

## Locke on Consciousness and What it is About\*

By

VILI LÄHTEENMÄKI (JYVÄSKYLÄ)

### 1. Introduction

A perceptual process involves a percipient, a perceptual act, and something perceived. It is relatively uncontroversial that for Locke consciousness pertains to this scheme so that consciousness is, in one way or another, about self or the subject of thought, the mind's acts of thought, and ideas passing in the mind as representations of something (see, I.i.8, II.i.1, II.xxvii.9, IV.ix.3)<sup>1</sup>. Approached in this way, explication of the relations consciousness bears to what it is about must harmonize with Locke's doctrine of ideas according to which ideas originate only in sensation and reflection (II.i.4 and *passim*), are the appearances the mind has or perceives in itself (Epistle to the reader), and are the materials for knowledge (II.i.2 and *passim*). Consciousness is a uniform phenomenon for Locke in the sense that it incorporates our acquaintance with external things, our own mental acts, and the subject of experience so that we are conscious of them by virtue of ideas and in the sense that we can be conscious of all of them at once, or so I will argue<sup>2</sup>. As Locke claims that consciousness of our own being is involved in all thought and perception, he treats all consciousness as some type of self-consciousness. I will examine how consciousness relates to what it is about paying special attention to the intimate relations between consciousness and mental acts and consciousness and self. To motivate the task at hand, take three statements that each makes a point about consciousness.

"Consciousness is the perception of what passes in a Man's own mind" (II.i.19).

"[It is] impossible for any one to perceive, without perceiving, that he does perceive" (II.xxvii.9).

\* I would like to thank Christian Barth, Stephan Schmid, and Jani Sinokki for their helpful comments on earlier versions of this paper.

1 J. Locke: *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch, Oxford 1975. References to the *Essay* are by book, chapter, and section.

2 I have argued elsewhere that Locke understands consciousness as experiential knowledge so that the 'experiential' and 'epistemic' features are two complementary aspects of his concept of consciousness (V. Lähteenmäki: "The Sphere of Experience in Locke: The Relations Between Reflection, Consciousness, and Ideas", in: *Locke Studies* 8 (2008), pp. 59-100). Here I examine Locke's view of consciousness in terms of what it is about.

“For nothing can be more evident to us, than our own Existence. *I think, I reason, I feel Pleasure and Pain*; Can any of these be more evident to me, than my own Existence. [...] In every Act of Sensation, Reasoning, or Thinking, we are conscious to our selves of our own Being” (IV.ix.3).

In the last quote emphasis is clearly on the subject as that which is self-intimating in our conscious states. The second quote, for its part, appears less straightforward on that score, since it can be read as pointing either to the perceptual act or subject, or both, as what is self-intimating in a perceptual state. As it stands, the first quote reveals us no more than that consciousness is properly about something within the mind and that there is a sense in which consciousness is perception.

Given that Locke is explicit that we are conscious of ourselves whenever we think or perceive anything, that consciousness is always also about the subject of experience, it is worth noting that in the secondary literature consciousness and self-consciousness are seldom characterized as a single phenomenon. For example, Udo Thiel notes that “[c]learly, the consciousness of states and operations on the one hand and the consciousness of one’s own existence or self-consciousness on the other are *very closely connected* in Locke”<sup>3</sup>. This is a fully justified characterization as Locke undoubtedly distinguishes between consciousness and self-consciousness in terms of whether we consider a given conscious state as being primarily *of* the subject of thought, an act of thought, or something external as well as in terms of a degree of epistemic certainty, which depends on whether the considered “object” is an internal or external one. Such formulation nevertheless provides a backdrop against which to emphasize that for Locke consciousness is a uniform phenomenon in the sense that a single conscious state can involve several types of contents. Indeed, a conscious state that is about nothing external, i. e., in thinking of thinking, is a possibility for Locke, but not a state that would not include consciousness of the subject. This means that there is a sense in which all consciousness is self-consciousness.

In view of the fact that consciousness of one’s self plays a prominent role in Locke’s account of personal identity (II.xxvii.9 ff.), it is also important to see that he does not treat all consciousness as self-consciousness for an *ad hoc* reason to be able to draw from it in accounting for personal identity, but he is motivated for the view because of his empiricism in general, i. e., independently from the function (self-)consciousness serves in accounting for personal identity. Moreover, the notion of self-consciousness is wide enough to accommodate states that are and states that are not primarily about self. At the end of the paper I will briefly discuss how the self that Locke takes to be present in all of our mental acts relates to the self as he understands it in his discussion of personal identity.

3 U. Thiel: *The Early Modern Subject: Self-consciousness and Personal Identity from Descartes to Hume*, Oxford 2011, p. 118; my emphasis.

## 2. Consciousness *per se*

With regard to ideas, consciousness is needed in delineating the realm of ideas, where ideas are what all thought is about – ideas exist only as they are experiences, “our *Ideas* being nothing, but actual Perceptions in the Mind, which cease to be anything, when there is no perception of them” (II.x.3). It is in the chapter concerning the origin of ideas where Locke gives his description “Consciousness is the perception of what passes in a Man’s own mind” (II.i.19).

Let us first determine in what sense consciousness is perception. Locke says, “thinking consists in being conscious that one thinks” (II.i.19), “consciousness [...] is inseparable from thinking, and as it seems to me essential to it,” and “consciousness always accompanies thinking” (II.xxvii.9). The purpose of these statements is first and foremost to deny that we could think without being conscious of it rather than describe the nature of the relation consciousness bears to thought. Consciousness being constitutive, inseparable from, and essential to thinking means, minimally, that for something to count as a thought, the one who has it must be conscious of it. On the basis of the above statements, it is not clear whether consciousness, despite constantly accompanying thought, is perception in the sense of being itself an act of perception or an internal element of all acts of mind. It could be constitutive, inseparable, and essential in the sense that thoughts and perceptions are always necessarily objects of a perception, either through being objects of a further perception or through being their own (secondary) objects.

Consider however Locke’s own analogy which suggests that consciousness is not perception understood as an act: in a similar way as hunger consists in the feeling or sensation of hunger, thought consists in consciousness, i. e., the ‘feeling’ or ‘sensation’ of thinking (II.i.19). Feeling of hunger is not a mental act that has hunger as its object, and neither is consciousness an act that has thought as its object – they refer to the very *experience* of hunger and thought<sup>4</sup>. Various descriptions of thought that do not make a reference to thought as experience can of course be given in the Lockean framework, e. g., that thoughts have content. But thought being experienced, that the subject of it is conscious of it, is essential and constitutive in that the experiential aspect is part and parcel of thought.

Concerning the statement that consciousness is “the perception of what passes in a Man’s own mind”, the same can be put thus: consciousness is perception in the sense of being the *product* or *result* of an act of perceiving<sup>5</sup>. When Locke states that it is “impossible for any one to perceive, without perceiving, that he does perceive”, it is not enough that we read ‘perceiving’ as ‘being conscious’, but that we understand this sense of ‘perceiving’ as referring to just the result aspect of a perceptual process: consciousness is to be viewed as perception neither in the sense of a perceptual process as a whole – including both the act

4 See also Lähteenmäki (see note 2), p. 84.

5 Consider a dictionary definition of one sense of ‘perception’ as the result or product of perceiving, as distinguished from the act of perceiving.

of perception and its result, lived-through experience, if one wills – nor as only the act. Consciousness is perception in the sense of an experience, from the first-person perspective, of what occurs in the subject's own mind.

Apart from the passage where consciousness is described as perception there is little to suggest that Locke is a higher-order perception theorist of consciousness. Although nothing compels us to put his view in relational terms, the idea that consciousness means an inherent reflexivity of thoughts so that they are their own objects (along with what they are primarily directed at) captures the intimacy Locke wants to have between consciousness and thinking<sup>6</sup>. But since it would be a mistake to understand the way in which consciousness is a perception similar to the way in which perception is an act – in view of the recent discussion of whether Locke is a higher-order or same-order perception theorist of consciousness – it is important to note that insofar as a same-order theory requires consciousness to be treated as an act, he is not a same-order theorist either<sup>7</sup>.

A combination of two points also suggests that we should not expect to find an account in Locke of how a mental state becomes conscious. Firstly, he does not have a notion of unconscious or non-conscious thought as a contrast-class from which a need would arise to explain, and against which to explain, how *some* thoughts come to be conscious. Secondly, he attributes consciousness to the subject of thought and not mental states: “when we see, hear, smell, taste, feel, meditate, or will any thing, we know that we do so” (II.xxvii.9)<sup>8</sup>. In this light, I take it to be more appropriate to ask what consciousness is about for Locke and how it can be about what he takes it to be about than to ask how consciousness comes about.

Granted, then, that ‘perception’ means roughly ‘experience’ in “consciousness is the perception of what passes in a Man's own mind”, the next step towards answering these questions is to determine what it is for Locke that passes in the mind, of what consciousness is an experience. It seems quite correct to say that what passes in the mind is thinking. We could thus rephrase Locke's description: ‘consciousness is the experience of one's own thinking’. Yet this is unhelpful an observation as it stands, since thinking in a broad sense can equally well mean entertaining acts of thought as contents of thought for Locke. So is it experi-

6 S. Weinberg: “The Coherence of Consciousness in Locke's *Essay*”, in: *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 25/1 (2008), pp. 21-40: 26 and Thiel (see note 3), pp. 116-117.

7 A number of recent interpreters argue against a higher-order perception reading. See, Weinberg (see note 6), pp. 26 ff.; A. Coventry and U. Kriegel: “Locke on Consciousness”, in: *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 25/3 (2008), pp. 221-242; Thiel (see note 3), pp. 116-117. As indicated, I agree with these authors concerning the intimacy between consciousness and acts of thought, but I believe it is not correct to treat consciousness as a mental act or an internal element of mental acts (insofar as this requires assigning an act nature to consciousness).

8 Note that I am only making the point that Locke himself is not concerned with a relational account of how mental states come to be conscious. I do not claim that what Locke maintains about consciousness is untranslatable into talk of mental states.

ence of thinking where thinking is understood as acts of thought or contents of thought? Locke's statements about the intimate relation between consciousness and thinking could be taken to suggest that 'what passes in the mind' are acts of thought rather than ideas, at least as they are taken as representations of something outside the mind. I believe it must be understood to cover both.

If Locke maintained that consciousness is strictly speaking only consciousness of mental acts *qua* acts, he would have no reason to refer to them quite clumsily as 'what passes in the mind'. Moreover, and more importantly, Locke uses 'passing in the mind' terminology with regard to both acts and ideas: he says that mental operations (II.i.8) as well as ideas or a succession of ideas (II.xix.3 and II.xiv.4) pass in the mind. While the mind is always conscious of all its activity of thought, thought is also always about what is represented by the ideas occurring in the mind. Recall that "whatsoever the Mind perceives in it self, or is the immediate object of Perception, Thought, or Understanding, that I call *Idea*" (II.viii.8). It is perfectly appropriate to take consciousness to cover also ideas (as representations of something). Consider the following passages.

"I presume it will be easily granted me, that there are such *Ideas* in Men's Minds; every one is conscious of them in himself" (I.i.8).

"Every man being conscious to himself, That he thinks, and that which his Mind is employ'd about whilst thinking, being the *Ideas* that are there, 'tis past doubt, that Men have in their Minds several *Ideas*, such as are those expressed by the words, *Whiteness, Hardness, Sweetness, Thinking, Motion, Man, Elephant, Army, Drunkenness*, and others" (II.i.1).

It is true that especially in the latter passage consciousness is said to be primarily of activity of thinking, and only secondarily of ideas and their contents. But by including ideas in what pass in the mind, Locke includes ideas also in what consciousness is about. It being 'past doubt' that we have ideas of sweetness, thinking, and motion in our minds, owes to our consciousness of them. Nevertheless, the latter passage suggests that there is a difference in distance, as it were, in the sense that consciousness is more intimately related to thinking taken as passing of mental acts in the mind than taken as passing of ideas as representations of something in the mind. So far so good, but here things get more complicated due to Locke's discussion of reflection as a source of ideas of mental acts.

Namely, despite the difference in terms of intimacy between acts and ideas as representations, we have strong reason to read Locke as maintaining that strictly speaking consciousness of mental acts too is consciousness by virtue of ideas, or that is the reading I will next attempt to vindicate. This means that rather than being an inherent reflexivity pertaining to *acts* of thought in the absence of ideas of those acts, consciousness pertains to *ideas* of mental acts so that it is part of the nature of their ideas, and not the nature of mental acts *per se*, that they are experiences of the subject that has them<sup>9</sup>. If this is correct, then any differences

9 Pace M. Bolton: "The Taxonomy of Ideas in Locke's *Essay*", in: L. Newman (ed.): *The Cambridge Companion to Locke's "Essay Concerning Human Understanding"*, Cambridge 2007, pp. 67-100: 86; Weinberg (see note 6), pp. 26-28; and Thiel (see note 3), p. 116.

between consciousness of mental acts and consciousness of ideas as representations of something are not because consciousness of the former would happen in the absence of ideas. As a consequence, the intimacy between consciousness and mental acts becomes a problem, because the intimacy cannot be grounded on a lack of ideas between them. But first it of course needs to be argued that Locke is committed to consciousness of mental acts by virtue of ideas, before addressing the question of intimacy.

### 3. Consciousness of Mental Acts by Virtue of Ideas

Locke maintains that there are no other sources of ideas than sensation and reflection (II.i). The former provides ideas of external objects and the latter ideas of mental acts. A change he made concerning consciousness as a source of ideas indicates more particularly that he does not allow consciousness as a third type of source. He noticed belatedly his careless use of consciousness as a source of ideas (in IV.iii.23) and made a change to the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Essay*<sup>10</sup>. IV.iii.23 reads in editions 1-4 as follows, “All the simple *Ideas* we have are confined [...] to the Observation of our Senses and the Operations of our own Minds, that we are conscious of in our selves”. In the 5<sup>th</sup> edition the passage reads, “All the simple *Ideas* we have are confined to those we receive from corporeal Objects by *Sensation*, and from the Operations of our own Minds as the Objects of *Reflection*”. What Locke had noticed, or someone had pointed out to him, is that coupling mental acts with consciousness in a context where sources of simple ideas are at issue is at odds with his commitment to two exclusive sources of ideas, and he accordingly removed ‘consciousness’ replacing it with ‘reflection’.

Through excluding consciousness as a source of ideas, the question we are left with is whether Locke allows direct consciousness of mental acts or whether he thinks that consciousness of mental acts requires ideas provided by reflection in a similar way as our experience of external objects requires ideas provided by sensation. I believe Locke’s view is the latter. The described change is already telling in this respect. The change is important, not only in indicating that consciousness is not a source, but also against the background that speaking of consciousness of mental acts, or of whiteness, motion, one’s past actions, or an elephant for that matter (see II.i.1 and II.xxvii.13) would be fine by Locke’s lights insofar as consciousness could be taken as consciousness by virtue of ideas. The change is truly motivated only because here such reading is not available, because the passage concerns the origin of ideas. If it were Locke’s view that consciousness preceded reflection<sup>11</sup> (taken in its function as a source of simple ideas), he would be well motivated not to remove consciousness altogether, but

10 U. Thiel, in: “Leibniz and the Concept of Apperception”, in: *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 76 (1994), pp. 195-209: 202, and in Thiel (see note 3), p. 115, pays attention to this change.

11 As maintained by Bolton (see note 9), p. 86; Weinberg (see note 6), p. 26; and Thiel (see note 3), p. 116.

to state instead that ‘simple ideas are confined to those we receive ... from the operations of the mind, that we are conscious of, as the objects of reflection’ in order to express that consciousness provides objects for reflection.

Another important passage concerning how consciousness relates to mental acts is in the discussion of the origin of ideas in II.i.

“In this Part, the *Understanding* is merely *passive*; and whether or no, it will have these Beginnings, and as it were materials of Knowledge, is not in its own Power. For the Objects of our Senses, do, many of them, obtrude their particular *Ideas* upon our minds, whether we will or no: And the Operations of our minds, will not let us be without, at least some obscure Notions of them. No Man, can be wholly ignorant of what he does, when he thinks. These *Simple Ideas*, when offered to the mind, *the Understanding* can no more refuse to have, nor alter, when they are imprinted, nor blot them out, and make new ones in it self, than a mirror can refuse, alter, or obliterate the Images or *Ideas*, which, the Objects set before it, do therein produce” (II.i.25).

Do ‘obscure notions’ count as ideas? If they do, we are conscious of our mental acts by virtue of ideas and the ideas are produced by reflection. If they do not, having ‘obscure notions’ means being directly conscious of mental acts. In support of a direct acquaintance reading concerning this particular passage it has been pointed out that II.i.25 is not concerned with reflection<sup>12</sup>. But the whole chapter in question, II.i, is about sensation and reflection as the origins of ideas. The statement about mental operations is no isolated remark about a quite different way of being acquainted with those operations but integral part of that discussion.

The last line of § 24 makes the fundamental empiricist point that all knowledge is grounded on experience, that is, “those *Ideas*, which *Sense* or *Reflection*, have offered for [the mind’s] contemplation”. To this refers the first line of § 25 when it states, “In this Part, the *Understanding* is merely *passive*”. II.i.25 concerns hence both sensation and reflection. Immediately after saying that sensory objects impose their ideas upon our minds and that mental acts impose, minimally, obscure notions of them, he continues, “These *simple Ideas*, when offered to the mind [...]”. The question is of production of ideas through sensation and reflection. The text in its immediate context does not suggest that ‘obscure notions’ is consciousness in the absence of ideas<sup>13</sup>.

It can still seem curious that Locke uses the expression ‘obscure notions’ which he otherwise never uses in reference to the acquaintance we have with our own mental acts. Granted that he is not suggesting that notions are different from ideas, it could indicate his allowance for variety in the ideas of mental acts. On the one hand, he calls reflection the process that produces clear, distinct, lasting ideas (II.i.7-8; see also II.xix.1). But at the same time, and in the same context, he also points out that reflection comes in degrees and describes the

12 Weinberg (see note 6), p. 28; Thiel (see note 3), p. 113.

13 Note also that the fact that Locke uses the term ‘notion’ does not go far in suggesting that he is talking of something different from ideas. Quite the contrary, he says, “I shall enquire into the *Original* of those *Ideas*, Notions, or whatever else you please to call them, which a Man observes, and is conscious to himself he has in his *Mind*” (I.i.3). Consider also II.xxxii.1 where he says that ideas are “bare Appearances or Perceptions in our Minds”.

type of reflection responsible for clear and distinct ideas as involving attentive consideration (II.i.7-8); and since he also maintains that in perceiving something we always perceive our perceiving (II.xxvii.9), that nobody “can be wholly ignorant of what he does, when he thinks” (II.i.25), he can take another type of reflection, one that does not involve voluntary attention, as that which provides ideas of mental acts whenever they are executed.

By emphasizing the passivity of reflection understood as a source of simple ideas of mental acts, Locke indicates a distinction between passive involuntary reflection and an active voluntary reflection<sup>14</sup>. In the secondary literature, Lockean reflection has typically been taken as always involving voluntary attention<sup>15</sup>. This view naturally supports a direct acquaintance reading, since becoming conscious of thoughts requires no voluntary attention. To see further why such reading of reflection is hardly correct, consider what Locke says of pleasure and pain.

“If [a perception of delight] were wholly separated from all our outward Sensations, and inward Thoughts, we should have no reason to prefer one Thought or Action, to another [...]. And so we should neither stir our Bodies, nor employ our Minds; but [would] let our Thoughts [...] run a drift, without any direction or design; and suffer the *Ideas* of our Minds, like unregarded shadows, to make their appearances there, as it happen'd, without attending to them” (II.vii.3).

According to this passage pleasure and pain precede explicit reflection on mental acts. It is the pleasurableness or painfulness associated with mental acts that attract the mind to attend to them. Now the question is whether pleasure and pain are joined to mental acts or their ideas. Locke's answer is that they are joined to ideas.

“[Pleasure and pain] join themselves to almost all our *Ideas*, both of Sensation and Reflection: [...] there is scarce any [...] retired thought of our Mind within, which is not able to produce in us *pleasure or pain*” (II.vii.2)<sup>16</sup>.

Locke surely means that they are joined to ideas of mental acts understood as occurrent conscious mental activity. It is not the case that the mind must have attentively reflected on its (already conscious) acts to produce ideas of them before they are experienced as painful or pleasurable. The most direct way of being conscious of mental acts is by virtue of ideas: passive reflection is involved in mental acts in a function of giving rise to their ideas through which we are conscious of the acts and the pain or delight associated with them<sup>17</sup>.

14 I have argued in some length for the distinction in Lähteenmäki (see note 2), and will here be concerned mainly with the former type of reflection, though the latter will be relevant in the section “Self as an explicit object of thought”.

15 J. Gibson: *Locke's Theory of Knowledge and its Historical Relations*, Cambridge 1917, p. 57; D. J. O'Connor: *John Locke*, Harmondsworth 1957, p. 97; R. F. McRae: *Leibniz: Perception, Apperception, and Thought*, Toronto 1976, pp. 16 and 34; Weinberg (see note 6), p. 34.

16 Pleasure and pain are also associated with external sensory ideas, and perhaps more prominently so, but for the present purposes our interest lies in mental acts.

17 Note also that Locke counts pleasure and pain as acts of the mind in the purpose of underscoring that reflection, and not sensation, is the origin of their ideas. And Locke takes



When Locke is clarifying to Stillingfleet his view of sensitive knowledge as agreement between ideas he explicitly notes that ideas of mental acts are produced in the mind.

“Now the two ideas, that in this case are perceived to agree, and do thereby produce knowledge, are the *idea of actual sensation* (which is an *action* whereof I have a clear and distinct idea) and the idea of actual existence of something without me that causes that sensation”<sup>18</sup>.

Notice, firstly, that sensation is an *act* of the mind here and, secondly, that the idea produced is of an *occurrent* act of sensation. Locke distinguishes *having* ideas from *actually receiving* ideas and notes that it is only the latter, and not the former, “that gives us notice of the *Existence* of other Things, and makes us know, that something doth exist at that time without us, which causes that *Idea* in us” (IV.xi.2)<sup>19</sup>. ‘The idea of actual sensation’ that Locke mentions to Stillingfleet, he describes in the *Essay* as “that perception and Consciousness we have of the actual entrance of *Ideas*” (IV.ii.14). Being conscious of ‘entrance’ means being conscious of the act the mind performs that allows the sensory idea (as that which represents something external) to come into the mind. The source of the idea through which are conscious of the occurrent act of sensation, of the way in which a sensory idea enters the mind, must be reflection (consider also II.xix.1).

Moreover, it is significant that here we have consciousness of occurrent mental acts playing a crucial role as material of *knowledge*. This alone constitutes a weighty reason for Locke to maintain that we are acquainted with mental acts through their ideas: he recurrently points out that it is only ideas of mental acts and external things that have the function of serving as the “Beginnings, and as it were materials of Knowledge” (II.i.25; see also II.i.2, II.vii.10, II.xii.2, II.xxxiii.19, and IV.ii.1).

The aim of this section has been to investigate whether Locke is committed to the view that our consciousness of mental acts is consciousness by virtue of (reflective) ideas of those acts, which I take to be the case. The next section will still draw on Locke’s view of sensitive knowledge, but the focus is shifted to the role ideas of mental acts have in warranting sensitive knowledge, and consequently to the intimate nature of the relation between consciousness and mental acts.

pleasure and pain, as they are joined to ideas, to be themselves ideas as he says that “they are annexed to so many other Ideas” (II.vii.6; my underlining).

18 *Mr. Locke’s Reply to the Right Rev. The Lord Bishop of Worcester’s Answer to his Second Letter*, in: *The Works of John Locke*, London 1823, vol. IV, p. 360.

19 Also his discussion of association of pleasure and pain with some but not all ideas attest to such distinction: “*Pleasure or Pain, which accompanies actual Sensation, accompanies not the returning of those Ideas without the external Objects*” (the section heading of IV.xi.6). Here too the question is of the difference between an actual act of sensation and an actual act of remembering as two ways to elicit a sensory idea in the presence and absence of its external cause, respectively.

#### 4. Intimacy Between Consciousness and Mental Acts

If consciousness of mental acts is mediated by ideas in a way similar to external sensation, how can Locke take it to be more intimate and epistemically more reliable than external sensation? The key, I believe, is that ideas of mental acts do not represent anything outside the mind. There is no similar distance, as it were, between mental acts and their ideas as there is between external things and their ideas. We can see this through considering Locke's discussion of sensitive knowledge from the specific point of view of intimacy trusted between consciousness and mental acts. Sensitive knowledge – which “*deserves the name of Knowledge*” (IV.xi.3) – concerns “*the particular existence of finite beings without us*” (IV.ii.14). The sole materials of knowledge are ideas (II.i.25), and all knowledge consists of perception of agreement or disagreement between ideas (IV.i.2).

Locke's view of sensitive knowledge has often been seen as conflicting with his definition of knowledge so that in sensitive knowledge the agreement does not pertain between ideas but between an idea and something actually existing outside the mind<sup>20</sup>. A strong case has been made in recent scholarship that in sensitive knowledge the agreement is indeed between ideas<sup>21</sup>. Lex Newman notes, “[i]ronically, that this is Locke's meaning is most clear in the case [of] sensitive knowledge”<sup>22</sup>. As we already saw, Locke is explicit in his reply to Stillingfleet that there are “two ideas, that in this case are perceived to agree [...], the idea of actual sensation [...] and the idea of actual existence of something without me that causes that sensation”.

We do not have to enter the much-oared waters of ontological status of ideas and threats of scepticism, since for the present purpose the single crucial issue concerns the nature of ‘the idea of actual sensation’, the ‘consciousness of the actual entrance of ideas’. Becoming conscious of mental acts by virtue of their ideas applies not only to acts of sensation but other types of mental acts as well. Accordingly, the intimacy is not exclusive to consciousness of acts of sensation.

“I ask any one, Whether he be not invincibly conscious to himself of a different Perception, when he looks on the Sun by day, and thinks on it by night; when he actually tastes Wormwood, or smells a Rose, or only thinks on that Savour, or Odour? We as plainly find the difference there is between any *Idea* revived in our Minds by own Memory, and actually coming into our Minds by our Senses, as we do between any two distinct *Ideas*” (IV.ii.14).

In another passage Locke calls the difference “manifest” and says, “there is no body who doth not perceive the difference in himself, between contemplating

20 For an extensive list of references and a view disagreeing with the traditional reading, see L. Newman: “Locke on Knowledge”, in: *The Cambridge Companion to Locke's “Essay Concerning Human Understanding”* (see note 9), pp. 313-351: 331.

21 In addition to Newman (see note 20), my discussion here on sensitive knowledge is indebted to J. Nagel: “Sensitive Knowledge: Locke on Skepticism and Sensation”, forthcoming in: M. Stuart (ed.): *Blackwell Companion to Locke*; and K. Allen: “Locke and Sensitive Knowledge”, in: *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, forthcoming.

22 Newman (see note 20), p. 331.

the Sun, as he hath the *Idea* of it in his Memory, and actually looking upon it” (IV.xi.5). The difference between different perceptions is clear, not because we would at once perceive a difference alone, nor because of some differences in the sensory idea or the qualities of what is represented in the sensory idea, but because we manifestly perceive the types of the two mental acts in question. There is an intimate relation between the reflective idea and the act of which it is an idea and such relation pertains between ideas of all types of mental acts and the acts themselves: be a sensory idea actually sensed (by sight, touch, etc.), recalled from memory, or otherwise thought about, veridical recognition of the relevant type of act of the mind makes the difference patent (see IV.xi.2)<sup>23</sup>. Sensitive knowledge need not be of concern here except for seeing that Locke grounds his case of justifying sensitive knowledge on the intimacy between mental acts and their ideas.

Intimacy need not mean infallibility concerning the type of an occurrent mental act, however. As noted above, reflection comes in degrees and our ideas of mental acts can be indistinct (II.i.7-8). While the experiential grasp the mind has of both its own acts and external things is by virtue of ideas, there is nevertheless a general difference in terms of distance of how the mind relates to its own acts and external things.

“Since the Things, the Mind contemplates, are none of them, besides it self, present to the Understanding, ‘tis necessary that something else, as a Sign or Representation of the thing it considers, should be present to it: And these are *Ideas*” (IV.xxi.4).

Whereas this passage appears to suggest self-acquaintance of the mind in the absence of ideas, given the evidence that reflective ideas are at play in our consciousness of mental acts, the price to pay for a literal reading is considerably high. A more charitable interpretation takes Locke as pointing out that the mind is present to itself from the beginning in a way that external things can never be and that therefore there is a difference regarding the function of reflective ideas and sensory ideas *as* they are signs or representations. Sensory ideas refer to outside the mind. Consider Locke’s account of reality of knowledge concerning complex ideas that are “*Archetypes* of the Mind’s own making”.

“[They are] not intended to be the Copies of any thing, nor referred to the existence of any thing, as to their Originals, [wherefore they] *cannot want any conformity necessary to real Knowledge*. For that which is not designed to represent any thing but it self, can never be capable of a wrong representation, nor mislead us from the true apprehension of any thing, by its dislikeness to it” (IV.iv.5).

Complex ideas do not represent wrongly, because they only represent themselves. Contrast this to Locke’s ‘physical enquiry’ of how external bodies produce

23 It is beyond the scope of this paper to consider whether Locke’s account would fully satisfy the sceptic as to the possibility of sensitive knowledge as knowledge in a strict sense. For discussion on the topic, see Allen (forthcoming, see note 21); Nagel (forthcoming, see note 21); and S. Rickless: “Locke’s ‘Sensitive Knowledge’: Knowledge or Assurance?”, in: *Oxford Studies in Early Modern Philosophy*, vol. 7, forthcoming.

ideas in us and whether they resemble something really existing. While such inquiry is not among the primary concerns of the *Essay* (I.i.2), Locke sees some of it as “necessary, to make the Nature of Sensation a little understood, and to make the *difference between Qualities in Bodies, and the Ideas produced by them in the Mind*, to be distinctly conceived” (II.viii.22). Against this background we can read IV.xxi.4 quoted above as concerned with ideas as representations in the confined sense of representation where the existence of what is represented is referred to outside the mind.

Mental acts are of course not fully on a par with complex ideas. For instance, the materials of complex ideas are other *ideas*, the simple ones. Mental acts, for their part, “proceed [...] from Powers intrinsic and proper to” the mind (II.i.24). There is hence a sense in which both mental acts *per se* and external objects *per se* belong to the realm of reality of things (see, e. g., IV.iv.3). The important similarity between complex ideas and ideas of mental acts, and a shared difference from ideas of external things, nevertheless abides. Since neither is referred to outside the mind, they do not serve a similar representational function as those ideas that do refer to the existence of external things. The distance between these ideas and what they represent is very short, to put it bluntly, and hence there is little space for dislikeness<sup>24</sup>. But since there is nonetheless a representational relation, Locke could allow for mistakes in recognition of the type of mental act we are having.

“[N]othing can be more evident to us, than our own Existence. *I think, I reason, I feel Pleasure and Pain*; Can any of these be more evident to me, than my own Existence. [...] In every Act of Sensation, Reasoning, or Thinking, we are conscious to our selves of our own Being” (IV.ix.3).

In all mental acts an idea of our own existence is suggested, and this can be the case even if we would mistake in identifying the particular type of occurrent act, e. g., taking a sensation for remembrance, or we would have only an obscure and/or confused idea of the act that falls short of being evident. Whatever the act, or whether we have only an obscure and/or confused idea of it, we do not fail to be conscious of our being when having that act. This brings us to the third thing Locke takes consciousness to be about, our own self.

## 5. Consciousness of self

Thus far I have argued that the mind is conscious of both the activity of thought and external objects by virtue of ideas and that the relation sensory and reflective ideas bear to what they are about differ in terms of intimacy. We are now in a position to consider the relation between consciousness and the subject of thought. Remember Locke’s explicit view.

“[Consciousness] is inseparable from thinking, and as it seems to me essential to it: It being impossible for any one to perceive, without perceiving, that he does perceive. When we see,

24 In the case of complex idea and what it represents the distance is the shortest possible, there is no room whatsoever for distortion.

hear, smell, taste, feel, meditate, or will any thing, we know that we do so. Thus it is always as to our present Sensations and Perceptions” (II.xxvii.9).

“In every Act of Sensation, Reasoning, or Thinking, we are conscious to our selves of our own Being” (IV.ix.3).

The first quotation is from the opening section of Locke’s discussion of personal identity (II.xxvii.9). It is thus to be expected that the aspect of consciousness that it brings about the self gains special importance there. It is worthwhile to remind that Locke is not speaking about a distinct notion of consciousness, but that being about self is one element in the overall inventory of what consciousness affords us: every mental act involves consciousness of our own being, but not every mental act is primarily about the self.

Before examining how Locke could accommodate this thesis within his framework of ideas, it is useful to see his motivation for it. It can be highlighted through a comparison with Descartes. Descartes explains that while an infant in her mother’s womb is completely occupied in confusedly perceiving sensory ideas of pain, hunger, etc., it,

“[n]onetheless, [...] has in itself the ideas of God, of itself and of all such truths that are called self-evident [*per se notae*], just as adult human beings have them when they are not attending to them; for it does not acquire these ideas later on, as it grows older. I have no doubt that if it were released from the prison of the body, it would find [*inventura*] them within itself”<sup>25</sup>.

Descartes has metaphysical resources on which Locke cannot draw, immaterial substance and innate ideas. Descartes can maintain that there is a way in which the mind is indeed in the possession of the idea of itself from the commencement of its existence. The idea of self can be in the mind prior to its discovery since the mind is immaterial substance that can exist without being, at least explicitly, perceived. Strictly speaking, we should understand the innateness of (the idea of) self in the sense that the mind can find its self whenever it turns inwards and attends to *itself* rather than to an (dormant) *idea* of self. There is thus a sense in which the idea of self does not pre-exist reflection on the self, but the idea is rather created as a result of a reflective act<sup>26</sup>. Central to the present concern in any case is that for Descartes it is one thing to be in the possession of an idea and another thing to “find” it. The presence of the idea of self (or self *simpliciter*) to the mind before it is found is metaphysical in nature, and it is only when it is found for the first time (and entertained any time afterwards) that it becomes experientially present to the mind<sup>27</sup>.

25 Letter to Hyperaspistes, in: *Œuvres de Descartes*. Ed. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery, Paris 1964-1976, vol. III, p. 424.

26 For a view that this applies to all (so called) innate ideas, see A. Simmons: “Cartesian Consciousness Reconsidered”, in: *Philosophers’ Imprint* 12/2 (2012), pp. 1-21: 18-19.

27 How the discovery of self happens according to Descartes is not a straightforward matter. I believe it goes along the following lines. Descartes distinguishes conscious thoughts from self-conscious ones through specific reflexive relations. There are at least two different ways in which the mind becomes conscious of itself. A) Volitions involve inherently an intellectual perception of the act of will where the perception is directed at the volitional idea as complete (i. e. taken as both formally and materially), but it is in virtue of the material

Locke cannot resort to any other type of presence of self than experiential presence. He explicitly refuses to ground anything on the assumption that there are underlying substances (see, e. g., II.xxvii.25). When he says, “that which is conscious of Pleasure and Pain, desiring, that that *self*, that is conscious, should be happy” (II.xxvii.26), the question is of an experienced self: “[i]t not being considered [...], whether the same *self* be continued in the same, or divers Substances” (II.xvii.9). Moreover, he emphatically refuses innate ideas (Book I). He has weighty reason to treat all consciousness as self-consciousness, to posit an experiential presence of self in all occurrent thought, including the simplest and faintest of sensory perceptions. If self had no experiential presence in all consciousness, he would be hard put to show how its experiential presence is achieved<sup>28</sup>.

It is a different and more difficult task to account for how the experiential presence comes about in light of Locke’s view of ideas. Given that he takes it to be “beyond Question, that *Man has a clear Perception of his own Being*” (IV.x.2), it might seem striking that he says nothing about the origin of such ‘perception’. Namely, regarding ideas of external things Locke maintains that they have their cause in the reality of things existing outside the mind. And as we saw in the previous section, Locke takes for granted the existence of natural mental capacities from which ideas of individual mental acts are received; in this sense, for ideas of mental acts too there is an ostensible correspondent in the reality of things. Regarding an idea of self, no similar correspondent is available.

In this respect, it is relevant that for Locke the question is of our own *being*. In general, idea of existence is “suggested to the Understanding, by every Object without, and every *Idea* within” (II.vii.7), and the idea of our own existence is suggested whenever we think (IV.ix.3). From a point of view of causal origin, the idea of our own self is on the same footing as the idea of existence in general. And all mental acts, while suggesting the existence of each individual act, are at the same time *cogito* acts to the effect that “nothing can be more evident to us, than our own Existence” (IV.ix.3). In distinction to Descartes, Locke makes use of the psychological features of *cogito* stopping at the experience of one’s substantiality, allowing the possibility of such experience even in changes of substance (II.xxvii.10)<sup>29</sup>. Also his statement that consciousness “makes every one to be, what he calls *self*” (II.xvii.9; my underlining) indicates that he is little

idea being the object of perception that the mind becomes conscious of itself as modified in a certain way, as that which is willing. B) The mind can (voluntarily) reflect on any of its sensory ideas by means of a distinct act of thought. In this case, too, the object of reflection is the complete idea, but it is in virtue of the material idea being the object of reflection that the mind becomes conscious of itself as modified in a certain way, say, as that which is perceiving.

28 If self were an inferred idea for Locke, he could avoid resorting to innate ideas and immaterial substance. But such reading is ruled out by his commitment to its constant presence in all thought (II.xxvii.9) and by the intuitive certainty we have of it (IV.ix.3).

29 See G. Yaffe: “Locke on Consciousness, Personal Identity and the Idea of Duration”, in: *Noûs* 45/3 (2011), pp. 387-408: 21.

concerned about what causes us to have the idea<sup>30</sup>. Arising of an idea of self in all mental acts Locke accepts as a fact. As a further illustration of that, consider his explanation of how the idea of duration is received.

“*Reflection* on these appearances of several *Ideas* one after another in our Minds, is that which furnishes us with the *Idea of Succession*: And the distance between any parts of that Succession, or between the appearance of any two *Ideas* in our Minds, is that we call *Duration*. For whilst we are thinking, or whilst we receive successively several *Ideas* in our minds, we know that we do exist; and so we call the Existence, or the continuation of the Existence of our selves, or any thing else, Commensurate to the succession of any *Ideas* in our minds, the *Duration* of our selves, or any such other thing co-existing with our Thinking” (II.xiv.3).

In addition to being conscious of ourselves in each mental act, reflection on a train of ideas makes us conscious also of a continued existence of ourselves<sup>31</sup>. Locke seems to be saying here, on top of stating that reflection on a train of ideas can give the idea of duration in general, that the duration of ourselves also serves as a meter-stick for duration of anything else: it can only appear to us that something (other than our self) co-exists with our thinking if we experience ourselves to endure as well. As intriguing as this passage is, here I wish to emphasize only Locke’s unwavering acceptance of the primitive presence of self.

But there is more to be said about consciousness of self. Locke’s expressions to the effect that we cannot perceive without perceiving that we do so seem to envelop (or, alternatively, fail to discriminate between) different intensities of experiential presence of self.

## 6. Self as an Explicit Object of Thought

To be attentively aware of oneself as the subject or owner of an occurrent experience surely differs from being aware of oneself as a subject of an occurrent experience when one’s attention is directed elsewhere. While it could be argued that only the former way of being conscious of oneself truly merits the title self-consciousness, Locke would hardly agree. Self-consciousness does not require the self to be the explicit or primary object of consciousness, but its presence can be secondary, peripheral, or attenuated. Self-consciousness understood in this way allows for an internal distinction. In one sense, self-consciousness provides an experiential condition of possibility to direct explicit attention to one’s self. In another sense, self-consciousness is the resulting state of explicitly attending to one’s self. Although Locke does not explicitly ascribe such double function to self-consciousness, we can gather this from his general discussion

30 Compare Hume’s statement that it is “evident, that the idea, or rather impression of ourselves is always intimately present with us” (*Treatise* 2.1.11.4).

31 Note that I am here concerned only of the origin of an idea of self and how it aligns with other things Locke takes consciousness to be about. See Yaffe (see note 29) for an elaborate analysis of Locke’s account of continuous existence through time of self and (esp. pp. 16-17) for a discussion of how reflection on a train of ideas can yield the experience of continued existence.

of various degrees of attention to ideas and the discussion of self in the context of personal identity. Start with the former.

“[There are] *different state[s] of the Mind in thinking*, which those instances of Attention, *Res-very* [sic], and Dreaming, *etc.* before mentioned, naturally enough suggest. That there are *Ideas*, some or other, always present in the mind of a waking Man, every one’s Experience convinces him; though the mind employs itself about them with several degrees of Attention. Sometimes the mind fixes itself with so much earnestness on the Contemplation of some Objects, that it turns their *Ideas* on all sides; marks their Relations and Circumstances; and views every part so nicely, and with such intention, that it shuts out all other Thoughts, and takes no notice of the ordinary Impressions made then on the senses, which at another Season would produce very sensible Perceptions: At other times, it barely observes the train of *Ideas*, that succeed in the Understanding, without directing, and pursuing any of them: And at other times, it lets them pass almost quite unregarded, as faint shadows that make no Impression.

§ 4. This difference of *Intention*, and *Remission* of the mind in thinking, with a great variety of Degrees, between earnest Study, and very near minding nothing at all, Every one, I think, has experimented in himself” (II.xix.3-4).

Here Locke makes a general observation, one he believes everyone’s own experience would corroborate, that as long as there are ideas within the sphere of conscious experience, they could also be attended to. As we have seen, as long as there is any thinking going on in the mind, the subject of thought is self-conscious as it has, together with other ideas, also an idea of itself. Presence of that idea can be more or less intense. Quite regardless of the degree of intensity, it can be voluntarily attended to and made an explicit and primary object of thought just as any other idea passing in the mind. And when it is explicitly attended to, the subject is self-conscious in the second sense.

This leads to notice that the differences in intensity of presence of self suggest a more weighty difference. Namely, the difference between self understood as that which always accompanies all our “present Sensations and Perceptions” (II.xvii.9) and as a responsible agent concerned for its future (II.xvii.17 ff.). Responsible agency surely does not presuppose constant attentive self-reflection, but it requires more robust grasp of a self than an elementary self-consciousness, at least in its weaker forms, can afford. Locke describes the latter type of self as follows.

“*Self* is that conscious thinking thing, (whatever Substance, made up of whether Spiritual, or Material, Simple or Compounded, it matters not) which is sensible, or conscious of Pleasure and Pain, capable of Happiness or Misery, and so is concern’d for it *self*” (II.xxvii.17).

And he states about ‘personality’ in its forensic signification.

“[P]ersonality extends itself beyond present existence to what is past, only by consciousness, whereby it becomes concerned and accountable; owns and imputes to itself past actions, just upon the same ground and for the same reason as it does the present. All which is founded in a concern for Happiness the unavoidable concomitant of consciousness, that which is conscious of Pleasure and Pain, desiring, that that *self*, that is conscious, should be happy” (II.xxvii.26).

This notion of self has an important role in the discussion of personal identity (II.xvii.9-29). Contrasted with the thesis that an idea of ourselves accompanies every mental act (II.xvii.9; IV.ix.3), it seems clear that a self we are acquainted with even in the faintest of our mental states differs from a self that is charac-



terized as concerned for itself and desiring its happiness. But the seeming gap between the core self present in all thought and the more loaded self relevant for responsible agency does not entail two distinct selves. It is rather that the latter is built on the former<sup>32</sup>. Already the opening paragraph of the discussion of personal identity indicates as much. Locke says that self is “a thinking intelligent Being, that has reason and reflection, and *can* consider it self as it self [...] by that consciousness, which is inseparable from thinking” (II.xxvii.9; my emphasis)<sup>33</sup>. To explicitly grasp oneself as oneself is crucial for responsible agency, but for the present topic it is equally important that already that which has the capacity to do so counts as a self. We can set aside a question about qualities that are required for a given self to count as a morally responsible agent, and look more closely into the details of how the elementary and ever-present idea of self can be taken as an explicit object of a reflective act.

Let us now recall a passage quoted earlier and at the same time bear in mind the distinction between receiving ideas of actual mental acts and other ways of entertaining ideas.

“Every man being conscious to himself, That he thinks, and that which his Mind is employ’d about whilst thinking, being the *Ideas* that are there, ‘tis past doubt, that Men have in their Minds several *Ideas*, such as are those expressed by the words, *Whiteness, Hardness, Sweetness, Thinking, Motion, Man, Elephant, Army, Drunkenness*, and others” (II.i.1; my underlining).

Here Locke states in a single passage that we are always conscious of our actual mental acts (by virtue of a reflective idea, as I have argued) and that our mental acts are always employed about something. From the passage we can pick out a (not very untypical) combination where an actual mental act is ‘employed about’ an idea of thinking. In such case we are, technically speaking, conscious of thinking in two senses at once (and through two numerically distinct ideas): by actually *thinking* and by thinking of *thinking*. Thinking of thinking happens in one of at least three ways for Locke: either a) the mind voluntarily and attentively reflects on an idea of thinking “by keeping the *Idea*, which is brought into it, for some time actually in view” (II.x.1), or b) the mind elicits an idea through its “power to revive again in our Minds those *Ideas*, which after imprinting have disappeared, or have been as it were laid aside out of Sight” (II.x.2), or c) the mind entertains an abstract idea of thinking (II.xi.9).

In all cases, a) through c), we are conscious of the actual mental act by virtue of an automatically elicited reflective idea and in all cases the actual mental act is in one way or another about an idea of thinking. In the first case, the ‘idea of thinking’ can be the same as the idea by virtue of which we are conscious of the actual act. In other words, the mind attends to an idea of a mental act it just executed. That idea is automatically produced by passive reflection, and because the mind can retain it in its view, it can also take it as an object of voluntary

32 See also Weinberg (see note 6), pp. 27-28 and 34-35.

33 Locke speaks of ‘person’ in this passage, but elsewhere he is clear that ‘person’ “is the name for this *self*. Where-ever a Man finds, what he calls *himself*, there I think another may say is the same *Person*” (II.xxvii.26).

attentive reflection, examine it intently (see also II.xix.3) and achieve clear, distinct, lasting ideas (II.i.8)<sup>34</sup>. In the second case, the ‘idea of thinking’ is clearly different from the idea by virtue of which we are conscious of the actual act, since here it is a revived idea of a particular past mental act. In the third case, too, the ‘idea of thinking’ is different from the idea of the actual act, since here it is a “general Representative [...] of all of the same kind” (II.xi.9). Since idea of self is suggested in every mental act, it is justified to take the same variety of ways of self-relating to apply to self as well, not only to acts of mind: self can be taken as an explicit object of thought when an idea of self is presently in the mind, through reviving a past particular idea of self, or thinking of the abstract notion of self.

These different ways of explicit self-reflection are relevant for seeing that Locke’s view of the more elementary type of self-consciousness connects with his concerns about responsible agency. In somewhat more general terms, these ways of attentive reflection let us also see that ideas of mental acts elicited through passive reflection are not the only type of ideas we can have of our mental acts. Acknowledging ideas of occurrent mental acts does not mean that Locke is excluded from having also more robust ideas as building materials for knowledge: the clear distinct lasting ideas of mental acts (which he discusses in II.i.7-8) are produced through attentive reflection. But as the case of sensitive knowledge shows, the automatically elicited ideas of mental acts have a crucial epistemic role too.

## 7. Concluding Remarks

I have examined Locke’s view of consciousness from the point of view of how it incorporates our acquaintance with external things, our own mental acts, and the subject of experience. In doing so I have argued that all consciousness is consciousness by virtue of ideas for Locke. He includes ideas as representations of external things as well as such episodes as one’s past actions in what consciousness is about. It is not only an act of remembering a past action of which a subject is conscious, but also the past action itself; and the subject is conscious of both of them by virtue of an idea. There are two ideas associated together, the idea of the action remembered and the idea of the act of remembering. For as regards mental acts in particular, according to the proposed reading, Locke does not invoke ideas of them “only to explain the ability to recall an act previously reflected upon and to provide for general ideas of kinds of mental acts”<sup>35</sup>, since he needs *ideas* of mental acts on a more elementary level.

Indeed, the motivation for a ‘by virtue of ideas’ reading concerning consciousness of occurrent mental acts stems from Locke’s own considerations.

34 This is surely the most significant way of attentive reflection in that the following two ways presuppose that ideas more robust than those of occurrent mental acts have been produced in the mind through this way of attentive reflection.

35 Bolton (see note 9), p. 86.

Most notably, in his discussions of pleasure and pain and sensitive knowledge we find consciousness of occurrent mental acts serving a role that requires him to treat it as consciousness by virtue of ideas. There are not two distinct ways in which pleasure and pain connect with what passes in the mind: directly to mental *acts* on the one hand and to sensory *ideas* on the other, but to both sensory and reflective ideas. And regarding sensitive knowledge Locke not only explicitly says that ideas of occurrent mental acts are produced in the mind, but also his general commitment to ideas as the only materials for knowledge indicates that consciousness of mental acts is consciousness by virtue of ideas, since such consciousness is a constituent in sensitive knowledge.

Within that framework I have then attempted to account for the intimacy Locke trusts between mental acts and consciousness of it in terms of different representational functions of sensory and reflective ideas. I have then discussed Locke's acceptance of experiential presence of self in all conscious states and analyzed different ways of self-relating within Locke's wide notion of self-consciousness. That analysis lets us see the ways in which self can be taken an explicit object of attentive reflection as well as how Locke can have ideas as building materials for knowledge that are more robust than what is automatically elicited when acts of thought are executed.

Dr. Vili Lähteenmäki, Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of Jyväskylä, P. O. Box 35, 40014 Jyväskylä, Finland, vili.lahteenmaki@jyu.fi

