John Locke's moral person.

Darryl George Fanick

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JOHN LOCKE'S MORAL PERSON

by

Darryl George Fanick

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research through the Department of Philosophy in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts at The University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

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ABSTRACT

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In this thesis my main task is to argue that moral agency is fundamental to Lockean personhood. I attempt to explicate morality's place in Locke's notion of the person by laying out the connections between his explicit discussion of personhood, in Book 2 Chapter 27 of the Essay Concerning Human Understanding, and morality, in Book 2 Chapter 28 of the Essay and in Some Thoughts Concerning Education.

I begin in Chapter 1 by examining, and then discussing the moral significance of, Locke's own claims about person and personal identity. In the first two sections of Chapter 2 I lay out the connection between Locke's "Forensick" (moral) person and his moral theory, and draw from his moral theory the central characteristics of the person. In the third section of this chapter I begin to look critically at Locke's concept of the person and argue that there is a tension in Locke's writings between two characteristics he ascribes to person--namely they are motivated by pleasure and pain yet they are intelligent agents who govern their
lives by reason. This leads to Chapter 2 which looks at another moral theme related to personhood (accountability) in the hope of resolving this tension. In the conclusion I discuss what Chapter 3 means to this tension, and criticize Locke's theory of personhood in light of some of Friedrich Nietzsche's thoughts on the value of human life.
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INTRODUCTION

In 1690 John Locke (1632-1704) published *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Four years later he had revised this publication and released a second. It was in this second edition that Chapter 27 of Book 2—"Of Identity and Diversity"—first appeared. While Locke had made some remarks about the person at the beginning of Book 2 Chapter 1 in the first edition, his main discussion of the concept of the person is in 2.27.

When I first envisioned this thesis I saw it as an opportunity to examine Locke's concept of the person (through analyzing the chapter "Of Identity and Diversity"), and to study the criticisms and developments of that concept in other philosophers such as David Hume (1711-1776). However, when I began looking at what Locke had to say about the person, I realized there was more than enough to do in trying to understand what a person is in Locke's own philosophy.

In this thesis I have extended my study of Locke's concept of the person beyond his explicit discussions in Chapters 1 and 27 of Book 2 of the *Essay*. I have taken seriously Locke's claim at the end of Chapter 27 of Book 2 that "person" is a "Forensick Term". I have taken him as
claiming that "person" is a moral term. Hence I have gone beyond Locke's explicit discussions of the problem of identity of persons in Chapters 1 and 27 of Book 2 and argued that there is a concept of person as moral agent underlying his discussions of morality in Book 2 Chapter 28 of the Essay, and in Some Thoughts Concerning Education.

My task in this thesis is to explicate the place of morality in Lockean personhood. I wish to show that moral agency is fundamental to Locke's concept of the person. In Chapter 1 I will examine Locke's discussion of personhood proper—what Locke himself claims about person and personal identity in 2.27—as well as the moral significance of what he claims. Chapter 2 will begin the study of the person as moral subject. Once I have established the connection between Locke's notions of personhood and morality I will draw from Locke's moral theory the central characteristics of the moral person. At the end of this chapter I will show the reader that there is a tension in Locke's writing between two characteristics which he ascribes to the person—namely they are motivated by pleasure and pain yet they are intelligent agents who govern their lives by reason. This will lead into Chapter 3 which will look at another moral theme related to personhood—accountability. Chapter 3 will look at more characteristics of the person
(this time as accountable agent) in the hope of resolving this tension. However, it will not be until the conclusion that I will discuss what Chapter 3 means to that tension.
CHAPTER 1


t Locke's Reordering of the Person/Substance Connection

When Locke wrote "Of Identity and Diversity" he did so in the face of an historical tradition in which the notion of person was intimately related to that of substance. In his Meditations on First Philosophy Descartes (1596-1650) calls the "I" a thinking thing or substance. With a concern for Christian theology, Bishop Edward Stillingfleet objects to Locke's notion of personal identity, and asserts that the person is a union of soul (immaterial substance) and body (material substance). Christopher Fox in "Locke and the Scriblerians" reports that Boethius (c.480-524) called the person the "... individual substance of a rational nature" and that according to Etienne Gilson this definition "... had remained largely unchallenged during the formative years of Christian theology."

The single most important feature of Locke's discussion of personhood in Book 2 Chapter 27 of the Essay is the relationship Locke himself develops between person and substance. What makes it so important is that it is a reordering of the person/substance connection. For Locke, the person and substance are not intimately related. In 2.27 Locke relaxes the connection. He refers to the person
as a "conscious thinking thing" (p. 341; 2.27.7); however, when he calls the person a "thing" he has a certain kind of person/substance connection in mind. This chapter's analysis of Locke's personhood is concerned with laying out that relationship and the moral significance of it.

In the first section of the chapter I discuss the role of substance in personhood. I argue that person is not a substance for Locke: and while he thinks of the person as consisting of a substance he is uncertain what kind of substance(s) it is. We shall see that Locke leaves open the possibility that the person may consist of matter only. For Descartes it was the soul that did the thinking. For Locke it may be a material substance which has conscious thought "superadded" to it that is the thinker (p. 541; 4.3.6). For Locke it may be that persons do not have souls.

In the second section I demonstrate Locke's separation of the identity of person (which is intimately bound up with consciousness) from the identity of substance. Not only is it possible for Locke that the material substance (or body) may change while the person remains the same, but also the immaterial substance (or soul) could change without affecting sameness of person. I argue in this section that Locke entertains the possibility that the person may consist
of more than one body during its life. Moreover, even if persons have souls they may have more than one in a lifetime—and the same soul may join with a series of different persons.

In the third section I tie in this relationship between person and substance (as discussed in sections I and II) with some of the objections I look at which Locke's concept of personal identity faced in the 18th century. The problem of personal identity is not for Locke and his contemporaries merely an abstract problem, but is bound up with religious and moral issues.

Section I: The Role of Substance in Personhood

To work out the connection between person and substance I will address three questions. What does "substance" mean in Locke's philosophy? In what way is substance related to person, i.e., is substance a necessary or sufficient condition of personhood? What kind of substance is bound up with person?
A) What does Locke mean by "substance"?

Locke writes:

The Idea then we have, to which we give the general name Substance, being nothing, but the supposed, but unknown support of those Qualities, we find existing, which we imagine cannot subsist, sine re substante, without something to support them, we call that Support Substantia; which, according to the true import of the Word, is in plain English, standing under, or upholding. (p. 296; 2.23.2)

We do not have a clear idea of substance according to Locke (p. 297; 2.23.4). It is that something we assume is the base for a set of qualities. Hardness (p. 297; 2.23.4), thinking, knowing, doubting (p. 297; 2.23.5) do not exist by themselves. They are grounded in some "subject" (p. 297; 2.23.4). That subject is the substance.

B) In what way is substance related to person?

In Section 17 of Chapter 27 Locke claims that the self is "made up of" a substance (p. 341; 2.27.17). When Locke makes this claim he is hinting to us that substance is not sufficient, although it is necessary, for personhood. The person should not be identified with the substance. Rather, a person at any given time is "made up of" or consists of a substance of some kind. One could look around the campus and see Windsor Hall, the library, etc. The university
consists of, or is made up of, these buildings. The buildings are not of themselves the university; however, they house the university. When certain things take place in the campus, e.g., lectures, private study, etc., there is a university. Similarly the substance does not make the person even though it is what the person is made up of.

It is only when the substance displays consciousness that there is a person:

... whilst comprehended under that consciousness, the little Finger is as much a part of it self, as what is most so. Upon separation of this little Finger, should this consciousness go along with the little Finger, and leave the rest of the Body, 'tis evident the little Finger would be the Person... (p. 341; 2.27.17)

When Locke says that the person is "conscious" he is emphasizing that the person has an awareness of him/herself. "Consciousness is the perception of what passes in a Man's own mind" (p. 115: 2.1.19). When one perceives—sees, hears, feels, etc., or thinks—he/she takes notice of something, and an idea is formed in the mind (p. 143: 2.9.2-3). Ideas are the objects of thought (p. 47: 1.1.8). Consciousness involves being aware that those ideas are in one's "own mind". The person not only has the idea of the object, e.g., a tennis ball, but is also aware that he/she is having that idea, i.e., that he/she is doing the
perceiving. To be conscious for Locke is to perceive one's self. Insofar as persons are conscious they are aware of themselves.

The most important strand in Locke's notion of person is not substance, it is consciousness. The person consists of some substance and may consist of more than one substance in a lifetime. (I will discuss this latter point at greater length in Section II). The person, whatever kind of substance(s) he/she may consist of, not only thinks, but is conscious of his/her thoughts, because consciousness is inseparable from thinking (p. 335; 2.27.9). Consciousness is what "... makes every one to be, what he calls self..." (p. 335; 2.27.9).

When thinking of what a person is for Locke one should be careful with the relationship between substance and person. Substance is necessary for person, but is not sufficient. Where there is consciousness there is thought to be conscious of, and there is a person which does the thinking and consists of a substance.

C. What kind of substance is bound up with person?

Although he identifies God as one "sort" of substance there are two main alternative substances for Locke:
material; and immaterial (p. 329; 2.27.2). Which of these is associated with his concept of the person?

The kind of substance tied up with person, depends upon what kind of substances think and are conscious. Does Locke claim to know what kind of substances think and are conscious? I suggest he does not.

In Section 13 of "Of Identity and Diversity," Locke addresses the question "... Whether if the same thinking Substance ... be changed, it can be the same Person" (p. 337; 2.27.13). In response he notes that this cannot be resolved except by those who "... know what kind of substances ... think ..." (ibid.). Given that Locke does not go on to answer the question, but instead offers only speculations, the missing conclusion appears to be that Locke himself does not claim to be one of those people.

In Section 17 of Chapter 27 Locke says of the self that it "... is that conscious thinking thing. (Whatever Substance, made up of whether Spiritual, or Material, Simple, or Compounded, it matters not) ..." (p. 341; 2.27.17). The thing which thinks is necessarily conscious but is not specifically any particular kind of substance. Substance is bound up with self, but what kind of substance "it matters not".
In a passage from Book 4 Chapter 3 Locke writes that we "... have the Ideas of Matter and Thinking, but possibly shall never be able to know, whether any mere material Being thinks, or no." (p. 540; 4.3.6). Possibly we shall never be able to know whether matter can think because "... we know not wherein thinking consists nor to what part of Substance the Almighty has been pleased to give that Power ..." (p. 541; 4.3.6). In 4.3 of the Essay Locke entertains the possibility that matter can think.

Looking at the two passages from 2.27 and the passage from 4.3 it would seem that Locke does not want us merely to assume that persons consist of immaterial substances. For Locke the substance tied up with person is a conscious thinking substance. Locke seems committed to the possibility that persons have no souls and may consist of no more than a system of matter with a faculty of thinking added to it (p. 541; 4.3.6).

Section II: The Person/Substance Connection in Light of Sameness of Substance and Personal Identity

If a person consists of substance, is the sameness of that person, i.e., personal identity, constituted by sameness of the substance of that person? Not for Locke. Sameness of person is determined by something other than
that which determines sameness of substance. To lay this out I will look at sameness of substance and personal identity in turn. After this I will consider what impact this separation has on the person/substance connection.

A) Sameness of Substance

The essential feature of sameness of substance is continuity of existence—continuous existence. An immaterial substance (Finite Intelligence) of a specific time and place is the same as an immaterial substance of some other time and place if and only if there is a continuous existence which links them:

... Finite Spirits having had each its determinate time and place of beginning to exist, the relation to that time and place will always determine to each of them its Identity as long as it exists. (p. 329: 2.27.2)

What makes an immaterial substance of today and an immaterial substance of yesterday the same is that the existence of today's substance is linked back to the existence of yesterday's substance. For example, if a substance originated at time T1 in place P1, and later a substance perished at T3 in some place, the substance at T1 could be the same substance as that at T3 if and only if there were no breaks in existence between those two points
in time and place. If T3's origin was T1P1, the substance of T1P1 and the substance of T3 (some place) would be the same.

On the other hand, if an immaterial substance began at T1P1 and existed until T3, and if an immaterial substance began at T5P5 and existed until T7, the substance of T1P1 and T7 would not be identical. At time (T4) the substance at T7 did not yet exist. These two substances could not be the same because there is a break in existence (T4). There is no continuous existence between T1P1 and T7 and so these two substances would not be the same.

For a substance at present to be considered identical with a substance of some past time, there must be a link between the two substances, and that link must be continuous existence. Sameness of substance is determined by the continuity of the existence of the substance.

Although continuity of existence is what determines sameness of substance, Locke never goes on to identify the factor which determines whether a substance has same (continuous) existence:

From what has been said, 'tis easy to discover, what is so much enquired after, the principium Individuationis, and that 'tis plain is Existence it self, which determines a Being of any
sort to a particular time and place incommunicable to two Beings of the same kind. (p. 330: 2.27.3)

Continuity of existence is clearly important to "sameness of substance", but Locke never explains what must be constant for a substance to have a continuous existence.

B) Personal Identity

Sameness of consciousness is what makes personal identity:

... personal Identity consists, not in the Identity of Substance, but... in the Identity of consciousness... (p. 342: 2.27.19)

Sameness of person is a function of sameness of consciousness.

What is "sameness of consciousness"? In Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man, Thomas Reid (1710-1796) devotes one chapter—"Of Mr. Locke's Account of Our Personal Identity"—to examining and criticizing Locke on his notion of personal identity. He asks:

... is it not strange that the sameness or identity of a person should consist in a thing which is continually changing and is not any two minutes the same?

Reid attacks Locke by claiming that consciousness is not continuous. According to Reid consciousness, like every
operation of the mind is "... flowing like the water of a river ..." while identity is something affirmed only of a thing which has a "continued existence". "Consciousness ... is transient and momentary, and has no continued existence ..." (p. 214 Essays).

It would be helpful to think of Reid's "continued existence" as much like "continuity of existence" which I discussed in relation to Locke's identity of substance. In another chapter of the Essays entitled "Of Identity" Reid claims that identity supposes an "uninterrupted continuance of existence" (p. 202 Essays). It appears that a "continued existence" for Reid is a single existence over a period of time which at no time has ceased to exist only to begin again, i.e., an existence which has at most only one beginning, a time in which it persists, and at most one point at which it ends.

When Reid says consciousness "... has no continued existence" he is saying that consciousness does not have only one beginning, time in which it endures, and ending. I become conscious of the chair in which I sit only to cease being conscious of it. When I am conscious of the chair once again this is an entirely new consciousness:
The consciousness I have this moment can no more be the same consciousness I had last moment, than this moment can be the last moment. (p. 214 Essays)

When Reid says consciousness does not have a "continued existence" he is pointing out that we have a series of individual conscious thoughts--there is no one constant consciousness.

Does "same consciousness" require "continuous consciousness" for Locke? I suggest not, given Locke's challenge of the Cartesian view that the soul always thinks in Book 2 Chapter 1--"Of Ideas in general and their Original".

For Descartes, thought determines the identity of the I/self/soul/thinking thing:

At last I have discovered it--thought: this alone is inseparable from me. I am, I exist--that is certain. But for how long? For as long as I am thinking. For it could be that were I totally to cease from thinking, I should totally cease to exist. (Second Meditation, The Philosophical Writings of Descartes Vol. II, p. 18)

The nature of the soul is to think. We think not only through our waking days, but our nights of sleep as well (ibid.). As long as I continue to think I am the same thinking substance persisting through time. For Descartes sameness of self is determined by continuity of thought.
I suggest Locke's challenge to the Cartesian view that the soul always thinks indicates he does not hold that sameness of person is determined by sameness of conscious thought. According to Locke, persons can sleep without dreaming (p. 111: 2.1.13). If this is so, and (as we saw on p. 8) consciousness involves perceiving one's thoughts, then Locke must admit that breaks in consciousness occur. However, Locke wants to say that even though there are such breaks the person remains the same as long as his/her consciousness remains the same. Locke writes of the personal self that it:

... would be by distance of Time, or change of Substance, no more two Persons than a Man be two Men, by wearing other Cloaths to Day than he did yesterday, with a long or short sleep between: The same consciousness uniting those distant Actions into the same Person... (p. 336: 2.27.10)

The person of today and yesterday is the same as long as he/she has the same consciousness, even though there is a time between today and yesterday in which the person was asleep and had no consciousness. Given that Locke must admit that breaks in consciousness occur, and that he claims a person today and yesterday, separated by a gap in consciousness (dreamless sleep), can be the same provided consciousness remains the same, Locke's "sameness of consciousness" cannot require "continuity of consciousness".
If "sameness of consciousness" is not "continuity of consciousness," what is it? Locke writes:

> For it is by the consciousness it has of its present Thoughts and Actions, that it is self to it self now, and so will be the same self, as far as the same consciousness can extend to Actions past or to come . . . (p. 336: 2.27.10)

Sameness of consciousness is determined by how far one's consciousness may extend to actions past or to come. My consciousness of seeing the pen as I write this sentence is now fixed to a certain time and place. My consciousness of seeing the pen as I write this following sentence is now fixed to a certain time and place different from the first consciousness. However, I who continue to write am now conscious of having had the perception of seeing that pen (first instance) a few moments earlier and so I who write now am the same person who had that perception of the pen. Locke's personal identity does not rely on a consciousness which continues from moment to moment, instead it is determined by how far a person's consciousness may extend to actions past or to come . . .”.

It is the perceiving of a perception, or consciousness of a thought that provides the continuity for sameness of person. I can claim I was the boy who was read a story by his father so many years ago because I am conscious of
having that perception of being that boy and having that story read to me at some point in my past. My being conscious of that perception makes me the same person as that boy who had that perception. As we have seen on page 9, consciousness and thought do together. Insofar as I think, I must also be conscious of those thoughts. This thinking and being conscious of those thoughts makes me a person, and the degree to which my consciousness can extend to thoughts past or to come will constitute the extent of my personal identity.

When Reid points out that consciousness is discontinuous he does not prove invalid Locke’s notion of personal identity. Locke’s notion does not rely on a person’s consciousness being continuous from one time to the next, but instead on a person’s consciousness being able to extend to actions and thoughts, past or to come. This is what Locke means by “same consciousness”. If I could be conscious of writing this paragraph today, playing tennis yesterday, and wondering about God’s existence last year, then I who write this paragraph today, played tennis yesterday, and wondered about God’s existence last year, would be the same person. Consciousness makes personal identity insofar as it extends to actions or thoughts, uniting those actions or thoughts into one person.
C) The Person/Substance Connection

In distinguishing between the identities of material and immaterial substance and the identity of person, Locke lays out possible relationships between person and substance. I will examine these now.

That a person can remain unchanged while the material substance in which it consists changes is something, according to Locke, we have some evidence of in our bodies. The particles which make up our bodies are part of our thinking conscious selves such that we feel them when they are touched and know whether they have been harmed or not. Every individual’s limbs are very much a part of him/herself. If one of those limbs is separated from that individual’s consciousness of its heat, cold, etc., then it is no longer a part of him/herself:

Thus we see the Substance, whereof personal self consisted at one time, may be varied at another, without the change of personal identity: There being no question about the same Person, though the Limbs, which but now were a part of it, be cut off. (p. 337: 2.27.11)

The material substance whereof the personal self consists may change while the person does not.
If the limbs of the body be cut off, and the limbs of the body are a part of the "personal self", has the self been changed? Locke writes:

... as far as any intelligent Being can repeat the Idea of any past Action with the same consciousness it had of it at first, and with the same consciousness it has of any present Action; so far it is the same personal self.

(p. 336 2.27.10)

The person remains the same as long as its consciousness does not change. The person whose hand is cut off is no longer feeling any heat by the hand and so has no consciousness of any heat the hand is exposed to. However, it is still the same person as that person who had, at one time, consciousness of the heat felt by the hand, because the person without the hand is conscious of the perception that the person with the hand had had of the heat. As long as consciousness remains the same the person will remain the same even if the substance in which the consciousness inheres is altered.

In considering the relation of immaterial substance to the identity of the person Locke asks two questions:

"... Whether if the same thinking Substance (supposing immaterial Substances only to think) be changed, it can be the same Person" (p. 337; 2.27.13); and, "... Whether the
same immaterial Substance remaining, there may be two
distinct Persons" (p. 338; 2.27.14).

In terms of the question whether one person can exist
through a change in substance, Locke answers that the
question can be resolved only by knowing what kind of
substances do think, and also by knowing whether the
consciousness of past actions can be transferred from one
thinking substance to another. Although Locke himself does
not resolve the question he makes the point that if the same
consciousness could be transferred from one thinking
substance to another, then it is possible that two thinking
substances could make up one person. Evident in Locke's
response is an identification of personhood with
consciousness. What makes the person the same person is
sameness of consciousness: whether that consciousness be
annexed to one substance or more. Identity of person is
determined by sameness of consciousness not sameness of
substance.

As to the question whether there can be one immaterial
substance but two persons, Locke points out, that it is based
upon a certain scenario: the same immaterial being who is
conscious of its past actions is stripped of that
consciousness, losing it beyond any power of ever retrieving
it again, and so begins a new consciousness that cannot go beyond this new state. Since personal identity reaches no farther than consciousness, Locke's solution to the puzzle indicates that the same immaterial being may house two distinct persons, since there are two distinct consciousnesses. There are two persons even though just one immaterial being, because personal identity is determined by consciousness and not sameness of substance.

The material substance wherein the self subsists may be changed without a change in the person; the immaterial substance which thinks may be changed without change in the person; and, there may be two distinct persons while the immaterial substance remains unchanged. What these three combinations indicate is that the person is separable from the body (material substance) and the soul (immaterial substance). The factor which determines sameness of substance is continuous existence, whereas sameness of consciousness is the key to the identity of person. Since the factors which determine the identity of substance and identity of person differ, Locke is committed to the possibility that the person may consist of more than one body during its life. He is also committed to the possibility that even if a person has a soul, he/she may
have more than one in a lifetime, and the same soul may join with a series of different persons.

Section III: The Theological and Moral Significance of Locke's Theory on Personhood in 2.27

In concluding my discussion of the person/substance connection in "Of Identity and Diversity", I would like to turn to the criticisms raised against Locke's concepts of person and personal identity. In "An Answer to Mr. Locke's Second Letter" Bishop Edward Stillingfleet challenges Locke's conception of personal identity on the ground that it is inconsistent with the "Article of the Resurrection". The criticisms he raises focus on the substance/person connection. Person for Stillingfleet is a combination of Soul and Body and so "... the Identity of Person must take in both, not only here, but at the Resurrection" (p. 175).

His attack comes in two parts. He claims first:

... I cannot but observe, that we have no Certainty upon your Grounds, that Self-consciousness depends upon an individual immaterial Substance, and consequently that a Material Substance may, according to your Principles, have Self-consciousness in it; at least that you are not certain of the contrary (pp. 35-36).

Stillingfleet observes, as I have argued already, that the Lockeian person may have no soul. It may consist of no more...
than a material substance that thinks. This concerns Stillingfleet because of the impact it has on personal identity. According to Stillingfleet the material substance "... which consists in the Life of an Organiz'd Body, must cease by Death: for how can that, which consisted in Life, be preserved afterwards?" (p. 36). From this he concludes:

... if the Personal Identity consists in a Self-consciousness depending on such a Substance as cannot be preserved without an Organiz'd Body, then there is no Subsistence of it separate from the Body, and the Resurrection must be giving a new Life. (p. 36)

Stillingfleet sees a challenge to the doctrine of resurrection if the person may consist of no more than a material substance that thinks, i.e., if the person has no soul.

The second part of his attack focuses on the insignificance of material substance to personal identity. On Stillingfleet's reading, scripture tells us that the body in which the "Person lived and acted" will be resurrected on the day of judgment (p. 38). Locke's concept of personal identity is inconsistent with the doctrine of the resurrection:
... for it makes the same Body which was here united to the Soul not to be necessary to the Doctrine of the Resurrection, but any Material Substance being united to the same Principle of Consciousness makes the same Body. (p. 44)

The point at issue for Stillingfleet is what constitutes the identity of person. For Locke personal identity is determined by sameness of consciousness, but Stillingfleet cannot see how Christian scripture on resurrection "doth ... relate to a Consciousness Principle" (p. 43).

For Stillingfleet, personal identity depends upon:

... a Vital Union between the Soul and Body and the Life which is consequent upon it; and therefore in the Resurrection the same Material Substance must be reunited; or else it cannot be called a Resurrection, but a Renovation: i.e. it may be a New Life, but not a raising the Body from the Dead". (p. 44)

Besides Stillingfleet, Locke was criticized by Bishop Joseph Butler (1692-1752). Like Stillingfleet Butler's criticisms were related to the person/substance connection.

In an appendix to The Analogy of Religion entitled "Of Personal Identity" Joseph Butler argues that personal identity "... cannot subsist with diversity of substance" (p. 390). Butler challenges Locke's use of consciousness as that which determines sameness of person. According to Butler "... consciousness, being successive, cannot be the same in any two moments, nor consequently the
personality constituted by it" (p. 392 Analogy). I take it when Butler says consciousness is "successive" he has a notion of consciousness similar to Reid's. Butler does not conceive of consciousness as having a continued existence. Based on the logical implication of Locke's use of consciousness in personal identity, Butler rejects that notion (p. 392 Analogy). For Butler if consciousness is that which determines sameness of person:

... it must follow, that it is a fallacy upon ourselves, to charge our present selves with any thing we did, or to imagine our present selves interested in any thing which befell us yesterday; or that our present self will be interested in what will befall us tomorrow ... (pp. 392-393 Analogy)

But what is the nature of Butler's criticism? What is it about the possibility that we could not charge our present selves with anything we did, or be interested in what might befall us tomorrow, etc., that is disturbing to Butler? Where does all of this lead to for Butler?

In laying out his criticism Butler claims that Locke's notion of personal identity has implications for the Christian faith and other "contemporary issues". Personal identity "... is a notion equally applicable to religion and to our temporal concerns ..." (p. 394 Analogy).
How is Locke's personal identity applicable to religion and other temporal concerns for Butler, and what are these temporal concerns? Perhaps Locke answers that question for us:

In this personal identity is founded all the Right and Justice of Reward and Punishment: Happiness and Misery, being that, for which every one is concerned for himself . . .
(pp. 341-342; 2.27.18)

It would seem that according to Locke it is through personal identity that one may be judged. Certainly the courts are concerned with holding men accountable for their actions, while religion points to the day of resurrection in which all persons will be judged for their actions. Perhaps Butler's interest in the implication that we could not "... charge our present selves with any thing we did ..." etc., centres on what Locke's conception of personal identity does for accountability. Perhaps the other "temporal concerns" Butler writes of are "legal" concerns. It would appear that he thinks Locke's notion of personal identity would make it difficult to see how a judgment made by us in a court of law, or by God on the day of judgment, could be just. Reid contends that in terms of Locke's notion,

... no man is the same person any two moments of his life; and as the right and justice of reward
and punishment is founded on personal identity; no man could be responsible for his actions. (p. 215 Essays)

Reid sees a problem for holding a man accountable for his actions given Locke's notion of personal identity. I suggest the concern Butler has for Locke's characterization of personal identity as applicable to religion and other "temporal" concerns centres on accountability. I suggest that for Butler Locke's notion of personal identity as sameness of consciousness presents problems for attaching actions to individuals and so for holding a person accountable for his/her actions, whether here or in the after-life.

What these criticisms indicate is that Locke's thesis on personhood was not looked upon by his contemporaries as a merely abstract discussion. Rather, it was regarded as related to other concerns, i.e., religion, holding one accountable for actions, and the practice of reward and punishment. Locke's critics saw Locke's theory as a piece in a much greater whole. Moreover, Locke himself saw a relationship between personal identity and justice, or reward and punishment, etc. In fact he calls "person" a "Forensick Term" (p. 346: 2.27.26), and calls attention to the manner in which God will hold everyone accountable for their actions on the "Great Day" (p. 347: 2.27.26).
Henry E. Allison, in "Locke's Theory of Personal Identity," suggests that when Locke developed his notion of personal identity, he did so with a concern for moral responsibility. He writes:

... if personal identity were linked with substantial identity, we would, on Lockean grounds, have no clear means of determining the limits of moral responsibility.
(p. 107 Locke On Human Understanding)

I take it Allison is suggesting that since Locke held that we could not know the real essence of substance, and personal identity is key to moral responsibility, a substantialist account of personal identity would not do.

When Locke's critics challenged his theory of personhood they did so on the grounds of its implications for morality and religion. In laying out his theory of personhood, Locke himself stressed a connection between it and reward and punishment which are concepts in his moral theory. Given the concern these critics had for morality and religion, as well as Locke's own concern for the moral theme of reward and punishment in 2.27, we need to ask what is the nature of the connection between Locke's theories of personhood and morality?

To answer this question we will look at Locke's moral theory. For Locke, reward and punishment, accountability,
and religion play specific roles in morality. A morally
good life is one which is led in accordance with God's
commands. Rewards and punishments are used to motivate
persons to live morally good lives. Persons are held
accountable by God for their lives' actions. Next we will
look at Locke's theory of personhood in relation to his
theory of morality. For the moment I will bypass examining
accountability in any detail; leaving that discussion for
Chapter 3. In the next chapter I will talk about reward and
punishment, religion, etc., in Locke's moral theory and see
what that theory tells us about the Lockean person.

What I have done in this chapter for the most part is
discuss Locke's notion of person and personal identity in
Book 2 Chapter 27 of the Essay. Locke's person consists of
some kind of substance (or substances) yet its identity is
determined not by sameness of substance, but by
consciousness. A person is a conscious thinking thing, and
his/her identity is determined by how far that person's
consciousness may extend to actions or thoughts. However,
Locke's thesis should not be studied merely in abstraction
from other discussions in the Essay; and so, in the next
chapter I will look at Locke's moral theory and see what we
can draw out of that concerning Locke's person.
CHAPTER 2

Person as Moral Subject

Locke's person is a moral agent. In this chapter I shall explain just what this means. In the closing passages of Chapter 27 of Book 2 of the Essay, Locke refers to 'person' as a "Forensick Term". According to the Oxford English Dictionary, 'forensic' is a word "pertaining to, connected with, or used in courts of law . . .". However, Locke does not intend person to be narrowly understood in this legal sense. In identifying 'person' as a forensic term Locke writes that it has to do with "appropriating Actions and their Merit". It is concerned with the ownership of actions of all kinds and with the evaluation of the individual on the basis of the merit of those actions. I suggest that in calling 'person' a forensic term Locke is identifying the person as a moral subject.

Anyone who has read those parts of Locke's Essay directly concerned with his moral theory (for example, Book 2, Chapter 28) will be quick to point out that he never explicitly calls the moral subject a person. Instead, when he refers to the participants in his moral system he calls them "men" or "intelligent beings". Moreover, in the chapter on personal identity Locke distinguished between
'man' and 'person'—treating the former as the biological entity (pp. 331-332; 2.27.6). However, we must remember that this chapter in which Locke's concept of person was systematically developed was only added in the second edition of the Essay in 1694. It seems reasonable to think that if Locke had revised the rest of the Essay in the light of that development he would have used the term 'person' in many places where he had earlier used the term 'man'.

In defining person as a "Forensic Term" in Book 2 Chapter 27, Locke stated that it "belongs only to intelligent Agents capable of a Law, and Happiness and Misery". We shall see that all three components of this definition are central in his notion of moral subject as developed in his discussion of moral relations in Book 2 Chapter 28. Moral agents are intelligent beings; they are beings which follow laws of a certain kind; and they are creatures which are capable of being happy or miserable. In this chapter I am going to show how these characteristics are required by a participant in the moral scheme which Locke lays out in Book 2 Chapter 28.

The principal feature of Locke's moral scheme is God's law. "Divine law "... is the only true touchstone of moral Rectitude ..." (p. 352; 2.28.8). Locke's moral theory can
be explained by looking at his concepts of law in general and Divine law in particular. Concentrating on these aspects of that theory will help us understand the nature of the moral subject.

Section I: Person and Locke's Notion of Law in General

A) Locke's Notion of Law in General and Moral Rules

Law is fundamental to Locke's moral theory. It is "... Moral Rules, or Laws, to which Men generally refer, and by which they judge of the Rectitude or Pravity of their Actions..." (p. 351; 2.28.6). In Locke's moral system the moral subjects determine the merit of their actions according to the relation those actions have to moral laws.

In describing the nature of these laws Locke writes:

It would be in vain for one intelligent Being, to set a Rule to the Actions of another, if he had it not in his Power, to reward the compliance with, and punish deviation from his Rule, by some Good and Evil, that is not the natural product and consequence of the Action it self. For that being a natural Convenience, or Inconvenience, would operate of it self without a Law. This, if I mistake not, is the true nature of all Law, properly so called. (pp. 351-352; 2.28.6)

According to Locke laws have three essential characteristics. First, they are rules which direct actions. They are dictates as to what should and should not
be done. Second, they are erected by someone who has the power to enforce them with a reward for compliance with, and a punishment for deviation from, a specific rule. Third, the rewards and punishments associated with these rules are not natural "conveniences or inconveniences" of the actions governed by those rules. There is a "natural Inconvenience" to hitting my thumb with the hammer, so there is no need for a law prohibiting this action. The pain is a direct result of that action. The rewards and punishments associated with moral laws are those which are given to or imposed upon the subject by the law enforcers. All laws "properly so called" display these three characteristics.

Moral laws are very different from the so-called laws of science. However the laws of science are to be characterized, it is clear that they do not prescribe behaviour to intelligent beings. The law of gravity explains why rocks fall from cliffs. However, no one would ever say that the rock must be intelligent in order to conform to this law.

Moral laws also need to be distinguished from commands that prescribe behaviour to animals. "The dog is not to chew on Dad’s slippers" is not a moral rule. In the case of the dog there is no apparent understanding of the command
and how it relates to that injunction. These commands do not appear to prescribe behaviour to intelligent beings. Dogs seem to live according to a procedure of trial and error. They encounter things which are pleasurable and painful, and then behave so as to avoid the pain and gain the pleasure. In this way they discover what to do and not do.

Moral rules have significance—are significant in a moral subject's life—because the moral participants recognize that they are subject to them. These laws are designed for the moral participants to use in determining how to act. Moral subjects then must be able to understand what the moral rules are and the consequences of breaking them. They must know how to live with or interact with those laws in order to benefit in the long run from them. The moral subjects must have a level of intelligence which enables them to understand the moral system as well as how it relates to them, i.e., the significance of it in their lives.

B) Person as Intelligent Agent

If the moral subject must be "intelligent" what does it mean to be intelligent for Locke? He writes:
... 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... (p. 264; 2.21.40)

Intelligent agents are those who can act upon a choice arrived at through a consideration of their options. That consideration is made independently of immediate desires for what one wants. According to Locke when we make a wrong judgment it is most often caused by "... the prevalency of some present Pleasure or Pain, heightned by our feeble passionate Nature, most strongly wrought on by what is present" (p. 278; 2.21.67). To keep this "Precipitancy" under control "... our Understanding and Reason was given us, if we will make a right use of it, to search, and see, and then judge thereupon" (ibid.). Intelligent agents are those who have intellectual faculties to guide them in their choices and help keep them from being controlled by their passions.

The divisions between the intellectual faculties—Understanding, Reason, Judgment, etc.—are not completely clear. Moreover, Locke devotes an entire chapter to explaining Reason alone, which he considers "... necessary, and assisting to all our other intellectual Faculties..." (p. 668; 4.17.2). A proper explanation of these faculties and their relationships would
take the better part of another thesis. However, some explanation of the key intellectual faculty "Reason" can be made.

Of the four parts of Reason Locke writes:

... the first and highest, is the discovering, and finding out of Proofs: the second, the regular and methodical Disposition of them, and laying them in a clear and fit Order, to make their Connexion and Force be plainly and easily perceived: the third is the perceiving their Connexion; and the fourth, the making a right conclusion. (p. 669: 4.17.3)

A "proof" is an "intervening" or "intermediate" idea that shows how a pair of ideas either fits or does not fit together (p. 532: 4.2.3). When one reasons he/she reasons about the connection or disagreement between ideas. Locke offers an example of a process of reasoning using proofs:

... Men shall be punished,--God the punisher,--just Punishment,--the punished guilty--could have done otherwise--Freedom--self-determination, by which Chain of Ideas thus visibly link'd together in train, i.e. each intermediate Idea agreeing on each side with those two it is immediately placed between, the Ideas of Men and self-determination appear to be connected ... (p. 673: 4.17.4)

According to Locke the notion that man is self-determined is not grasped immediately. However, with the use of intermediate ideas (proofs) the connection can be seen.

Reason is the ability to comprehend the relationship between
ideas. In reason one has the power to see direction in thoughts.

Insofar as one is intelligent then for Locke he/she has a power to put ideas together in an orderly fashion as well as to analyze that order, and then draw conclusions based upon that analysis. As an intelligent being one has a power to reason and so an ability to keep one’s desires under control.

C) Person as Seeker of Pleasure and Avoider of Pain

Even though they are intelligent there is a sense in which Locke’s moral subjects do not seem all that different from dogs. Just as the dog appears to avoid certain behaviour because it fears punishment or seeks a reward, so Locke’s moral subjects appear to be motivated to follow the moral laws by the promise of future rewards and threat of future punishments. Locke’s moral subjects are seekers of pleasure and avoiders of pain.

"Reward" and "Punishment" are ambiguous terms for Locke. Of "Civil" laws Locke claims that the government has the "... power to take away Life, Liberty, or Goods, from him, who disobeys: which is the punishment of Offences committed against this Law" (pp. 352-353: 2.28.9). In
explaining what he means by "Morally Good and Evil" Locke claims that "... Good and Evil, Pleasure or Pain, attending our observance, or breach of the Law, by the Decree of the Law-maker, is that we call Reward and Punishment" (p. 351; 2.28.5). In the first case the punishment appears to be that which causes pain, e.g., the taking away of one's freedom, while in the second, punishment appears to be explained in terms of pain itself, e.g., the pain one feels in having his/her freedom restricted.

Each law has a reward or "good" and a punishment or "evil" related to it that may be bestowed upon a person for his/her adherence to, or transgression of, that law (p. 351; 2.28.6). For Locke good and 'evil"... are nothing but Pleasure or Pain, or that which occasions, or procures Pleasure or Pain to us" (p. 351; 2.28.5). I take it then the rewards and punishments associated with laws could be either those things which are bestowed upon a person that cause feelings of pleasure or pain, or the pleasures or pains caused by that which is bestowed upon the person.

However Locke conceives of the reward/pleasure and evil/pain connections, pleasure and pain are the most
significant parts of reward and punishment. I am not going to be motivated to act in a certain manner by a reward that does not appeal to me or by a punishment that I do not fear. If we are to understand his concepts of reward and punishment then we must look at pleasure and pain.

Locke distinguishes between two kinds of pleasures and pains:

By Pleasure and Pain, Delight and Uneasiness, I must all along be understood... to mean, not only bodily Pain and Pleasure, but whatsoever Delight or Uneasiness is felt by us, whether arising from any grateful, or unacceptable Sensation or Reflection. (p. 232; 2.20.15)

The pleasures and pains one feels are of the body or of the mind (p. 229; 2.20.2). Bodily pleasure and pain arise from "sensation". Mental pleasure and pain arise from "reflection".

It is not too difficult to imagine what Locke would mean by the pleasure and pain of "sensation". The smell of ammonia would be "painful" or unpleasant; whereas the warmth of the sunshine can be most pleasurable. Locke himself writes of the pain of "Hunger" and "Thirst", and the pleasure of "Eating and Drinking to remove them" (p. 233; 2.20.18). The problem is to unpack the pleasures and pains of "reflection".
"Passions" arise when one has reflected upon something and perceives it to be either pleasurable or painful:

... we love, desire, rejoice, and hope, only in respect of Pleasure; we hate, fear, and grieve only in respect of Pain ultimately: In fine all these Passions are moved by things, only as they appear to be the Causes of Pleasure and Pain, or to have Pleasure or Pain some way or other annexed to them. (p. 232; 2.20.14)

Passions themselves are feelings of pleasure and pain associated with particular intentional objects.

Hope "... is that pleasure in the Mind, which every one finds in himself, upon the thought of a probable future enjoyment of a thing, which is apt to delight him" (p. 231; 2.20.9). Shame "... is an uneasiness of the Mind, upon the thought of having done something, which is indecent, or will lessen the valued Esteem, which others have for us ..." (p. 232; 2.20.17). "Passions" are examples of the pleasures and pains of "reflection".

The promises and threats of future physical or mental pleasures and pains are what are used to motivate the moral subject to live a moral life:

... since it would be utterly in vain, to suppose a Rule set to the free Actions of Man, without annexing to it some Enforcement of Good and Evil, to determine his Will, we must, where-ever we suppose a Law, suppose also some Reward or Punishment annexed to that Law. (p. 351; 2.28.6)
It makes no sense—it would be in "vain"—to set up a rule unless you had some way to enforce it. A law is ineffective unless it has a means of securing adherence. The way to secure adherence to the moral laws for Locke is with promises of rewards and threats of punishments which will motivate the moral subject to adhere to them. Since rewards and punishments are closely tied with pleasures and pains and it is the promise of future pleasure and threat of future pain that is used to motivate the moral subject, Locke's moral subject must be a seeker of pleasure and avoider of pain.

Section II: Person and Moral Law

A) Moral Law and Education

What kinds of laws are moral laws? Locke observes that in society the moral laws or rules which "Men" use to "judge of the Rectitude or Pravity of their Actions" are of three sorts: "Civil" law; "law of Opinion or Reputation"; and, "Divine" law (p. 352: 2.28.7).

Civil laws are constructed by governing bodies to give and maintain order in a "commonwealth". "... [N]o one can inclose or appropriate any part (of the land) without the consent of all his Fellow-Commoners..." was a "Law of the
Land" in 17th century England. Today we would consider statutes prohibiting ownership of handguns without a license as examples of civil laws.

Law of Opinion or Reputation (laws of custom) are not formally constructed. They are established "... by a secret and tacit consent ... in the several Societies, Tribes, and Clubs of Men in the World ..." (p. 353: 2.28.10). Although people leave the job of running the society, i.e., determining laws and enforcing them, in the hands of the government, "... yet they retain still the power of thinking well or ill" (p. 353: 2.28.10).

Marrying outside the Catholic faith is not illegal in our country; however, it is not well accepted by the members of that faith. That a Catholic should not marry a non-Catholic is an example of an attitude that is expressed in that religion, or a law of opinion or reputation.

"Divine laws are the commands of God; and are constructed by Him to "... direct our actions to that which is best" (p. 352: 2.28.9). These are laws "... whereby Men should govern themselves ..." (my emphasis) (ibid.), i.e., they are laws which men may use to guide their personal lives. "... [W]e should love our neighbor as ourselves ..." is an example of our "Saviour's
great rule". God enforces these laws with "... Rewards and Punishments, of infinite weight and duration, in another Life..." (p. 352: 2.28.8).

As I claimed earlier the most important part of Locke’s moral theory is God’s law. For Locke, morality is based upon Divine Law alone. Moral Goods and Evils are closely bound up with the pleasures and pains one receives according to the moral value of his/her actions as determined through a comparison with "some" law (p. 351: 2.28.5). It is by comparing these actions to Divine law that:

... Men judge of the most considerable Moral Good or Evil of their Actions; that is, whether as Duties, or Sins, they are like to procure them happiness, or misery, from the hands of the ALMIGHTY. (p. 352: 2.28.8)

The reward one receives ultimately for following God’s law is happiness, which "in its full extent" is "the utmost Pleasure we are capable of" (p. 258: 2.21.42). The punishment one receives ultimately for breaking God’s law is misery, which "in its full extent" is the "utmost Pain" (ibid.).

What is it that could make one feel the utmost pleasure (or the utmost pain) he/she is capable of? I suggest that the "happiness" and "misery" related to Divine law is brought about by God’s approval or disapproval of the moral
subject. When the moral subject adheres to God's law God holds that subject in high esteem; this gives the subject a sense of pleasure. On the other hand, when the moral subject breaks God's law God disapproves of the subject; this gives the subject great pain.

My suggestion is based upon Locke's theory of education. The main concern of education for Locke is to produce a virtuous agent. Of a child's education Locke writes:

... whatever you are teaching him, have a care still, that you do not clog him with too much at once; or make any thing his business but downright virtue, or reprove him for any thing but vice, or some apparent tendency to it. (p. 133: s159 Education)

To teach a child what is right the child's education must include study of the Bible. In this he/she will learn "... "What you would have others do unto you, do you the same unto them:" and/such other easy and plain moral rules..." (p. 116: s159 Education). In studying the Bible a child will learn moral rules which will become "... the standing and sacred rules of his life and actions" (p. 116: s159 Education).

To motivate children to act virtuously Locke argues for the use of rewards and punishments:
I grant, that good and evil, reward and punishment, are the only motives to a rational creature; these are the spur and reins, whereby all mankind are set on work and guided, and therefore they are to be made use of to children too. (p. 36; s54 Education)

The rewards and punishments Locke has in mind are connected with "esteem" and "disgrace" (p. 36; s56 Education). It is important for Locke that a "love of credit" and "apprehension of shame and disgrace" be nurtured in children:

Esteem and disgrace are, of all others, the most powerful incentives to the mind, when once it is brought to relish them. If you can once get into children a love of credit, and an apprehension of shame and disgrace, you have put into them the true principle, which will constantly work, and incline them to the right. (p. 36 s56 Education)

Although Locke writes specifically about the usefulness of the approval and disapproval of others (e.g., parents p. 37 s57 Education) in nurturing such a love and apprehension, Locke never explains whose esteem and condemnation ultimately children should be taught to concern themselves with. Whose esteem and condemnation is a child to be taught to respect?

A child's education must also include as the "foundation" of virtue a "true notion of God" (p. 99; s136 Education). Children must learn that ". . . God made and
governs all things, hears and sees every thing, and does all manner of good to those that love and obey him" (ibid.). Children must be taught what God demands of them; that he is going to judge them; and, that he watches them and is aware of what they do in their lives. I suggest that the esteem and disgrace which will motivate children to adhere to the moral rules (which we already understood from the Essay are God's laws) is God's esteem and condemnation. It is in the "foundation" of virtue—a true notion of God which involves understanding God as a governor, judge, and constant observer—that virtuous beings will see what is right and how to live their lives.

B) The Importance of Pleasure and Pain to the Person

In looking closely at Divine law and moral education the importance of pleasure and pain to the person becomes apparent. According to Locke "... all that we desire is only to be Happy" (p. 283; 2:21.71) and in all our actions we aim at finding it (p. 254; 2:21.36). Persons are concerned primarily with finding happiness. Locke's theory of moral education is designed with this concern of the person in mind. Children are not to be reproved for "anything but vice". Virtue is to be their "business". Education involves teaching what one's happiness should
consist in and the means for attaining that happiness. A love of God's credit and apprehension of his condemnation is to be developed in children. And they are to be taught the moral rules and the rewards and punishments that accompany those rules.

The characteristic of the person as seeker of pleasure and avoider of pain is, according to Locke, what educators must focus on if the person is to be taught to lead a morally good life. Locke claims the only motives of a rational creature are good and evil or reward and punishment (p. 47). According to Locke the greatest motivator is pain. "... [T]he chief if not only spur to humane Industry and Action is uneasiness" (p. 230; 2.20.6). Pleasure is also a motivator; however, it "... operates not so strongly on us, as Pain" (p. 232; 2.20.14). As we have seen reward and punishment are closely tied up with pleasure and pain. The morally educated person, on Locke's account, appears to place the highest priority on attaining the pleasure of God's esteem and avoiding the pain of his condemnation.

Section III: A Tension in Moral Personhood

What we have learned of the moral person by looking at Locke's moral theory helps to flesh out what Locke means by
his striking claim that 'person' is a "Forensic Term". A person must be capable of living within a system structured (or ordered) by divine law. In Locke's moral theory it is God's laws which indicate what should and should not be done. If a person is to live within this moral framework he/she must be able to understand what God's laws are, and the consequences of breaking them. The person must know how to live with or interact with those laws in order to benefit in the long run from them. A person must have a certain level of intelligence (as I have discussed before) which would enable him/her to understand the moral system as well as how it relates to him/her, i.e., the significance of it in his/her life. A person must be an "intelligent agent capable of a law".

It is also essential that the person be a seeker of pleasure and avoider of pain. Pleasure and pain are used to enforce God's law. If one lives a morally good life he/she will receive eternal happiness; while living a morally bad life will result in one's receiving everlasting misery. Pleasure and pain are what one receives for living either in accordance with, or in opposition to, God's law. Since pleasure and pain are used to motivate the subject to live a moral life, in order to live within this framework, Locke's
person must be a seeker of pleasure and an avoider of pain. Persons must be "capable of Happiness and Misery".

There is, however, a tension between these two characteristics. Locke seems unclear as to which of these sides is more dominant in the person. On one hand it appears that persons for the most part live their lives guided by reason, which is independent of their hopes and fears. On the other hand, persons appear to respond ultimately only to their hopes and fears.

In Section I, while looking at the person as an intellectual being, we examined reason. In doing so we learned that "Reason was given us" to keep ourselves from being too easily swayed by our desires. One's life is to be directed by reason. "Reason must be our last Judge and Guide in every Thing" (p. 704: 4.19.14).

In Section I we also learned that persons must be seekers of pleasure and avoiders of pain. Rewards and punishments are to be used to move people to follow laws. In Section II we learned how persons come to be motivated to follow moral laws. They are taught to follow certain rules in order to attain God's esteem and avoid his punishment. It would seem that a person who has obtained such a moral training will only act because he/she desires God's esteem.
and wishes to avoid his displeasure. In his Education Locke stresses that the way to move people to act is to appeal to their desire for pleasure and fear of pain, because this is what they are concerned with most.

Which of these two characteristics is more dominant in the person? When I look at the person as a reasoner I get an impression of the person as guided by his/her understanding. The person has immediate desires, yet through reason works to keep him/herself from being too easily lead around by these desires. When I look at the person as one who places the highest priority on finding pleasure and avoiding pain, I get an impression of the person as one who will only be lead by the promise of pleasure and threat of pain. In the first case reason seems to direct one’s life, while in the second it seems, at best, to be a handmaiden to one’s hopes and fears. It seems that reason, in the second case, can only be a tool to help find the way either to fulfill one’s desire for pleasure or to satisfy one’s concern to avoid pain.

There is a third characteristic of the Lockean person, given his moral theory, that I have not yet mentioned. Persons must be capable of being held accountable for actions. In Locke’s moral theory it is actions which are
judged and those who committed those actions are rewarded or punished on the basis of that judgment. If one cannot be accountable for an action then he/she cannot be punished for it, or collect any benefit for it. For persons to live or function within this moral framework they must be called to account for actions.

Locke himself attributes this characteristic to the person when he writes that,

This personality extends itself beyond present existence to what is past, only by consciousness, whereby it becomes concerned and accountable. Owns and imputes to it self past Actions . . . . (p. 346: 2.27.26)

Through consciousness a "person" extends him/herself to other times and so becomes "accountable" for actions at those times. Claiming that X is a person for Locke implies the claim that there are actions of value for which X can be held accountable.

In discussing accountability Locke ties it up with freedom and the Will. If persons are accountable agents they do not sound like beings who have been programmed to act only by a desire for God's esteem and fear of his displeasure. If they are free and have Wills they do not sound like they are restricted to act by any internal artificial drives. Rather, persons appear to be beings that
can function as they decide to, independently of any
inculcated hopes or fears.

Locke has much to say about the kinds of actions for
which a person is accountable and which reveal more about
the person as an accountable agent. Perhaps the answer to
the problem of which is more dominant in the person (reason
or inculcated desire) lies in the conditions that must hold
for a person to be called to account for an action. Chapter
3 will look at Locke on accountability.
CHAPTER 3

Person as Accountable Agent

In Chapter 2 the task was to examine Locke's moral theory as it related to his concept of the person. In so doing a question arose as to whether reason was more dominant than inculcated desire, or vice versa, in Locke's person. At the end of that chapter I claimed that Locke's person was an accountable agent and suggested that perhaps by examining Locke on accountability we would find an answer to this problem. The purpose of this chapter then will be to determine what it means for one to be an "accountable agent". I will lay out the conditions of accountability for Locke, and explain what they indicate about accountable agents and so also the Lockean person.

Section I: Freedom as a Condition of Accountability

The only actions subject to moral appraisal are those done freely. "[T]he free Actions of Man" are judged against the moral rules (p. 351: 2.28.6). For a person to be held accountable for an action, that action must have been done freely. This is the first condition for the accountability of persons. The first thing we can say of the person then is that it must be a free agent.
How does Locke conceive of freedom? Locke writes:

... the Idea of Liberty, is the Idea of a Power in any Agent to do or forbear any particular Action, according to the determination or thought *of the mind, whereby either of them is preferr'd to the other ... (p. 237; 2.21,8)

If I have the power to either do x or not do x: as I choose, I am free. The key to the conception of freedom is that there be an action which is performed "according to the determination or thought of the mind". In looking more closely at this key condition and other claims Locke makes about freedom we will see what is involved in being a free agent for Locke. As a free agent Locke's person is one who can intelligently choose a course of action and carry it out. Insofar as a person is free he/she can make a choice and fulfill it independent of other factors (e.g., a quick temper) which can force one to choose and act inappropriately.

A) The Will and Freedom

Let us examine what I have called the key to Locke's conception of freedom. Locke refers to the "determination or thought of the mind" associated with freedom as "Volition" (p. 238; 2.21,8). "Volition" or "Willing" is Locke's description of what one does when he/she wills a certain action to be (p. 236; 2.21,5). If persons are free
agents and freedom consists in one's producing the action he/she wills then persons must have Will. To understand what it means for a person be free we must look at Locke's conception of the Will; as well as what is involved in acting according to one's "Volition" or "Willing".

On Locke's view the Will is a power "... which the mind has ... to order the consideration of any Idea, or the forbearing to consider it; or to prefer the motion of any part of the body to its rest, and vice versa in any particular instance ..." (p. 236; 2.21.5). According to Locke we all have a power, or ability (p. 242; 2.21.17), to direct changes in our mental and physical operations. The ability I have to choose to concern myself at the moment with the usefulness of reasoning skills in one's life as opposed to my misadventures on the tennis court today, or to prefer raising my hand to letting it rest on the arm of the chair in which I am seated, is called the Will.

"... [T]he Will in truth, signifies nothing but a Power, or Ability, to prefer or chuse ..." (p. 242; 2.21.17).

What is involved in acting according to one's "Volition" or "Willing"? Locke claims that "... Freedom, or not Freedom, can belong to nothing, but what has, or has not a power to act" (p. 243; 2.21.19). To act according to
one's "Volition" is to produce the action he/she wills.

Locke writes:

For how can we think any one freer than to have the power to do what he will? And so far as any one can, by preferring any Action to its not being, or Rest to any Action, produce that Action or Rest, so far can he do what he will. For such a preferring of Action to its absence, is the willing of it: and we can scarce tell how to imagine any Being freer, than to be able to do what he wills. So that in respect of Actions, within the reach of a power in him, a Man seems as free, as 'tis possible for Freedom to make him.

(p. 244; 2.21.21)

To be free one must have a power within oneself to "produce" the action he/she wills--the act must originate from (have its source in) the person. I take it, then, that to be able to act according to one's "Volition" is to have a power to "produce" (to be the source of) the action one wills.

The production of the action associated with freedom is accomplished independently of other constraints that force one to act. When one is free he/she has the option to perform some action or its opposite.

Locke describes freedom as an "indifference" of the "operative Powers" (p. 283; 2.21.71). He discusses "operative Powers" in Book 2 Chapter 21 of the Essay:

Not that I deny there are Faculties both in the Body and Mind: they both of them have their powers of Operating, else neither the one nor
the other could operate. For nothing can operate, that is not able to operate; and that is not able to operate, that has no power to operate. (p. 243; 2.21.20)

A power to operate—operative Power—is an ability to perform a certain kind of activity or function.

Not all operative powers are indifferent. Digestion, while it is an operative power according to Locke (p. 244; 2.21.20) is a function one performs without the option of not performing that function. A person does not have the power to digest or not digest, he/she only has the power to digest. In this case one’s power is not indifferent. However, when one has the power to do or not do, then that power is indifferent.

According to Locke the indifference associated with freedom is:

\[\ldots \text{an indifference of the operative Powers of the Man, which remaining equally able to operate, or to forbear operating after, as before the decree of the Will, are in a state, which if one pleases, may be called indifference.} \ldots\]

(pp. 283-284; 2.21.71)

If I have the ability to move or not move then I have an operative power; and so, I am, in respect of this, free. Locke writes:

\[\ldots \text{as far as this indifference reaches, a Man is free, and no farther. v.g. I have the Ability} \]
to move my hand, or let it rest, that operative power is indifferent to move, or not to move my hand: I am then in that respect perfectly free. (p. 284: 2.21.71)

When free a person is able to do or not do as he/she wills without being constrained by forces which bring about his/her actions. Locke mentions three kinds of constraint. According to Locke, a man locked in a room such that no matter how much he wills it he cannot leave is not free in respect to his staying (p. 238: 2.21.10). Being locked in he does not have the option to leave if he so chooses. He is externally physically constrained. Similarly, as we have seen, a man paralyzed such that no matter how much he wills it he cannot move is not free in respect to his lying still. He has no option but to lie still; and so in being constrained by a personal physical incapacity he is not free. Finally, Locke writes of the loss of freedom due to "compulsion" (p. 238: 2.21.10). When one prefers to follow the opposite course of action to the one he/she does follow, one is said to have acted out of "Compulsion" (p. 240: 2.21.13), which I suggest is an overwhelming desire (pp. 249-250: 2.21.30). Freedom consists in a person's ability to produce an action on the basis of what he/she wills. This production occurs independently of constraints which move one to act, i.e., external physical causes, physical incapacities, or compulsive desires.
Insofar as the person is free he/she has a Will and a power to act in accordance with that Will. In beyond a Will the person has the ability to make a choice or show a preference. With a power to act in accordance with that Will the person has a power to produce an action in order to fulfill that choice, or do what he/she prefers.

B) Freedom and Reason

A free action is produced by someone who has the capacity to understand what he/she is doing. In the last chapter I made the point that to function within the moral framework Locke describes, a person would need a level of intelligence which would enable him/her to understand the moral laws which govern man and how he/she relates to those laws. This intelligence is also important for one's freedom:

But if through defects that may happen out of the ordinary course of Nature, any one comes not to such a degree of Reason, wherein he might be supposed capable of knowing the Law, and so living within the Rules of it, he is never capable of being a Free Man, he is never let loose to the disposal of his own Will (because he knows no bounds to it, has not Understanding, its proper Guide) but is continued under the Tuition and Government of others, all the time his own Understanding is incapable of that Charge. (p. 350; s60 Second Treatise)
When one acts freely the action is produced by having the capacity to understand the rules of the society and how one's action relates to those rules. To act freely one must have a level of "reason" such that one would be capable of understanding the governing Law, how he/she relates to that Law, and what choices he/she should make based on those understandings. As we have seen already Locke's person must be a reasoner.

Section II: Consciousness as a Condition of Accountability.

Now that we have looked at the first condition of accountability (freedom) and what that indicates about the person we can look at the second. The second condition reaffirms that the person must be a conscious being. In one of the closing sections of 2.27 Locke argues that on the "Great Day" when God passes judgment on all he will do so with the knowledge that those before him were the same persons who "committed those actions" (p. 347; 2.27.26). The second condition of accountability is that the alleged actor be conscious of having done the action.

Earlier I noted that consciousness is involved in accountability (p. 53); however, I did not mention how it is involved for Locke. According to Locke if one is conscious
of having done some action then he/she did the action, because in being conscious of having done it, one owns that action:

That with which the consciousness of this present thinking thing can join itself, makes the same Person, and is one self with it, and with nothing else; and so attributes to itself, and owns all the actions of that thing, as its own, as far as that consciousness reaches, and no farther . . . . (p. 341; 2.27.17)

Concerning actions that one is not conscious of having done Locke argues:

. . . to receive Pleasure or Pain; i.e. Reward or Punishment, on the account of any such action, is all one, as to be made happy or miserable in its being, without any demerit at all. For supposing a Man punish'd now, for what he had done in another Life, whereof he could be made to have no consciousness at all, what difference is there between that Punishment, and being created miserable? (pp. 346-347; 2.27.26)

It is unjust for a person to be rewarded or punished for an action that he/she is not conscious of having done:

And therefore conformable to this, the Apostle tells us, that at the Great Day, when every one shall receive according to his doings, the secrets of all Hearts shall be laid open. The Sentence shall be justified by the consciousness all Persons shall have, that they themselves in what Bodies soever they appear, or what Substances soever that consciousness adheres to, are the same, that committed those Actions, and deserve that Punishment for them.—(p. 347; 2.27.26)
God will know whether a person committed a specific action or not in knowing whether the person is conscious of having done that action. If the person did the action then he/she could be held accountable for it.

Although God can look into the "Hearts" of men, we cannot; and so, Locke identifies a means human beings may use to determine whether a person committed an action. In arguing that identity of man and identity of person are different, Locke addresses a possible objection to his position:

But is not a Man Drunk and Sober the same Person, why else is he punish'd for the Fact he commits when Drunk, though he be never afterwards conscious of it? Just as much the same Person, as a Man that walks, and does other things in his sleep, is the same Person, and is answerable for any mischief he shall do in it. Humane Laws punish both with a Justice suitable to their way of Knowledge: Because in these cases, they cannot distinguish certainly what is real, what counterfeit; and so the ignorance in Drunkenness or Sleep is not admitted as a plea. For though punishment be annexed to personality, and personality to consciousness, and the Drunkard perhaps be not conscious of what he did; yet Humane Judicatures justly punish him; because the Fact is proved, against him, but want of consciousness cannot be proved for him. (pp. 343-344: 2.27.22)

Although it is the person that is punished, and sameness of person is a question of sameness of consciousness, human beings attribute actions to other human beings by
determining whether the "Fact" can be established against them. Since in some cases we cannot know whether a person is conscious of having done or not, if we are going to hold him/her accountable for the action we must base our decision on something other than our understanding of what he/she is conscious of. It would appear we must base our decision on whether there is any physical evidence, e.g., a witness's account, which would make us think he/she was guilty.

The second condition of accountability is that the alleged actor be conscious of having done the action. If one is conscious of having done the action then he/she did it. If one is not conscious of having done the action then he/she did not do it. Since consciousness is a condition of accountability and the person is an accountable agent then the person must be, as Locke has said himself, a conscious being.

In closing this chapter I would like to emphasize what we have learned of the accountable person as free agent. As a free agent one has a power to carry out a course of action which one has intelligently considered and decided upon. At the end of the last chapter I made reference to a tension in Locke's moral theory. In the conclusion I will look at that
tension once again in light of what I have said about freedom and the Will in this chapter.
CONCLUSION

I have made note of a tension in Locke's discussion of the person and suggested that perhaps a further study of another characteristic of the moral person might help to resolve it. Even with Chapter 3 now completed I am not satisfied that this tension has been resolved.

The tension concerns which of two characteristics is more dominant in Locke's concept of the moral person. On one hand Locke's moral person appears as a being which responds ultimately to only its inculcated desires. In the end the only thing that moves the person is the promise of future pleasure or the threat of future pain. On the other hand Locke's moral person appears as a being which reasons independently of its desires. The moral person seems to be a being which uses its intellect to govern its life and protect itself from being too easily swayed by its immediate desires.

One might argue that the solution to this dilemma lies in Locke's concept of freedom. Even though children are taught desired behavior with the use of esteem and shame, and persons are motivated to act in a morally acceptable manner by rewards and punishments, persons, in light of their freedom, rise above their desires. Persons as free
agents have enough reason to consider proposed courses of action. Furthermore, in being free, persons have an ability to rein in their passions in order to give themselves time to reason:

The first therefore and great use of Liberty, is to hinder blind Precipitancy; the principal exercise of Freedom is to stand still, open the eyes, look about, and take a view of the consequence of what we are going to do, as much as the weight of the matter requires. (p. 279: 2.21.67)

In being free, persons have time to think about their actions rather than blindly follow their habits; and so, in the end reason is more dominant than inculcated desire.

On the face of it this solution appears to resolve the problem, until you consider what it is that one reasons about. For Locke, when considering proposed courses of action:

... Morality, established upon its true Foundations, cannot but determine the Choice in any one, that will but consider: and he that will not be so far a rational Creature, as to reflect seriously upon infinite Happiness and Misery, must needs condemn himself, as not making that use of his Understanding he should. The Rewards and Punishments of another Life, which the Almighty has established, as the Enforcements of his Law, are of weight enough to determine the Choice, against whatever Pleasure or Pain this Life can shew, when the eternal State is considered but in its bare possibility, which no Body can make any doubt of. (p. 281: 2.21.70)
What moral persons think about when deciding what to do are the "consequences" of the proposed actions. They weigh present pleasures and pains against the prospect of their future happiness and misery when deciding upon courses of action. The pleasures and pains that were used to develop desired habits are used now to maintain those habits via the tool of reason. Moral persons have been trained to love God's esteem and fear his condemnation; and when they reason about actions this is what their consideration focuses on.

What do we do about Locke's concept of personhood? Do we accept it, or reject it? I am not satisfied that the tension has been resolved; however, that does not mean I reject it. Perhaps Locke has his finger on just what we are. We in fact do things for the sake of either the immediate or the long term pleasure they give us. We also like to think of ourselves as capable of reasoning through our problems independently of our immediate desires. Perhaps Locke sees a conflict at the core of what we are as persons. If Locke is giving us an accurate account, then the tension in what persons are should be reflected in his account of person and its nature. It could be there is no fault in Locke's concept of personhood as related to this tension because this tension is a signal of a conflict we as persons have in our lives.
Does this mean I accept Locke's theory of personhood? I am not willing to do that yet either. When I signed on to this project my interest was a personal one. We call ourselves "human beings", "persons", or "men". What does that mean? What is a "human being", a "person", or a "man"? I came at Locke's concept of personhood with this concern. Now that I have looked at that concept there are two things about it that bother me.

Back in Chapter 2 I quoted a text from the Education to argue that Locke thought rewards and punishments were important to motivating children to be virtuous. In that passage Locke claimed that "... good and evil, reward and punishment are the only motives to a rational creature ...". Is Locke correct? In writing this thesis there were times that I was frustrated and disheartened. As the "Boss" himself has said, I was "sick of sitting 'round here trying to write this book". What got me through those times? I do not recall contemplating the pleasure I would feel on its completion. Nor does it seem to have been the pain which motivated me; for if I wanted to rid myself of the frustration I could just as easily have walked away from it all. What I remember to have sustained me at those times was my drive to finish this project. We have all met people who appear to have a "great Will". After having
worked through this thesis, and seen other students work through theirs, it seems entirely possible that at times the "spur" and "reins" are something other than the thought of future pleasure and pain. Maybe we are motivated for a great part by pleasure and pain, yet that source of motivation does not seem to explain the entire story.

I am also disturbed by the lack of significance Locke's moral theory places on this life. This life is important for Locke ultimately only as a means. According to his theory we live this life in order that we may achieve a certain desired end: happiness in the next.

Unlike Locke, Friedrich Nietzsche places a high priority on this life and challenges those who do not. In The Anti-Christ, Nietzsche writes:

Life itself is to my mind the instinct for growth, for durability, for an accumulation of forces, for power: where the will to power is lacking there is decline.14

Life is growing, striving, conquering, struggling, etc. For Nietzsche life is will to power.15 When our values do not exhibit this will to power they are in decline, or nihilistic (p. 572; The Portable Nietzsche). Nietzsche attacks Christianity on these grounds. It values values
which do not have the enthusiasm of the will to power, but are nihilistic or life negating (p. 573; The Portable Nietzsche):

Christianity is called the religion of pity. (p. 572; The Portable Nietzsche)

Pity is the practice of nihilism. To repeat: this depressive and contagious instinct crosses those instincts which aim at the preservation of life and at the enhancement of its value. It multiplies misery and conserves all that is miserable, and is thus a prime instrument of the advancement of decadence: pity persuades men to nothingness! Of course, one does not say "nothingness" but "beyond" or "God," or "true life," or Nirvana, salvation, blessedness. (p. 573; The Portable Nietzsche)

Enthusiasm for life is important for Nietzsche. Turning away from this life is decadent.

What bothers me about Locke's morality is that it is in Nietzsche's sense nihilistic. It looks away from this life. For Locke it is not the moral value of the action which is used to compel us to act. It is not our understanding of what is right that is appealed to. We are enticed to act a certain way by a prize. Actions themselves are not significant. It is the reward and punishment associated with those acts which are most important. One should live this life in quest of the everlasting life of happiness. The "concern" is with the future. This life is only a means
to the greater end of a merely possible happiness. This life is to be gotten away from; it is meaningless in itself.

In The Razor's Edge W. Somerset Maugham develops a story around the concern one character has for understanding the value of his life. Larry Darrel, after a close friend has died in saving his life, begins to wonder about the value of it:

And then you think of a fellow who an hour before was full of life and fun, and he's lying dead; it's all so cruel and so meaningless. It's hard not to ask yourself what life is all about and whether there's any sense to it or whether it's all a tragic blunder of blind fate. (p. 52; 1.10)

At the end of the book Maugham speculates that Larry would believe the "... ultimate satisfaction can only be found in the life of the spirit ....". I suspect Maugham is saying Larry would think the value of life is in living itself. There is no grand prize for living. I would be disappointed if Maugham had said anything less.
FOOTNOTES


BIBLIOGRAPHY


VITA AUCTORIS

Darryl George Fanick was born of Irish and Russian descent in Windsor, Ontario, on March 25, 1963. He attended St. Angela grade school and then Honourable W. C. Kennedy Collegiate Institute high school, where he was Vice-President of the student council in grade 13 and received the Kennedy Collegiate 50th Anniversary Award upon graduation. He entered the University of Windsor in the fall of 1981. In June of 1984 he received his Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and then began work on his Master of Arts. As a student at the U of W he received the Major H. P. Swan Prize in Philosophy (1985), a U of W Postgraduate Tuition Scholarship (1985-86), and a U of W Summer Research Scholarship (1986). He has participated in the sport of tennis as a competitor since age ten, and has been coaching since he was sixteen. In 1982 he was certified as an Ontario Tennis Association Instructor. He intends to study for the degree of Bachelor of Education and become a teacher.