

John Locke's "Unease": The Theoretical Foundation of the Modern Separation of Church and State

Political Theory

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Abstract

John Locke is acknowledged to be one of the theoretical founders of the separation of church and state, a distinguishing feature of modern liberal democracies. Though Locke's arguments for the merits of such separation have been subject to extensive investigation, his argument for its feasibility has remained relatively unexamined. This article argues that Locke was confident that separation of church and state can successfully be implemented in all times and places because of his epistemological and psychological insights that human beings are moved to act by unease and that separating church and state removes the unease that causes religiously based political instability. We conclude by noting that Locke's understanding of unease is foundational for his larger ambition to secure political liberty.

Keywords

Locke, unease, religion, separation of church and state, liberalism

Separation of church and state has long been recognized as an essential aspect of a liberal political order and has been promoted as such around the world. Yet separation has been increasingly challenged both by illiberal

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states who see it as an innovation that poses a danger to political stability and from within liberal democracies themselves, where many wonder if such separation fulfills its promise of being good for both politics and religion (Owen 2007).

These concerns were anticipated by John Locke, acknowledged as one of the most important theoretical founders of the modern conception of separation of church and state.¹ In *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689), Locke sets out his clearest and most well-known argument for separating church and state, claiming that “[t]he care of Souls cannot belong to the Civil Magistrate, because his Power consists only in outward force; but true and saving Religion consists in the inward persuasion of the Mind, without which nothing can be acceptable to God” (Locke 1983, 5).² While his argument for the *propriety* of separation takes over three-quarters of *Letter*, he ends by discussing its *feasibility*—that is, the efficacy of separation in securing and enhancing peace and prosperity. Scholars sometimes treat this as an aside, but Locke regards it as vital for his argument because even many of those in England inclined to favor religious freedom believed that the magistrate had to have the power to impose religious uniformity—at least in “matters indifferent”—in order to prevent churches from becoming “*Conventicles*, and Nurseries of Factions and Seditions” (LCT, para. 74, 53).³ Indeed, according to Locke, this political concern was “thought to afford the *strongest* matter of Objection against this Doctrine of Toleration” (LCT, para. 74, 53; emphasis added). Hence, he discusses not only the “Necessity” of separation of church and state but also its “Advantage” (LCT, para. 5).

This concern with the effects of religious liberty on political stability certainly had been an important consideration for Locke himself, with his views evolving over time. In fact, it was the issue of religiously based political conflict that spurred Locke in 1660 to pen his first writing intended for the public, the *Two Tracts on Government* (1967). Written in response to a 1659 pamphlet by Edward Bagshawe in favor of toleration, Locke’s *Two Tracts* argued—much like Hobbes—that for the sake of civil peace, the sovereign has the authority to impose articles of faith or modes of worship in “matters indifferent” (and the power to determine what those matters are). But by the time he wrote his “*Essay Concerning Toleration*” in 1667, Locke had come to

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1. See, generally, Bowser and Muse (2007); Witte (2006). For the theological debates that informed Locke’s views, see, for example, Harris (1994) and Marshall (2006).
 2. References to *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (Locke 1983) will be cited as LCT with paragraph and page number.
 3. For a discussion of Locke’s conception of toleration, see Nadon (2006, 2014).

believe that—as a matter of right—“all speculative opinions and religious worship . . . have a clear title to universal toleration” (LCT, 121).⁴ Nevertheless, he still did not openly reject the possibility of a state church and continued to insist that those who have “a set form of religion separate from the state” (i.e., dissenters from the state church) can become a dangerous faction because of their religious differences from the magistrate, even in a “very indifferent and trivial circumstance” (LCT, 121). He, therefore, concluded that “experience vouches the practice” of the magistrate using “all ways either of policy or power that shall be convenient” to “break and suppress” any “numerous” groups of religious people that set themselves apart from the rest of society because of their religious beliefs or practices (LCT, 118). In other words, practical concerns about the feasibility of toleration (rather than its propriety) continued to keep Locke from fully embracing the idea.

But by 1685–86, when he first wrote *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, Locke dramatically changed his position and confidently proclaimed that separation of church and state poses no political danger. While he admits that “Seditious are very frequently raised, upon pretense of Religion,” he maintains that if the magistrate would simply remove himself from the “Business” of religion, there would not be “Seditious Conspiracies” against him (LCT, para. 74, 53; para. 76, 55). What caused the change in Locke’s view from 1667 to 1685? Why was he convinced in *Letter* that his new position advocating separation of church and state was feasible? Some point to his personal experiences from the mid-1660s to the mid-1680s as the source of his new confidence that toleration worked and persecution did not.⁵ Others have argued that Locke’s change of position corresponds with his investigations in epistemology, which grew throughout the 1660s and 1670s.⁶ While endorsing these explanations, we argue that there is an additional—and largely

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4. In 1669, Locke was involved (with Lord Shaftesbury and others) in creating the “Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina,” which explicitly called for religious toleration not only for dissenting Christians but also for non-Christians, such as Native Americans, “whose idolatry, ignorance, or mistake gives us no *right* to expel or use them ill” (Article 97; emphasis added).
 5. These range from his role as ambassador to Cleves, where he saw and reported toleration working among different sects of Christians to being a witness to the steadfastness of dissenters in England in the 1660s against persecution under the Clarendon Codes to becoming a close associate of Lord Shaftesbury, a known proponent of religious toleration: see generally Tate (2016).
 6. For epistemological arguments, see Owen (2007, 157), who argues that “Locke builds his doctrine of religious toleration on the ruins of theological certainty.” See also Vernon (2010); Wolfson (2010).

overlooked—essential and foundational cause for Locke’s confidence in the feasibility of separation of church and state: his evolving understanding of the importance of unease in determining people’s choices and actions, which he had begun to see before and during the time he wrote *Letter* in 1685–86 but which he developed and formulated in its final and comprehensive form in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.⁷ In fact, it seems that Locke’s insight into the importance of unease in causing religiously based political conflict suggested to him the centrality of unease for human behavior more broadly.

According to Locke, his investigations into “human understanding” were prompted by his conversations with friends regarding “Morality and Divinity,” especially the need to ascertain the “Bounds between Opinion and Knowledge” in order to “regulate our Assent, and moderate our Perswasions,” especially “those which concern our Conduct” (*Essay*, epistle, bk. I, ch. I, sec. 5). During the time of these conversations, Locke was part of the household of Lord Shaftesbury, which he joined in 1667. Shaftesbury was an advocate for toleration who left England for the Netherlands in 1682 after he was arrested for treason. In late 1683, after the death of Shaftesbury, Locke fled to the Netherlands. There, he met Philipp van Limborch, who asked him to put forth his ideas on toleration, which required Locke to temporarily set aside his work on *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Indeed, *Letter* is explicitly framed as a response to a gentleman who is “pleased to inquire what are my Thoughts about the mutual Toleration of Christians in their different Professions of Religion” (LCT, para. 1).

The fact that *Letter* was written in the middle of the time when Locke was working on *Essay* suggests a possible link between the ideas of the two works. In particular, we contend that when Locke wrote *Letter*, he had already begun to realize the importance of unease—and the removal of unease—for human “Conduct,” at least in the religiously based political conflict that had riven England for decades and been on Locke’s mind since at least 1660. Thus, by the time he wrote the first (Latin) version of *Letter*, he already had the epistemological and psychological foundations of his theory of separation of church and state. As he admitted, however, he had not yet fully seen the larger place that unease has in the human condition, especially in determining the human will. He came to this realization after the publication of the first edition of *Essay* in 1690, so that by the second edition in 1694, Locke had fully embraced the conclusion that unease—and not concern with a

7. References to *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Locke 1975) are cited as *Essay*, by book, chapter, section, and page number.

greater good—is what determines our decisions, including our political and religious decisions.⁸ Our core argument in this article is that his doctrine of unease—which he had discovered by the 1680s, featured in *Letter* in 1685, elaborated on in the first edition of *Essay* in 1690, and fully developed in its final form in the second edition in 1694—provides the psychological foundation of his new argument in *Letter* that separation of church and state will not jeopardize the commonwealth’s political safety.

In the discussion that follows, we first delineate how Locke’s idea of unease provides a crucial theoretical foundation of his extensive discussion and defense of separation of church and state articulated most famously in *Letter*. We then provide a detailed explication of Locke’s innovative understanding of unease in *Essay*, and its implications for his views regarding human action, will, and power. We conclude by raising the question of how this conception of unease may contribute to a better understanding of Locke’s liberalism more generally.

Unease and the Feasibility of Separation of Church and State

In *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, Locke wants to “distinguish exactly the Business of Civil Government from that of Religion” (LCT, para. 5, 12). According to him, “the Care of Souls is not committed to the Civil Magistrate any more than to other men,” and therefore he concludes that “the whole Jurisdiction of the Magistrate reaches only to these Civil concerns; and that all Civil Power, Right, and Dominion, is bounded and confined only to the care of these things; and that it neither can, nor ought in any manner be extended to the salvation of Souls” (LCT, paras. 9–10, 12–13). As we have noted, while Locke devotes most of *Letter* to why such separation of church and state is right, he also argues that his radical proposal is feasible. In his

8. In 1692, in the course of finalizing the second edition of *Essay*, Locke wrote to his friend Molyneux requesting “advice and assistance” to improve it. In response to Molyneux’s critical comments that Locke seemed to make “all Sins to proceed from our Understanding, or to be against Conscience; and not at all from the Depravity of our Wills,” Locke admitted his “weakness of understanding.” Consider his cryptic reply: “I confess, I think there might be something said, which with a great many men would pass for a satisfactory answer to your objection; but it not satisfying me, I neither put it into my book, nor shall now into my letter” (January 20, 1692, in the Locke-Molyneux correspondence collected in De Beer [1979], 625–26, and generally Chappell [1994a, 197–99]; Kramnick [1999]).

view, it has the “Advantage” of reducing and, over time, even eliminating religion as a danger to civil peace, which—as we said earlier—was the very issue that first pushed Locke out of predominant concern with scientific-medical studies into a public concern with politics. Separation of church and state does so in two important ways. First, it removes the unease of oppression that pushes dissenters to sedition. Second, it weakens the desire of people to hold “Power and Empire over one another” in the name of God, whether the person is motivated by a cynical “Pride and Ambition” or is “sincerely solicitous about the Kingdom of God, and thinks it his Duty to endeavour the Enlargement of it amongst Men” (LCT, para. 3). We address each of these in turn.

Removing the Unease of Oppression

Unease allows Locke to demonstrate to the magistrate and those concerned with the consequences of separation why it will not lead to political instability or harm religion. Separation of church and state, according to Locke, means a government focuses on the subjects’ “Civil concerns” rather than their speculative theological opinions or modes of worship.⁹ In doing so, it removes the oppression that is the source of religiously based sedition. People in England, including Locke himself at one time, misunderstood why religion was such a persistent cause of “Factions, Tumults, and Civil Wars” (LCT, para. 78). It is “not the Diversity of Opinions, (which cannot be avoided), but the refusal of Toleration to those that are of different Opinions, (which might have been granted) that has produced all the Bustles and Wars, that have been in the Christian world, on account of Religion” (LCT, para. 78). Locke emphatically declares that “there is only one thing which gathers People into Seditious Commotions, and that is Oppression” (LCT, para. 76, 56). When people experience harm or the possibility of harm from the magistrate because of their religious beliefs or practices, they come to hate him. As Locke says, “we extend our hatred usually to the subject, (at least if a sensible or voluntary Agent,) which has produced Pain in us, because the fear it leaves is a constant pain” (*Essay*, bk. II, ch. XX, sec. 14). The painful fear caused by religious “Sufferings and Oppressions” “naturally” makes people “willing to *ease* themselves” by casting “off an *uneasie* and tyrannical yoke . . . that galls their Necks” (LCT, para. 76, 55; emphases added). “What else can be expected,” Locke asks, “but that these men, growing weary of the Evils under which they Labour, should in the end think it lawful for them to

9. Locke defines “speculative” theological opinions as those—like the Trinity—that “terminate simply in the Understanding” and do not “influence the Will and Manners” (LCT, para. 59, 46).

resist Force with Force, and to defend their natural Rights (which are not forfeitable upon account of Religion) with Arms as well as they can?" (LCT, para. 78).

Indeed, the oppressed do not even have to experience religious persecution to be uneasy—even the *possibility* of oppression because of an “ill-settled Liberty” can cause them pain (LCT, para. 76, 55). If the “bounds” between church and state are settled clearly and the magistrate gets out of the “Business” of religion, there is no possibility he could impose “Penalties” for speculative opinions or modes of worship. This separation removes the fear that causes unease, which will make people no longer his enemies. As a result, “[a]ll things” will “immediately become safe and peaceable,” Locke assures the reader (LCT, para. 77, 56–57). In fact, Locke goes further and argues that even those who do not share the personal religion of a liberal magistrate will become his friends and “will think themselves so much more bound to maintain the Peace of the Commonwealth, as their condition is better in that place than elsewhere; And all the several separate Congregations, like so many Guardians of the Publick Peace, will watch one another” (LCT, para. 77, 57). So, Locke concludes emphatically that “Just and Moderate Governments” that limit themselves to protecting people’s life, liberty, and property “are *every where* quiet, *every where* safe” (LCT, para. 77, 55; emphasis added).

Moreover, when subjects do not have to worry about defending their religious beliefs or practices against persecution, they can focus on removing the uneasiness that naturally affects them. This deepens the “quiet” of liberal societies. In the *Essay*, Locke distinguishes between physical and mental unease. Physical “uneasiness” and its satisfaction “fill a great part . . . of our lives” according to Locke (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 45). Concern with physical unease is so naturally dominant for most people that they will not consider ideas of “the greater good”—even the “infinitely greatest confessed good” like Heaven—without being forced to confront them (bk. II, ch. XXI, secs. 37–38). On top of that, because “*most men cannot live, without employing their time in the daily Labours of their Callings,*” they do not have the leisure or habits necessary to direct their minds to such ideas (bk. I, ch. III, sec. 24; emphasis original). Allowed to run its course, then, people’s “pursuit of happiness” would be largely satisfied by the removal of physical unease “and some few degrees of Pleasure in a succession of ordinary Enjoyments”—that is, “*comfortable preservation*” (bk. II, ch. XXI, secs. 43–44; *Second Treatise*, sec. 95; emphasis added). Thus, separation of church and state has the double force of removing the unease of oppression for people with strong religious convictions *and* allowing people without them to concentrate on removing their physical unease, assuring the peace and stability of the state.

Religious Cruelty and Zealotry

Separation not only removes the political causes of religious violence, but it also removes the religious causes. According to Locke, there are some people who seek “temporal Dominion” in the name of God (LCT, para. 35, 26), an ambition that can be traced in part to the human desire for power. Very early in life, human beings develop the desire for power, which gives them the ability to get the things that can remove their physical unease (STCE, sec. 117). Having the power to acquire objects that remove unease gives rise to the feeling of “pride,” which is pleasure produced by contemplating one’s power (STCE, sec. 81). Unfortunately, the desire for power can easily become a desire for “dominion”—for “Absolute, Arbitrary, Despotical Power” to control the actions of others (*Second Treatise*, sec. 24). This desire is born when a person (often in early childhood) experiences “a ready compliance from all about them,” which is a deep pleasure because it removes the unease of not having enough power to ensure that we can get what we want (STCE, sec. 104). Because the experience does not last, a person feels pain at the loss of dominion and so begins to desire to hold it again. This desire for dominion is strengthened because it mixes with self-love, which is—like the desire for power—another original fact of human nature that can turn every situation from a matter of preservation or comfort into a competition of “whose wills shall carry it over the rest” (STCE, sec. 109).

By itself, the love of dominion is “the first origin of most vicious habits that are ordinary and natural,” but it becomes extraordinarily dangerous when enflamed by imaginations ungoverned by reason (STCE, sec. 103). This dangerous possibility exists, according to Locke, because the human imagination “is always restless, and suggests variety of thoughts, and the will, reason being laid aside, is ready for every extravagant project” (*First Treatise*, sec. 58). When the desire for dominion is joined with an “extravagant” religious imagination, someone can have visions of “Glory and Esteem,” which create a “fantastical *uneasiness*” that they try to satisfy by holding “Power and Empire” over society in the name of God (*Essay*, bk. III, ch. X, sec. 8; bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 45; LCT, para. 1, 8). Locke declares, “in this state, he that goes farthest out of the way, is thought fittest to lead, and is sure of most followers” because he stokes and promises to fulfill his followers’ desire for dominion as well (*First Treatise*, sec. 58). People believe the “inspirations” of these “fiery Zealots” due to people’s own “Ignorance, Laziness, Education, or Precipitancy,” which does not allow them to form their own religious ideas but instead take them “upon Trust” (LCT, para. 2, 8; *Essay*, bk. I, ch. III, sec. 24). This is especially true where religious ideas are the subject of “learned and labourious Enquiries” inaccessible to the “greatest part of Mankind”; in

such cases, religious ideas will always be *given* to people by “the several sects of Philosophy and Religion” who “instil into the unwary, and, as yet, unprejudiced Understanding, (for white Paper receives any Characters) those Doctrines they would have them retain and profess” (bk. III, ch. X, sec. 2; bk. IV, ch. XX, sec. 3; bk. I, ch. III, sec. 22).

For Locke, the mind is open to receiving such religious ideas because of the mental unease caused by the idea of death. The desire for “self-preservation,” according to Locke, is a “natural inclination” that man—like “all other animals”—has “to preserve his being”; indeed, it is the “first and strongest desire God planted in men, and wrought into the very principles of their nature” (*First Treatise*, sec. 86, 88). Unlike animals, however, human beings can and do form an idea of death—of going out of existence. This idea transforms the original, irresistible impulse for self-preservation shared with animals into the very human desire “to escape Death” (LCT, para. 38, 28). When “Eternal Life” is proposed as an idea, it promises escape from death, and therefore, people desire “the acquisition of Eternal Life,” especially if such life also promises to satisfy our innate desire for pleasure without pain through the eternal bliss of Heaven (LCT, para. 24, 18; para. 38, 28). The opposite idea—the eternal torment of Hell—fills us with fear and aversion that is even more powerful than Heaven because “Pleasure operates not so strongly on us, as Pain” (*Essay*, bk. II, ch. XX, sec. 14).

By itself, the desire for Heaven or avoidance of Hell does not inherently lead to religious persecution. No one has an innate idea of God or of what God requires, so the idea of pleasing God does not necessarily include harming “Hereticks” or holding dominion over nonbelievers in His name. People have to create this idea or be *taught* it. If they are taught the opposite—that God wants people to “proceed with Charity, Love, or Good-will” to others (LCT, para. 4)—they can be made to regard religious persecution as “monstrous” and abhorred by God (LCT, para. 5; para. 2). As Locke says, “if the preservation of all mankind, as much as in him lies, were everyone’s persuasion, as indeed it is everyone’s duty and the true principle to regulate our religion, politicks, and morality by, the world would be much quieter and better natured than it is” (STCE, sec. 116).

Locke believes that such reform of religion is possible because the desire for glorious dominion in the name of God requires a cruelty that has “no Foundation in Nature” (STCE, sec. 116). Harming others because of their religious beliefs or modes of worship is cruel and, “in itself,” cruelty “neither is nor can be” pleasant because it is against “humanity” to put “anything in pain” (STCE, sec. 119). The only thing pleasant about being cruel is the “honor” a person receives from others for being cruel (STCE, sec. 116). Thus, cruelty has to be put into us “by fashion and opinion” (STCE, sec. 116). As

Locke says, “I cannot persuade myself” that cruelty is “any other than a foreign and introduced disposition” (STCE, sec. 116). Because cruelty is not natural, people will only *act* on the idea of pleasing God by holding dominion in His name if they feel a *present* uneasiness at the thought of not doing so that is so strong as to crowd out other uneasiness (*Essay*, bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 37). That present feeling of unease can only be generated if people continuously reaffirm their belief that God will reward obedience or punish disobedience to the persecutors’ doctrines. As we saw previously, Locke believes that such constant reaffirmation is very hard to sustain amid “the *uneasiness* of our desires” that beset us every day because no matter how much an “absent good may by contemplation be brought home to the mind, and made present,” “nothing will be in the mind as a present good, able to counter-balance the removal of any *uneasiness*, which we are under, till it raises our desire, and the *uneasiness* of that has the prevalency in determining the will” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 37). Even those “that have had lively representations set before their minds of the unspeakable joys of Heaven, which they acknowledge both possible and probable too” will not act on them unless the ideas cause a powerful present unease that spurs them to action (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 43). If that does not happen, then the idea of “a future state” will not create a strong enough *present* unease in people to displace the naturally “prevailing *uneasiness* of their desires, let loose after the enjoyments of this life, [that] take their turns in the determining of their *wills*, and all that while they take not one step, are not one jot moved, towards the good things of another life considered as never so great” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 37). This means that while the idea of death gives rise to a natural unease (the fear of death) that is satisfied by the idea of a God who helps people to escape death by “believing and doing” what He requires (LCT, para. 62), there is no inherent inclination toward the idea of a cruel God who requires the magistrate to coerce people to honor Him by empty professions of government-imposed or approved theological opinions or modes of worship. The idea of that kind of God must be put into people’s minds.

This insight explains why separation of church and state will have such far-reaching influence on religious ideas themselves. Because cruelty is not natural to human beings, any theology presuming a cruel God who requires persecution can only be maintained by the magistrate’s force, which includes the “right of making laws with penalties of death, and consequently all less penalties . . . and of employing the force of the community, in the execution of such laws” (*Second Treatise*, sec. 4). “Reward and punishment,” Locke says, “are the spur and reins whereby all men are set on work, and guided,” and the ultimate punishment is inflicting pain on the body (even to death).

While public opinion (what Locke calls “the law of opinion”) is powerful, social approval or disapproval works on the mind rather than the body and therefore can continuously dominate the will only of those moved constantly by their imagination of what others think of them. In contrast, the magistrate’s force is physical—it works on the mind by threatening pain to the body, which connects to “our natural propensity . . . to avoid pain at any rate” (STCE, sec. 48). The prospect of physical punishment creates an immediate mental unease that can crowd out the other, ordinary physical uneases that we constantly experience. While the magistrate’s force cannot make people believe a certain opinion, it can make them *act* as though they do. It cannot control their mind, but it can control their will. If the threat of that physical force is removed, people who do not believe in the persecutors’ doctrines will no longer act like they do. And even those who may continue to *believe* in the persecutors’ doctrines will often *act* according to ordinary physical and mental unease. If the physical force that maintains religious cruelty is removed, “humanity” will reassert itself and people will not persecute others (STCE, sec. 116). They will thus fall away from the doctrines that require them to act cruelly toward others and take them away from their own comfortable preservation. By denying persecutors the magistrate’s force, separation of church and state will render innocuous their fantastic doctrines without censoring or limiting their religious liberty.

Unease and Illiberal Religions

Locke, therefore, defends the feasibility of separation of church and state in two important ways. First, he shows the magistrate how separation will remove the unease of oppression from his subjects and thereby gain their affection. By losing the power to impose articles of faith or modes of worship on his subjects, the magistrate gains *more* authority with his subjects. Second, Locke shows the liberally minded (i.e., those who believe that “Liberty of Conscience is every mans natural Right”) that separation will also undermine the potential for religion to be used by persecuting zealots to hold power over others. Locke’s understanding of unease, therefore, explains why separation of church and state will permit religious freedom while disarming religion’s dangerous ambitions, allowing the magistrate to satisfy natural unease and, in doing so, secure the safety, security, and prosperity of the liberal state.

But is separation of church and state feasible if there is an illiberal religion, whether Christian or otherwise, whose doctrines teach that the believer’s own salvation and the glory of God *require* the rule of the true religion on earth, including political rule? Will the adherents of such a religion not be *uneasy* at

the fact that their religion does not rule the commonwealth? If that unease were strong enough, would they not desire to overthrow the liberal magistrate and replace him with one who imposes their religion on the commonwealth? Would they not try to use the “space” given by separation of church and state to promote doctrines contrary to liberal politics and thus lay the groundwork for sedition? Locke was clearly aware of the problem, which was widely discussed in England in the form of the debate over whether Catholics should be tolerated. Locke traces the political danger of such religions to their idea that “*Dominion is founded in Grace,*” and therefore, the magistrate must subscribe to the true religion as understood by religious authorities; that supreme political allegiance is not owed to the magistrate but to those religious authorities; that the magistrate’s political authority can be removed by religious authorities; and that “*Faith is not to be kept with Hereticks,*” even the social compact that forms society (LCT, para. 69–70). On this point Locke is clear: the holding or profession of “so dangerous an Evil” should not be tolerated by the liberal magistrate (LCT, para. 69). Those who demand that the magistrate not interfere in their religion must accept that their religion cannot interfere with the magistrate and his authority to protect the life, liberty, and property of all his subjects (LCT, paras. 7–8, 12). If they deny that other people have the equal right to religious freedom or if they deny the magistrate’s exclusive legitimate authority to care for the civil interests of the people, the liberal magistrate can use force to suppress the holding and teaching of such beliefs. The magistrate can also use force against illiberal religious practices that threaten “Injury . . . to any man, either in Life or Estate” (LCT, para. 50). “For what do all these and the like Doctrines signifie,” Locke asks, “but that they may, and are ready upon any occasion to seize the Government, and possess themselves of the Estates and Fortunes of their Fellow Subjects; and that they only ask leave to be tolerated by the Magistrate so long until they find themselves strong enough to effect it?” (LCT, para. 69).

It is important to remember, however, that Locke believes the magistrate would rarely have to exercise such power. In a liberal commonwealth, the power of illiberal religious doctrines would decline among their adherents because they depend on the idea that God requires persecution of others, which is cruel and, therefore, only sustained by social opinion and, ultimately, the threat of physical force. In a liberal commonwealth where people are focused on removing their ordinary physical and mental uneases, they have less time and inclination toward such theology. In addition, liberal public opinion makes professing and even holding such doctrines socially unacceptable, which adds a powerful source of unease in maintaining them among anyone who wants to be an accepted part of society. Finally, a liberal society

encourages the use of reason—“our only Star and Compass”—in theology, and reason teaches that cruelty “very ill suits the Notion of a Deity” (LCT, para. 12). In a liberal commonwealth, once the adherents of an illiberal religion see that their doctrines require persecution and that persecution is cruel, they will fall away from or reform such doctrines to conform to separation of church and state, especially if they know that they otherwise will not “be tolerated by the Magistrate” (LCT, para. 70).

Locke’s confidence in the feasibility of separation is rooted in his insight that separation alleviates certain dangerous uneases and frees or legitimates others that are helpful to the peace and prosperity of the commonwealth. Separation removes the unease felt by those who are or could be persecuted—that is, those with minority (“dissenting”) religious beliefs or practices. They become friends of the magistrate and advocates of civil peace. Separation also removes the unease felt by followers of religious zealots who are no longer forced by government power to believe in a persecuting God. They become peaceful citizens who quietly practice their milder religious beliefs and respect the right of others to do so. Separation may not relieve the “fantastical” unease felt by religious zealots to spread the empire of God, but it will defang their power to do so by any means other than persuasion. Instead of persecutors, they become preachers who have only spiritual authority—and only over those who voluntarily join their religious society (and who can “go out” at anytime) (LCT, para. 28, 14, 15). At the same time, separation allows the unease that all individuals naturally feel for their comfortable preservation to come back to its natural place in the front of our minds. As a result, everyone becomes more inclined to be “rational and industrious” acquirers of property who are proud of their liberty rather than “Quarrelsome and Contentious” dominion seekers who trample on the life, liberty, or property of others (*Second Treatise*, sec. 34). The whole climate of public opinion shifts toward Locke’s liberalism. If, however, some illiberal religions arise in or are brought into this liberal society, the magistrate is not required to tolerate their illiberal practical opinions or modes of worship. Because in time, they also will undergo the process of political, social, and theological liberalization, it will “seldom happen” that the magistrate will have to use force against them, or at least not very much force for very long (LCT, para 65). Locke believes that this process can work with all religions; hence, he confidently concludes that religious liberty “ought to be permitted to the *Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists, Arminians, Quakers*, and others, with the same Liberty. Nay, if we may openly speak the Truth . . . neither *Pagan*, nor *Mahumetan*, nor *Jew*, ought to be excluded from the Civil Rights of the Commonwealth, because of his Religion” (LCT, para. 77).

Locke on “Unease”

To understand why Locke was so confident that his radical idea of toleration would work, we need to have a deeper understanding of his view of unease itself. To begin, it is important to understand that Locke’s view of unease is radically different from those who came before. The idea of “unease” is found in the works of philosophers and theologians at least as far back as Augustine’s *Confessions*, where he discusses *inquietum*. It was later taken up and developed by Locke’s French contemporaries, such as Blaise Pascal and Pierre Nicole, who argue that humanity’s Fall from Grace is the source of our boredom (*ennui*) and uneasiness (*inquiétude*), relieved only by unsatisfying diversion (*divertissement*).¹⁰

Locke’s view of “unease” represents a significant departure from those conceptions. We know that Locke was already contemplating the importance of unease in the human condition by the 1680s. But his first, more comprehensive discussion of unease takes place in *Essay*, first published in 1690. As we have seen, *Essay* was prompted, according to Locke, by his conversation with “a few Friends” regarding “Morality and Divinity,” especially the need to ascertain the “Bounds between Opinion and Knowledge” in order to “regulate our Assent, and moderate our Perswasions” (*Essay*, epistle). “Our Business here,” Locke states, “is not to know all things, but those which concern our Conduct” (bk. I, ch. I, sec. 5). It is therefore not surprising that he begins Book I of the *Essay* with a detailed and extensive discussion of “Innate Notions” in order to show the bounds or limitations on human understanding.

Locke confronts the formidable task of explaining how we actually think, decide, and act in his chapter on “Power” (bk II, ch. XXI). This chapter is one of the most important (and longest) in *Essay*, endeavoring to explain what he means by power, will, and liberty—important questions for human understanding but, above all, for morality. In this chapter, Locke provides the original account of what determines the will, an explanation that he will correct in subsequent editions published after 1689. According to Locke, “will” and “liberty” are types of power. Changes we discern in ourselves and in objects we see around us give rise to the idea of “Power” as the ability to make change (active power) or receive change (passive power) (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 3). This idea of power allows Locke to distinguish between “Will” and “Liberty,” which is important for understanding our actions but also for

10. According to Rahe (2009, 106, especially footnote 14), during his exile in France (1675–79), Locke acquired and read Pascal’s *Pensées* and purchased Nicole’s *Essais de Moral*, which he translated into English.

larger theological questions concerning “free will” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 14). “Will,” for Locke, is the “Power which the mind has, thus to order the consideration of any *Idea*, or the forbearing to consider it; or to prefer the motion of any part of the body to its rest, and *vice versâ* in any particular instance” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 5). In contrast, liberty is the “Idea of a Power in any Agent to do or forbear any particular action” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 8). Will is, therefore, the power of the mind to choose a particular idea to consider or a particular action to take; liberty is the power to act on that choice. Humans may have liberty to do or not do an action, but they are never free of “willing,” which is the “Power, or Ability, to prefer or chuse” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 17).

But on what basis do we make choices—or simply put, what determines the will? In the first edition of *Essay*, Locke claims that “*the greater Good is that alone which determines the Will*” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 35). This is because willing is “*Preferring*,” defined as “*being pleased more with the one, than the other*” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 28). Locke argues that we necessarily prefer what is good, which means that the good (or greater good) determines our choices. We define what is good by what gives us “Happiness,” which Locke defines as “the utmost Pleasure we are capable of.” Because pleasure and pain are produced by the “operation of objects on our Minds or Bodies, that which produces pleasure we call Good, and that which produces pain Evil” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 29). The determination of our wills by happiness, according to Locke, is not an imperfection or “diminution of Freedom because it benefits us”; and in any case, “God himself cannot chose what is not good” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 31). Indeed, “God Almighty himself is under the necessity of being happy” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 50).¹¹

This answer presents Locke with two puzzles. The first is that if our wills are determined by the Good, “*How it comes to pass that Men’s Wills carry them so contrarily [to what is good], and consequently some of them to what is Evil?*” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 34). Locke’s answer is that while individuals choose what appears to them to be the greater good, there is no greatest good

11. This “motivational externalist” or “intellectualist” position is the Platonic view that knowledge is virtue, combined with an Epicurian premise that the good is the pleasant. On “intellectualism,” see Chappell (1994a); Colman (1983); Yolton (1970). On “internalism,” see Magri (2000, 58); Vailati (1990, 215). In terms of Locke’s contemporaries, this was the contest between Platonists such as Henry Moore, Ralph Cudworth, Locke’s student Anthony Ashley Cooper, Arminians such as Lomboc and the Epicureans such as Gassendi, and the Latitudinarian divines such as John Tillotson (see, generally, Kramnick 1999; Spellman 1987, 484–85).

toward which all people are oriented by nature and which guides their choices. He denies the “Philosophers of old,” who argued that people are by nature directed toward a “*Summum bonum*” that does (or should) guide our choices and in which we find our true happiness (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 55). Rather, the diversity of human tastes and palates means that what we relish is in us and not in objects themselves. Consequently, not all people think that “Riches or Glory” are good (i.e., not all people like them), just as tastes differ on the merits of “Cheese or Lobsters.” Arguments about the relative merits of “Riches, or bodily Delights, or Virtue, or Contemplation” are comparable to debates about the merits of “Apples, Plumbs, or Nuts” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 35). Humans choose different things the way bees are “delighted with Flowers” while “Scarabes” are “delighted with other kind of Viands.” Because we do not have an innate idea of “the Good” or an inherent inclination toward a *summum bonum*, we can (and do) choose what is bad rather than good.

But what if a person knows what is good? Would they necessarily choose it? Or as Locke puts the question: “*How Men come often to prefer the worse to the better; and to chuse that, which by their own Confession has made them miserable?*” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 36). Locke responds by affirming that “*Man never chuses amiss*” in choosing “*the greater Good*” but in doing so sometimes prefers the present *apparent* good, or the “appearance of the Good,” not taking into account in all cases the “remote and concealed Evil,” suggesting that present pleasures and pain do not always allow us to see and judge what will give us more pleasure over time. With this discussion of power, Locke claims to have explained the “*Ideas of Will, Volition, Liberty, and Necessity*” on the basis of what a person thinks is good (i.e., what pleases him) (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 46).

After the publication of the first edition of *Essay*, however, Locke reconsidered these arguments because he did not find them to be “as accurate a review, as I was capable of” (*Essay*, epistle, para. 9). In particular, Locke seems to have been unpersuaded that he had adequately explained “Liberty and the Will” (*Essay*, epistle, para. 9). Part of the difficulty here is the problem that it does not make sense to say that the greater apparent good determines what people choose (i.e., the will) if there is no greatest good. Continuing to use the language of “good” suggests that it has some kind of meaning apart from what makes each individual happy. It does not really explain what determines our choices. So Locke undertook “a closer inspection into the working of Men’s Minds, and a stricter examination of those motives and views, they are turn’d by” (epistle, para. 9). As a result of these investigations, he “found reason somewhat to alter the thoughts I had formerly had concerning that, which gives the last determination to the Will in

all voluntary actions” (epistle, para. 9).¹² He seems to have realized that if our own happiness defines what is good, and we make choices based on what we believe will make us happy, then our idea of happiness determines our choices. The person’s pursuit of a “greatest good” for him as a human being is transformed into the person’s “pursuit of happiness” for him as an individual (*Essay*, bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 43). And as he said in the first edition, if happiness is defined not as a pleasure that outweighs pain but as “Pleasure, without any considerable admixture of uneasiness” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 62), then “[w]hatever we feel of *uneasiness*, so much, ‘tis certain, we want of happiness” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 39). Because “a *total* freedom from pain *always* makes a necessary part of our Happiness,” the “first and necessary step towards happiness” is “removing of pain, as long as we have any left” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 71; emphasis added). Thus, the irresistible desire for happiness necessarily means we seek to remove pain, which in turn determines the choices we will make. So Locke reached the momentous conclusion in the second edition of *Essay* that it is not the Good (or even any apparent good) but “*uneasiness* alone [that] operates on the *will*, and determines it in its choice” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 36).

So, what is unease and what causes it? According to Locke, uneasiness is “[a]ll pain of the body whatsoever, and disquiet of the mind” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 31).¹³ Purely bodily pains are those such as hunger and thirst, and other natural desires, “that return at their seasons” for the “preservation of themselves and the continuation of the species” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 34). Disquiet of the mind is caused by ideas, particularly our idea of happiness (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 60). Based on experience and reflection, we form an idea of what we think will make us happy by causing pleasure through “the removal or *lessening of a pain*” (bk. II, ch. XX, sec. 16). Not having the objects that

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12. The Locke-Molyneux correspondence shows that Locke had been thinking about this problem for some time so that though Molyneux may have prompted Locke to address the question of free will in the *Essay*, he did not contribute directly to its resolution (see especially Locke’s letter to Molyneux dated January 20, 1692, as note previously).
 13. Due in part to the variety of subsequent changes to the *Essay* dealing with the question of will, volition, human agency, and divine justice, the scholarship on unease in Locke can be found in a range of disparate fields. For a general overview, see Davies (2017) and Kramnick (1999, 2010). On the problem of free will and the “Doctrine of Suspension,” see Chappell (1994a, 1994b); Colman (1983); Leisinger (2017); Lowe (1995); Magri (2000). For claims that Locke was a compatibilist, see Glauser (2003); Jenkins (1983); Schouls (1992). On a more metaphysical approach regarding agency, self-transcendence, and God, see Yaffe (2000) and Yolton (1970, 2001).

bring us pleasure by removing our pain spurs unease—that is, a desire for what we judge we need at that moment to remove our pain.

Locke's insight into unease allows him to answer on new terms the two questions he posited and sought to address in the first edition of *Essay*: Why do we not always choose the good; and why do we choose evil? In answering the first question, Locke acknowledges the novelty of his approach:

It seems so establish'd and settled a maxim by the general consent of Mankind, That good, the greater good, determines the will, that I do not wonder, that when I first publish'd my thoughts on this Subject, I took it for granted; and I imagine, that by a great many I shall be thought more excusable, for having then done so, than that now I have ventur'd to recede from so received an Opinion. But yet upon stricter enquiry, I am forced to conclude, that *good*, the *greater good*, though apprehended and acknowledged to be so, does not determine the *will*, until our desire, raised proportionably to it, makes us *uneasy* in the want of it. (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 35)

Explaining why the drunkard continues to go to the “soaking Club” even when he knows it is not good for him (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 35), or more tellingly, why the “infinite eternal Joys of Heaven” and our “eternal condition of a future state” do not outweigh “the expectation of Riches, or Honour, or any other worldly pleasure” for someone persuaded of the advantages of virtue (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 37), Locke points to “that topping uneasiness” that overpowers the “infinitely greatest confessed good” and determines the will (256). The motivations of the drunkard and the lover of glory would seem to be radically different yet both in fact are moved by the same cause—their present uneasiness, so that “*Video melior proboque, Deteriora sequor*” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 35; “I see and approve of the better, but I follow the worse,” from Ovid’s *Metamorphosis* VII, 20–21). Locke thus reverses his view from the first edition of *Essay* in two important ways. First, he now understands that the human condition is one in which we face constant, endless unease, and happiness is found in the relief of those uneases and not in the prospect of some apparent goods whose possession constitutes happiness. Second, Locke now concludes that the most powerful unease is what determines our will.

But which unease? There may be no greatest good, but is there a greatest or most powerful unease? According to Locke, while we are constantly confronted by many physical and mental *uneasinesses*, it is the “greatest *present* uneasiness” that “is the spur to action” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 40; emphasis added). The “absent good, though thought on, confessed, and appearing to be good” does not determine our choices unless we feel present “unhappiness in

its absence” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 45). Locke therefore suggests that unless the absent good is brought to our contemplation in such a way as to raise our desires proportionate to the value of the good, making us “*uneasie* in its want,” it will not determine our will (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 45). The reason for this is that “[a]ll present pain, whatever it be, makes a part of our present *misery*: But all absent good does not at any time make a necessary part of our present happiness, nor the absence of it make a part of our *misery*” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 43). It is for this reason that he recommends a suspension, deliberation, and scrutiny of each successive desire to allow an examination of what will lead to our happiness. He defines this suspension and deliberation as “Free Will” and the foundation of “Liberty” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 47).¹⁴

It is this insight into unease, and therefore the need to suspend its relief through our judgment, that also allows Locke to explain the second question—why we desire happiness yet choose what makes us unhappy (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 54). Here, Locke accepts his formulation in the first edition of *Essay* regarding the diversity of human tastes, both in palate and the “relish” of the Mind, and his rejection of the *Summum bonum* to explain why “all Men desire Happiness, yet their *wills carry the so contrarily*” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 55). But unease allows Locke to extend his discussion from the first edition by reminding the reader that such diversity in the individual’s judgment of the good “excuses him not,” because “by a too hasty choice of his own making, he has imposed on himself wrong measures of good and evil” (bk., II, ch. XXI, sec. 56). The various forms of uneasiness also allow him to provide a more extensive account of why we make poor choices. He shows, for example, how bodily pains (271–72) and the problem of “absent good” due to the “*weak and narrow Constitution of our mind*” (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 64), our poor judgment of consequences (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 66), and our ability to change what we consider pleasant (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 69) can explain why we “*prefer the worse to the better*.” For example, our preference for the present over the future means transient pleasures and pain will not be countered by “Joys of a future state,” the “endless Happiness, or exquisite Misery of an immortal Soul hereafter,” making us think that virtue and religion are not necessary for our happiness (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 60).

From this general overview, we can see that Locke’s discovery of the nature and primacy of unease revolutionized his understanding of what causes human beings to choose and act. In the first edition of *Essay*, Locke denies a *summum bonum* and argues that all people instead pursue happiness understood as pleasure without pain, and they use the word “good” to describe

14. On Locke’s view of suspension of desire, see Chappell (2000).

something pleasant. All this is retained in the second edition. But after the first edition, Locke seems to have realized that he did not understand how the desire for happiness operates on our wills. He had assumed that we are drawn toward what we believe gives us the most pleasure (i.e., makes us happy). But he realized that his teaching could not explain why people in reality do not always choose what they say will make them happy (for example, the “infinite Eternal joys” of Heaven). Then he realized the decisive importance of unease—that we are not drawn toward things simply by the pleasure they promise; we are driven toward them by our most pressing unease, which they promise to relieve.

Unease is theoretically innovative for Locke in two important ways. First, it allows him to abandon finally the last vestiges of the “old Philosophers” and scholastics who argued for innate ideas and posited that we are by nature drawn toward a *summum bonum*. Consequently, Locke’s unease is not like Augustine’s *inquietum* and Pascal’s *inquiétude*, a feeling of lacking some profound good in our lives, which makes us unhappy and thereby gives rise to a longing for that greater good. Rather, unease is based on physical and mental pain and need not necessarily point to or disclose our neediness for the divine. The absence of such an “existential” dimension to pleasure and pain also allows us to distinguish Locke’s “unease” from subsequent concepts that seem similar to unease but are fundamentally different, such as Kierkegaard’s “anxiety” and Heidegger’s “angst.”

Second, it marks Locke’s break from Hobbes’s theory of the passions and therefore his previous endorsement of the Hobbesian claim that the sovereign is to determine matters of religion.¹⁵ Hobbes too had attempted to break with the notion of a compelling “Good” through his claim “there is no such *Finis ultimus*, (the utmost ayme,) nor *Summum Bonum*, (greatest Good,) as is spoken of in the Books of the old Morall Philosophers” (*Leviathan*, ch. XI). Denying the “greatest Good,” Hobbes nevertheless retained the idea that the apparent good “moves” us: in his account of the “passions,” he states that “Endeavour” or motions within the body, “when it is *toward something which causes it*, is called APPETITE, or DESIRE” (*Leviathan*, ch. VI; emphasis added). In Hobbes’s view, we experience pleasure as a thing in itself, not primarily as the feeling of relief from pain. Thus, we are *drawn* toward objects that give us pleasure, and that feeling of being drawn—that is, desire—is itself pleasant.

It was this understanding of the passions that justified Hobbes’s rejection of toleration and defense of the sovereign determining all matters in religion.

15. See, in this context, Collins (2020) on the importance of Hobbes’s *Leviathan* on Locke.

Because there is no true greatest good, there are only future apparent goods. This means that everyone desires power, which is the “present means to obtain some future apparent Good” (*Leviathan*, ch. X). Because there is no *finis ultimis*, the desire for power is insatiable and “ceaseth only in death” (*Leviathan*, ch. X). In some people, this desire takes the form of a desire for safety; in others, a desire for gain; and in still others, a desire for glory (the imagination of endless power) (*Leviathan*, ch. XIII).

Religion—including Christianity—is politically dangerous because it taps into the desire for power. For those concerned with safety or gain, it promises the power to overcome death through eternal life. It also posits an evil (eternal suffering) that is more powerful than the goods and evils at the sovereign’s disposal. For those who want glory, religion provides the glorious opportunity to become God’s lieutenants or vicars who wield “pain of eternal death.” In his attempt to preserve the authority of the sovereign, Hobbes is therefore compelled to fashion a new Christian creed that undermines the authority of God’s “vicars” by claiming, “All that is NECESSARY to Salvation, is contained in two Vertues, Faith in Christ, and Obediance to Laws” (*Leviathan*, ch. XXXVI). To ensure that such simple, politically harmless religion prevails, the sovereign must have conclusive authority over ecclesiastical matters, denying separation of church and state and, in principle, religious toleration.¹⁶

Though initially sharing Hobbes’s view that separation could not work, Locke realized that the nature of desire does not require the sovereign to dominate religion in order to make it politically safe. Desire is not the pleasant feeling of being drawn toward “power after power”; rather, it is an “uneasiness in the want” of an object that relieves our pain (bk. II, ch. XXI, sec. 31). Since the unease associated with religion is satisfied without holding dominion over others, people will be content with having their own liberty rather than usurping other men’s conscience. It is “abundantly evident in History,” according to Locke, that religiously based political conflict exists as long as church and state remain united (LCT, para. 78). Indeed, “[i]t *cannot be otherwise*, so long as the Principle of Persecution for Religion shall prevail . . . with Magistrate and People” (LCT, para. 78; emphasis added). The only solution is to get rid of “the unhappy agreement that we see between the Church and State” because only separation will tame the “Heads and Leaders of the Church” who are “moved by Avarice and insatiable desire of Dominion, making use of the immoderate Ambition of Magistrates, and the Superstition

16. See Patapan 2017 on how the “feare of power invisible” and “Torment Eternall” were some of the major obstacles to the efficacy of Hobbes’s *Leviathan* state founded on the sovereign’s use of fear.

of the giddy Multitude” (LCT, para. 78). Far from being impractical, then, separation is the only feasible answer.

Conclusion

In this article, we have sought to demonstrate that Locke’s confidence in the efficacy of separating church and state can be traced to his discovery that human beings are moved, even in their religious concerns, not by longing for some greatest good but by unease. Religious oppression causes unease, which moves people to sedition. If even the possibility of religious persecution is removed by making sure government has no power over religious beliefs or practices and the church has no coercive power, unease is eliminated, undermining the motivation for religiously based political violence. Importantly, because Locke’s arguments for toleration and separation of church are based on unease as an aspect of human psychology, he does not believe that his claims are historically contingent or specific to Christianity. Indeed, unease justifies Locke’s claim that the separation of church and state can be successfully introduced and implemented not only in his circumstances but for all times, places, and peoples. Unease is therefore the theoretical and practical answer to those who claim that separation is impractical, politically dangerous, or limited to some beliefs.¹⁷

Our discussion of the efficacy of Locke’s defense of separation of church and state has also revealed the innovation at the heart of Locke’s religious thought—his discovery of unease. Unease, as we have seen, is the philosophical and psychological innovation that marks Locke’s departure from classical, Christian, and even modern thought. Locke rejects the existence of the classical view of the “greatest good” and therefore denies we are moved by it. In addition, he takes up the Christian conceptions of *inquietum* and *inquiétude* but fundamentally transforms them by showing that unease traces its origins not to our fallen state but to impulses that “God planted in men, and wrought into the very principles of their nature” (*First Treatise*, sec. 88). Finally, Locke’s discovery of unease represents his fundamental break from the modern Hobbesian view, which he initially shared, that competing apparent goods determine our actions. Like Hobbes, Locke believes that by “good” we really mean “what makes me happy” (i.e., feel pleasure). Unlike Hobbes, however, Locke contends that what makes us happy is to relieve our unease. Thus, Locke’s doctrine of unease reveals to us a world where our lives and

17. Compare, for example, Waldron (2002), who emphasizes the Protestant character of toleration, and Swaine (2005), who argues liberty of conscience has an important role in a world of religious pluralism.

actions are defined by competing uneases, where happiness consists of the removal or lessening of our most pressing present pain, and where our will and decisions are determined by that pain.

Our examination of Locke's teaching on toleration, founded on his innovative concept of unease, raises the question of what role unease may have in his political philosophy more generally. We have seen how Locke realizes that separation of church and state needs to be supported by a suite of political, economic, and educational initiatives that would direct people's unease away from fantastical unease of the imagination toward more natural physical and mental unease that can be satisfied in freedom, security, prosperity, and a benign view of God. Politically, there must be a constitutional order with rule of law and parliamentary institutions based on the consent of the governed that allows the people to remove any unease they might have under a government that exercises absolute, arbitrary power. Economically, robust protection of private property permits people to be secure in the fruits of their rational and industrious labor, allowing them to have comfortable self-preservation. Educationally, separation of church and state also requires a new civil theology that will foster more rational ideas of God to take root in the minds of the people, providing a bulwark against any ambitious attempts to use religion to unsettle the boundaries of church and state for political gain. This suite of measures suggests that unease may play a more central role than realized in Locke's political, economic, and educational philosophy. Our examination of the efficacy of Locke's separation of church and state and his concept of unease therefore invites a more profound engagement with this vital aspect of Lockean political thought, providing a new perspective into a liberalism that continues to influentially shape contemporary politics.

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