

LOCKE'S ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE FREEDOM TO WILL¹

British Journal for the History of Philosophy 25:4 (2017), 642-662.

(This is a penultimate draft and contains some errors. Please cite the published version.)

Matthew A. Leisinger

Abstract. In sections 2.21.23-25 of *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, John Locke considers and rejects two ways in which we might be “free to will”, which correspond to the Thomistic distinction between freedom of exercise and freedom of specification. In this paper, I examine Locke’s arguments in detail. In the first part, I argue for a non-developmental reading of Locke’s argument against freedom of exercise. Locke’s view throughout all five editions of the *Essay* is that we do not possess freedom of exercise (at least in most cases). In the second part, I argue that, when Locke asks whether we possess freedom of specification, his question is intentionally ambiguous between two readings, a first-order reading and a higher-order reading. Locke’s view is that, on either reading, we do not possess freedom of specification (at least in any interesting sense).

In sections 2.21.8-13 of *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, Locke presents the following account of freedom:²

Freedom An agent A is free with respect to some action ϕ just in case: (1) if A were to will to ϕ , then A would ϕ ; (2) if A were to will to forbear ϕ -ing, then A would forbear ϕ -ing.³

Having presented his official account of freedom, Locke goes on in sections 14-25 to consider whether we might possess some further kind of freedom over and above the ordinary kind of freedom discussed in sections 8-13. He begins, in sections 14-21, by considering whether we might additionally possess *freedom of the will*, that is, whether the will itself might be free. Locke’s answer is that, since both *the will* and *freedom* are powers, and since one power cannot possess another, it follows that the will itself cannot be free. Next, in sections 23-25, Locke considers

¹ I’m grateful to Michael Della Rocca and four anonymous referees for their comments on earlier versions of this paper. I’m also grateful to Sam Rickless for his comments and for first challenging me to examine *Essay* 2.21.23-25 more closely. Above all, I’m indebted to Ken Winkler for his comments on many drafts as well as for his advice and support. This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

² All citations of Locke’s *Essay* are in the main body of the text and refer to the Nidditch edition by book, chapter, and section number. Where relevant, I’ll use subscripts to distinguish the five editions of the *Essay* – *Essay*₁, *Essay*₂, and so on.

³ Three brief notes about *Freedom*. First, for Locke, “action” refers to both bodily actions and mental actions, and to both performances (doing something) and forbearances (not-doing something). Second, the conditionals in (1) and (2) should be understood causally. A satisfies (1), for example, only if, were A to will to ϕ , A’s willing to ϕ would *cause* A’s ϕ -ing. Third, *Freedom* only applies to beings that satisfy certain cognitive requirements. In particular, Locke assumes that A is free with respect to ϕ only if A is able to will to ϕ .

whether we might possess (not freedom of the will but) *the freedom to will*, that is, whether an agent might be free with respect to her volitions or acts of willing. Locke takes this proposal more seriously and goes on to discuss two senses in which we might be “free to will”.

These two senses correspond to the Thomistic distinction between freedom of exercise and freedom of specification. While Locke doesn’t use these terms, he was almost certainly aware of the distinction and likely had something like it in mind.⁴ Suppose I’m choosing between an apple and an orange. I possess freedom of exercise just in case (1) I’m able to will to take an apple or an orange and (2) I’m able *not* to will to take an apple or an orange. By contrast, I possess freedom of specification just in case (1) I’m able to will to take an apple and (2) I’m able to will to take an orange. In other words, whereas freedom of exercise is the power to determine whether I form *some* volition, freedom of specification is the power to determine *which* volition I form. Locke’s project in sections 23-25 is to consider whether, in addition to possessing the ordinary kind of freedom discussed in sections 8-13, we might also be “free to will” in either of these senses.

There’s no scholarly consensus about how best to understand Locke’s arguments in sections 23-25. Understanding Locke’s arguments in these sections, however, is crucial for understanding his overall account of freedom. Does *Freedom* represent Locke’s considered view, or does Locke think that we possess some further kind of freedom – either freedom of exercise or freedom of specification – over and above the ordinary kind of freedom outlined in sections 8-13? In this paper, I’ll attempt to answer this question. I’m going to argue that *Freedom* does indeed represent Locke’s considered account of freedom and that, according to Locke, we do not possess either freedom of exercise (at least in most cases) or freedom of specification (at least in any interesting sense). I’ll begin with freedom of exercise. Whereas Samuel Rickless has claimed that Locke’s argument against freedom of exercise changed between successive editions of the *Essay*, I’ll argue that, throughout all five editions, Locke consistently maintains that we do not possess freedom of exercise with respect to present actions. I’ll then turn to freedom of specification. Commentators have long been vexed by an ambiguity in the text of section 25, where Locke asks “whether a Man can *will*, what he *wills*”. I’ll argue that Locke actually recognizes this ambiguity and, moreover, that it is crucial to his argument. On one reading, Locke thinks that the answer is

⁴ Cf. Chappell, Della Rocca, and Sleigh (1998, 1198-1199 and 1247-1248). Locke’s distinction may not correspond perfectly with the Thomistic distinction. When Locke discusses what I’m calling “freedom of specification”, he seems to be concerned not with whether I’m able (1) to will *this action* or (2) to will *that action*, but rather with whether I’m able (1) to will *to perform this action* or (2) to will *to forbear this action* (cf. 2.21.27).

affirmative but uninteresting. On the other reading, he thinks that the answer is interesting but negative. Either way, he concludes that we don't possess freedom of specification in any interesting sense. Locke's view, therefore, is that the kind of freedom he discusses in sections 8-13 is all the freedom we have. We do not possess the further freedom to will.

1. Freedom of Exercise

Locke argues in *Essay* 2.21.23-24 that we do not possess freedom of exercise (at least in most cases).⁵ Suppose A is considering whether to ϕ . Since freedom of exercise is A's power to determine whether she forms *some* volition with respect to ϕ -ing, A possesses freedom of exercise only if A is able *not* to will to perform or forbear ϕ -ing. Locke argues that A does not possess freedom of exercise because A *cannot not* will to perform or forbear ϕ -ing; she *must* will one way or the other.

Here's the standard reading of Locke's argument.⁶ A's ϕ -ing must either exist or not exist. Suppose (1) that A's ϕ -ing exists. In this case, it follows that A willed to ϕ . Therefore, A willed to perform or forbear ϕ -ing. Next, suppose (2) that A's ϕ -ing does not exist. In this case, it follows that A willed to forbear ϕ -ing. Therefore, A willed to perform or forbear ϕ -ing. Since (1) and (2) are exhaustive, it follows that A must will to perform or forbear ϕ -ing. She can't avoid willing one way or the other. Therefore, A does not possess freedom of exercise.

The obvious problem with this argument, which Leibniz was perhaps the first to observe, is that the inference from (2) is invalid: it simply doesn't follow that, if A's ϕ -ing does not exist, then A willed to forbear ϕ -ing.⁷ Suppose I'm deciding whether to mow the lawn tomorrow. If I don't mow the lawn, this may be because I decided not to do so. But there are other possible explanations for my inaction. If I suspend deliberation and fail to decide one way or the other, I might end up not mowing the lawn *despite* not having willed not to mow the lawn. In this case, my ϕ -ing would not exist, even though I never will to forbear ϕ -ing.

While some think that Leibniz's objection is decisive, Samuel Rickless (2000, 49-55) argues that Locke revises his argument first in *Essay*₂ and then again in *Essay*₅ in order to avoid

⁵ I'll discuss this qualification later.

⁶ For similar reconstructions, see Chappell (1994, 105-106) and Rickless (2000, 48-49). For a different reconstruction, see Stuart (2013, 426-427).

⁷ Leibniz (1981, 181). Cf. Chappell (1994, 106; 2007, 157), Rickless (2000, 49), and Stuart (2013, 425).

this objection.⁸ On Rickless's developmental reading, Locke first revises the argument in *Essay*₂ by restricting ϕ to range not over all actions whatsoever but merely over stoppings of processes. Locke's conclusion in *Essay*₂ is thus that A lacks freedom of exercise only with respect to stoppings of processes. As Rickless realizes, this restriction does nothing to avoid Leibniz's objection: we can suspend deliberation about any future action, including future stoppings of processes. Fortunately, according to Rickless, Locke revises his argument again in *Essay*₅ by further restricting ϕ to range over only stoppings of processes in which A is presently engaged.

While I agree with Rickless that Locke restricts ϕ in some way, I disagree with Rickless's developmental claim. Instead, I think that, even in *Essay*₁, Locke intends to restrict his argument to present actions. In order to justify this claim, let's examine the evidence for Rickless's developmental reading.

First, what evidence is there for thinking that Locke revises his argument in *Essay*₂? Throughout *Essay*₁₋₅, the action that Locke uses to illustrate his argument is the stopping of a process: "a Man that is walking, to whom it is proposed to give off walking" (2.21.24). Since this example is already present in *Essay*₁, it provides little evidence for Rickless's developmental reading. Instead, Rickless supports his reading by citing the lines immediately following this example, which Locke did revise in *Essay*₂ (I've underlined Locke's revisions):

[...] and so it is in regard of all other Actions in our power; they being once proposed, the Mind has not a power to act, or not to act, wherein consists Liberty: It has not a power to forbear *willing*; it cannot avoid some determination considering them, let the Consideration be as short, the Thought as quick, as it will, it either leaves the Man in the state he was before thinking, or changes it; continues the Action, or puts an end to it. (2.21.24)

Rickless claims that Locke inserted the underlined text in order to restrict his argument to stoppings of processes, that is, cases in which an agent must either "continue the Action" or "put an end to it". Read in context, however, I don't think that this line actually supports Rickless's developmental reading. In this passage, Locke is discussing the example of an agent who's deciding whether to stop walking. So, when Locke adds that the agent must unavoidably "continue the Action" or "put an end to it", Locke is not *restricting* his argument to stoppings of processes. Rather, he's *applying* his argument – which he takes to apply to all actions – to the example under consideration, which happens to be the stopping of a process. Indeed, earlier in the quoted passage,

⁸ Glauser (2003, 709-710) and Garrett (2015, 274-277) agree with Rickless that Locke is able to avoid Leibniz's objection, but they do not consider the developmental question. Chappell (1994, 106-107; 2007, 147), by contrast, thinks that Leibniz's objection is decisive.

Locke explicitly says that he takes his argument to apply equally to “all other Actions in our power”. So, I see little reason to think that Locke revises his argument in *Essay*₂.

What about the claim that Locke restricts his argument in *Essay*₅ to stoppings of processes in which the agent is presently engaged? On the one hand, since I deny that Locke restricts his argument to stoppings of processes, I also deny that Locke restricts his argument to stoppings of processes in which the agent is presently engaged. Having rejected the former claim, there is little reason to accept the latter. On the other hand, there is considerable textual evidence for thinking that Locke restricts his argument in *Essay*₅, not to present stoppings of processes, but to present actions more generally. Here’s a passage from *Essay*₄ 2.21.23:

That *Willing*, or *Chusing* being an Action, and Freedom consisting in a power of acting, or not acting, *a Man in respect of willing any Action in his power once proposed to his Thoughts cannot be free.*

Here’s the same passage in *Essay*₅ (again, I’ve underlined the relevant revisions):

That *Willing*, or *Volition* being an Action, and Freedom consisting in a power of acting, or not acting, *a Man in respect of willing, or the Act of Volition, when any Action in his power is once proposed to his Thoughts, as presently to be done, cannot be free.*

In this passage, Locke restricts his argument to present actions, that is, to actions proposed “as presently to be done”. Similarly, Locke changes *Essay*₄’s “A Man is not at liberty to will, or not to will” to “in all proposals of present Action, a Man is not at liberty to will, or not to will” in *Essay*₅ (2.21.24). And again, in a lengthy addition to *Essay*₅, Locke explains that it’s sufficient for his argument to apply only to proposals of present action, which he now says are “the far greater number”:

For considering the vast number of voluntary Actions, that succeed one another every moment that we are awake, in the course of our Lives, there are but few of them that are thought on or proposed to the Will, ’till the time they are to be done [...]. (2.21.24)

It’s clear, therefore, that Locke restricts his argument in *Essay*₅ to present actions. Accordingly, we might modify Rickless’s developmental reading and think that Locke revises his argument in *Essay*₅ by restricting ϕ to range over only present actions. On this reading, Locke’s conclusion in *Essay*₅ would be that, if A is considering whether to ϕ , where ϕ is some present action, then A lacks freedom of exercise with respect to ϕ .

I want to reject even this modified version of Rickless’s developmental reading. While it’s clear that Locke restricts his argument to present actions in *Essay*₅, it doesn’t follow that this

restriction constitutes a revision. Instead, I think that Locke implicitly restricts his argument to present actions in *Essay*₁₋₄ as well. In *Essay*₅, Locke merely makes this restriction explicit.

The principal motivation for my non-developmental reading is simple charity. Locke's argument avoids Leibniz's objection only when restricted to present actions. Therefore, we ought to read Locke's argument as restricted to present actions, *ceteris paribus*. Of course, great philosophers sometimes make bad arguments. Read without the restriction to present actions, however, much of what Locke says just seems glaringly false. For example:

[A] *Man in respect of willing any Action in his power once proposed to his Thoughts cannot be free.* The reason whereof is very manifest: For it being unavoidable that the Action depending on his *Will*, should exist, or not exist; and its existence, or not existence, following perfectly the determination, and preference of his *Will*, he cannot avoid willing the existence, or not existence, of that Action [...]. (*Essay*₁₋₄ 2.21.23)

When Locke says that “the Action [...] [follows] perfectly the determination, and preference of his Will”, it seems obvious that the action in question cannot be a future action. Even if I can now will future actions, Locke surely isn't claiming that future actions “perfectly follow” present volitions. After all, future-directed volitions are easily foiled. I may be able to will now to go to the bank tomorrow, but no mere volition of mine can guarantee that the bank will be open.

If Locke does restrict his argument to present actions in *Essay*₁₋₄, why doesn't he say so? I want to suggest that Locke implicitly restricts his argument to present actions in *Essay*₁₋₄ because he holds that present actions are the only actions that we can will.⁹ Whereas it's clear that I can will *now* to raise my arm *now*, and that I can intend *now* to raise my arm *in the future*, it's not equally clear that I can will *now* to raise my arm *in the future*. So, while Locke doesn't distinguish volitions and intentions, it's not implausible to think that he might have a similarly restricted notion of the will on which we can only (now) will present actions.

There's some textual evidence for this reading. In section 24 of *Essay*₁₋₄, Locke says that “A *Man is not at liberty to will, or not to will any thing in his power, that he once considers of*”. Locke revises this line in *Essay*₅, saying instead “That in all proposals of present Action, a *Man is not at liberty to will, or not to will, because he cannot forbear willing*”. On Rickless's developmental reading, we might have expected Locke simply to qualify his claim in *Essay*₅ by restricting it to “proposals of present Action”. But that's not what Locke does. Instead, Locke

⁹ Stuart (2013, 428-429) makes the same suggestion. Unlike Stuart, I'm going to give textual evidence for this suggestion. I'll also suggest that Locke may have changed his view in *Essay*₅.

replaces one qualification with another. Whereas Locke says in *Essay*₅ that his claim only applies to “proposals of present Action”, Locke says in *Essay*₁₋₄ that his claim only applies to actions “in his power”. My suggestion is that Locke actually takes these two qualifications to be equivalent. Strictly speaking, I can only perform *present* actions *right now*. Therefore, strictly speaking, only present actions are *in my power* right now. Future actions will be in my power in the future, but they are not yet in my power. Locke’s two qualifications are thus equivalent insofar as they both restrict Locke’s argument to the same subset of actions, namely, *present actions* or actions that are (strictly speaking) *in my power*.¹⁰ If this is Locke’s view, then we can see why he would deny that we can will future actions. Supposing that we can only will to perform actions that we take to be in our power,¹¹ if only present actions are in our power, it follows that we can only will to perform present actions.¹² So, on my proposal, Locke restricts his argument to present actions in *Essay*₁₋₄ because he holds that we can only will present actions, and he holds that we can only will present actions because he holds that only present actions are in our power, strictly speaking.

It might be objected that, when Locke says in section 24 of *Essay*₅ that “proposals of present Action” are “the far greater number”, he’s implying that there are also proposals of future action, which might suggest that we can, in fact, will future actions. This objection rests on a confusion. It doesn’t follow from the claim that there are proposals of future action that we can now will those future actions. Even if I cannot *will* now to raise my arm in the future, I can surely *consider* or *deliberate* now about whether to raise my arm in the future. In this sense, future actions might be “proposed to our thoughts” for consideration or deliberation even if we cannot yet will them.

The objector might respond by observing that, whereas Locke summarizes his argument in *Essay*₁₋₄ as concluding that “a Man is not at liberty, whether he will *Will*, or no”, Locke revises this passage in *Essay*₅ to state merely “that in most cases a Man is not at liberty, whether he will *Will*, or no” (2.21.25). The implication seems to be that, while agents don’t possess freedom of exercise “in most cases”, they may possess freedom of exercise *in other cases*. These “other cases” are, plausibly, cases of future action. And, in order to possess freedom of exercise in these “other

¹⁰ My suggestion is not that Locke takes “present actions” and “actions in one’s power” to be *synonymous*, but merely that he takes both phrases to refer to the same actions.

¹¹ For evidence that Locke would endorse this claim, see *Essay*₁ 2.21.15 and *Essay* 2.21.28. Cf. Stuart (2013, 405).

¹² Perhaps setting aside cases of irrationality, such as those in which an agent takes future actions to be in her power.

cases” of future action, an agent would presumably have to be able to will her future actions. Therefore, the objector might conclude, Locke does not hold that we can only will present actions.

This objection doesn’t damage my central argument, however. My claim is that, throughout *Essay*₁₋₅, Locke consistently restricts his argument to present actions. In *Essay*₁₋₄, Locke leaves this restriction implicit because he assumes that we can only will present actions. In *Essay*₅, by contrast, Locke no longer makes this assumption and instead explicitly restricts his argument to present actions. We might wonder why Locke decides to make this restriction explicit. One possibility is that Locke changed his view. Perhaps, in *Essay*₅, Locke thinks that we can will future actions and therefore grants that we might possess freedom of exercise with respect to future actions. Another possibility is that, while Locke still holds that we can only will present actions, he doesn’t want his argument to rest on this assumption. Yet another possibility is that it didn’t occur to Locke until *Essay*₅ that anyone might think that we could will future actions.¹³ Regardless, my claim is simply that, throughout *Essay*₁₋₅, Locke takes his argument to apply only to present actions. This claim is not undermined if, in *Essay*₅, Locke allows that we might be able to will future actions.

Before moving on, let’s take a final look at Locke’s argument against freedom of exercise. How successful is the argument, restricted to present actions? Suppose A is considering whether to ϕ , where ϕ is some present action. Locke’s argument contains two crucial inferences. First, if (1) A’s ϕ -ing exists, then A willed to ϕ . Second, if (2) A’s ϕ -ing does not exist, then A willed to forbear ϕ -ing. Given these inferences, it follows that A lacks freedom of exercise. We might want to question the inferences, however.

Let’s start with the inference from (1). Consider Davidson (1980, 79)’s mountain climber, who considers whether to let go of the rope holding the man beneath him but then becomes nervous and drops the rope without willing to do so. In this case, the climber considers whether to ϕ , where ϕ is some present action (dropping the rope), and A ϕ ’s, but A doesn’t will to ϕ . Davidson thus appears to provide a counterexample to the inference from (1): A’s ϕ -ing exists, but A does not will to ϕ . There are at least two responses open to Locke. First, Locke might further restrict ϕ . In all five editions of the *Essay*, Locke characterizes ϕ as “the Action depending on his Will” (2.21.23). Accordingly, Locke might mean to restrict ϕ not just to *present* actions but to present actions *that depend on A’s will*. On this reading, Davidson’s example mightn’t undermine Locke’s

¹³ I’m grateful to an anonymous referee for raising this possibility.

inference because we might think that the climber's action doesn't depend on her will; the climber drops the rope because she's nervous, not because she wills to do so. Alternatively, Locke might respond by claiming that even Davidson's climber cannot forbear willing one way or the other. The climber drops the rope, Locke might insist, *even though* she wills not to drop the rope; she wills to forbear ϕ -ing, but she ends up ϕ -ing all the same. As a result, even if Davidson's example shows Locke's inference to be invalid, it may be consistent with the overall conclusion that, in cases of present action, A cannot forbear willing to perform or forbear ϕ -ing.

Next, consider the inference from (2). Even if ϕ is restricted to present actions, mightn't there be cases in which A forbears ϕ -ing, not because A wills to forbear ϕ -ing, but simply because A doesn't form a volition either way? Suppose I'm considering whether to dive into a pool at exactly 4:00. At 3:55, I'm deliberating about whether to dive at 4:00 and, since I'm afraid of water, I cannot make up my mind; I stand at the edge of the water, trembling and indecisive. When 4:00 comes around, I still cannot bring myself to form a volition either way. As a result, I forbear diving at 4:00, yet I do not will to forbear diving at 4:00. I think that Locke is committed to rejecting such examples. If, at 4:00, I consider whether to dive at 4:00 and do not do so, it simply follows that I willed to forbear diving at 4:00. Once 4:00 has passed, I may continue deliberating about whether to dive at 4:05 or about whether to dive at all but, after 4:00, I have in effect made up my mind about whether to dive at 4:00. After all, it's no accident that I continue to stand at the side of the pool. I continue to stand there, voluntarily, because I have willed to forbear diving at 4:00.¹⁴

While some questions remain, Locke's argument against freedom of exercise – restricted to present actions, as Locke always intended it to be – is, on the whole, very effective.

2. Freedom of Specification

Having dismissed freedom of exercise, Locke moves on in section 25 to consider whether we might be "free to will" in the sense of possessing freedom of specification. Recall that freedom of specification is an agent's power, not to determine whether she forms *some* volition, but to determine *which* volition she forms. If A is considering whether to ϕ , she possesses freedom of specification just in case she's able to determine whether she wills to ϕ or whether she instead wills not to ϕ . Here's how Locke puts the question of whether we possess freedom of specification:

¹⁴ Locke's argument here is relevant to Davidson's example. Locke might claim that, just as I will to forbear diving at 4:00, so too Davidson's climber wills to forbear dropping the rope.

Since then it is plain, a Man is not at liberty, whether he will *Will*, or no; [...] the next thing to be demanded is, *Whether a Man be at liberty to will which of the two he pleases, Motion or Rest.* (2.21.25)

In section 24, Locke discussed the case of an agent considering whether to stop walking, arguing that such an agent lacks freedom of exercise because he cannot forbear willing one way or the other. Now, concerning this same case, Locke asks whether such an agent, even if he is not free to forbear willing, might nonetheless be free to will “which of the two he pleases”. I’ll refer to this as “*The Question*”.

Locke actually gives two responses to *The Question*. The first, which I’ll call “*The Absurdity Response*”, is that *The Question* is “absurd”:

This Question carries the absurdity of it so manifestly in it self, that one might thereby sufficiently be convinced, that Liberty concerns not the Will.¹⁵ For to ask, whether a Man be at liberty to will either Motion, or Rest; Speaking or Silence; which he pleases, is to ask, whether a Man can *will*, what he *wills*; or be pleased with what he is pleased with. A Question, which I think, needs no answer [...]. (2.21.25)

The second, which I’ll call “*The Regress Response*”, is that *The Question* threatens a problematic regress:

[And] they, who can make a Question of it, must suppose one Will to determine the Acts of another, and another to determinate that; and so on *in infinitum*. (2.21.25)¹⁶

Section 25 thus consists of three parts: *The Question*, *The Absurdity Response*, and *The Regress Response*.

Let’s begin with *The Absurdity Response*. Locke says that *The Question* is “absurd” because to ask *The Question* is to ask “whether a Man can *will*, what he *wills*”, which “needs no answer”. Unfortunately, the phrase “whether a Man can *will*, what he *wills*” is ambiguous between a first-order reading and a higher-order reading. These two readings differ in how they understand the phrase “what he *wills*”. On the first-order reading, “what he *wills*” refers to *the particular action* that the man wills. On this reading, Locke is asking whether a man, who does in fact will to ϕ , can will to ϕ . By contrast, on the higher-order reading, “what he *wills*” refers not to *the particular action* that he wills but rather to *his willing of that action*. On this reading, Locke is asking whether a man can will to will to ϕ .

¹⁵ *Essay*_{1.4} adds: “that Liberty concerns not the Will in any case”.

¹⁶ *Essay*_{1.4} adds: “and so on *in infinitum*, an absurdity before taken notice of”.

Vere Chappell (1994, 107-108) adopts the higher-order reading. According to Chappell, when Locke considers “whether a Man can *will*, what he *wills*”, he’s considering whether a man can will to will to ϕ .¹⁷ Chappell argues that Locke finds *The Question* “absurd” because he thinks that we obviously *cannot* will to will to ϕ . More specifically, on Chappell’s reading, Locke denies that we can will to will to ϕ because such an appeal to higher-order volitions generates a problematic regress, which Locke details in *The Regress Response*.¹⁸

There are at least two problems with Chappell’s interpretation. First, when Locke says that it’s “absurd” to ask “whether a Man can *will*, what he *wills*”, Chappell thinks that “the absurdity lies not in the question itself, but in an affirmative answer to it; that it consists in some sort of infinite succession of wills” (108). According to Chappell, it’s perfectly intelligible to ask whether we can “will what we will”; what’s unintelligible is to claim that we do so, for this claim generates a problematic regress. But that isn’t what Locke says. Locke says that *The Question* “carries the absurdity of it so manifestly in it self, that one might thereby sufficiently be convinced, that Liberty concerns not the Will.” According to Locke, what’s absurd isn’t any particular answer to *The Question*; what’s absurd is *The Question* itself. Chappell’s reading thus incorrectly locates what Locke takes to be absurd about *The Question*.

Second, Locke says not only that it’s absurd to ask “whether a Man can *will*, what he *wills*” but also that it’s absurd to ask whether a man can “be pleased with what he is pleased with”. The latter question, like the former, admits of both a first-order and a higher-order reading. On the first-order reading, the question is whether a man, who is in fact pleased with ϕ -ing, can be pleased with ϕ -ing. On the higher-order reading, the question is whether a man can be pleased with his being pleased with ϕ -ing. As we’ve seen, Chappell adopts the higher-order reading and argues that, according to Locke, an affirmative answer is absurd. The problem is that, even if Chappell’s interpretation were plausible in the case of willing, it’s much less plausible in the case of being pleased. It’s hardly absurd to think that a man might be pleased with his being pleased with ϕ -ing. Suppose I help a friend and I’m pleased with my doing so. Surely I might, upon reflection, be

¹⁷ Chappell doesn’t note the ambiguity between a first-order and a higher-order reading.

¹⁸ Walsh (2010, 90) and Yaffe (2000, 29) follow Chappell. Stuart (2013, 430-431) and Glauser (2003, 713) agree that Locke denies that we can will to will to ϕ , but they think that Locke denies that we can will to will to ϕ not merely because it leads to a regress but also because there’s something incoherent about the very notion of willing to will.

pleased that I'm pleased with helping my friend. Such an experience seems not merely intelligible but commonplace.¹⁹

Rickless (2000, 63-65) proposes an alternative interpretation of *The Absurdity Response*. Unlike Chappell, Rickless adopts the first-order reading: when Locke considers "whether a Man can will, what he wills", he's considering whether a man, who does in fact will to ϕ , can will to ϕ .²⁰ As a result, Rickless argues that the correct answer to *The Question* is not negative (as Chappell claims) but affirmative: *of course* I can will to ϕ if I do will to ϕ ! As Rickless observes, if I do in fact will to ϕ , then it follows trivially that I *can* will to ϕ , because whatever is actual is possible. We might wonder why Locke would take *The Question*, understood in this way, to be "absurd". Rickless suggests, plausibly, that Locke takes *The Question* to be absurd precisely because the answer is so obvious it's not worth asking. *Of course* a man can will what he does in fact will, or be pleased with what he is in fact pleased with! The answer is so obvious that it's absurd even to pose *The Question* in the first place.

Rickless's interpretation avoids both problems that I raised against Chappell.²¹ First, Rickless's interpretation correctly locates what Locke takes to be absurd about *The Question*. Whereas Chappell thinks that it's merely an affirmative answer to *The Question* that's absurd, Rickless rightly holds that *The Question* itself is absurd. Second, Rickless's interpretation explains why Locke says it would be "absurd" to ask whether a man can "be pleased with what he is pleased with". Just as it's obvious that a man can will what he does in fact will, so too it's obvious that a man can be pleased with what he is in fact pleased with. Therefore, while I will disagree with Rickless's overall interpretation of section 25, I think we ought to prefer Rickless's interpretation of *The Absurdity Response* over Chappell's.

Let's move to *The Regress Response*. In *Essay*₅, Locke says that "they, who can make a Question of it, must suppose one Will to determine the Acts of another, and another to determinate that; and so on *in infinitum*." In *Essay*₄, Locke adds a phrase to the end of this passage, saying that the supposition of higher-order volitions is "an absurdity before taken notice of". This phrase refers back to a passage at the end of section 23 that Locke removed from *Essay*₅ in which he discusses the alleged regress in more detail:

¹⁹ Stuart (2013, 430) notes this difficulty but nonetheless adopts the higher-order reading.

²⁰ Like Chappell, Rickless doesn't recognize that *The Question* is ambiguous between a first-order and a higher-order reading.

²¹ Rickless notes the first problem but not the second.

Besides, to make a Man free after this manner, by making the Action of *willing* to depend on his *Will*, there must be another antecedent *Will*, to determine the Acts of this *Will*, and another to determine that, and so *in infinitum*: For where ever one stops, the Actions of the last *Will* cannot be free [...].

Very roughly, Locke's thought in this passage (and in *The Regress Response*) is that, if his opponent makes freedom – whether freedom of exercise (as in section 23) or freedom of specification (as in section 25) – depend in some way on the existence of higher-order volitions, then she is committed to a problematic kind of regress.

In order to see why freedom might involve higher-order volitions, recall Locke's own account of freedom:

Freedom An agent A is free with respect to some action ϕ just in case: (1) if A were to will to ϕ , then A would ϕ ; (2) if A were to will to forbear ϕ -ing, then A would forbear ϕ -ing.

Suppose A is considering whether to ψ . A possesses freedom of exercise just in case A is free with respect to *the act of willing to perform or forbear ψ -ing*. Similarly, A possesses freedom of specification just in case A is free both with respect to *the act of willing to ψ* and with respect to *the act of willing to forbear ψ -ing*. Since these acts of willing are themselves actions, we can substitute them into *Freedom* to yield formal Lockean definitions of freedom of exercise and freedom of specification. For example:

S-Freedom An agent possess freedom of specification just in case: (1) if A were to will to will to ψ , then A would will to ψ ; (2) if A were to will to forbear willing to ψ , then A would forbear willing to ψ ; (3) if A were to will to will to forbear ψ -ing, then A would will to forbear ψ -ing; (5) if A were to will to forbear willing to forbear ψ -ing, then A would forbear willing to forbear ψ -ing.

We needn't worry about the cumbersome details of such definitions. What's important is simply that they appeal to higher-order volitions. For example, it follows from *S-Freedom* that A possesses freedom of specification only if A is able to will to will to ψ .²² Locke's aim in *The Regress Response* is to reject such higher-order volition (or "HOV") accounts of freedom.

Locke rejects HOV accounts of freedom in *The Regress Response* because he thinks that they generate a problematic regress. What exactly is the regress that Locke has in mind? According to Chappell (1994, 109-111), Locke's worry is that, on HOV accounts, actions "inherit" their freedom from an actually infinite series of higher-order volitions: ϕ is free only if it is produced

²² Like *Freedom*, *S-Freedom* assume that A satisfies certain cognitive requirements. Just as A satisfies *Freedom* only if she *is able* to will to ϕ , so too an agent satisfies *S-Freedom* only if she *is able* to will to will to ψ .

by a free volition, which in turn is free only if it is produced by another free volition, and so on *in infinitum*. More carefully, on such a view, A is free with respect to ϕ only if A's ϕ -ing was produced by a free volition v_1 , and A is free with respect to v_1 (v_1 is a "free volition") only if v_1 was produced by a free higher-order volition v_2 , and so on *in infinitum*.²³ If we stop the regress and claim that there is some volition v_n such that v_n was not produced by a higher-order volition, it follows that *none* of the lower-order volitions are free and that ϕ itself isn't free either, because these all "inherit" their freedom from v_n . Therefore, in order for A to be free with respect to ϕ , there must be an actually infinite series of higher-order volitions. But this is absurd. Therefore, Locke rejects HOV accounts of freedom.

There are several problems with Chappell's interpretation. Chappell himself criticizes Locke's argument for relying on what Chappell calls the "inheritance principle": "An agent is free with respect to an act, only if he also is free with respect to the act of willing which produces that act" (110). The trouble is that Locke rejects the inheritance principle, since it follows from *Freedom* that an action ϕ can be free even if the volition to ϕ is not free.²⁴ Whereas Chappell thinks that this is a problem with Locke's argument, I think it's a problem with Chappell's interpretation.

Here's another problem. I've suggested that Locke's aim in *The Regress Response* is to reject HOV accounts of freedom. Consider an extreme HOV account, *Infinite Freedom*, on which A is "free to will" only if A is free with respect to every volition in the infinite series stretching back from v_1 – that is, only if A is free to will to ϕ , free to will to will to ϕ , and so on *in infinitum*. According to Locke, A could be free with respect to each of these volitions *even if* A were never to form a single one of them. Suppose I'm sitting in a chair. According to Locke, I'm free to get up only if it's the case that, *if* I were to will to get up, I would get up. I needn't actually will to get up in order to be free with respect to the act of getting up. Likewise, in the case of *Infinite Freedom*, Locke's view implies that, for any volition in the infinite series of stretching back from v_1 , A is free with respect to that volition only if it's the case that, *if* A were to will to form that volition, then A would form that volition. A needn't actually will to form the volition in order to be free with respect to the volition. Therefore, *contra* Chappell, even an extreme HOV account of freedom

²³ For similar interpretations of *The Regress Response*, see Stuart (2013, 432-433) and Glauser (2003, 711-712). Note that Locke specifies that the higher-order volition v_2 would have to be produced by a corresponding higher-order faculty of will. I've omitted this detail as it seems inessential to Locke's argument.

²⁴ Chappell also argues that Locke cannot be arguing *ad hominem* because his opponents would reject his argument on other grounds. Cf. Glauser (2003, 712-713).

such as *Infinite Freedom* wouldn't demand that, in order for A to be "free to will", there must be an actually infinite series of higher-order volitions. At most, such an HOV account could only demand that A *be able* to perform an actually infinite series of higher-order volitions.²⁵ Moreover, most HOV accounts of freedom demand much less than *Infinite Freedom*. It's clear, for example, that *S-Freedom* doesn't require even that A *be able* to perform an actually infinite series of higher-order volitions. *S-Freedom* does require that A be able to will to will to ψ , but *S-Freedom* doesn't posit any further higher-order volitions; A needn't be able to will to will to will to ψ , for example. So, on Chappell's interpretation, Locke's argument doubly misses its target: first, because HOV accounts require at most that A *be able* to perform actually infinite series of higher-order volitions; second, because most HOV accounts, such as *S-Freedom*, require even less.

I think there's a better way to reconstruct Locke's argument. The trouble with HOV accounts, Locke says, is that "where ever one stops, the Actions of the last *Will* cannot be free". It follows from *Freedom* that A is free with respect to ϕ only if A is able to will to ϕ – call this volition " v_1 ". It also follows from *Freedom* that A is free with respect to v_1 only if A is able to will to will to ϕ – call this volition " v_2 ". And so on *in infinitum*. What Locke observes is simply that, wherever we stop the regress, we'll be left with an unfree, highest-order volition. Locke is assuming, I think, that A *is not able* to perform an actually infinite series of higher-order volitions. HOV accounts must grant, therefore, that there is some volition such that A *is not able* to will to perform that volition, which is just to say that there must be some unfree, highest-order volition. So, *contra* Chappell, Locke's point is *not* that, in order for ϕ to be free, A must (be able to) perform an actually infinite series of higher-order volitions. Locke's point is simply that, assuming that we are unable to perform actually infinite series of higher-order volitions, it follows that all HOV accounts must posit some unfree, highest order volition.

Why does Locke take this to be a problem for HOV accounts? Rickless (2000, 61), who otherwise gives a similar reconstruction of Locke's argument, simply reads Locke as "assuming that [the agent] is free with respect to *all* his acts of volition". But this needn't be the case. An HOV theorist might agree with Locke that A is free with respect to ϕ only if A is able to will to ϕ . She might nonetheless argue that A possesses a further kind of freedom – perhaps freedom of specification – only if A is able to will to will to ϕ . On this view, A would not be free with respect

²⁵ In other words, Chappell (1994, 110) is wrong to claim that, according to Locke, "Every act with respect to which an agent is free is voluntary."

to her higher-order volition v_2 . Locke's opponent might nonetheless insist that A possesses an important, further kind of freedom simply insofar as she is free with respect to her lower-order volition v_1 .

While Locke doesn't explicitly consider this line of argument, we can hazard a guess as to what his response might be. For Locke, it doesn't matter whether A is free with respect to v_1 , the act of willing to ϕ . Locke's view is simply that A is free with respect to ϕ only if A is able to will to ϕ . The HOV theorist is unhappy with this position. As Locke paraphrases his opponent's complaint, "a Man is not free at all, if he be not as free to will, as he is to act" (2.21.22). Accordingly, the HOV theorist appeals to a higher-order volition v_2 so that A can be free not only with respect to ϕ but also with respect to v_1 . Locke might reasonably ask, however, why such an HOV account of freedom is preferable to his own. According to Locke, A is free with respect to ϕ but (possibly) not with respect to v_1 . According to the HOV theorist, A is free with respect to ϕ and with respect to v_1 but (possibly) not with respect to v_2 . In either case, we're left with an unfree, highest-order volition. If the HOV theorist demands that A be free with respect to v_1 , why doesn't she also demand that A be free with respect to v_2 ? To stop at v_1 seems arbitrary. But, Locke argues, the HOV theorist must stop somewhere, since we cannot perform actually infinite series of higher-order volitions. The HOV theorist is therefore caught between the horns of a dilemma: either she ends the regress arbitrarily, or she's led into absurdity.²⁶

So far, I've discussed *The Absurdity Response* and *The Regress Response*. Next, I want to consider how Locke takes these two responses to bear on *The Question*. There's something of a puzzle here. Earlier, I argued against a higher-order reading of *The Absurdity Response*. When Locke says that to ask *The Question* is to ask "whether a Man can *will*, what he *wills*", Locke is not considering whether a man can will to will to ϕ ; instead, he's considering whether a man, who does in fact will to ϕ , can will to ϕ . In *The Regress Response*, by contrast, it's clear that Locke is considering whether we can will to will to ϕ . As we've just seen, Locke's point in *The Regress Response* is that freedom of specification cannot require that we be able to will to will to ϕ , for such an HOV account of freedom yields a problematic regress. Locke's two responses thus seem to address two different questions: the former, whether we are "free to will" in the sense of being able *to will* what we do; the latter, whether we are "free to will" in the sense of being able *to will to will* what we do. The puzzle is to understand how these two responses fit together.

²⁶ Cf. Yaffe (2000, 29).

Rickless (2000, 64) suggests one solution to this puzzle. Rickless too endorses the first-order reading of *The Absurdity Response*: according to Rickless, Locke thinks it “absurd” to ask “whether a Man can *will*, what he *wills*” because it’s obvious that a man *can* will to ϕ if he *does* will to ϕ . And yet, when Locke asks *The Question* (“*Whether a Man be at liberty will which of the two he pleases, Motion or Rest*”), Rickless thinks that Locke is asking a question about higher-order volitions: Locke is asking, that is, whether we’re able *to will to will* which of the two we please. We might worry that, on this reading, *The Absurdity Response* is simply a non-sequitur: Locke asks whether we’re able *to will to will* which of the two we please and he answers merely that we are able *to will* which of the two we please. Rickless’s solution is that “Locke thought that willing to perform a volition is tantamount to performing that volition” (64). On Rickless’s interpretation, Locke holds that *willing to will to ϕ* “reduces to” *willing to ϕ* . As a result, to ask *whether a man can will to will to ϕ* is just to ask *whether a man can will to ϕ* ; that is, to ask *The Question*, which does concern higher-order volitions, is just to ask “whether a Man can *will*, what he *wills*”, which does not concern higher-order volitions. Rickless is thus able to resolve our puzzle about how Locke’s two responses fit together. According to Rickless, *The Absurdity Response* addresses *The Question* under the assumption that *willing to will to ϕ* reduces to *willing to ϕ* : since *willing to will to ϕ* reduces to *willing to ϕ* , and since we obviously can *will to ϕ* , it follows that we obviously can *will to will to ϕ* . Therefore, *The Question* is “absurd”. In *The Regress Response*, by contrast, Locke addresses those “who can make a Question of it”, that is, those who do not share his assumption that *willing to will to ϕ* reduces to *willing to ϕ* and who therefore do not recognize that *The Question* is absurd. Locke’s argument against these opponents is that, if *willing to will to ϕ* does not reduce to *willing to ϕ* , then we’re led to an infinite regress of higher-order volitions. This result, Locke thinks, should convince his opponents that *willing to will to ϕ* does reduce to *willing to ϕ* .

Rickless never explains why Locke might think that *willing to will to ϕ* reduces to *willing to ϕ* . Don Garrett (2015, 270-271) attempts to fill this lacuna in Rickless’s interpretation, which he otherwise endorses. Suppose I want to contract the muscles in my arm. Garrett observes that, even if I cannot will to contract them *directly*, I can will to contract them *indirectly* by willing, for example, to raise a glass, since I know that my volition to raise the glass will cause my muscles to contract. In this sense, *willing to contract my muscles* “reduces to” *willing to raise the glass*. Now, suppose instead that I want to experience “the illicit *volition* to steal” (271). As before, Garrett

suggests that, even if I cannot will to will to steal *directly* – that is, I cannot form a volition whose object is *willing to steal* – I can nonetheless will to will to steal *indirectly* by willing to steal – that is, by forming a volition whose object is *stealing*. It's in this sense, Garrett claims, that *willing to will to steal* (or *willing to will to ϕ*) “reduces to” *willing to steal* (or *willing to ϕ*). There's a clear disanalogy between Garrett's two cases, however. In the first, I'm able to will to contract my muscles indirectly by willing to raise the glass because I know that willing to raise the glass *causes* my muscles to contract. In the second, by contrast, willing to steal doesn't *cause* willing to steal; it *is* willing to steal. It would be a confusion to think that I can will to will to steal “indirectly” by willing to steal and thereby “causing myself” to will to steal. What Garrett's example suggests isn't that *willing to will to steal* “reduces to” *willing to steal*, but that I cannot *will to will to steal* even indirectly. All I can do is *will to steal*.

Setting aside Garrett's proposal, I think that Rickless's interpretation is itself unconvincing. First of all, Locke nowhere suggests that *willing to will to ϕ* reduces to *willing to ϕ* . If his argument turns so crucially on this reduction, it's surprising that Locke doesn't make it more explicit. Second, as I observed earlier, Locke says that *The Question* “carries the absurdity of it so manifestly in it self, that one might thereby sufficiently be convinced, that Liberty concerns not the Will” (2.21.25). But, according to Rickless, since *The Question* itself concerns whether we can *will to will to ϕ* , the absurdity of *The Question* only comes out when we realize that *willing to will to ϕ* reduces to *willing to ϕ* . Even if such a reduction is plausible, it would surely be a stretch to claim that this absurdity is “manifest” in *The Question* itself.²⁷ While these objections are not decisive, they should at least motivate us to look for an interpretation that fits better with what Locke actually says.

I think there's a more plausible solution to our puzzle. I've claimed that, when Locke says in *The Absurdity Response* that to ask *The Question* is to ask “whether a Man can *will*, what he *wills*”, the phrase “whether a Man can *will*, what he *wills*” is ambiguous between a first-order reading and a higher-order reading. In fact, I think that this same ambiguity is already present in *The Question* itself. When Locke asks “*Whether a Man be at liberty to will which of the two he pleases, Motion or Rest*”, he might be asking either whether we can *will* which of the two we please (a first-order reading) or whether we can *will to will* which of the two we please (a higher-order reading). Interestingly, most commentators adopt the higher-order reading. *Prima facie*, however,

²⁷ Interestingly, Rickless (2000, 63-64) raises a similar objection against Chappell.

the first-order reading seems much more natural. Indeed, the first-order reading (“whether we can will which of the two we please”) matches *The Question* (“*Whether a Man be at liberty to will which of the two he pleases*”) just about word for word. The higher-order reading is, admittedly, a permissible reading of *The Question*. It only arises, however, when we interpret *The Question* using Locke’s formal account of freedom. This is because, on *Freedom*, A is free to “will which of the two she pleases” only if, if she were to will to will which of the two she pleases, then she would will which of the two she pleases. So, if we take *The Question* at face value, we get the first-order reading, which we might describe as the “natural” or “unphilosophical” reading. By contrast, if we interpret *The Question* using Locke’s theoretical machinery, we get the higher-order or “philosophical” reading.

I want to suggest that Locke himself recognizes that both *The Question* itself as well as the related question “whether a Man can *will*, what he *wills*” are ambiguous between a first-order reading and a higher-order reading. As a result, it’s no coincidence that Locke gives two responses to *The Question*. Locke’s two responses, I claim, respectively address these two readings of *The Question*. When he first poses *The Question*, Locke adopts the natural or first-order reading, on which *The Question* asks whether we can *will* which of the two we please, or whether we are “free to will” in the sense of being able *to will* what we do. Locke responds to this reading of *The Question* with *The Absurdity Response*, arguing that the answer is obviously affirmative – of course we can will what we will! Locke recognizes, however, that *The Question* also admits of a philosophical or higher-order reading, on which it asks whether we can *will to will* which of the two we please, or whether we are “free to will” in the sense of being able *to will to will* what we do. He therefore goes on to address *The Regress Response* to those “who can make a Question of it”, that is, to those who wish make *The Question* into a question worth asking by giving it a more philosophical interpretation. On this higher-order reading, Locke argues that an affirmative answer to *The Question* leads to a problematic kind of regress. *The Absurdity Response* and *The Regress Response* thus fit together as two complimentary responses to two different readings of *The Question*.

This interpretation of section 25 faces an important challenge. I’ve claimed that, when Locke asks *The Question*, he’s asking whether we possess freedom of specification. In *The Absurdity Response*, he answers that we obviously do. In *The Regress Response*, he answers that

we do not. Which of these is his considered view? Does Locke hold that we possess freedom of specification, or not?

In order to understand Locke's answer, we need to read section 25 in context. Recall that, after presenting his own account of freedom in sections 8-13, Locke considers whether we might possess some additional kind of freedom, either freedom of exercise or freedom of specification. In sections 23-24, he denies that we possess freedom of exercise (at least in most cases). In section 25, he considers whether we possess freedom of specification. Now, suppose we adopt the first-order reading of *The Question*. On this reading, Locke thinks it's clear that the answer to *The Question* is affirmative. This affirmative answer to *The Question* is entirely uninteresting, however. If freedom of specification is just the power to will what we will, then Locke is happy to grant that we possess freedom of specification in this trivial sense. Next, suppose we adopt the higher-order reading of *The Question*. On this reading, Locke admits that *The Question* is interesting. As Locke says, we can at least "make a Question of it"; it's at least worth asking whether freedom of specification might involve higher-order volitions. In *The Regress Response*, however, Locke argues that the answer to *The Question* on this reading is negative, because such an HOV account of freedom of specification leads to a problematic regress. Locke's overall strategy in section 25, therefore, is to argue that the answer to *The Question* is either affirmative but uninteresting or interesting but negative. On the first-order reading, we do possess freedom of specification, but it's entirely uninteresting. On the higher-order reading, freedom of specification would be something philosophically interesting, but we do not possess it. Either way, we have no reason to posit freedom of specification. Locke concludes that the kind of freedom discussed in sections 8-13 is all the freedom we need.

3. Conclusion

To summarize, Locke's project in *Essay* 2.21.23-25 is to consider whether we possess some kind of freedom over and above the ordinary kind of freedom discussed in sections 8-13. He considers two possible candidates. The first is freedom of exercise, an agent's power to determine whether she forms *some* volition with respect to ϕ -ing. I've argued that, in sections 23 and 24, Locke denies that we possess freedom of exercise at least with respect to present actions. Moreover, I've argued that Locke's argument against freedom of exercise remains substantially the same throughout all five editions of the *Essay*. The second kind of freedom that Locke considers is freedom of specification, an agent's power to determine *which* volition she forms.

Locke's view, I've argued, is that we do not possess freedom of specification in any interesting sense. On the one hand, freedom of specification might be the power *to will what we will*. Locke grants that we are "free to will" in this sense. Such freedom, however, is entirely uninteresting. On the other hand, freedom of specification might be the power *to will to will what we will*. While this kind of freedom might be philosophically interesting, Locke argues that we do not possess it, because such HOV accounts of freedom generate a problematic regress. Locke's conclusion, therefore, is that the freedom he's already discussed is all the freedom we have. We needn't posit either freedom of exercise or freedom of specification.

References

- Chappell, Vere. 1994. "Locke on the freedom of the will." In *Locke's Philosophy: Content and Context*, edited by G. A. J. Rogers, 101-121. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chappell, Vere. 2007. "Power in Locke's Essay." In *The Cambridge Companion to Locke's 'Essay Concerning Human Understanding'*, edited by Lex Newman, 130-156. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chappell, Vere, Michael Della Rocca, and Robert Sleigh. 1998. "Determinism and Human Freedom." In *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, edited by Michael Ayers and Daniel Garber, 1193-1278. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Davidson, Donald. 1980. "Freedom to Act." Chap. 4 in *Essays on Actions and Events*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Garrett, Don. 2015. "Liberty and Suspension in Locke's Theory of the Will." In *A Companion to Locke*, edited by Matthew Stuart, 260-278. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Glauser, Richard. 2003. "Thinking and Willing in Locke's Theory of Freedom." *Dialogue* 42 (4): 695-724.
- Leibniz, G. W. 1981. *New Essays on Human Understanding*. Translated and edited by Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Locke, John. 1975. *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*. Edited by Peter H. Nidditch. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Rickless, Samuel C. 2000. "Locke on the Freedom to Will." *The Locke Newsletter* 31: 43-67.
- Rickless, Samuel. 2015. "Locke On Freedom." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2015 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta. Accessed October 27, 2016. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2015/entries/locke-freedom/>
- Stuart, Matthew. 2013. *Locke's Metaphysics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Walsh, Julie. 2010. "'Things' for 'Actions': Locke's Mistake in 'Of Power'." *Locke Studies* 10: 85-94.
- Yaffe, Gideon. 2000. *Liberty Worth the Name: Locke on Free Agency*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.