

1 Complex ideas of mixed modes

Ideas of mixed modes consist of combinations of simple ideas of different kinds.

- Examples: obligation, drunkenness, lie
- “These mixed modes being also such combinations of simple *ideas* as are not looked upon to be characteristic marks of any real beings that have a steady existence, but scattered and independent *ideas* put together by the mind, are thereby distinguished from the complex *ideas* of substance.” (2.22.1)

Three ways to get these ideas:

- By experience and observation of things
- By invention of the mind
- By explaining the names of actions we’ve never seen

2 Complex ideas of substances

Locke says that our idea of substance comes from noticing that some simple ideas constantly go together, and then positing a substratum in which they all inhere, “not imagining how these simple *ideas* can subsist by themselves.” (2.23.1)

Substance in general

- Locke is skeptical that we have a clear idea of substance in general (as opposed to ideas of particular substances).
 - “If anyone should be asked what is the subject in which color or weight inheres, he would have nothing to say, but the solid extended parts. And if he were demanded what is it that solidity and extension adhere in, he would not be in a much better case than the *Indian* before mentioned who, saying that the world was supported by a great elephant, was asked what the elephant rested on – to which his answer was a great tortoise. But being again pressed to know what gave support to the broad-backed tortoise, replied, something he knew not what.” (2.23.2)
- Idea of substance: ideas of some modes, an idea of some thing, and a relation of support between them.

Particular substances

- Our ideas of particular substances (man, horse, sun, water, ...) are nothing but ideas of mixed modes taken with an idea of “something to which they belong” or “in which they subsist.”
- The ideas that make our complex idea of substance:
 - Ideas of primary qualities: bulk, figure, number, situation, motion, ...
 - Ideas of sensible secondary qualities: taste, color, smell, ...
 - We are most acquainted with external things through their secondary qualities.
 - Our senses are less discerning with respect to primary qualities. We would cease to have ideas of secondary qualities if our senses could detect the smallest parts of bodies. (2.23.11)

- Ideas of active and passive powers
 - Strictly speaking powers are complex ideas. (2.23.7)

More on powers

- Scholastic picture: a substance's having properties is explained in terms of the substance having certain powers
- The EM mechanists proposed a new program to explain all properties of bodies in terms of their essential properties (properties that are found in all bodies)
- Locke takes these essential properties to be none but primary qualities received through the senses

We have ideas of three sorts of substances: God, finite intelligences, bodies

Idea of mind as clear as idea of body

- "...we have as clear a notion of the substance of spirit, as we have of body – the one being supposed to be (without knowing what it is) the *substratum* to those simple *ideas* we have from without, and the other supposed (with a like ignorance of what it is) to be the *substratum* to those operations we experiment in ourselves within." (2.23.5)
 - Body: ideas of coherent solid parts, and a power of communicating motion by impulse, plus substance (2.23.17)
 - Mind: ideas of thinking and willing ("or the power of moving or quieting corporeal motion" (2.23.15)), plus substance
 - Both of these contain nothing more than combinations of our simple ideas from sensation and reflection – this story is in line with Locke's blank slate theory of the mind.
- Locke says both involve the ideas of existence, duration, and mobility.
- Cohesion (2.23.23-5)
- Mobility (2.23.28)

God

- Ideas of existence and duration, knowledge and power, pleasure and happiness, etc.
- These are "enlarged" with the idea of infinity