suspend one's choice, or at most one not to will. It is not a volition to will something, and hence not a case of voluntary willing, which both Locke and Limborch maintain a case of free willing would have to be: a free action must at the least be voluntary. Limborch might argue that if stopping one's will can be accomplished voluntarily, then so can starting it up again: an agent who has suspended her choice, examined, and judged, can then by willing start deliberating once again, and this time carry the process through to a volition to act. But this new volition would still not be one that the agent had willed. At most she would have willed to reinstate her various desires (perhaps with a new one added or some of the old ones given different strengths), and it would then be one of these desires that brought about her volition to act. Limborch might then claim that willing

to start deliberating as to *d*, having judged that *d* is the best thing to do in the situation, is tantamount to willing to will *d*. And perhaps he would be right to do so: he might hold with Aquinas, for example, that ‘when you will the means to an end you thereby also [*eodem actu*] will the end’ (*Summa th.* IaIIae q8 a3 resp.). But that he is right is at the least not obvious; and it is less obvious still that anything in Locke’s position commits him to this result.

It is important to note, however, that Locke *could* have accepted the reasoning just attributed to Limborch consistently with the rest of his position. Some critics have claimed that the doctrine of suspension by itself is incompatible with Locke’s determinism, intellectual or otherwise (one such is Edmund Law: see King 1781, pp. 214-16 n. 48). But this is wrong. An agent who suspends her choice, even one who does so voluntarily, need not be doing anything uncaused: neither her action of suspension nor the volition by which it is produced is ipso facto undetermined. And even if, as Limborch insists and Locke admits in the *Essay*’s fifth edition, an action of suspension requires a volition that is free and not merely voluntary, there is no need for the further volition that is required to produce that free volition to be free itself, or even voluntary. (Limborch would presumably think otherwise, on the basis of the inheritance principle; but there is no reason for Locke to do so). Locke logically could, therefore, agree with the Arminians that there are free volitions (albeit only in cases of suspension) without becoming an Arminian himself - that is, without adopting even their inheritance principle much less their indeterminism.

One further complication arising from Locke’s advocacy of the doctrine of suspension needs to be mentioned. When, in Section 47 of the *Essay*’s second edition, he first calls attention to our power of suspending our desires in mid-deliberation, Locke links this power to freedom (or liberty) in a way that at first sight seems perplexing. In this power, he says, ‘lies the liberty Man has’; and again, ‘this [power] seems to me the source of all liberty; in this seems to consist that, which is (as I think improperly) call’d *Free will*’ (*Ess.* 2-5 II.xxi.47: 263). What these statements suggest is a definition of freedom that is different from the one he has been promoting, or at the least a restriction of the latter to cases involving suspension. (Remember, the only freedom in question at this point is the freedom of overt voluntary actions, those ‘consecutive to volition’: it is only later that Locke extends freedom to volitions themselves.) But this surely is not Locke’s intention. For one thing, he never develops any such suggestion or even repeats it either in the second or in any subsequent edition. He must here be speaking rhetorically, exaggerating the true state of things in order to stress the importance of suspending our desires in our lives as rational and moral agents. What he is literally saying is something like this: that it is by exercising our power of suspension that we can best achieve (as he does say in the very next section) the ‘very improvement and benefit of [Freedom]’, the ‘end and use of our *Liberty*’ (*Ess.* 2-5 II.xxi.48: 264; cf. *Ess.* 1 II.xxi.30: 251-2n).

¹³ In this article, the views attributed to Locke are those maintained in all five of the earliest editions of the *Essay*, unless indicated otherwise: either that the view in question was first introduced in the second, fourth or fifth edition, or that it was abandoned after the first, third, or fourth edition (the second and third editions are virtually identical).

¹⁴ For Hobbes' use of 'necessary' see Section 3 of this article, pp. xx-xx above; for Calvin's see *Inst.* I.xvi.9, II.ii.7, II.iii.5, and II.v.1; for Hume's see *THN* II.iii.1-2 and *EHU* viii.

¹⁵ See *Eng. Works* IV 265 and Cudworth 1838, pp. 24-6.

¹⁶ Limborch exerted this pressure on Locke in a series of letters, beginning in 1700, concerning the latter's doctrine of freedom and motivation, as it had been stated in the second edition of the *Essay*. These letters, together with Locke's replies, were first published in Locke 1708; they are included, with English translations and helpful notes, in de Beer's edition of Locke's correspondence, see *Corr.* VII 167-695 passim.

