The Very Human Ideot:

Locke's *Essay*, Darwin's *Descent*, and the Disruptive Power of Intellectual Disability

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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Acknowledgements

Ideas are peculiar 'things': from where do they come, of what, if anything, are they made, how do we realise them, can we share them? The 'idea' for this thesis has no originary moment that I am aware of, but I do thank the people with intellectual disability, and/or mental illness, their families, and the professional, research and support staff with whom I have spent my own professional life. They are the source of many of the questions, and moments of inspiration, that led me to this project.

Investigating the function of intellectual disability in the disparate work of John Locke and Charles Darwin was never going to be an easy task, readily placed in an academic department. I thank Professor Stephanie Hemelryk Donald for having the courage to take on the initial supervision of a topic which was outside her own domain, but which she considered worthwhile, and which she pushed me, with due academic rigour and personal enthusiasm, to pursue across a range of disciplines. Professor Donald left the University of Technology, Sydney, and at that point I was fortunate to move to supervision of Dr Peter Caldwell, whose prodigious memory was both astounding and inspiring. Sadly, Dr Caldwell soon retired: Professor Andrew Jakubowicz was kind enough to step in, and to provide some stimulating commentary from the disability studies perspective.

My particular acknowledgements, however, go to Dr Jeremy Walker, of UTS, and to Kennedy Bridge, erstwhile of the University of Adelaide. Kennedy was brave enough to read a thesis on the peculiar topic of idiocy in seventeenth and nineteenth century theories. He was also brave enough to tell its author that her thesis was essentially 'boring', albeit in a few more, carefully chosen words. I hope there have been considerable improvements since that reading some eighteen months ago: the polite kick is perhaps one of the greatest contributions that can be made to any thesis.

Dr Walker came on board as co-supervisor of this thesis in early 2009, when Professor Jakubowicz was to be away for some months. Dr Walker has been an assiduous, determined, and insightful reader. His written comments have been extremely helpful, and most gratefully received. Our discussions have pushed me to think outside the 'square' of my initial research questions, to broaden my inquiry of questions of humanness in general. The many mistakes are mine, but this is a better thesis for his critical support.

I also acknowledge the remarkable staff and service of the UTS library (City Campus), and the superb support of Research Administrator (FASS), Juleigh Slater.

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Texts used and citation method:

John Locke and Charles Darwin each produced a large number of publications. Darwin's publications in particular have had many editions. In order to avoid bulky, intrusive citations, at the same time as making clear which work, and which edition I am referring to, I have adopted the following in-text citation method.

All references to the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* are, unless otherwise specified, taken from the scholarly edition edited by Peter Nidditch, published in 1975. In order not to interrupt the text with long citations, I have used the form, Book: Chapter: Section (1.2.2, for Book 1, Chapter 2, Section 2, for example), with no other appellation or date. All references in this form refer to the *Essay*.

In the body of this thesis, references to Locke's other works are cited with an abbreviated title, edition date, page number, rather than the more traditional author, date, page number: for example, (*Reasonableness* 1824: 213).

Darwin's works are now all available in authoritative editions on the magnificent Darwin website: http://darwin-online.org.uk/. I have preferred the last editions prepared by Darwin, of *The Descent on Man* (1882), and of the *Origin* (1876). There are fewer editions of *The Expression of Emotions*; I have used the 1872 edition. All Darwin's work are cited as per Locke's other works above; that is, Title: Date: Page. For example, (*The Descent* 1882: 31).

All abbreviations are the obvious ones:

Essay Concerning Human Understanding (*Essay*)

Two Treatises of Government: In the Former, The False Principles and Foundation of Sir Robert Filmer, And His Followers, are Detected and Overthrown (*Two Treatises*

Some Thoughts Concerning Education (*Some Thoughts*)

The Reasonableness of Christianity (*Reasonableness*)

The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex (*The Descent*)

The Expression of Emotions of Emotions in Man and Animals (*The Expression*)

On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life (*Origin*)

These and other abbreviations are generally also noted in text.

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Abstract

Innate maxims, John Locke declared in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), cannot exist because children and people with intellectual disability (whom he called ideots) do not show evidence of knowing such maxims. This thesis argues that, for very good reason, ideots were Locke's prime evidence against the then current belief that God implanted, pre-birth, maxims and principles that became the basis of all human knowledge. Teasing out the differences Locke made between ideots, changelings and monsters, this thesis also discusses the contribution of people with disability to Locke's argument that species, such as Man/human, are, like the words that represent them, largely conventional rather than natural, essential or immutable. One hundred and seventy years after Locke, Charles Darwin published his work on evolution in humans. He, like Locke, included repeated references to people with intellectual disability in *The Descent of Man* (1871), and its companion piece, The *Expression of Emotions* (1872). This thesis argues that the motivation and effect of Darwin's inclusion of people with intellectual disability were vastly different from Locke's, both in relation to people with intellectual disability themselves, and, importantly, to the understanding of who should, and should not, be included in the species, human, particularly over the longer term. Darwin has been regularly criticised for the use of analogy rather than evidence; in this thesis I argue that his use of people with intellectual disability was indeed analogy, and fallacious analogy at that. Whether or not Darwin himself approved of eugenics, what he left us with was effectively an 'eugenic man' – a single, male, adult as the measure of who it is could, and should, survive. This thesis concludes that a recuperation of the diverse humankind that Locke considered in the *Essay* is an intellectual, and social, imperative.

Introduction

Are idiots human?

As an undergraduate in the 1970s I took an elective in the history of psychology. Thomas Hobbes and John Locke featured prominently, the latter a be-wigged figure staring, grey-toned, from a dust-jacket, the former with no image that I can recall. In retrospect, the inclusion of Locke (1632-1704), sandwiched somewhere between Plato (c. 427-347 B.C.E.) and William James (1842-1910), makes more sense that that of Hobbes (1588-1679), if only because Locke was less sure of human processing (variable) and knowledge (rarely certain), than Hobbes was of his assessment of human nature and behaviour (selfish, war-like), and psychology is, hopefully, an exploratory science. Both were given to us as father-figures; the discipline was searching for an origin narrative, and Locke and Hobbes were better qualified than most for a role they never knew they would play.

Psychology then favoured behaviourism; genes and inheritance were 'out', environment and conditioning were 'in'. Locke was, apparently, intimately tied to the development of behavioural and environmental approaches; he was the 'father' of the 'blank slate' theory. I don't know now whether I misinterpreted what the lecturers were saying: however, psychology texts then, and many today, bear out the impression I took from those classes - that, in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (the *Essay*), officially published in 1690,[1] Locke's thesis was that all humans were born with minds more or less the same. Individual differences, including those of personality and intellect, were entirely the outcome of environment and opportunity.[2] The Locke I remember from those courses did not believe anything was innate.

Twenty five years later, having had a career as both a psychologist and speech pathologist, specialising in working with people living with intellectual disability, and, in latter years, with mental illness; having assessed people who do not recognise their own parents, and others who had committed murder; having produced professional

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[1] The *Essay* was released in late 1689, but the date 1690 appeared on the frontispiece.

[2] See, for example, Beirne-Smith, Patton and Ittenbach: "[h]istorically, the environmental view of intellect and personality derives from the philosopher John Locke's concept of the *tabula rasa*, which suggests that children are born with a mind that is a 'blank slate' on which the environment 'writes' experience and thus develops traits" (1994: 167).

papers, edited a professional magazine; having had three children, and having undertaken post-graduate work in loosely connected areas of communications and cultural theory,[3] as well as various other life-pursuits, I returned to the *Essay*.

My reason for revisiting Locke was connected to my professional 'expertise', and the research interests that arose from this. Recent decades have seen the bourgeoning of the field of disability studies. French theorist, Michel Foucault's work, in particular, has been employed to move the discussion of disability away from the everyday practicalities of resources and treatment, into theoretical analyses of power and position. Modernity, Foucault has apparently demonstrated, is dependent on the dichotomy reason/unreason, and thus on the constructing categories and institutions that enable it. Intellectual disability has been increasingly commonly viewed as anything but an innocent and natural category. In approaching the *Essay*, I was curious about dimly remembered references to ideots and changelings, (both of which groups are likely now to be called people with intellectual disability),[4] in a work often regarded as, if not initiating, then seminal to, the modernist era. Although this curiosity stemmed from a degree of caution about the applicability to intellectual disability of Foucault's archaeologies of power and mental illness, I was not intending to write a thesis on Locke. I come from a politically left tradition, and the study of enlightenment liberalism,[5] to which his name is so often attached, has never been popular there, any more than it is in Foucault's work, or the broader critical cultural analyses that had informed my post-graduate work. My initial project had been to interrogate the eighteenth century's generation of statistical norms, the corresponding pathologising of those who are outside the norm, and the contemporaneous invasion of populist interpretations of evolutionary theory into notions of what is it to be human, and who

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[3] *The Other Half: Women and the Oral-aural in Film* (Thesis for degree of Master of Arts, University of Technology, Sydney 1994); *Dangerous devotions* (Thesis for the degree of Master of Arts, in Writing, University of Technology, Sydney, 2005).

[4] The spelling 'ideot' is intentional, reflecting Locke's use. See below for further notes re terminology with respect to intellectual disability.

[5] Sluhovsky (2006) points out that terms such as Enlightenment, early-modern and medieval are heuristic, already interpretative and promulgative of a particular ideology. While acknowledging that the notion of era is an abstract one, and terms and boundaries are contested, I use 'medieval', 'pre-modern', 'early-modern', 'enlightenment', and the 'Enlightenment' (with capitalisation when a noun), assuming that the reader will be familiar with the general periods of time implied. There is no particular need to problematise the periods here.

can 'count' in our assessment of current and potential characteristics of humanness. The *Essay* was interesting background material.

It soon became apparent that all was not as it had initially seemed. The *Essay* had a far more nuanced notion of the *tabula rasa*, or the child as "white paper" (2.1.2), than my undergraduate work had led me to believe: Locke actually assumed innate capacities, while arguing against innate ideas. There was also a much more significant role for people with intellectual disability in the *Essay* than I would ever have thought likely: although numerically the references were not extravagant, it seemed that Book 1, 'Of Innate Notions', in particular, could not have been written without the evidence that those people Locke called ideots, provided. While their most powerful role was in the argument against innate ideas (or against nativism), people with intellectual disability were not used up or finished with at the end of Book 1. In Book 2 they were evidence in the identification of the processes of understanding. In Books 3 and 4, changelings, (those whom we might now call people with severe or profound intellectual disability),[6] and monsters (people with physical anomaly), were evidence for the argument that language is conventional, that there is no fixed notion of the human species in particular. In the *Essay*, ideots, in various manifestations, with varying degree and detail of disability, were not pushed into a group that signified unreason, their existence nothing more than a bolster to the importance of reason, as a Foucauldian interpretation would have it. Indeed, the primacy of reason was of itself under some question (see, for example, *Essay*: 1.2.7-9; discussion in Chapter, 3, 4 and 5 below). I concluded that further investigation of the function of idiocy in the *Essay* was warranted.

As so often happens, my sighting of Locke's references to ideots turned out to be a discovery only if viewed through the eyes of the new kid on the block. There was nothing like extensive coverage, but there was a potential dispute on the horizon, in the form of dramatically differing opinions on the role and effect of ideots in the *Essay*. Neither disability theorist, Chris Goodey (1994), who read Locke's inclusion of idiot-changelings (Goodey's term) as placing them outside the category human, nor scholar of the eighteenth century, James Buickerood, who presented a "tentative effort to get a fix on Locke's infrequent yet evocative examples of idiocy as they function in his

[6] See Appendix here for illustrative case studies of different denominations of intellectual disability.

inquiry into human understanding" (Buickerood 2004: 3), pretended to undertake exhaustive research. Goodey's work had considerable influence in the disability literature, however, while Buickerood rejected Goodey's reading outright, and set the challenge for further study.[7] This thesis takes up, and extends the reach of, Buickerood's challenge.

Having decided a deeper examination of the *Essay* would be fruitful, I returned to my starting point; nineteenth century statistics, phrenology, and Darwin's biological human. Why was it, I asked, that the lack of innate ideas in ideots could, in Locke's way of thinking, upset the widely-held belief in pre-birth, imprinted ideas (nativism), but post-Darwin it has become almost impossible to include humans who range outside the 'norm',[8] except as they function as examples of pathology (intellectual disability in the medical model), or anomaly (deviations or freaks of nature)? Goodey had opened his 1994 article with these questions: "Whom do we choose to call human? Who is excluded and by what criteria? Why are these differences important anyway?" (1994: 215). These are rarely questions lightly asked; they have troubled philosophers, theologians, writers, archaeologists, biologists, and lay people for millennia. Indeed, "[t]he inherent starting-point in any serious discussion of human problems, even if only implicit, is the idea we have of man himself and of his relation to the universe" (Crocker 1991: 3). Goodey's reading of the *Essay* is, I argue in Chapter 1 here, highly problematic, but at the same time as I disagree with his conclusions, his raising of questions of humanness in relation to people with intellectual disability is important. With both Goodey and Buickerood's articles in mind, I revised my initial project with the *Essay* in mind, and with the thought that some of the answers to the questions above lay in the *Essay's* implied 'human'.

Disability theorist, Licia Carlson (2001; 2005), has pointed out that philosophical discussion of what she calls mental retardation has generally been limited to moral and

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[7] This is not a public dispute and I do not know, at this stage, whether disability scholar C.F. Goodey is aware of Professor James Buickerood's rejection of his thesis on Locke's ideots, as stated in his articles of 1994 and 1996. Professor Buickerood's work was presented at the Midwest American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies meeting in October 2004, but is not yet published. The latter does, however, firmly oppose Goodey's reading.

[8] It is important to note that the concept of norm, as applied to humans, is a modern one, stemming no further back than the 1830s (Davis 1995; 2006). Further discussion of this point follows in Chapter 7 below.

social justice issues. Reading Darwin's *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, (*The Descent*), and *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (*The Expression*), first published in 1871 and 1872 respectively, certainly raised questions in relation to the inception of eugenic thinking, but there was already a considerable literature on eugenics,[9] and it seemed to me to be more profitable to ask what were the differences behind, in, and that arose as a result of, Locke's and Darwin's inclusions of people with intellectual disability in such major theoretical work. Engagement with the *Essay* had reinforced my view that the existence of people with intellectual disability has had, at least in the past, a bearing on how we see ourselves as human, a bearing neither limited to the definition of boundaries – as Goodey (1994) had read Locke – nor to the expression of altruism – as Darwin (1882) indirectly suggests in his estimate of what should be done about those he considers the weaker members of the species. I decided that in approaching Locke and Darwin's work I would set the position, and possible contribution to theory, of people with intellectual disability as the subject, rather than spend many thousands of research and writing hours on reworking the already well-rehearsed subject of their oppression.

The questions for research then became: did the appearance of people with intellectual disability in the *Essay* make comment over and above clarifying characteristics of idiocy itself, separating it from mental illness, as Locke, with relative fame, had done in Book 2? Did people with intellectual disability have, as Buickerood suggested they might, a function in the *Essay*, or were they just an exception that proved a rule, an example that could have been replaced by one or more other examples? If there were a role, did this role or function have import because ideots were human, because they were not-human, or was their humanness, or not, irrelevant? What was the effect of their inclusion - or exclusion - from the category human, on the broader understanding, and function, of definitions of humanness in the *Essay*?

Secondly, what, if anything, had Darwin done differently from Locke? Why had it become the case, since Darwin's exposition of natural selection, particularly as applied to humans, that people with intellectual disability have been firmly placed as not-normal, pathological? Was this simply a co-incidence of the theory of natural selection

[9] For eugenics applied to people with intellectual disability, see for example, Kevles (1985); McDonagh (1998); Radford and Park (1995); Stubblefield (2007); Thomson (1998); Wyndham (2003).

overlapping, in time, and perhaps inclination, with the interest in the measurement of humans, with what Quetelet (1842) had dubbed "social physics," and with the nineteenth century sciences of phrenology and craniometry? Did Darwin's positioning of people with intellectual disability affect the concept of human that was produced in, and by, *The Descent*, and *The Expression*?

Finally, if idiots are thought of as human, what does it matter to Locke and Darwin's theses? What does this matter to people with intellectual disability? And, most importantly, what does it mean for humankind in general?

In the effort to answer these questions, the slightly larger proportion of this thesis is given over to the detailed examination of the function of people with intellectual disability in Locke's *Essay*. One of the difficulties of reading Locke now is that certain passages have been quoted so often, and discussed so regularly, that these are the ones that always stand out. Similarly, although *The Descent* and *The Expression of Emotions* are relatively rarely studied, Darwin's name is so closely bound with a radical, secular, scientific notion of evolution, that a distillation of the *Origin* overshadows both popular imagination and scholarship. The wood, it seems, is always made up of the same trees. My intent here is to attend to the components, to examine how, and on what evidentiary basis, Locke and Darwin each came to his conclusions. The resultant wood, made up of many different trees, may appear dishevelled, even rampant with weeds, but it is far more interesting than a neatly trimmed, homogeneous garden. It is also far more fruitful, for what is at stake in whether or not people with intellectual disability (and other 'marginal' groups) are considered is not only who we humans understand ourselves – all ourselves, not just those with intellectual disability - to be, but also how, and on what basis, we make the assessment of who we should, could, or might *become*.

Thus this thesis includes an historical contextualising of idiocy in the seventeenth century, as well as in-depth attention to ideots, changelings and monsters in Locke's text. This is, of itself, a long overdue consideration; of more interest, however, is what this reading uncovers. I do not ask what Locke's references to ideots, changelings and monsters say about his beliefs with respect to those loosely constituted groups, as both Goodey and Buickerood have done. The *Essay* is not an advocacy document, and whether or not Locke concerned himself with the treatment of people with intellectual disability is not relevant to what he writes in it. Instead I argue that the examination of

idiocy in the *Essay* leads to questions of much wider scope; in particular, this thesis raises and responds to the question of 'who was Locke's Man'? I argue that, in the *Essay*, 'Man' was indeed, as Yolton (2004) asserted, a proxy for 'human'. This human, I show, was never singular or homogenous, but instead encompassed the range of (almost) all possible human births. This human was not the 'Person' Locke inserted in the second edition of the *Essay*. Person has garnered much attention, but was, I show, restricted to a political or moral Man, and was more than possibly an abstract category. Human was not tied to the civil law, nor a fixed, pre-determined individual, category or species, as it had been in Aristotelian thought, for example. With reference to people with intellectual disability, and with physical anomaly, I show that the *Essay* argues recognising Man is not a matter of identifying universal features, but rather of agreeing, or not, on a set of criteria, which might change.

Having examined people with disability (ideots, changelings and monsters) in Locke's *Essay*, I turn to Darwin's work on humans. However, his nineteenth century theories did not arise spontaneously; the latter third of this thesis examines eighteenth and nineteenth century views of human nature, before questioning *The Descent* and *The Expression of Emotions* in detail. I argue that Darwin's particular articulation of evolution in humans, reinforced by the rise of statistics and measurability in the burgeoning medical, educational and social sciences of the time, produced a human which appeared biologically essential, but was, at the same time, an abstracted ideal. Darwin's human, perhaps more than any previous conception, made the survival of any heterogeneous human, such as that of the *Essay*, seem an impossibility, at the same time as evolution apparently relied on variation and diversity. Since Darwin's epoch-making theory of natural selection, people who are judged to be less than average no longer have a place in the ongoing species: they are remnant, vestigial, cases of reversion. I conclude that Darwin's Man was narrow, even dangerous, and that Locke's human had much to recommend it.

It should be noted before proceeding that although my argument is to some extent a recuperation of the *Essay*'s position on the human, this thesis does not intend to recuperate Locke as a person, any more than it seeks to vilify Darwin, although the latter's inclusion of people with intellectual disability and his version of human are critiqued and found wanting. Nor does this thesis aim to support or even engage in

detail with Locke's political thought, any more than it seeks to diminish Darwin's overall achievement in developing evolutionary theory. I am not arguing that either man was perfect or produced theories that are consistently of lasting interest or benefit. Locke, for example, despite the diversity of humans considered in the *Essay*, was a government official and a secretary to a politician; he was involved in the colonisation of America, and owned shares in companies that supported the slave trade. On the other hand, the biographies suggest that Darwin was a kindly figure, in general more likeable than his testy seventeenth century forebear. There is also a suggestion that Charles and Emma Darwin's last child may have had intellectual disabilities (Keynes 2001). Baby Charles only lived for nineteen months (Gelb 2008), so there is no way of knowing now whether living with a child with intellectual disability of his own would have made Charles modify some of the theories I discuss below. However, researchers, philosophers, poets, even theologians rarely practice what they preach. If they did, then research, philosophy, literature, and so on would be no more than the writing up of, or report on, a theory or system of thought that was either testable or implementable within the confines of the author's life - at best, a very limited exegesis. Whether or not Locke liked ideots, or Darwin would have changed his mind about including them in *The Descent* is, then, he laregely irrelevant: each man wrote what he wrote, and it is the words on the page, with all their possible readings and implications over time, that matter, not the personality of the author. Thus, while I refer to Locke's Man or human, Darwin's Man and so on, these are shorthand terms for emerging paradigms, instigated by each individual author, in their specific historical and personal contexts, but only realisable in the broader context of interpretations, environments, complimentary or contradictory systems and implementation that follow, and continue to develop long after the death of the author.

Thus, this thesis aims to show that, despite the details of Locke's own life, and possibly even despite his own inclinations with respect to at least some people with intellectual disability, one of the great strengths of Locke's *Essay* is its repeated, albeit implicit, declaration that to know ourselves, we must first consider every creature that could possibly be 'us'. This thesis then aims to show that Darwin, quite possibly in contradiction to his personal ethical inclinations, returned the debate about humanness to a focus on the mature, adult male paradigm. This reductionism, I will argue, was an

intellectually arid move, one that swept all potentially fertile evidence, profitable contradiction, rewarding digression, into a dust bucket, to be emptied as soon as possible. Darwin's particular invocation of the civilised adult male as the human who *should* - but, threateningly, who might not - continue the species, lent a biological imperative to class, gender and racial prejudice. It produced, perhaps without intent, but nevertheless with lasting effect, eugenic thinking. Having a particular man as your measure of the human can lead, as the twentieth century has demonstrated, with remarkable ease and rapidity, to genocide.

Notes re terminology:

I provide a chapter outline at the end of the Methodology section, which follows here. Before proceeding, it is appropriate to note my use of terminology, as this can be both a jargon-laden and contentious area, particularly in the disability field.

This thesis follows currently Australian terminology, most commonly referring to 'people with intellectual disability' rather than 'learning disability' - the preferred term in the United Kingdom- or 'mental retardation' - still common in the United States, and Canada. Australia is also, in some areas, moving toward replacing 'intellectual' with 'cognitive', and I, too, use the latter descriptor on occasion.[10]

People with intellectual disability is the preferred terms when the discussion is situating itself as coming from the point of view of the twenty-first century. As is relatively common in disability studies, I employ contemporary terms when discussing the past in its own context: thus the terms from the *Essay* – ideots, naturals, changelings and monsters - when discussing the *Essay*, Locke's other works, and other philosophical, theological, legal and community discourses of the pre- and early-modern periods. On the basis of the evidence discussed below, I have taken natural (as a noun) in the *Essay* to be a term that is either interchangeable with ideot, or which refers to a specific sub-group, those whose impairment is in-born rather than acquired through accident or illness: natural(s) is therefore occasionally used here when discussing seventeenth century and earlier concepts of ideot.

Locke's use of the now archaic spelling, with the 'e' instead of 'i' after the 'd' in

[10] For discussion of the rationale for term, intellectual disability, see Schalock, Luchasson, and Shogren (2007).

ideot,[11] is chosen to suggest that this is older terminology, representing a somewhat different composition of the concept(s) ideot, than we would have today, if we were to employ the detail of current diagnostic criteria. In the final section of this thesis, when the discussion turns to the nineteenth century, and centres around Darwin's references to idiots, I continue to use that term (as he does), but revert to the more common, idiot, following Darwin's spelling .

In general, ideot (idiot) or idiocy are used generically in this thesis to cover all people who might be thought to have cognitive impairment in the seventeenth through to the nineteenth centuries, unless there is reason to specify otherwise (that is, ideot/idiot may include changelings or imbeciles when speaking generally). However, it should be noted that both Locke and Darwin refer to what appear to be differing degrees of intellectual impairment. Locke describes ideots as having dull organs and wanting quickness, while he describes changelings as lacking language, and having little or no response. The legal definitions of the time recognised ideots as having difficulties with counting, computation and knowledge of relationships: an educated guess, then, is that in the former Locke was referring to people we might now say have mild to moderate intellectual disability (ideots), and, in the latter, to people with severe or profound disability (changelings). Darwin's terms are idiots, microcephalic idiots and imbeciles: these are less readily equated with current terminology, although imbeciles appear to be people with milder intellectual disability than idiots.

Similarly, monster or monstrosity, to refer to a person with physical anomaly, was common in the pre- and early-modern periods, although often with a wider meaning, as we see below, than Locke allowed. Monster continued in common usage, again primarily for a person with significant physical anomaly, through the eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries. I use monster when the term is consistent with the context - that is, when the discussion centres on past definitions and attached meanings. People with physical disability is used when the discussion is contemporary.

There were, and are, formalised sets of measures and symptoms that set boundaries between diagnostic categories, but, given the difficulty (and lack of need for) retrospective diagnosis, in this thesis I am assuming the informal, flexible and

[11] Locke's spelling is not entirely consistent: there are some instances of idiot, with a 'i'. He beings with ideots, with an 'e', and I have preferred this spelling for the reasons above.

functional family and community diagnoses of intellectual disability, rather than relying on check lists and cut off points. Descriptive criteria such as Locke's, noted above and in more detail below, are very adequate, and can be kept in mind. However, for the reader unfamiliar with the disability field, I have provided short case studies in an Appendix to this thesis, to aid in recognition of groups.

I am aware that the above terms, including people with intellectual disability, are not always favoured. Highly respected disability theorist, Tom Shakespeare (2006), has pointed out that some British social theorists, arguing for disability being the outcome of disabling social conditions or lack of adjustments to enable people with (usually physical) impairment, prefer the 'disabled person' appellate, and have rejected some non-British theory seemingly simply on the grounds of its usage of person- or people with disability (2006: 10). I feel comfortable that person-with terminology situates the person or people as the subject, and their impairment or disability as something that they have, along with all their other qualities and characteristics. That is, a person with intellectual disability can also be a person with sporting interests, or a person with long hair, musical talent, or a myriad other qualities. The term disabled person is far more constrictive, insisting that the person is disabled first and foremost, and a person with sporting interest as, at best, a secondary or adjunct quality.

As with ideots and changelings, I have basically followed Locke's use of Man, with the capital to mean human. I use man, with no upper case, to mean a single, male human, while women, children and so on are used as would be expected. When it is Locke's concept being referred to, Person is also capitalised; no upper case indicates general, popular usage of the term person. Enlightenment and later thinkers did not, to my knowledge, employ the degree of capitalisation that Locke used. They did not differentiate Man and Person either: that this is so is part of the point of this thesis. Similarly, Darwin makes much less use of capitalisation, with the result that the generic Man, and the individual man are collapsed perhaps even more frequently than he intends: this has occasionally made the choice of man or Man difficult, but I have generally preferred the capitalised form when discussing his group or species concept. I also use humankind as the group denominator.

As do a number of authors (see, for example, Rickless, 2007), I use the term nativism as interchangeable and synonymous with the theory (or doctrine) of innate

ideas, which argued, or assumed, that God had imprinted specific maxims and principles in the human prior to her/his birth, and that these were the basis of human knowledge. Clearly, it is a less cumbersome term. Anti-nativism indicates the opposition to the theory or doctrine of innate ideas. This is not to imply there is, or was, only one theory of nativism; there were many, and they are referred to below, but the umbrella term is adequate in most situations.

Before proceeding I also note that I am very much aware that in approaching Locke, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and Darwin, I am neither a trained historian, nor philosopher. I am educated as an applied behavioural scientist; I am not a biologist, geologist, palaeontologist or other scientist who might be expected to have specialist knowledge of evolutionary theory. In researching and writing this thesis, I have done my best to become familiar with the pertinent aspects of the enormous bodies of literature in the relevant disciplines, particular in history and philosophy of science and ideas. I can never pretend, however, to have properly inspected even the near corner of any single field: there is a vast amount of Locke scholarship, immense interest in the Enlightenment, an industry around Darwin. At the same time, there is some advantage in re-viewing the past through a disciplinary-eclectic, but subject-focussed lens or set of lenses, such as are necessarily used here: my point of view is not fixed, I have been able to gather together and analyse evidence that is outside the purview of a single disciplinary focus, and to critique information and discussion with far less fear or favour than if I had to answer to a single discipline.

Finally, I note that the tone of this thesis is sometimes casual, almost conversational. Relatively often for a formal academic work, I use the first person pronoun. I have avoided complex terminology when shorter and simpler words will do just as well. This is due to a commitment to plain English wherever that enhances communication. It is also due to not speaking from a single disciplinary perspective: there could be a frightful mix of terminology otherwise. The style is also consistent with both Locke and Darwin's texts, which, although considered works of philosophy and science respectively, are both conversational in approach. Like Locke, I beg the reader's favour and indulgence in reading my words.

Methodology

In the opening pages of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, John Locke outlined his method in only a few lines (1.1.3). Like his, my method is simple: it is to pit a series of questions – those in the Introduction above, and summarised below - against the close textual analysis of the *Essay*, *The Descent*, *The Expression of Emotions,* and against other primary texts of the pre- and early-modern, enlightenment, and nineteenth century periods. However, it is now well over three hundred years since Locke was writing, and while his straightforward empirical method pervades much thinking, new disciplines have arisen, and the critical tools used to engage with texts differ from those of the *Essay*. Here, I identify my method as close textual analysis, under an interrogatory approach. I explain the emphasis placed in this thesis on close attention to, and analysis of, the evidence, rather than to the arguments or theory presented in the primary texts. I briefly discuss recent approaches to research pertaining to people with intellectual disability: approaches that seek to apply the work of French theorist, Michel Foucault; more conventional historical research; social constructionism, and British Social Model theory. I note some of the restrictions of each approach, and also highlight the efficacious contributions each has made to the methodology of this thesis. A summary statement of method is followed by a chapter synopsis.

The objects of study: the *Essay*, *The Descent*, and *The Expression of Emotions*:

Both the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and *The Descent of Man* are texts that concern an essential aspect of being human: "The *Essay* presents, for the first time, a systematic, detailed, reasoned, and wide-ranging philosophy of mind and cognition, whose thrust, so far as it is in line with the future rather than the past, is empiricist" (Nidditch 1975: viii). *The Descent of Man* was the extension of the *Origin of Species*, which E.O. Wilson (2009) situates as "the most important book of science ever written," in fact, "given its importance to all of humanity and the rest of life … the most important book in any category" (2009: xv). As the *Origin's* successor, *The Descent* was the first, and perhaps should be the grandest,[1] outline of the theory of natural selection as it occurs in humans. The *Essay* disposed of the popular doctrine that human knowledge was initially dependent on God-given, inborn inscription, and proposed instead the development of human knowledge through sensory perception and experience. Nearly

[1] E. O. Wilson (2009) includes *The Descent of Man* and *The Expression of Emotions* among the "four [great books] to read," and suggests that "[i]t is impossible to imagine a higher quality of intellectual exposition" could be found elsewhere (2009: xvi). We should be able to safely expect grandness from *The Descent*.

two hundred years later, when this post-lapsarian, anti-nativism in mind and knowledge was well accepted, first the *Origin of Species*, and then *The Descent of Man* challenged the long-held, and often strenuously protected, belief that a God or a designer had planned, and possibly constructed, an human body, entirely separate from all other living creatures. Both Locke's and Darwin's were works offered into cultural worlds that favoured theological or religious explanations; Locke's *Essay* proposed an individual, experiential – and in that way, secular – development of ideas, while Darwin's offered a unromantic, biological account of the body as the outcome of largely random environmental forces: both provoked considerable contemporary controversy. Both remain texts studied, quoted, interpreted as seminal in the instigation and development of ideas integral to the way the Western world views itself.

The choice of Darwin's *The Descent of Man* over the *Origin of Species* for a thesis interested in humanness is a relatively obvious one. *The Expression of Emotions* can easily be included too, as it was the work in which Darwin hoped to most effectively demonstrate the continuity between human beings and the 'higher' animals,[2] through the medium of the similarities in their emotional expression. The rationale for the choice of the *Essay* over Locke's other work, specifically the *Two Treatises*, and perhaps even over *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* is perhaps less obvious. After all, it is Locke's political work – specifically the second of Locke's *Two Treatises on Civil Government* (1689) - that Ravitch (1973), for example, chooses for inclusion in his collection of source readings on ideas of Western Man, *Modern Man*. However, I will show in more detail below that Locke's political Man is a very different creature from the diverse human that appears in the *Essay*. Locke, in fact, tells us as much; the opening lines of the *Two Treatises* are a declaration, "Reader, thou hast here the beginning and end of a discourse concerning government" (Locke 2003: 3). Government is a formal and finite arrangement made among adults who are effectively enfranchised, or may at least have a say in the political process. Government is the business of a specific group of people. In the *Essay*, on the other hand Locke declares the "Understanding" to be the "quarry" (Locke 1975, Epistle: 6). If Locke's view of human is taken from his political

[2] Darwin used the terms 'higher' and 'lower' to apply to various non-human animals, and to what he called the 'races of Man', frequently, as we see in more detail in Chapters 7 and 8 below.

work, Man is automatically a male citizen, but the human beings who exhibit, develop and employ understanding, knowledge and opinion include children, people with various impairments, people from non-European countries, those who could never be citizens as Locke knew the concept. It is, as this thesis demonstrates, the *Essay*, not the *Two Treatises* or even *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (which deals with the making of a male child into a free citizen), in which "[i]t is the nature of what it is to be human that is Locke's concern, at least so much of human nature as our limited knowledge reveals" (Yolton 2004: 7). Thus, while, as both Mattern (1980) and Yolton (2004) have pointed out, it is Locke's political Person who has attracted most attention, this thesis gives a turn to the wide-ranging, imperfect, human of the *Essay*.

With the enthusiasm for the *Origin of Species*, and for the liberal human of Locke's political work, it is rarely noted that either Locke or Darwin referred to people with intellectual disability; it is even more rarely a matter of sustained interest that either did so.[3] To understand the function of intellectual disability in the work of these two exemplary thinkers, an acknowledgement that the evidence they present is integral to their method, and to their conclusions, is required. As far as I am able to discover, it has never before been argued, as it shall be in this thesis, that both Locke and Darwin actually *relied* on the evidence from people with intellectual disability to support one or more key aspects of their theories. The first strategy of this thesis, then, is to bring the evidence in both Locke's and Darwin's works to the foreground.

Evidence is not example:

Firstly, it should briefly be noted that evidence differs from example. That it does so is a key, albeit often passed over, distinction of empirical from rationalist argument. Evidence must meet different criteria than example: evidence must be testable against

[3] I mention, as this thesis progresses, a number of in-passing acknowledgements of Locke's references to ideots and changelings, although Goodey (1994; 1996), and Buickerood (2004) remain the authors to provide most extensive coverage of the issue of intellectual disability in Locke's work. I have been unable to find any similar, relatively casual acknowledgement of Darwin's mentions of idiots. My initial research showed Borthwick (2000) providing one article interrogating Darwin's use of idiots, and Quinn (2007) noting Darwin's descriptions of idiots among the aspects of his canon that Darwinian enthusiasts would prefer to not have noticed. I have been unable to uncover any further interest in the subject. Since writing up this thesis I have been made aware of an article by Gelb (2008) which takes a similar position to Borthwick, and which covers some of the ground of this thesis, albeit with less context and analysis.

other evidence; it cannot be replaceable, although evidence can be cumulative. Example is reliant on, and produces, similitude, analogy: example is likeness to, rather than data for (or against), or even demonstration of. Example can be literary, creative, and should be persuasive; evidence must be much more closely related to the issue at hand. These are important distinctions that the reader is requested to keep in mind while reading this thesis.

The *Essay* as an evidence-based text:

Many topics are covered in the four books of the *Essay*, including, very broadly speaking, the refutation of the belief that God imprints maxims, principles and specific ideas in humans that are the foundation for knowledge (Book 1); the psychological/ epistemological analysis of "the Ways, whereby our Understandings come to attain those Notions of Things we have" (1.1.2) in Book 2; the difficulties of an arbitrary and conventional (rather than given and natural) language, and the related issue of nominal and real essences (Book 3); and finally, in Book 4, the limits and uncertainties of human knowledge. None of these topics was without precedent, but the *Essay*'s particular analyses and arguments served not only to clear the ground, as Locke in the Epistle suggested they might (Locke 1975, Epistle: 10), but were also ground-breaking, as the storm of comment that followed the *Essay*'s release, and the continued influence of the work throughout the Enlightenment attest.[4]

While there are elements of everyday rational argument in the *Essay*, in his investigation of human understanding Locke did not concentrate on his own mind, as Descartes (1596-1650), for example, had so determinedly done in his 1637, *A Discourse of a Method for the Well-Guiding of Reason, and the Discovery of Truth in the Sciences*. Nor did he posit the mind as a single, abstract entity, divorced from living, breathing, and, as we see in this thesis, imperfect people. As Colie (1965) noted,

> Like Montaigne, Locke was concerned with phenomena of change and process; unlike Montaigne, though, Locke did not limit himself to examining his own changes of mind, body, and spirit, his own processes (though there is much autobiography in the *Essay* and elsewhere in Locke's writings), but attempted a generalized description of the process of understanding common to all mankind. (Colie 1965: 32)

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[4] See, for example, for discussion of contemporary response, Yolton (1993), and on continued influence, Porter (2003). Further discussion in Chapter 1 here.

Locke himself described the 'novelty' of the *Essay* as being an attempt "to describe to others, more particularly than had been done before, what it is their minds do, when they perform that action, which they call knowing" (quoted in Romanell 1984: 10). Knowing is an action, not an endpoint; it is not fixed, but, in its every moment, liable to change. Knowledge, too, for Locke, is not certain or absolute: "Locke's definition of knowledge reflects his insistence that we are directly acquainted only with the contents of our minds" (Osler 1970: 11), and is thus individual and not set. From the beginning, Locke tells the reader that he is investigating the "Ways" humans attain "Notions," that he will feel himself successful if he can "can set down any Measures of the Certainty of our Knowledge, or the Grounds of those Persuasions, which are to be found amongst Men," but which, he cautions the reader, are

> so various, different, and wholly contradictory; and yet asserted some where or other with such Assurance and Confidence, that he that shall take a view of the Opinions of Mankind, observe their Opposition ... may perhaps have Reason to suspect, That either there is no such thing as Truth at all; or that Mankind hath no sufficient Means to attain a certain Knowledge of it. (1.1.2)

Thus, a diversity of people is observed in the *Essay*'s working out of how it is our minds make notions, and in making the case that humans legitimately differ in knowledge. Amerindians, for example, provide evidence that custom and experience explain differences in arithmetic abilities (2.16.6), and that syllogism is a culturally specific, and unnecessary, basis for argument and teaching (4.12.11). (Asian) Indians, and Greeks also figure, and people from Turkey and from Japan. There are 'savages', 'heathens', 'Peruvians', and people in huts. In recent years this anthropological data has sparked considerable discussion (D. Carey 2004; Paxman 1995; J. Smith 2006, for example), to which I briefly turn in Chapter 1, below. What remains less well recognised is that differences among individuals *within* a culture are also important evidence in investigating and explaining degrees of knowledge. The *Essay* presents us with aging people (2.10.9), young 'wenches' (4.2.3), "Men in love with their Opinions" (2.1.10), those "whom decrepit old age has blotted out the memory of his past knowledge, and clearly wiped out the ideas his mind was formerly stored" (2.9.14), and, far too often to enumerate, children. There are also people with blindness (1.4.20) or deafness (2.2.2),

and there are the very learned (2.9.8).[5] While 'savages' appear in Book 1, it is ideots and children who are the most effective evidence in the case that book makes against the doctrine of nativism,[6] that is, against the belief that God imprinted formed ideas prior to birth to provide humans with the basis for knowledge. Ideots, children savages, criminals, illiterates and ordinary, everyday people, in fact, make up "at least one half of Mankind" (1.2.24), and thus provide evidence for and against a number of hypotheses. Locke's contemporaries, English philosopher John Norris (1657-1711), and German polymath, Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716) both, as I show in more detail below, recognised that if they could demolish the veracity or reliability of Locke's evidence, they could undermine the strength of the *Essay's* arguments.

Since the early commentary, despite all the data proffered in it, scholarship has preferred the *Essay* as a philosophical tract, with its writer a philosopher first, a researcher a very distant second. "The main subject of this book," says Vere Chappell, introducing the 1994 *Cambridge Companion to Locke*, "is Locke's philosophy, in the current academic sense of that term. So construed philosophy is a special field of inquiry, marked off ... in particular from the various empirical sciences" (Chappell 1994: 1). The chapters in the *Cambridge Companion* concern 'Locke's theory of ideas' (Chappell 1994: 26-55), 'Locke's philosophy of body' (McCann 1994: 56-88), 'Locke's philosophy of mind' (Bennett 1994: 89-114), and similar topics. Thirteen years after the *Cambridge Companion to Locke*, the specific *Cambridge Companion to Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding* was published. The latter volume similarly has a specific bent toward complete, and not contingent, theory: it covers, for example, 'Locke's distinctions between primary and secondary qualities' (Jacovides 2007: 101-129), 'Locke on substance' (McCann 2007: 157-191), and 'Locke on knowledge' (Newman 2007: 313-351). This is all important and erudite scholarship, engaging in questions that have concerned humankind for millennia, but, as Hacking (1983) has remarked, "[p]hilosophers usually think in theories" (Hacking 1983: xv), and Locke's theory is notoriously inconsistent, even contradictory (von Leyden 1954; Newman 2007). Thus, in the case of comment on the *Essay*, thinking in theories has resulted in a

[5] There are more, and often many more, examples of each of these groups. Children have well over one hundred appearances.

[6] See, in particular, 1.2.12 & 27; 1.3.12; 1.4.20; discussed in detail below.

virtual industry of scholarship that attempts to resolve seemingly unresolvable tensions in Locke's theoretical statements,[7] while ignoring one of the key properties of Locke's epistemological approach. That is, the reliance on observation (since often called empiricism), whether at the level of personal sensory perception, or at the level of generalising in Locke called reflection, or at the level of highly controlled experiment, produces contingent theories: if the evidence changes, or new evidence is found, so will the hypotheses or conclusions reached. Evidence is not example or illustration; evidence is the driver, not example, of the theory, and the theory can only be singular for the time being.

I make no claim or argument that Locke himself was fully aware of how dependent the *Essay* was on the evidence he gathered over the many years of the its germination: he was exploring new epistemological territory, and certainly did not call himself an empiricist – a word that held connotations of quackery at the time (Romanell 1984). At the same time, he took the need for evidence, and the contingency of theory, to the extreme: as both Mattern (1980) and Rickless (2007) have noted, Locke set universality, (rather than generalisation and exception), as a key criterion for confirmation. Rickless points out that "Locke repeatedly points to evidence indicating that there is no one speculative or practical principle to which all humans assent," and what "irked" him (Locke) "was that the proponents of AUC [Argument from universal consent] needed to show ... that there are principles to which no humans fail to assent" (2007: 45-46). Mattern states that "part of the basis of Locke's denial of the certainty of the claim at all humans are rational is his contention that this generalization fails to fit all known instances" (1980: 25). Showing that there were instances of humans who did not have innate ideas was important to Locke and in Books 1 and 2 in particular, the method

[7] Recently, Newman (2007), for example, has attempted a "broader interpretation" in relation to Locke's "doctrines" on knowledge, in "an effort to render the various doctrines [in the *Essay*] consistent with [Locke's] official definition" (2007: 313). Yet, although Locke does, in Book 4, say that "*Knowledge* then seems to me to be nothing but *the perception of the connexion of and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our Ideas*" (4.1.2), there are, as Newman suggests, other presentations of knowledge in the *Essay* that make this 'definition' unlikely to be 'official'. I suggest that this is because knowledge, per se, is not the target of the *Essay:* Locke does not set out to seek to uncover what knowledge is, but rather how humans can come to knowledge, and how (secular and individual) processes of knowledge acquisition affect certainty and truth.

of the *Essay* is effectively to take a theory (nativism, certain knowledge), and examine it as an hypothesis to be tested against the empirical evidence, rather than a theory to be discursively contested. Thus, if Locke had found no one who was unaware of innate ideas, presumably he would have, despite his own inclinations, to have agreed with the nativist theory. What or whom Locke observed, described and on what basis he included them as data in the *Essay*, is of high relevance to any field of Lockean enquiry.

This thesis, then, goes against the general philosophical grain, and takes the evidence as integral to, and not simply illustrative of, the arguments the *Essay* puts forward. Such close attention to the *Essay* as largely an *exercise* in empiricism with evidence underpinning statements of contingent theories (plural), as is undertaken here, may generally be useful in Locke scholarship. It certainly reveals the contribution of Locke's understanding of people with intellectual disability to the *Essay*.

Further evidence, including *The Descent of Man* and *The Expression of Emotions*:

John Yolton (2004) has said that "[b]ecause the *Essay* is such a complex, topic-laden work with comments and analyses often scattered through chapters and sections, it is sometimes useful, even necessary, to track the occurrences of particular words and phrases, specific concepts and doctrines" (2004: 8). I track, and investigate in detail, the use and function of the words ideot, changeling and monster in the pre- and early-modern periods, as well as in the *Essay* itself. On the basis of this, I argue that the *Essay* produced a view of humankind as heterogeneous, mutable, and, as Aarsleff (1994) notes, postlapsarian. At the individual level, this human, as we see below, was potentially a non-gendered being who may have had only limited agency, who may or may not have been a Person in the legal sense, who could be an idiot (although possibly not someone Locke called a changeling, again as we see below). In the latter third of this thesis, I trace the concepts of human and ideot through the Enlightenment, and into the nineteenth century, through this period's passion for the measurement and ranking, and into Darwin's *The Descent* and *The Expression of Emotions*.

Darwin's major work on humans, *The Descent*, and his detailed volume on emotions in humans and animals, *The Expression of Emotions*, are far less well-known works than *Origin of Species*: neither physical or web searches, library catalogues or

journal databases show many 'hits' for either work. Indeed, Zimmer (2002) describes the former as a "hodgepodge of a book" (2002: 316), while Lewens (2007) describes interest in *The Expression of Emotions* as "unusual" (2007: 129).[8] The lack of attention to Darwin's books on humans can partly be explained by the overpowering, all-encompassing nature of *Origin of Species*. In can also be partly explained by the fact that there "are certain passages in this book [*The Descent*] which make disturbing reading for us in the twenty-first century" (A.N. Wilson 2002: 375). Wilson is referring to passages on race in humans: this thesis analyses the even less commonly considered inclusion of people with intellectual disability in Darwin's theory of human evolution.

In the introduction to *The Descent*, Darwin repudiates the opinion of those who do not fully believe in the power of science: "it is those who know little, and not those who know much, who so positively assert that this or that problem will never be solved by science," he tells his readers (1882: 2). He then begins *The Descent* proper by setting the topic, "Nature of the evidence bearing on the origin of man" (1882: 5). Darwin's own words, then, suggest that a consideration of the evidence from idiots in his texts needs no further justification. Attention to his evidence in relation to humans is also otherwise warranted: it is from the work of Darwin, more than any other thinker or researcher, that we, today, take our notions of what constitutes the human (Quinn 2007), where the (amorphous) boundaries might be, and, above all, of who is fit to continue the species. As the horrors of state-enforced negative selection (negative eugenics) demonstrated in World War II, and as the less life-threatening, but highly intrusive, rights-denying, sterilisation of so many people deemed unfit (and usually feebleminded, Radford & Park 1995) in the earlier decades of the twentieth century also showed, the question of who should continue the species is one with potentially violent outcomes for those judged not to meet the criteria of fitness.

Idiots, as Darwin called them, make a number of appearances in the examples put forward in *The Descent*, and in *The Expression of Emotions*. In particular those Darwin calls microcephalic idiots have, as shown below, a significant function in his theory of human origin. I argue below that this function is served only by a something of a sleight

[8] To be thoroughly fair, it should be noted that Lewens mentions that the book has, over the past two or three decades, been more regularly noted (and praised by avowed Darwinists such as Richard Dawkins), than previously (Lewens 2007: 130)

of hand that makes people with intellectual disability appear as evidence when, in fact, they are, at best, analogy, and at worst effectively fictional examples. These references to idiots are long overdue for the examination and analysis received in this thesis.

Developing the tools of analysis: the current state of play in disability studies:

The past two or three decades have seen the emergence of the discipline of disability studies. Research in the area has unearthed historical material relevant to disability, while advocates and scholars (often one and the same person) have argued for disability to be thought of in similar fashion to gender and race, that is, as a constructed category that serves multiple ideological purposes.[9] In general, disability studies has attempted to move away from the positioning of people with disability as objects of treatment, rejecting the 'medical model' in favour of seeing disability as the product of, and reinforcer for, various ideological positions. However, even in disability studies, intellectual disability has been, as theorist Anne-Louise Chappell (1997) said some years ago, and as the work in current disabilities studies collections continues to demonstrate, all too often largely ignored: disability, as it is studied even now, is almost exclusively a " 'problem' of corporeal difference" (Mitchell and Snyder 2006: 205). Indeed,

> philosophical discourse about mental retardation has focused on moral issues surrounding the 'mentally retarded,' including definitions of personhood, the problem of marginal cases, and what constitutes justice for people who are labelled mentally retarded. In addition, discussions of 'the mentally retarded' appear in bioethical debates concerning sterilization, informed consent, access to health care, prenatal genetic testing and screening, and selective abortion (to name a few). (Carlson 2005: 133)

Moral issues are important; at the same time, the concentration on social justice maintains the passive position of people with intellectual disability, confining them to being objects of what I shall later detail as the 'compassionate gaze'. In the following sections I briefly examine possible ways to broaden the scope of what is studied under the rubric of intellectual disability, explaining why I have rejected some, and chosen

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[9] For historical research specific to intellectual disability see, for example, special issues of *Journal on Developmental Disability* (1995: Vol. 4, 1; 2001: Vol. 8, 2), and the *British Journal of Learning Disabilities* (2000: Vol. 28, 2), all devoted to historical research. For research and critical theory pertaining to ideology, discourse and disability in general, see for example, Corker and French (eds) 1999; Davis (ed.) 2006; Kristiansen, Vehman & Shakespeare (eds), 2009.

other, elements of current scholarly approaches as applicable to this thesis.

Foucault and the contingent nature of intellectual disability:

Carlson, above-quoted, offers to break the containment that surrounds what she calls mental retardation, by employing "a critical philosophical analysis" of the category itself, through a Foucauldian lens, which, she suggests, will allow "the *contingent* nature of mental retardation to emerge," and thus challenge "the self-evident nature of mental retardation *as a particular kind of problem to be solved"* (2005: 134. Carlson's emphasis). Carlson is not alone in her use of a Foucauldian approach; "Foucault's work is increasingly used as a "tool kit" with which to analyze the formation and productivity of specific knowledges" (Hughes 2005: 81). Would Foucault's geneology, or perhaps his emphasis of the relationship between language and power, be useful critical orientations with which to view, and interrogate, intellectual disability in the past, and specifically in the two seminal moments of their inclusion in the *Essay* and *The Descent*?

Yates (2005) finds Foucault highly relevant to intellectual disability. He suggests that "Foucault's historical ontology of truth, which focused on how particular objects came to take up a place in a particular system of knowledge or discourse of truth" leads us, in the case of learning difficulties (the preferred British appellation for intellectual disability), "to the realization that we are not dealing with an essential pathology whose nature resides outside of discourse, awaiting its discovery by medical or psychological knowledge" (2005: 67-68). Yates then proffers "A 'Foucauldian' Analysis of Care Services" (2005: 69-76). There are problems, however. The reliance on the institution (whether it be asylum, sheltered workshop, or discursive institution such as educational theory) as emblematic, or constitutive, is a reductionism that has already been criticised extensively in relation to people with mental illness (Allderidge 1985; Bynum, Porter & Shepherd 1985; Neugenbauer 1979); such problematic reliance should not be extrapolated to people with intellectual disability. Furthermore, when Locke was writing the *Essay*, physical institutions - asylums and the like - were far less common in England than France (Porter 2003), people often entered them primarily on account of poverty rather than disability per se (Stainton 2001); it is difficult to apply Foucault's analysis in such a different context. More importantly, although it is rarely recognised, the

concentration on the institution, and on discourse of authority, neglects the domestic. That is, in the early modern era at least, intellectual disability was primarily a family issue (Digby 1996), and it should not be assumed that families positioned people intellectual disability in the same, or even similar ways, to that of state, church or local community institutions. In fact, as I show in Chapter 2 here, there is evidence that people with idiocy were married, that some had children, suggesting that the classification of idiocy was subsumed by other classifications – wealth, social position, family and so on. The multiplicity of meaning of idiocy remains the case today (see, for example, Shridevi 2006). Too ready or too enthusiastic an application of a notion of power, particularly with the emphasis on power invested in and by institutions, can obscure such diversity of meaning.

Secondly, Yates's above-quoted claim that (his) Foucauldian analysis allows us to understand that "we are not dealing with an essential pathology whose nature resides outside of discourse," while perfectly reasonable, is relatively trivial. Without necessarily reading Foucault, as Hacking (1999) has pointed out, social constructionist theories have been common since the 1960s. Adherents have argued that many things - from authorship to women refugees - are not fixed, "not determined by the nature of the things ... not inevitable" (1999: 6). Hacking, who says of himself that "[a]s a philosopher I am ... skeptical of the very idea of essence" (1999: 17), demonstrates that social constructionist analysis, while consistent with the critique of fixed essence, and useful politically, can all too often be "so general and so fuzzy at the edges" as to be useless analytically (1999: 21). He asks, for example, "[w]hy would someone use the title *The Social Construction of Women Refugees* (Moussa 1992), when it is obvious that women are refugees as a consequence of a sequence of social events?" (1999: 9). In other words, Yates's 'discovery', similar to that of Carlson, that the category intellectual/learning disability is not innocently natural, is neither entirely new, nor necessarily revealing.

Hughes, abovementioned, also finds difficulties with the application of Foucauldian analyses to disability studies in general: "Foucault robs the body of agency and renders it sensuously barren ... the body does not act in and on the world; rather, the body is docile" (2005: 86). Yet, for people whose minds have impaired function, a

position in the world must more often be found, or is most often created, in or by the sensations and actions of the body. Foucault shied away from intellectual disability, concentrating instead on mental illness even in those archaeologies of the past in which the two groups intermingled, both literally (in poor houses, asylums, other institutions) and figuratively (as holy innocents, demonologically possessed, as creatures of unreason).[10] He was able to ignore idiots, I suggest, because he ignored, or disenfranchised from even the most rudimentary agency, the sensate body. Locke's theory of understanding asserts the centrality of the bodily senses in the acquisition of knowledge. To analyse the latter's references to intellectual disability through a Foucauldian lens is problematic, when that lens is in the first place blind to what it is looking at. Such an analysis would be a case of incommensurability (Hacking 1983: 65-74), and make for a theoretical negation, or at best a theoretical stalemate.

Gutting (1994) has argued that, with regard to history, Foucault's various works are idealist, and not empiricist: his work offers the opportunity of exploring conceptual frameworks and what forms, and deforms, the structure of these. Gutting also points out that each of Foucault's lectures and public works differ in orientation and definition; there is no one notion of power, or language, for example. At times this is a great strength, and I quote Foucault below for this reason. However, his idealist historical analyses are problematic when it comes to analysing both Locke and Darwin's texts, and many that lie, historically, in between. Foucault's idealism has led him to interpretation based on a sometimes less than complete set of historical records (Flynn 1994). In Locke's text, it is the empirical existence of people with intellectual disability (even if, in Locke's view, we may only know them through abstract or general ideas, and never through their essential nature), and their various ways of cognitive processing, whatever that impairment was taken to be (or not be), whatever their lives and the power structures that contained them were, that makes them a force, albeit a small and not necessarily conscious force, in the disruption of the status quo, particularly as it applied to theories of innate knowledge. Similarly, Darwin attempts to be exhaustive in his empirical evidence. To approach the *Essay* and Darwin's work with analytical tools that,

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[10] I refer here primarily to, *Madness and Civilisation* (1988); *The Birth of the Clinic* (1973); *The Order of Things* (1970).

no matter how attractive, would necessarily negate the central tenet of the importance of evidence would be delegitimise the object(s) of study before the study began.

In this thesis I assume, then, following Hacking, and from my own reading of the texts, that it is relatively uncontentious to say intellectual disability is contingent and constructed. Although there are religious and theological paradigms that might insist on very specific, and supposedly ahistorical views of human nature, I know of none that prescribe or proscribe what Locke and Darwin called idiocy. I do not think it is necessary to employ anything that needs to be called a Foucauldian approach to reach this conclusion: it is quite clear that the meaning of idiocy, intellectual disability and so on will change, just as the meaning of art, or music or the religious temperament changes. Furthermore, as this thesis argues, the notion of nominal species expounded by Locke in Book 3, and to a lesser extent Book 4 of the *Essay*, challenged essentialism several hundred years earlier than Foucault did.

Social constructionism and the Social Model of disability:

The emergence of Foucauldian analyses, and of social constructionism overlaps, in time and in some theoretical leaning, with the more formal British 'Social Model' of disability. In the 1980s, British theorists and advocates moved away from (de)constructing the categories of impairment, and focussed on replacing a medical/disease model of disability with a model in which disability was equated with oppression. Disability, in this way of thinking, was not to seen as a direct result of the impairment as such (that is, disability does not mean, or come about from, the cognitive dysfunction or quadriplegia that the individual might have), but with the disabling effects of societies that did not provide adjustments for that impairment: "the prime mover, in causal terms, is most certainly not the 'clinical condition'... but the oppressive society in which disabled people live" (G. Williams 2001: 134). Perhaps the most influential argument for oppression was put forward by Paul Abberley (1987; 1997); more recently Carol Thompson, quoted in Shakespeare (2006) had defined disability as "a form of social oppression involving the social imposition of restrictions of activity on people with impairments and the socially engendered undermining of their psycho-social wellbeing" (2006: 57), while Charlton (2006) is another thinker/advocate who continues

to see oppression as fundamental to disability.

This way of viewing disability has been powerful for social advocacy but, as highly respected disability theorist, Tom Shakespeare, says, the concentration on oppression "puts social researchers into a difficult position." When researching disability, they are committed to finding that disabled people are oppressed, by definition. The only question is the extent to which disabled people are oppressed" (2006: 57). Lawthorn (2005), too, notes that "one of the problems of disability studies is that in setting up the opposition of disabled versus non-disabled people it simplifies and sometimes caricatures the notion of disabled people as oppressed and non-disabled people as oppressors" (2005: 152). Impairment and resultant disability, when situated in the paradigm of oppression, sets up 'goodies' and 'baddies'. The chance of complex, shared, and theorised understandings is slashed.

Given intellectual disability is not a term free of historical and cultural antecedent, infill or need, it is more than likely that, if asked to identify all the people with intellectual disability from a given group of, say, one hundred school students, a physician from Locke's time, an educator from Darwin's, and a contemporary social advocate would chose at least some different children, and would probably vary in the numbers of children eventually identified. More startling claims have been made, however, for the constructed nature of intellectual disability. In 1996, Chris Goodey claimed that "mental handicap ... may be sheer invention" (1996: 215). This is, I suggest, a dangerous claim, one that threatens to erase the validity of the lived experience of many individual and families, and to negate lifetimes of professional research and practice. Goodey may have been intending a certain, potentially useful, shock-value, but while it is clear that "we as a society do have control over the processes which serve to define, delineate, and discriminate on the basis of actual or perceived difference" (Manion and Bersani 1987: 243), and definitions will differ across societies, it is also "clear that what we call 'mental retardation' has existed in all cultures and societies in one form or another, though the definition, diagnosis and treatment has changed through time - paralleling the philosophical, political and economic trends of the period" (Manion and Bersani 1987: 231). This thesis keeps in mind that Locke's ideots were probably a somewhat different group than the people to whom Darwin

referred. It also respects individuals, families and communities who have lived with functional impairments for probably as long as humans have been on this earth: intellectual disability or impairment, no matter what we call it, is 'real'.

This thesis acknowledges the oppressive force of societies that favour the 'able' over those with impairment. At the same time, I set aside the stereotype of the disabled victim, to enable discussion that moves beyond the moral questions that have for so long relegated people with disability to the passive objects of, at best, compassion. As Foucault himself said (but many who apply his theories to disability fail to recall):

> What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression. (1980: 119)

Acknowledging power as fluid and sometimes pleasurable, running not just in one direction but everywhere diffused, it is possible to more effectively re-view and re-think the agency and effect of any person or group in the social body. As we shall see, people with intellectual disability carried with them, and created with their presence, meanings other, and greater, than 'idiocy', 'mental retardation' or 'intellectual impairment': to be subordinate in one hierarchy, is not always to be stripped of agency or meaning in either that hierarchy, or in another that may exist simultaneously. When their presence is made visible, it is possible to investigate these meanings, to recognise the contribution people with intellectual disability made to Locke's, and could still make to our understandings, current and potential, of the 'world'. Disability, as I show that Locke recognised, but Darwin feared, is, in its very existence, a rupture of the purportedly universal.

The history of intellectual disability:

In 2001, disability theorists, Stainton and McDonagh pointed out that the "[h]istorical study of intellectual disability has until recently been a marginal activity" (2001: ix), the province of enthusiastic advocates or professionals, untrained in historical research. Until the 1980s, and often still, the history of intellectual disability was generally regarded as beginning in the early period of post-industrial change, the period that Adams (1971) claims saw "the first significant indication in modern times of informed concern for the mentally retarded" (1971: 17). Scheerenberger's (1983) simply

titled, *A History of Mental Retardation*, remains the most extensive treatment of the topic to date.[11] This history covers the period from the earliest fossil records to 1799 in less than a fifth of the book, leaving the bulk of work for 'The Age of Progress'. Scheerenberger's history prefers, as do most extant histories written prior to the mid-1990s, heroes and records of progress in treatment. He concentrates on doctors, educationalists, and advocates, relegating the actual people with intellectual disability to the status of object. Such "practitioner-pragmatist" histories, where services are "essentially benign and well-intended" (Read & Walmsely 2006: 457), and improvement is the order of the day, are consistent with the Enlightenment and modernist preference for clearly labelled forward trajectories, for change, increasing technology and progress.[12] These approaches are not necessarily heinous, but, as Stainton and McDonagh have shown, they leave us with "errors and unsupported assumptions, many of which have been reproduced in subsequent literature" (2001: ix).

The dominant medical, educational and institutional foci of such history-telling did not require or encourage attention to, or interrogations of, philosophical inclusions of people with intellectual disability. Only the very briefest of references to Locke can be found in a few of the general histories: Judge (1987) refers, very much in passing, to "the educational reforms of John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Pestalozzi" (1987: 31), while Beirne-Smith, Patton and Ittenbach (1994) link Locke and Rousseau as philosophers whose ideas "stressing the importance of the sense in human development began to take hold" in the eighteenth century and which "provided new ways of

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[11] Scheerenberger produced a second, companion volume in 1987, *A History of Mental Retardation: A Quarter Century of Promise*, which deals primarily with the United States.

[12] Progress is constantly favoured. In Australia, Judge's (1987) history centres on "advancing medical techniques" and "reforms", which are great improvements on what he labels as the 'Pre-Scientific' and 'Abandonment' eras, or the problematic 'Institutionalization Era'. Kanner's (1964) book-length history follows a similar pattern; Beirne-Smith, Patton and Ittenbach's (1994) authoritative text, *Mental Retardation*, provides an historical account that skates over 'Antiquity: Prior to 1700', before concentrating on the medical heroes of the nineteenth century. Similar in both form and content, is Blatt's section on the pre-history in his 1987 *Conquest of Mental Retardation*, and Lyttle's 'Historical Background' (1994: 314–322) in *Mental Health and Disorder*. Adams (1971) simply ignores any information or service provision prior to the nineteenth century, and presents nineteenth century doctors Itard and Sequin, the rise of state care and legislative change as heroic, the movement interrupted by "the eugenic scare" (1971: 32), but otherwise on a solidly progressive pathway.

perceiving the nature of the human mind and ultimately influenced educational reform" (1994: 29). These authors ascribe the "strict environmentalist position" to Locke; all characteristics are learned in their interpretation of the blank slate theory (1994: 167-8); they give no indication that Locke included ideots in the evidence for his refutation of the doctrine of innate ideas.[13]

Progress-focussed histories have also largely, if not entirely, ignored Darwin's work on natural selection in humans. This has remained the case even over the past two decades, during which hero-narratives have been rejected or re-examined, often-times in the cause of identifying oppression,[14] but also with attention given to a much greater range of subjects, including eugenics.[15] Despite both *The Descent* and *The Expression of Emotions* having numerous descriptions of people with idiocy, and despite the concept and term 'eugenics' being developed and coined by Darwin's cousin, Sir Francis Galton (Kevles 1985), eugenic-focussed studies have tended concentrate on the carceral and legislative aspects, such as institutionalisation or sterilisation legislation, rather than the theoretical background to questions of 'fitness'.[16]

A number of authors have asserted that a major difficulty in researching intellectual disability in the past is a paucity of documentation, particularly prior to the keeping of institutional records in the nineteenth century (Goodey 2001; Kanner 1964; Schereenberger 1983; Wright 1996). This thesis asserts that idiocy in Locke's work, as it appeared in the Enlightenment, in statistical analysis, and in Darwin's work on humans,

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[13] Of the nearly 300 entries in Simpson's (2004) on-line bibliography of works pertaining to the history of intellectual disability only one contains a reference to Locke in the title and this is Goodey's 1994 article noted above. French doctor turned American educationalist, Edouard Sequin scores ten title hits and Dr Jean Itard, the man Sequin called "The Apostle of the Idiot" (Judge 1987: 31), has eight.

[14] Colin Barnes is one of many who have followed this path, penning, 'A legacy of oppression' (1997), and the similarly orientated, 'Theories of disability and the origins of the oppression of disabled people in western society', published a year earlier.

[15] From the late 1980s, we find topics ranging from the 'Representations of gender and learning disability in early- and mid-nineteenth century Britain' (McDonagh 2001), through language, context and the historiography of 'mental impairments' in America in the years 1800-1970, (Borsay 1997), interest in the children with intellectual disability killed in the early Nazi programs (Rogow 2001), to the construction of the concept of the feebleminded in the UK and the US in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Gelb 1988; Jackson 2000; Trent 1994). There is also research into community approaches to disability (Wright 1996), as well as critical histories of special education (Read & Walmsley 2006), to name just a few.

[16] See, for example, A. Carey (2003); Goodheart (2004); Ryan (1997).

should all be considered part of the history of intellectual disability. In examining idiocy in the pre- and early-modern, enlightenment and early industrial periods, I also demonstrate that the assumption of lack of documentation is, when tested, erroneous. There is the primary source material of Locke's and other well-known works; there is also considerable extant legal, dramatic, didactic, novelistic literature from at least the fourteenth century which includes descriptions of, and information on, intellectual disability. In Chapter 2, and again in Chapter 6 below, I highlight the variety of discourses in which people with intellectual disability, and those with physical anomaly, can be found; this thesis thus contributes to a much fuller, and more nuanced, view of them in the past.

The tools of analysis: Intellectual disability as an interrogatory term:

In recent years there has been a move within disability history-telling that has potential for applications other than reassessing institutional and legislative discourses for their oppressive tendencies. Just after the turn of the third millennium, Paul Longmore and Laura Umanksy (2001) asserted that disability, like gender and race could become an analytical tool for the historian. A few years earlier, Lennard J. Davis had dubbed disability the "missing term," shut out from race, gender and sexuality in historical analysis (1995: 2), and not long after the publication of Longmore and Umansky's edited volume, *The New Disability History: American Perspectives*, historian Catherine Kudlick also asserted that "disability should sit squarely at the center of historical inquiry, both as a subject worth studying in its own right and as one that will provide scholars with a new analytical tool for exploring power itself" (2003: 765). Situating disability as subject does not automatically lead to novel research or findings: disability, like race or sex/gender can be a subject and still be 'looked-at', passive. However, disability as an analytical tool can be useful: it has led Davis (1995; 2006), for example, to a fruitful investigation of the development of the concept of normalcy, not only as it affects people with disability themselves, but as it builds and reinforces concepts of humanness. Davis brings together literary, scientific, mathematical, medical, cultural material to make his argument, taking disability out of the confined fields of morals and medicine. His work indicates that an analysis which sets disability, (in his

case deafness), as an interrogatory term, rather than the object of authoritative study, can reveal as much about people, events, discourses that have no overt connection with disability, as it can about people, events, discourses which are obviously connected to it.

Davis's work also suggests that the choice of research question(s) needs careful attention. To put it simply, Davis – implicitly, he does not state this - began with questions of normalcy, rather than of disability, exploring the first through the latter. In this thesis, I do not ask what Locke thought of people with idiocy, or whether he considered their lives, their social position, their education or health of interests. Instead I ask what people with intellectual disability were *doing* in the *Essay*, through the Enlightenment, in the early nineteenth century, and in Darwin's work. I ask what effect their presence has in these largely evidence-based texts. Most importantly, I ask whether the investigations in which people with intellectual disability are found could have reached the same conclusions without their presence. Did the evidence from people with intellectual disability contribute something particular, possibly unique? Such questions refuse the hegemony of oppression in studies of intellectual disability, and open the possibility of examining texts with fresh interrogations.

Statement of Method:

Locke's simple statement of his "historical plain method," is:

> *First*, I shall enquire into the *Original* of those *Ideas*, Notions, or whatever else you may please to call them ...
> *Secondly*, I shall endeavour to shew, what *Knowledge* the Understanding hath by those *Ideas* ...
> *Thirdly*, I shall make some Enquiry into the Nature and Grounds of *Faith*, or *Opinion* (1.1.3).

My subject is different, but the simplicity of my method is much the same. Having identified my 'quarry' as the investigation of the existence and function of people with intellectual disability in the *evidence* brought together by two seminal authors/ researchers in their texts on humankind: John Locke, in his *Essay*, and Charles Darwin, in his *The Descent of Man*, and *The Expression of Emotions*:

Firstly, I enquire into the contexts and historical background of the texts themselves, and of the references to intellectual disability in them. I track idiocy as it was understood in the early modern period. Later in this thesis, I trace idiocy through to

the nineteenth century.

Secondly, I examine the texts in detail, beginning with Locke's *Essay*, and proceeding to Darwin's texts, via a survey of Enlightenment concepts of human nature and the place of people with intellectual disability therein. I ask similar questions of each text: did people with intellectual disability have - as Buickerood (2004) suggested that in the *Essay* they might - a function greater than as an exception to prove a rule? Did they have a function greater than being an illustrative example? If so, what was this function, what meanings did intellectual disability bring to, and effect, in the texts? Importantly, could intellectual disability have been replaced by other evidence? With this interrogative approach, I also ask whether other groups – women, indigenous people, those with physical or sensory disability - were human in the ways that Locke's *Essay*, and Darwin's *The Descent*, and *The Expression of Emotions* formulated human?

Finally, I show that humanness as produced in the *Essay*, in *The Descent*, and *The Expression of Emotions*, its breadth and limits, its definitions, and inclusions was, in part, dependent upon the use, or misuse, of the evidence from the people with intellectual disability. On the basis of this analysis, I present the argument that diversity is critical to our thinking about humanness. This diversity must be diversity *within* a population, of age, competency, ability, as much as it is a diversity of people from different regions, cultural, or religious groups.

Chapter outline:

Chapter 1 of this thesis introduces Locke's *Essay* as a work with a long history of provoking controversy. I point to the references to ideots, changelings and monsters, and present evidence for these having significance for Locke. I show that these references to idiocy did not go unnoticed or unchallenged when the *Essay* was first published. However, while more recent commentary on the *Essay* has attended to the range of people who appear in it, including people of other cultures, and women, there has been only scant interest in the presence of people with intellectual disability. I critique the one influential article published by Chris Goodey in 1994, and the more recent and shorter paper of James Buickerood (2004). Chapter 1 thus brings the reader up to date with the story so far with respect to idiocy in the *Essay*.

The question of the meanings of idiocy in the seventeenth century must be addressed if there is to be any possibility of assessing the function of their inclusion in one of, if not the, first major psychological study of human understanding. Chapter 2 brings together details from a variety of sources to generate a composite picture of intellectual disability in the early-modern period. Against Goodey's assertion that Locke's ideots were "a private thought in the making" (1994: 218), I show that the awareness of intellectual disability in a variety of communities would have enabled readers of the *Essay* to recognise, and give meaning, to the ideots, changelings and monsters in the *Essay*. This chapter also demonstrates that, contrary to the claims of historians of intellectual disability, there is significant, extant documentation available from the pre- and early-modern periods. Any history of intellectual disability should consider this evidence.

Chapter 3 examines in detail the function of idiocy in Book 1 of the *Essay*, 'Of Innate Notions'. Firstly, I outline the debate around 'nativism', also know as the doctrine of innate ideas, the well-defended belief that formed notions (such as 'a thing cannot be, and not be, at the same time') were given to all humans, prior to birth, by God, and were the basis of human knowledge. I show that the doctrine of innate ideas was not, as Rickless (2007) has suggested, a straw man, but a fiercely fought turf war over the origin, and potential certainty, of knowledge. I argue that, given this, Locke would have wanted to be sure of his evidence for dismissing the doctrine. Locke's arguments against nativism are examined, with an eye and ear to the evidence from people with intellectual disability. I also attend to other evidence, including that from children, savages, and illiterates, showing that Locke placed it all together under the rubric of 'all Mankind', and that that term has meaning in the *Essay's* theses. Finally, I ask whether Locke's anti-nativist argument could have been successfully made without the evidence from people with intellectual disability, and find that it could not.

In Book 2, 'Of Ideas', Locke did not desert the people with little social or political power who, in Book 1, had made up his 'all Mankind': people from non-European backgrounds, ideots, children, uneducated locals. Chapter 4 here argues that this evidence was not delivered by scatter-gun, but was carefully placed. I demonstrate that ideots have a further function in Book 2; there is more to the mention of them than the

differential diagnosis of idiocy and madness made in Chapter 11 of that book. The 'falterings', to paraphrase Locke, found in people with idiocy were, I argue, part of a possibly unconscious, but nevertheless powerful and persistent, image of humankind as plural, various, differing, and imperfect. The notion of humankind as 'naturally' imperfect (rather than made so by the Fall, and the ejection from Eden) bleeds into Books 3 and 4. In the latter books of the *Essay*, changelings and monsters make several, occasionally critically noticed, appearances. The second half of Chapter 4 of this thesis interrogates the function of these appearances, arguing that scholarship to date has erroneously assumed a similarity among what are often called 'borderline cases' (Atherton 2007), and missed the manner in which Locke contrasts the two groups. The contrast of changelings and monsters was, I argue, Locke's most effective evidence that language is conventional, and that notions of groups and species are not fixed, but, to some extent arbitrary, and always mutable.

The post-lapsarian, diverse humankind that I argue emerges in the *Essay* is further explored in Chapter 5. I show that Locke consistently favoured plural terms and meanings – of ideas, Men, in his use of pronouns, and that this was consistent with his 'human', a concept which was also plural. Indeed, reviewing Locke's concept of the human with intellectual disability as the interrogatory term reveals a thoroughly secular, mortal, mutable and imperfect human, who is diachronic, dynamic and diverse. The seventeenth century had inherited two dominant notions of Man: one stemming from Aristotle, the other an interpretation of the biblical Adam. I show that Locke was interested in anything but a singular, representative being, that the *Essay*'s investigation of human understanding was dependent on the acknowledgement of humans in every state, and stage of life. Thus, the human of the *Essay* was not a social/civil identity: s/he is not the Person of the chapter 'Of Personal Identity'. I revisit this latter chapter, which was an addition to the second edition of the *Essay*, demonstrating that it did not, and could not, represent the total or even executive summary of Locke's thoughts about humans. Although the discussion of increasing secular concepts of humanness is not without precedent in the scholarly literature, this is a novel reading of the *Essay*.

The question then becomes, what happened to this diverse humankind, which could include people with intellectual disability, those with physical anomaly, the aged,

the very young? In Chapter 6, I offer a survey of Enlightenment thinking on humankind, noting a confusion of human nature and human understanding. I uncover remnants of diversity, but argue that the human nature sought so assiduously by many Enlightenment figures was an abstract concept. It was also a concept that hoped to identify universal characteristics: thus forcing the elimination of the diversity of the *Essay*. By the end of the Enlightenment, I argue, human was again being equated with (a) man.

Locke's many humans, in many states and stages of life were ever more effectively banished to a darkened corner with the birth, in the early nineteenth century, of material investigations into embryology and heredity, and measurement 'sciences' (statistics, phrenology, craniometry) applied to people, and the hasty marriage between these and the older, abstract concepts of the human. In the first section of Chapter 7 below, I show that it was in the early industrial period that intellectual disability came to be the concept that we now know: sub-normal, pathological, a problem to be treated. This brings us to Darwin's work. Holding in mind the developments of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, I examine Darwin's references firstly to people he simply calls idiots, in *The Expression of Emotions*, and then to those he repeatedly refers to as microcephalic idiots in *The Descent of Man*. I suggest that Darwin's apparent science has, at least with respect to human evolution, been a matter of developing a theory, and then looking around for supporting evidence, or indeed, example. In the absence of a fossil record, people with intellectual disability were something of a gap-filler, relegated to being examples of what humans were like when they were much nearer to the common progenitor, who or which also gave rise to apes and some monkeys. Yet, as I show, Darwin's 'evidence' from people with intellectual disability was erroneous.

In the final chapter of this thesis, Chapter 8, I show that the demonstration of the theory of natural selection applied to humans promoted the notion that there were some groups of humans naturally destined to die out. This was (apparently) not a philosophical, theological, or even political imperative, it was a biological one: the species would be better for, indeed might only survive, in their absence. *The Descent* and *The Expression of Emotions* both 'side-lined' non-Europeans, some women, those with mental illness, ignored the aged, and situated idiots and monsters as the best

examples of negative selection. Darwin's biological human, I argue, was a return to the essentialism Locke rejected in Books 3 and 4 of the *Essay,* despite natural selection's theoretical dissolving of species boundaries. I argue that Darwin relied on a very contained, *a priori* concept of Man: the civilised, mature male, who could have come straight from Aristotle. He made this the Man who had reached the current apotheosis of evolution. The negative selection of other groups – the demise of idiots being the key example – produced an hierarchy which helped Darwin circumvent the problem of explaining the mechanism of inheritance of adaptations. It also led to eugenic thinking. I outline further reasons that Darwin's deployment of people with intellectual disability as examples of atavism and negative selection were, quite simply, erroneous. Yet, as I show in this chapter, Darwin's thoroughly essentialist human still pervades much thinking about human nature today.

Finally, I conclude, that what is at stake for us, today, in reviewing the importance of the evidence from people with intellectual disability in both Locke and Darwin's work, is, firstly, the opportunity to recognise, and question, a back-door eugenics, that applies not only to people with intellectual disability or mental illness, but to any and potentially every one who does not match the norm. What is also at stake is the potential to recognise an ever-adapting, flexible, inherently mutable, effectively *a posteriori* human, who will enable us to escape the bounds of the *animal rationale*, to ask novel questions, explore new territories, to examine and develop our most creative thoughts.

Thus, this is not a thesis about the *Essay*, *The Descent* and *The Expression of Emotions*, first, and their references to people with intellectual disability second. It does not ask what these works said about people with idiocy, other forms of intellectual, and physical ability or disability; rather this thesis looks at Locke's *Essay*, and Darwin's work on humans through the lens of intellectual disability, investigating the function of those both Locke and Darwin called idiots, those they both called monsters, and those Locke called changelings. It questions the import of these groups in the formulation and explication of Locke's and Darwin's critically influential theses about human understanding, and the origins of humankind, respectively. In undertaking this investigation, neglected aspects of the *Essay* itself and of Locke's formulation of the human are revealed; all-too-often ignored statements from *The Descent* and *The*

Expression of Emotions are scrutinised, a novel comparison of the two bodies of work is made. Finally, significant conclusions about the recognition of within-population diversity are made.

Chapter 1

The *Essay*: background, response, ideots within.

The *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* was, and is still, extremely well-read, and made its author "the most influential philosopher of modern times" (Aarsleff 1994: 252). This influence has never been confined to the academies, or the discipline of philosophy, but affects "the way we think about ourselves and our relation to the world we live in" (Aarsleff 1994: 252). The *Essay* incited considerable, immediate controversy, and present-day responses are no more in agreement than those of the 1690s.

In this opening chapter, I briefly summarise the history of response to the *Essay*. I note recent interest in the anthropological data, in gender, and in the presence of people with intellectual disability. Before critiquing the work of the two recent researchers who acknowledge idiocy in the *Essay*, Goodey (1994; 1996) and Buickerood (2004), I describe the actual references to people with intellectual disability, and examine the characteristics Locke ascribed to ideots, to changelings and to monsters, each of which was a different group. In this first chapter I also examine the typography of the *Essay*, suggesting that by choosing to italicise and capitalise '*Ideot*' Locke was indicating that the presence of this group 'said something'. That 'something' is the topic of subsequent chapters of this thesis.

The *Essay*: background and reception:

The *Essay* did not appear until John Locke was fifty-seven years old. It "was the product of a mature philosophical mind that had been reflecting on the issues that it considers for nearly twenty years" (Rogers 2007: 7). It was also the work of a middle-aged man who was the older son of a minor notary, who had attended Westminster School on the patronage of the local squire, and achieved entrance to Oxford University, while most of his family remained yeoman farmers and minor officials (Woolhouse 2007). Begun around 1671, not completed until Locke was in self-imposed, but probably necessary, political exile in Holland in the latter 1680s, the long work showed that Locke matured as more than just a philosopher. "In place of the quiet leisure of a studentship at Christ Church [Locke] chose active participation in the affairs of his day" (Aarsleff 1969: 262): it is active participation, rather than isolated reflection, that can be seen everywhere in the *Essay*. Locke experimented in chemistry before leaving Oxford, and practised as a physician alongside the best-known, evidence-based physician of his

time, Thomas Sydenham; he was involved in the affairs of government, working for some years closely with the prominent Whig politician, Lord Ashley Cooper (soon to be the first Earl of Shaftsbury). He held positions as the Secretary of Presentations, Secretary and Treasurer of the Council of Trade, and famously participated in the drafting of the constitution of Carolina (Woolhouse 2007). Locke was an assiduous civil servant, interested in practical policy issues, authoring tracts on interest rates, in his early career, and, after the *Essay*, on recoinage (Woolhouse 2007). He travelled, flirted with women, but did not marry, maintained strong friendships with both women and men, thought about, and advised on the education of children (published in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* in 1693).

Locke could, and did, engage with men and women with brilliant minds; at the same time he was a 'commoner' whose medical notebooks were filled not with abstractions, but with practical queries, useful recipes and homely images (Meynell 1997); he had "notes on everything imaginable: cures, techniques, morals, religion, food, the swaddling of babies, and any sort of detail that might one day be useful," including an eclectic selection of prescriptions in the form of folk remedies, cures suggested by family members (Meynell 1997: 476). An easy eclecticism and an active curiosity clearly showed themselves to his contemporaries:

> It was his peculiar art in conversation, to lead people to talk of what they understood best. With a gardener he discoursed of gardening; with a jeweller, of a diamond; with a chemist, of chemistry, &c. 'By this,' said he himself, 'I please all those men, who commonly can speak pertinently upon nothing else. As they believe I have an esteem for their profession, they are charmed with showing their abilities before me; and I, in the mean while, improve myself by their discourse. (*Collected Works* 1823, Vol. 10: 165)

This is not to say Locke did not weigh up information. Locke left behind extensive notes on what he read in the form of commonplace books. These show he used a ranking system; a bar with one to three dots placed above or below showed how worthwhile Locke found a text, or particular aspects within in to be. According to Meynell (1997) this ranking indicated that, for example, in the written work of physician, anatomist and early neuroscientist, Thomas Willis (1621-1675), it was the method of experiment and observation that Locke found useful, rather than the actual theories Willis proposed.

Although Locke is known to have thought highly of the works of Descartes, it is

unclear whether he ever read another regularly ascribed influence, Pierre Gassendi (1592-1655) (Michael and Michael 1990), but his library contained many works by his friend and experimental chemist, Robert Boyle (1627-1691), and by Willis, whose lectures he attended at Oxford. Locke's reading was generally eclectic, and books on "travel and geography comprised the fifth largest category in Locke's library, ahead of works of philosophy, natural science, modern literature, and history" (Paxman 1995: 461). On completing the extensive analysis that led to him being "the first Western philosopher in modern times to focus his inquiries on the structure and formation of the human mind in order to gain insight into the objects and extent of human knowledge" (Lowe 2005: 21), Locke wrote to his friend Clarke explaining that "he had written it on the basis of his own observations, studiously avoiding reading books on the subject and consulting the opinion of others" (quoted in Wood 1975: 76). Whether or not Locke was being a little disingenuous in this, is irrelevant; the point is that "(l)ike Sydenham ... Locke was an observer of cases" (Colie 1965: 34), "a socially pragmatic thinker" (Walmsley 1995: 414). Locke was, according to De Beer (1969), editor of the definitive, eight-volume collection of Locke's correspondence, "the most unspeculative of philosophers. Not for him to 'let loose' his 'thoughts into the vast ocean of Being'; for him the safe shores of observation and experience" (De Beer 1969: 36).

When it was finally released, the stated aim of the extensive *Essay* was "to examine our own Abilities, and see, what Objects our Understandings were, or were not fitted to deal with" (Locke 1975, Epistle: 7). This examination was undertaken, and presented, with the awareness that much would be "found to be beyond the reach of our capacities," that we humans would benefit from acknowledging the limits of our understanding (1.1.4), and that "[w]e have our Understandings no less different from our Palates" (Locke 1975, Epistle: 8). Thus, from its introductory notes, the *Essay* was signalled as a work that enquired into, and reported on, the understanding of humans who varied - rather than of a single, representative man. Moreover, the *Essay* was intended for a broad audience, and as such was casual in its language, and wide-ranging in its evidence. Wood (1975) noted:

> The passage of nearly three centuries has tended to obscure the fact that the *Essay* was addressed to and meant to be read by the ordinary educated reader of common sense. *Just as its subject was the ordinary self* so was its intended object the ordinary

> man of affairs … for practical men: gentry, merchants, administrators, professionals, and educated artisans. (Wood 1975: 77. Emphasis in original)

Despite Locke's attempts to woo this audience, controversy buffeted the *Essay* from its release in late 1689. Introducing the standard scholarly edition, Nidditch describes the nearly 700 page work as "rich in philosophical matter … a much sought-after quarry – both a source and a target" (Nidditch 1975: viii). Moots (2007) asserts that the "enigmatic quality" of his work brought Locke both "admiration and scorn from his contemporaries" (Moots 2007: 482), while Dunn (1969) maintains:

> [i]t is unnecessary to demonstrate at any length the scale of Locke's reputation or the ambiguity of his heritage. From Voltaire and Jonathan Edwards, from Condillac and Thomas Jefferson, from Thomas Hodgskin or the Marquis de Condorcet, the testimonies are clear, eloquent and contradictory. (Dunn 1969: 6)

Locke himself forewarned of problems: "Men's principles, Notions and Relishes are so different, that it is hard to find a Book which pleases or displeases all Men" (Locke 1975, Epistle: 9). He was quite right: less than a year after the full volume was published,[1] a contemporary was noting: "Mr Locks new Book admits of no indifferent censure, for tis either extreamly commended, or much deeny'd, but has ten enemies for one friend" (quoted in Yolton 1993: 3). John Norris published critical remarks within months of its publication (Norris 1690), and by "1697 a storm of negative criticism had engulfed the *Essay*" (Yolton 1993: 8). Locke was testy about much of this (Cranston 1957), but responded to Bishop Stillingfleet, and the debate between the two men, centering on Stillingfleet's charge that the *Essay* had "a propensity toward skepticism," which could result in "the overthrow of important articles of the Christian faith" (Yolton 1993: 18), ran literally to volumes.

There were three edited and enlarged editions of the *Essay* published within a decade of the first, and a fifth edition in train when Locke died in 1704. It was quickly taken up as a work worthy of detailed study, becoming required reading at the university of Dublin in 1692, and at Cambridge and Oxford universities five years later (Woolhouse 1988). The *Essay*'s reputation spread to the Continent; Pierre Coste translated it into French in 1700, and it was reportedly well-read in this language (Aarsleff 1994). Various enthusiastic supports for Locke circulated, including Catharine

[1] Locke produced an abridgement of the *Essay*, which was published in 1688 (Woolhouse 2007).

Cockburn's 1702 publication, 'A Defence of Mr Locke's *Essay of Human Understanding*' (Sheridan 2007).

After Locke's death the power of the *Essay* did not diminish. The remarkable Irish novelist Laurence Sterne (1713-1768) had a life long dedication to reading Locke, and infused his characters and their way of thinking with Lockean ideas, even if sometimes ironically and satirically. Samuel Johnson included more references to, or from, Locke than any other thinker in his dictionary (Aarsleff 1994). Voltaire (1694-1778), heaped copious praise on him, while other Enlightenment thinkers, including Diderot (1713-1784), Condillac (1715-1780), d'Alembert (1717-1783), and later, French physician Auguste Pinel (1808-1878), all exhibit considerable allegiance to Locke, or more precisely, to his theories (Aarsleff 1994). On the other hand, philosopher Bishop Berkeley famously refuted Locke (Woolhouse 2004), the *Essay* was accused and critiqued by various French authors for materialism (Yolton 1991), Coleridge was contemptuous of him (Aarselff 1994), and throughout the romantic period Locke's pragmatic, process-orientated work was generally put to the side. Yet, by1876, Leslie Stephen was again noting of Locke that he was "the intellectual ruler of the eighteenth century" (quoted in Aarsleff 1994: 252).

Scholarship recommenced detailed attendance to Locke in the early decades of the twentieth century, with significant contributions by Carl Becker in the 1920s, Richard Aaron in the 1930s, and when Locke's personal papers and unpublished manuscripts became available in the Bodleian library, something approaching an industry, with, from the 1950s John Yolton, W. von Leyden, John Dunn, and later Vere Chappell, Hans Aarsleff, Peter Laslett, G.I Rogers, E.J. Lowe, among many others, publishing innumerable books and articles. Roland Hall and Roger Woolhouse's 1970 bibliography of the previous 40 years of Locke scholarship, seems short and slim compared with the number and variety of publications of the past four decades. Today, the Locke Bibliography web site is updated not by the year, but by the month, with each month containing several new contributions.[2]

Considering the depth and detail of this impressive scholarship, it would seem little new could be added. However, in recent years the range of disciplines interested in

[2] See, http://www.libraries.psu.edu/tas/locke/bib/index.html

Locke has widened. Locke was writing at a time that was fascinated with geographic and cultural discovery, when the establishment of America heralded newness and possibility, when knowledge, which to medieval scholars was finite, and open only to (re)ordering and preservation, became potentially infinite and cumulative (Vickers 1992). This new knowledge included information about peoples all over the world, and "Locke was one of the first people to receive letters from many far-flung places, from Charleston in Carolina, from Jamaica in the West Indies, from Bengal in India, and Amoy in China" (Goldie 2002: xviii). The *Essay*'s "topic being not merely British, but human, understanding, Locke saw that he could not content himself with turning his object only on those sides already exhibited by his predecessors and colleagues" (Paxman 1995: 463): thus he included much data gleaned from this travel writing in the *Essay*, and "Locke's arguments ... illuminate well the intellectual climate that placed travel literature and cultural pluralism at the centre of disputations about what fundamentally constitutes humanity" (Muthu 2003: 271). One of a number of authors interested in such travel data, J. Smith (2006) employs a theoretical paradigm from the work of cultural and media theorist, Raymond Williams, to sound out the anthropology in the *Essay*. Although it is not without contention,[3] Smith concludes that Locke's work shows "a deep and abiding interest in custom" (2006: 834): "*An Essay concerning Human Understanding* ... advances an early, if not the earliest, theory of cultural reproduction in the Western tradition" (2006: 831).

Feminist theory, too, has shown interest (Broad 2004; Hirshmann & McClure 2007; Ready 2002; Sheridan 2007; H. Smith 2001; Springborg 1995; 1998). Feminist interrogations tend to displace Locke, and his intentions as author, from the central position of authority and generator of meaning, and instead concentrate on what contemporary and current, predominantly female, readers of the *Essay* perceived, and

[3] There are opposing views to the anthropological inclusions is the *Essay*. Wood (1975) puts Locke's awareness of not only cultural but 'moral relativism' down to his anthropological interests, while Grant (1988) refers to such evidence serving in the epistemological debate "to show not only the variety of custom to be found ... but also the strength of custom everywhere in shaping the opinions that govern men's behaviour," and asserts that "Locke's descriptions of primitive societies acknowledge the strength of traditional social bonds and traditional social norms in our common life" (1988: 42). Recent decades have turned a differently critical eye to the inclusion of anthropological data, with Smith, above-quoted having a positive view, but with D. Carey (2004) presenting Locke as generally pernicious in his use of this information.

perceive, between the lines. This work thus shifts from analyzing, and often disputing, what the *Essay* (or, in some cases, Locke's other work) said about a list of defined subjects (qualities, ideas, knowledge, power, substance and so on), to the detail of *who* is included, and possibly excluded, as well as to the effect of Locke's thoughts on, and the utilisation by, groups and disciplines outside the mainstream of academic philosophy or political theory. This may well have suited Locke himself, who "[n]o less than Bacon ... is concerned that his scientific efforts in the *Essay* will prove to be of practical use in the daily lives of his readers" (Wood 1975: 71).

As such recent scholarship recognises, Locke "finds matter for philosophy in the most unlikely social exchange," even "confiding how he 'once met with one, who was perswaded his had been the Soul of Socrates' " (Walmsley 1995: 416-7). He also found matter for philosophy (and psychology) in people with idiocy. Mabbot (1973) refers to three groupings of arguments against nativism being found in Book 1:

> First (Locke) attacks the assumption on which the theory rests ... that these ideas must be innate because they are universal and necessary. ... The force of this argument depends on the alternative account Locke promises and attempts to give in book IV of the *Essay*. ...
> The second line of attack urges that children and idiots do not have such ideas.
> The third goes on to consider the second or 'potential' version of the theory ... and again idiots and children are cited as exceptions. (Mabbot 1973: 78)

Mabbot is not alone in recognising the key role of the evidence from people with idiocy; early commentators, to whom I turn below, were aware of it, too. Neither they, nor Mabbot, make any attempt, however, to tease out who Locke's ideots were, or why they were important to the argument: that is now the task of this thesis.

The *Essay*'s references to ideots, naturals, changelings, monsters and fools:

Setting aside the repetitions that occur in section summaries at the bottom of pages, the word ideot appears only twelve times in Nidditch's scholarly edition of the *Essay*. Although this is not a high frequency (gold, for example, gleans nearly two hundred mentions), the first mention of ideots is in the expanded version of the Contents and the last in the Index, so that even flicking through these sections, Locke's readers are alerted to people with intellectual disability having a role in his thesis. There are also four references to 'naturals' in the text; naturals were, in the common parlance of the

seventeenth century - to which I turn in Chapter 2 below - ideots with inborn disability. It should be noted here that while we tend, now, to think of natural (particularly when a descriptor of behaviour) as associated with a lack of self-consciousness, for Locke and his contemporaries, natural had a much closer tie with God, or with being God-given. Being *a* 'natural' carried a grain of positive value, particularly when compared with artificial fools, a point I return to below.

In the body of the text, the first appearance of ideots is early in Book 1, in the section that represents Locke's first, and major, salvo against nativism (1.2.5). Ideots again appear in Books 2, Chapter 2, Section 27, which has three usages of ideots, and two of naturals. Here, Locke takes the time and trouble to outline who ideots are: they are among those "least corrupted by Custom, or borrowed Opinions;" it is not the soul but the "Constitutions or the Organs of the Body [that are] the only confessed difference between them (ideots) and others;" they "have no Reserves, no Arts of Concealment;" their "notions are few and narrow, borrowed only from those Objects, they have most to do with, and which have made upon their Sense the frequentest and strongest Impressions;" at the same time, they are like people throughout the *Essay*, and have a "love of Pleasure, and abhorrence of Pain" (1.2.27). The slip from ideots to naturals, and back again, is made with ease and without explication, suggesting an added criterion: Locke's ideots are people with in-born impairment, their importune behaviour neither wilful, demonological, nor the result of divine punishment.

In Book 2, Chapter 11, Locke offers a further set of identifying features, this time contrasting ideocy with lunacy, or what we now call mental illness. Ideots may have "several ways of faltering," but more observations would be needed to ascertain the details of this "want or weakness of any, or all of the foregoing Faculties" (2.11.12), the latter of which are perception, retention and so on. This section also tells us that ideots "either perceive but dully, or retain the *Ideas* that come into their Minds but ill, [and] cannot readily excite or compound them," and thus they "will have little matter to think on" (2.11.12). Similarly they might be unable to "distinguish, compare, and abstract," to any degree, and so "would hardly be able to understand and make use of Language, or judge or reason to any tolerable degree; but only a little and imperfectly about things present, and very familiar to their Senses" (2.11.12). The section immediately following

draws the distinction between idiocy and mental illness, with the former being summarised as "want of quickness, activity, and motion in the intellectual Faculties," while, in mental illness, the "faculty of reasoning" is intact, but ideas are joined together "wrongly" and mistaken for truth (2.11.13). People with mental illness thus "make wrong Propositions, but argue and reason right from them" (2.11.13).

Locke has been credited with providing the first clear differentiation of intellectual disability and mental illness (Halliwell 2004). This is, in fact, an erroneous suggestion, as the summary of the contemporary legal statutes and medical knowledge in the next chapter demonstrates. However, it can be noted that Locke's quite accurate descriptions lack any emotive language, and there is no hint of association of ideots or mad men with either the devil or divine punishment, as is often assumed was the case (Neugebauer 1979). Importantly, too, in contrast to his contemporaries, John Norris (1657-1711), and Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716), whom we meet below, Locke allowed ideots some ideas and limited reasoning, describing the underlying issues in the same psychological, clinical terms he uses throughout the *Essay*, whether referring to people of great wit or people who have what we now call dementia: problems in faculties themselves, in retention and comparison of ideas.

The end of Book 2, Chapter 11 brings the reader to the end of "a short ... *true History of the first beginnings of Humane Knowledge*" (2.11.15). It also brings us to the end of the direct references to people with idiocy, although there are a handful of later descriptions which suggest idiocy. These are discussed later in this thesis.

Books 3 and 4 of the *Essay* include different people from Books 1 and 2: rather than ideots-naturals, there are those Locke calls changelings and monsters. With the exception of a short passage in Book 2, (2.21.50), which somewhat muddles the language,[4] there are sharp definitional and discursive distinctions between ideots and changelings.

Like ideots, changelings make their first appearance in the expanded Contents and

[4] This particular section asks "[w]ould any one be a Changeling, because he is less determined, by wise Considerations, than a wise Man?" The exact meaning of changeling is unclear here, although a comparison with other usages of the term, and with seventeenth century use, suggests a generic meaning for a person with intellectual disability. See Chapter 2 below for more information on seventeenth century meanings.

again appear in the Index. In all, there are a total of nineteen direct references to changelings, more by-name mentions than gained by idiots, and occasional other descriptions, which may well be of changelings. The direct references are clustered, with one in Book 3, Chapter 3, four in the same book, Chapter 6, one in Chapter 11, with a further twelve in four sections of Book 4, Chapter 4, 'On the Reality of Knowledge', and a final mention in 4.7.17.

There are also fourteen uses of the term monster, which generally appear close to, and sometimes in comparison with, changelings, and, as the ideots, the reader learns several things about Locke's changelings and monsters. We learn that they both occur frequently, but monsters occur in all species, while changelings appear to be a solely human phenomenon:

> The frequent Productions of Monsters, in all species of Animals, and of Changelings, and other strange Issues of humane Birth, carry with them difficulties, not possible to consist with this *Hypothesis* [that there are reliable, natural essences of things which we can know]. (3.3.17)

We are also given a prime example of a monster in the abbot of St Martin, who was born "*with so little Figure of a Man, that it bespoke him rather a Monster*" (3.6.26). Locke's description of the abbot was very different from that he gave of "some *Changelings*, who have lived forty years together, without any appearance of Reason" (4.4.13). "Some" changelings are "drivling, unintelligent, intractable," but "well-shaped" (4.4.16), while monsters are ill-shaped, but may have no cognitive impairment (3.6.26). The *Essay*'s changelings generally fail to develop *any* speech and language, and show no apparent engagement with the world around them (3.6.22; 4.4.16). These characteristics contrast changelings and monsters and also set changelings apart from ideots, who have dull organs, reduced perception, little ability to compare, but are able to judge, and reason "a little and imperfectly about things present" (2.11.12). The description of changelings, although voiced in harsh terms, is consistent with people whom we would now diagnose as having severe and profound intellectual disability.

While ideots are among the "great part of Mankind" (1.2.4; a phrase common in, and important to, Book 1, as I show below), changelings and monsters challenge the accepted notion of natural kinds, including of the species Man. Their presence suggests that both language and taxonomy are based in changeable, nominal concepts, rather than

due to the intuitive recognition of any real essence or constitution of person or thing (see Book 3, Chapter 6 in particular). More of that anon: for now it is important to keep in mind that the two groups have different characteristics, appear in different arguments, neither overlap nor interact.

There are only two instances of 'fool' in the *Essay*, both in 2.21.50, neither synonymous with ideot or changeling. Locke's fools are wilful humans liable to "draw shame and Misery" on the "self" (an important Lockean term discussed below). That Locke did not use fool as an appellation for people with intellectual disability is important to note, and the reasoning behind it is discussed in more detail below.[5] Locke's decision to note ideots and changelings in the Contents and Index he provided suggests they were of some import in the arguments. Fools, folly, monsters do not appear in either; both Contents and Index are reasonably extensive but, given the *Essay*'s length, also selective, and thus a fair representative of the topics Locke considered important, and/or judged as those his readers might wish to identify and consult readily.

Moreover, there is other evidence that Locke wanted ideots and changelings to stand out in the *Essay;* and I turn to this now.

The typography of ideots in the *Essay*:

Throughout the *Essay* Locke capitalises and italicises various terms, particularly new terms, or ones to which he gives a specific, Lockean, meaning.[6] These include Idea(s), Mixed Modes, Person, Personal Identity, and Perception. 'Idea(s)' - a, if not the, key term in the *Essay* - is both italicised and capitalised; the only exceptions being when the word appears in a whole phrase or sentence that is in italics, in which case Locke makes sure Idea stands out by not being italicised. To the modern eye the use of italics

[5] 'Folly' is employed as a noun or a descriptor on several occasions. However, apart from 2.11.13, when the generic 'folly' – see Chapter 2 here, for more information - is used, all instances have folly as a descriptor of behaviour or choices that should not have been, but were, made by people who were capable of behaving otherwise. For example, folly is used in reference to Adam and Eve (3.6.44), and as a descriptor of the conceit of thinking nothing is beyond our comprehension (4.3.22). This is consistent with the conceptual framework of the seventeenth century, as discussed below.

[6] A reminder that the Nidditch (1975) edition of the *Essay* follows the original spelling, punctuation, capitalisation, and use of italics.

in the *Essay* is frequent; however the terms stressed are neither haphazard or profligate, and Locke apparently made a decision to bring certain words to our attention in this way. Woolhouse (1997) quotes him advising his readers of this in the Epistle, as it appeared in the first and second editions of the *Essay*:

> One thing more I must advertise my reader of, and that is, that the summary of each section is printed in italic characters, whereby the reader may find the contents almost as well as if it had been printed in the margin by the side, if a little allowance be made for the grammatical constructions, which in the text itself could not always be so ordered, as to make perfect propositions, which yet by the words printed in italic, may be easily guessed at. (quoted in Woolhouse 1997: xxvii)

I have not found any sustained work on Locke's typography, but choices have been made by editors about following – or not – Locke's capitalisation, particularly in his early essays. Diskin Clay (1990) takes Locke scholar, translator and editor, Wolfgang von Leyden, to task for capitalising *Deus* in both the Latin and English versions of his 1954 collection of early pieces from Locke, published as the *Essays on the Law of Nature*.[7] Locke, Clay points out, had not capitalised *deus* it in the original manuscripts (which were in Latin). Clay, introducing the new translation of the same manuscripts, (under the title, *Questions Concerning the Law of Nature*), argues that von Leyden's use of capital 'D' situates Locke's essays firmly, and quite possibly erroneously, in a Christian tradition, thus forcing multiple references in under the one, homogenous God. This reduction silences what Clay calls Locke's "pagan voice," the "cultured voice of a scholar," who has read and taught Greek, and is familiar with Roman classics (Clay 1990: 81-82). Clay also notes that, in rendering Locke's Latin tract on governments into English, another translator, Abrams, had left the lower case 'd' in the Latin text, but translated *deus* as God (with capital and therefore as the Christian God); as had de Beer in his painstaking edition of Locke's correspondence. Clay convincing argues that quite dramatic differences in reading come about from these changes in capitalisation.

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[7] These are pieces have been provenanced to being written by Locke, in Latin, in the early 1660s, probably to be delivered as lectures, some at least when he was Moral Censor at Oxford (von Leyden 1954). The manuscripts only became known during the Second World War when descendents of Locke's cousin, Peter King, deposited them with the Bodleian Library. Von Leyden's 1954 edition of these works provides a scholarly introduction; the newer translation provides a scholarly introduction, as well as the new translation, in which Horwitz, Clay and Clay (1990) are not always entirely in agreement with von Leyden.

We can note, too, that the use of italics was of some significance in and around the time Locke was writing the *Essay*. Early-modern written language was, in general, rhetorical rather than literary, its punctuation and typography representing speech rather than being of a separate, more formal written domain, with its own rules. The rhetorical style resulted in capitalisation and stress that was not always popular: Vande Berg (1987) quotes from *The Compleat English Schoolmaster* (1674): "Whatseover words the author laies any kind of stress or force upon, these he either writes in a different character, or else prefixes a Capital before them, or both" (1987: 27). The author of this work, one Elisha Coles, may not have been not impressed with this procedure, but he did think it was much in fashion. The *Essay* is a good example of what Coles does not approve, and was an example at least one of Locke's 'fans' was to follow: Vande Berg describes the representation of the speech-base in *Tristan Shandy*. Sterne, the author of this latter work, was, as aforenoted, much influenced by Locke.

It seems then, that we should take notice of the fact that Locke uses both a capital and italics when referring to ideots. He does this in all instances, except in 2.11.13 where although *Naturals* appears in italics at the beginning of the section, as do *mad Men*, and later in the section Idiots (with an 'i') is capitalised, but does not have italics. However, that *Ideot(s)* is generally italicised, along with *mixed modes* and *same Man*, when these are new, compound, and apparently Lockean specific terms, while well-known terms at the time (experience, extension and the Law of Nature, for example) are not, suggests Locke was indeed bringing ideot(s) to the readers' notice. With the term highlighted in this way, it is difficult to agree with Armstrong's (1969) assessment that Locke's inclusion of ideots was a case of last resort.[8]

As already noted, changelings appear in different sections of the *Essay* from ideots; their typography is also more erratic. Neither changeling or monster is italicised when the typical seventeenth century generic usage is implied (in particular, 2.21.50), but *changeling* is in italics when the reference is to an apparently specific and restricted Lockean being, one who is 'well-shaped' but lacking any use at all of reason, and who thus raised questions of sorting into species. The two, relatively uninteresting references

[8] Armstrong puts it that, in arguing against universality, Locke "even resort[s] to the argument that idiots do not assent to the law of contradiction because they cannot understand it" (1969: 200).

to fools are not accorded the same treatment as either ideots or changelings, and nor is the term 'folly': these are presented in plain text and the reasons for this, too, are discussed in Chapter 2 below.

What we can see here is that Locke has made a decision that ideots, and some, specific changelings, need to stand out from the crowd. Early responses to the *Essay* responded in kind, as I now show.

Responses to the evidence from people with intellectual disability in the *Essay*:

For Voltaire, the *Essay* made Locke the " 'Hercules of metaphysics' because he had fixed the bounds of the human mind" (Aarsleff 1994: 253), while encyclopaedist d'Alembert similarly praised Locke for reducing "metaphysics to what it really ought to be: the experimental physics of the soul" (d'Alembert 1751, quoted in Aarsleff 1994: 255). Similarly to Nidditch (1975), Aarsleff (1994) asserts that it was most effectively the "successful application of the method of natural philosophy to the study of what pertains to the mind," that accounts for the "vast appeal and influence of Locke's thought" (1994: 255). So much so that the *Essay* "both in its private nature and its public effect [is] not unlike Freud's self-analysis two hundred years later" (Aarlseff 1994: 261), and Locke's

> importance reaches far beyond the limits of what has since his time become recognized as the professional discipline of philosophy. His influence in the history of thought, on the way we think about ourselves and relations to the world we live in, to God, nature and society, has been immense. (Aarlseff 1994: 255)

However, almost before the ink was dry on the first edition, English philosopher, John Norris (1657-1711), was asking, "Well, but how does he prove there are no such [innate ideas, universally assented to]?" (Norris 1690: 5). Norris does not object to Locke's references to savages or Americans or outlaws, instead he declared, "Why, he instances in some of the most Celebrated [of innate maxims], and says ... That *All Children and Ideots have not the least apprehension or thought of them*" (Norris 1690: 5. Italics in original). I examine Norris's response in more detail in Chapter 3 below. What can be noted here is that Norris was not alone in noticing ideots: in 1694, James Lowde published a *Discourse concerning the nature of man*, which argued with some points of the *Essay*. In the second edition of his own work, Locke referred to Lowde's

critique (Locke 2001, Epistle: 17).[9] Mention of "ideots and children" was only made very much in passing by Lowde, but he recognised that they were a significant presence in Locke's argument against native inscription.

Leibniz, (1646-1716), in his *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding*, argued against the evidence from people with intellectual disability, both as ideots and changelings. While Leibniz's extensive treatment of the *Essay* was not published until the late eighteenth century, it was written in Locke's lifetime, and was well-known (Woolhouse 2007). It, like Norris's critique, takes the easiest path in relation to people with intellectual disability: both reduce ideots, and, in Leibniz's case, albeit in a slightly more complicated fashion, also changelings, to people who simply cannot think, and therefore cannot be evidence against the universality of nativism. In the *New Essays*, which paraphrase the *Essay* and respond to it, point by point, Leibniz has the Locke character, Philalethes, say: "If general maxims were innate they should show up best in people who in fact don't show any trace of them. I mean children, mentally defective people[10] and savages": to which he has Theopilus reply: "I think that the argument at this point should run quite differently. Innate maxims only show up through the attention one gives to them: but these people have almost no attention to give" (Leibniz 1996: 88). I return to Leibniz and Norris in more detail below.

On the other hand, Diderot (1713-1784) was impressed with Locke's inclusion of groups who are often considered marginal – specifically the blind and deaf[11] – and there

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[9] Locke's response to Lowde does not appear in the Nidditch edition of the *Essay*. I refer here to online edition available at http://arts.cuhk.edu.hk/Philosophy/Locke/echu/.

[10] In their 1996 translation of Leibniz's *New Essays on Human Understanding*, Remnant and Bennett sometimes use the word 'imbecile' where Locke uses idiot. I sought clarification from Professor Bennett, whom I was able to find through a websearch. In a personal (email) communication (3rd August 2008), Professor Bennett explained that imbecile was Leibniz's word, but that " I don't recall giving this matter any thought; it will just have seemed obviously right to use the English 'imbecile'." He noted that he assumed Leibniz took the word from Coste's French translation of 1700, but that "I did have a reason for retaining 'changeling' in Iv.iv.13+ ... in that chapter the word 'changeling' is used and leaned upon and debated over and emphasized, and it seemed (and seems) to me *safer* to leave the word as it is and add a note explaining its meaning" (Bennett: 3rd August, 2008). It can also be noted that Locke's reference to naturals in 3.6.22 is replaced by imbeciles in the Remmant-Bennett translation, thus loosing some of the meaning: imbecility can be acquired by accident, disease or trauma, naturalness is in-born, and the work of God.

[11] Diderot published *Letter on the Blind* in 1749, and *Letter on the Deaf and Dumb* in 1751. While neither of these could be said to address 'issues' for those who are blind or deaf, Tunstall

is a strong trace of interest through the Enlightenment period, as we see in Chapter 6 below. The presence of people with impairments in the *Essay* was clearly difficult to entirely ignore.

By the early twentieth century, Richard Aaron, in a work initially published in 1937, was circumspect when referring to Locke's evidence against nativism, paraphrasing Locke's questioning of universal recognition as "if they were truly innate, if they were 'naturally imprinted' on the mind, surely they would be in the thoughts of all" (1971: 84), and summarising Locke's evidence, without mentioning ideots, as: "But they are not, for children and many adults know nothing of them" (1971: 84).[12] In more recent years, it is possible to find passing references to ideots, and slightly more attention given to the inclusion of changelings and monsters. Little of this is favourable commentary: Armstrong (1969), as aforesaid, presents ideots as a 'last resort'; Mabbot (1973), accorded a much more positive role to ideots, but gave no detail. Atherton (2007) spends some considerable words on changelings and monsters in her discussion of essences and classification, but sees their presence to being "in service" (of Locke's theory of language, rather than of his ontology), rather than as thought-provoking evidence in themselves (Atherton 2007: 273). Rickless (2007) is, like Armstrong, at very best grudging in acknowledging the inclusion of people with intellectual disability, suggesting that Locke's insistence that universal consent must have no exceptions forced him into mentioning those otherwise best left forgotten: "Whence the importance of what might otherwise appear to be an unnecessary reminder of the existence of humans who are insufficiently mature, intelligent, or educated to assent to the principles commonly thought innate" (Rickless 2007: 46). Indeed, Rickless's description of the inclusion of people with intellectual disability as an "unnecessary reminder" is somewhat surprising in the third millennium. Today, we generally expect some awareness of (equal) human value: Rickless's wording indicates the need for a more detailed, less subjective and value-laden analysis of their function in the *Essay*.

(2008) has argued for Diderot's recognition of the reality of the impairments, and their effects upon people with them, as well as the philosophic possibilities in considering them.

[12] It is interesting to note that Aaron was writing at the height of the interest in eugenics. In this context, the fact that he is one of the very few commentators to not repeat Locke's reference to idiots does seem a little disingenuous, at least in retrospect.

C.F. Goodey, as I have already noted, has devoted an unusually lengthy article, published in the *History of Psychiatry* in 1994, to 'John Locke's idiots in the natural history of mind'. Like so much of the commentary on the *Essay*, Goodey's reading is controversial. James Buickerood, editor of the journal *Eighteenth-Century Thought*, has acknowledged the lack of interest on the part of philosophers in Locke's understanding of "idiots, changelings, naturals and fools" (2004: 1), but found the work of historians of psychiatry and psychology, and of Goodey in particular, to be "profoundly misconceived" (2004: 4). Goodey's article has been highly influential, however, and it is necessary to address at least some of the issues it engages with, and provokes.

Recent responses to ideots in the *Essay*: Goodey and Buickerood:

As aforenoted, interest in idiocy in the *Essay* has been no more detailed or complete in either the field of disability studies, or in the histories of intellectual disability, than it has been in philosophical analysis. Thus, when Goodey's 1994 article was published, he was attending to a subject that was overdue for consideration. He was also positively asserting the right of the history of intellectual disability to be considered in a mainstream journal – the *History of Psychiatry* - rather than one dedicated, or perhaps confined, to the 'issue' of intellectual disability or mental retardation. However, in his article, Goodey argues against "an appeal to Locke [being] automatically an appeal to a positive science of the mind and its operations" (1994: 215), and specifically against him being taken as a progenitor of education in the field of disability. Instead he maintains Locke was "pessimistic" about ideots, while optimistic about everyone else (1994: 215). Goodey's dismissal of Locke centres on his claim that ideots and people with mental illness were positioned by Locke on "separate hierarchical rungs in a natural order. ... By these intellectualist criteria idiots are – possibly – now to be lumped with beasts" (1994: 222). According to his reading, "Locke's 'concept of 'man' is generated only by excluding from that concept certain 'men' " (1994: 249), that is, ideots and changelings. Although he does not reference Foucault, Goodey's thesis is similar to that of the well-known Foucauldian proposal that a reason/unreason dichotomy was a requirement for the formation of modernism. There is a problem with Goodey's analysis however. Although in the *Essay* there are at least two hierarchies, neither of these fits

comfortably with the ladder/progress metaphor Goodey invokes. There is the chain of being, or *scala naturae*, which could imply something of linear structure, although of regression rather than progression, descending from God through angels and spirits, humans, brutes and so on, to the rocks of the earth. But, as Locke makes plain in Book 3, Chapter 6, everything in this chain is linked and not on separate rungs. As Locke puts it:

> That there should be more *Species* of intelligent Creatures above us, than there are of sensible and material below us, is probable to me from hence; That in all the visible corporeal World, we see no Chasms or Gaps. All quite down from us, the descent is by easy steps, and a continued series of Things, that in each remove, differ very little one from the other. (3.6.12)

It is misleading to apply an image of aspiration and progress to the chain of being, particularly to one species within it. Humans were a link in the chain, their worth to be compared with the more intelligent angels and spirits (Yolton 2004, Chapters 2, 3 &4, for extended discussion), and ultimately to God, rather than one human to another. In this way of thinking, ideots are not much different at all from all other imperfect humans.

The second hierarchy in the *Essay* is the one that most concerns Goodey, that of the process of knowledge acquisition, as outlined in Book 2, Chapters 1-12. In this, Locke proposes that humans receive simple ideas through their senses, and through various processes make these into complex ideas and, through further processes of comparison and abstraction, into knowledge (either certain or uncertain). It is Locke's organisation of argument and evidence in Book 2, Chapter 11 that Goodey attends to in particular, saying that Locke "never quite says that idiots abstract not" (1994: 218), implying that this is what Locke really does mean to say, and continuing to discuss Chapter 11 as if Locke had, in fact, said that idiots do not abstract. There are significant problems here: firstly, Locke simply does *not* say idiots do not abstract, so to analyse his work as if he had is inappropriate. Secondly, it needs to be asked what would it mean if he had? Does Goodey want Locke to claim that people with idiocy do follow through with (Lockean, or some other) abstraction? Is it not the lack of abstraction, and of similar cognitive processes, that mean some people do have an impairment we have chosen to call – for want of a better description, and in the hope of providing decent services and support – intellectual impairment, learning disability, intellectual disability

and so on?

What Goodey fails to grasp is that the processes of knowledge acquisition are, as Locke outlines them, an hierarchy in the sense of a sequence of steps, each dependent on at least partial completion of the latter, but not necessarily a hierarchy of value. Locke's argument is that knowledge does not simply descend upon us, already complete (as it would if nativism were true). Knowledge only comes about through a series of operations. One analogy is the building of a house – we cannot have a roof without supports; another is the solving of a mathematical problem: a sequence of steps is unavoidable. Each step is then also valuable.[13] People with idiocy do not complete all steps of the sequence, and would not have idiocy if they did, but that does not mean that Locke automatically relegates them to a different rung on a ladder he did not know about. As Buickerood (2004) notes, Locke ascribes to ideots sensation, simple ideas, some reason: even if ideots lack Lockean abstraction, "their [Goodey and other historians of psychology and psychiatry] inference that Locke assumed idiots to be inhuman and all that they see that position to entail – the legitimacy of idiot infanticide and humans' rights to treat idiots as lower animals – would appear to be fallacious" (Buickerood 2004: 11).

As already noted, Goodey (1996) went on, in a later article based on this 1994 one, to declare that it may well be the case that "once upon a time there was no mental retardation" (Goodey 1996: 93), a claim that some individuals, families and caregivers would find very difficult to countenance. Nearly a decade later, he retracted a little, saying that exploring "Galen and Galenism on the relationship between psychology and anatomy does indeed lead me to conclude that the idea of a conceptual rupture as simply stated ('once upon a time there were no mentally retarded people') ... is not justifiable" (Goodey 2005: 166). Before this retraction, it became a recurring theme in Goodey's work, and to a lesser extent that of his colleague, Tim Stainton, that there was nothing in the pre- or early-enlightenment period that we would now recognise as intellectual disability. At best these claims were a storm in a tea-cup, whipped up with good intentions; societies have recognised something that could be called idiocy for millennia

[13] The builder who completes the steps, and the house will clearly be valued over the builder who only gets the walls up, and haphazardly at that, but this is a valuing of function, not person, and does not necessarily reflect on selfhood, or place in the family, and so on.

(Manion and Bersani 1987; Scheerenberger 1983), no matter how socially constructed the detail is. It is also the case that Goodey was actually splitting hairs; it was a "clinical concept recognizable in modern medicine" (Goodey 2004a: 289) that he saw as missing. He thus failed to recognise any but medical definitions. Goodey, and Stainton, fell into the trap that A. Carey (2003), identified; in trying to escape a taxonomic-pathology fixation, they set up as definitional the very categorising they wished to critique.

Goodey's may seem extravagant claims, fairly easily dismissed, but a pervasive set of beliefs about Locke, and about the history of intellectual disability in general, have been extracted and propagated from his work. There is now a certain orthodoxy in describing Locke as dismissive, pejorative and exclusionary in regard to ideots. Anne Digby (1996), in her introduction to an important collection of papers, *From Idiocy to Mental Deficiency*, simply paraphrases Goodey's claims (made again later in the same collection) that "Locke provided a much more comprehensive exclusion of the idiot than the earlier one" (Digby 1996: 3). She does not tell us what this earlier exclusion was. Patrick McDonagh, well published in the disability field, borrows heavily from Goodey in his PhD thesis. Following Goodey, he conflates ideots and changelings, stating that "Locke's concept of the human and of human understanding requires the idiot as a sort of 'buffer zone' between man and beast" (McDonagh 1998: 65). McDonagh has no footnote to, or bibliographical note of, reading Locke himself; his references in this discussion are all to the work of Goodey. More recently, Martin Halliwell (2004), studying images of idiots as they appear in fiction and film, describes Locke as "pessimistic" about ideots, using Goodey's description without direct attribution, as if it were proved that this was so, or at least accepted as uncontentious. Respected researcher, Bob Schalock (2004), cites Goodey. Goodey himself, sometimes with colleague, Tim Stainton, has gone on to author numerous articles examining the historical contingencies of what we now call intellectual disability; their work is regularly cited, and despite the significant revisions of his initial position mentioned above, they themselves both regularly cite Goodey's 1994 article.[14]

James Buickerood (2004) makes short shrift of dismissing Goodey's analysis.

[14] See Goodey 2001, 2004, 2005; Goodey & Stainton 2001; Stainton 2001, 2004. Porter (1998) took Goodey's argument at face value, Parmenter (2001), a highly respected researcher in the field of intellectual disability cites Goodey, as does Wong (2007).

Against Goodey's questioning of the human status of ideots, Buickerood simply says of Locke:

> Throughout this discussion [in Book 1, Chapter 2] ... the intimation is that idiots are to be considered 'men', humans. In fact, this line of argument would not make sense, much less succeed in its aim, were idiots not assumed to be human. (Buickerood 2004: 5)

Buickerood also objects to the conflation of ideots and changelings that Goodey makes, dubbing the picture Goodey, (and other historians of psychology and psychiatry), painted as "lamentable," on account of their insistence that Locke presents ideots "as completely devoid of intellectual faculties" (2004: 3). As I have already noted, changelings, in the *Essay*, may be lacking in intellectual faculties, but ideots reason a little, have several ways of faltering and are distinguished from both changelings and monsters, and these differences are important to their function and to the *Essay*'s theoretical positions. Goodey has confused two clearly identified groups who appear in two separate sections of the *Essay*.

Goodey is not alone, however: philosophers in general, according to Buickerood, "have not queried the details of Locke's understanding of idiots, changelings, naturals and fools, and the relations he took them to bear to one another and to 'normally' endowed men" (2004: 2). He goes on to ask, and assess, what characteristics Locke ascribed to ideots in particular, and to changelings, in lesser detail, arguing that it cannot be taken for granted exactly who Locke was referring to in his discussion. Implicitly linking idiots in the *Essay* with the discussion in Book 2, Chapter 27, on personal identity, and to Locke's political Man, Buickerood suggests that, an examination of the "examples of idiocy as they function in his inquiry into human understanding ... may enrich yet further our grasp of his notoriously complex vision of humankind, particularly regarding the traits of accountable agents" (2004: 3).

Buickerood's was a short paper, designed to be read at a conference. The questions raised – of characteristic, function and relation – are important. They are also questions outside the confines of the ethical debates that have maintained people with intellectual disability as object for so long. Fortunately for me, Buickerood seems to have left these questions, and more, for this thesis to answer.

Chapter conclusion: ideots do have a role in the *Essay*:

John Locke was clearly a man of many parts. His life, remarkably well-known primarily on account of the extensive documentation Locke himself left, demonstrates a consistent interest in the way things work – government, taxation, coinage, the sick body, the developing mind of a child – rather than in end-points or, to use modern parlance, outcomes. Locke was a man aware of evidence, and the weighing up thereof. The *Essay*, produced over a period of nearly twenty years, contains an immense array of evidentiary data, much of it from people who are anything but average. The *Essay* was an immediately controversial document. This chapter has shown that Locke's early readers, particularly those who wanted to refute his anti-nativism, recognised that people with intellectual disability were part of the evidence, and not throw-away examples. Locke himself made this clear, citing ideots in both the Contents and the Index, and emphasising their presence through the use of italics and capitalisation. My initial question about whether or not people with intellectual disability have a role greater than being an exception to prove a rule, seems likely to be answered in the affirmative.

Early responses to the *Essay* sought to defuse any power that ideots might have by making them uni-dimensional, thoughtless; more recent Locke commentary has only occasionally noted the presence of people with intellectual disability, sometimes with denigratory tone (Armstrong 1969; Rickless 2007). Of the two extant articles dedicated to Locke's ideots, Buickerood's essay is short and, on his own admission, "tentative" (2004: 3), while Goodey's work ultimately insists on intellectual disability as a social and ethical problem, never an area of theoretical contestation. Consequently, although these responses to the inclusion of ideots and changeleings suggests that they each had a function greater than replaceable example in the *Essay*, the details of that function remain largely unclear. Chapter 3 here begins the exploration of that, to-date, neglected function. Prior to that it is necessary to explore what meanings the references to people with intellectual disability would have provoked in readers of the *Essay*. As Buickerood has implied, as Norris's and Leibniz's responses to the *Essay* attest, (and as we see in more detail in Chapter 3 below), the success, or not, of the role the evidence from ideots played in the *Essay*, was heavily reliant on who Locke's readers took ideots to represent, or be.

Chapter 2

The historical background to John Locke's ideots

The ideots, changelings and monsters whom John Locke had in mind when writing the *Essay* lived some three hundred and fifty or more years ago. Like Locke, they lived in family, social, political, economic, religious, theological, scientific, philosophical, and in pragmatic, everyday contexts that were vastly different from what might be experienced today, even in the same country, by a similar person. Recuperating the details of an individual, or even attempting to construct a representative life of a person with disability in England over the years Locke was writing the *Essay* would be a fascinating, if difficult, task. It is not the task of this thesis. However, while historians of intellectual disability have asserted that there is almost no pre-nineteenth century documentation available (Goodey 2001; Kanner 1964; Scheereenberger 1983), in this chapter I bring together information from a variety of sources, revealing that there is in fact considerable historical material available, and that it is useful. With the past fleshed out, we have information that can be taken forward to understand the meanings and placement of idiocy in social and scientific contexts, including in the *Essay*.

This chapter begins with distinguishing ideots from fools, a distinction made at the time, often ignored now. I note that the terms ideot and natural, rather than ideot and fool, were more or less interchangeable. I examine the more prominent of the legal, medical and domestic discourses that featured people with intellectual disability, demonstrating that Locke's ideots would have been readily recognised by his contemporaries. An investigation of the tropes of changeling and monster in the pre- and early-modern periods follows.

Tom Shakespeare has said, "[u]ntil someone has done systematic historical research, it is only possible to unearth tantalising clues to pre-1975 social-contextual approaches" (2006: 19). This chapter is by no means the whole story of intellectual disability, or of physical anomaly, in the pre- and early-modern periods, but there is more here than a tantalising clue.

The ideot-natural /artificial fool distinction in pre- and early-modern thought:

Histories of intellectual disability regularly include more than a passing reference to jesters, court- and literary-fools, as well as references to artistic representations of cap and bell fools (Halliwell 2004; Kanner 1964; Schereenberger 1983; Stainton 2004). While it does appear that there have been examples of the keeping of a person with intellectual disability as a mascot and source of entertainment (James 1991; Kanner 1964), the work of Billington (1984) and Welsford (1966) demonstrates that, at least by the middle ages, the 'fool' was rarely, if ever, a person with intellectual disability.

Andrews (1998) points out that, while it was not uncommon in medieval and pre-modern times to refer to ideots as innocents, fools, or as having stupidity, the term fool was more often applied to elements of behaviour than to the congenital condition recognised as idiocy. Furthermore, in England, at least, in the Middle Ages "the word 'fool' was more than the abstract term of abuse which it appears to be today, but placed the owner of the name within a recognizable relation to a figure in a cap and bell" (Billington 1984:1).

Cap and bell fools were entertainers who often worked seasonally, at carnivals and festivals. The expectations were that their dress and behaviour would be stylised, and follow particular routines (Billington 1984; Welsford 1966). Artificial fools sometimes assumed the behaviour of the 'natural', or in-born fool or ideot, but our ancestors were well able to differentiate the two, even though a natural might on occasion be called a fool. The differentiation had a long history. For example, Billington relates the plot of the York Plays, dating from around the mid-fourteenth century, and perhaps the best known of the medieval mystery plays. Christ is brought to Herod, who assumes Christ to be playing the King-game - a common fool-game. Herod thus encourages Christ to sit next to him, two kings together. Christ remains silent, and so Herod "pulls faces and makes gurgling noises" to inspire a reaction: when he gets none, Herod decides that Christ is, after all, "the dumb or idiot Fool" (1984: 18). Much of the tension of the play resides in the awareness of the two sides of the term, fool, and in waiting for the ever-possible slip from one to the other (1984: 18-19).

Diametrically opposed meanings of fool – natural/innocent vs artificial/truly foolish - were entrenched at the latest by the end of the fourteenth century, and "[i]n England, and more so in Russia and other European countries, the church was sympathetic towards 'simpletons,' the 'holy fool' was often revered and 'natural fools' were often granted immunity from work" (Stainton 2004: 227). Around the fourteenth century, too, "an awareness developed of the need to distinguish such (witless) men from their mimics, who were beginning to profit from the idiot's immunity from work in the houses of the great" (Billington 1984: 20). The disabling effect of intellectual impairment was recognised, in naturals, who were given dispensation from working, centuries before the 'pathology' of idiocy was defined.

Sullivan (1977) examines visual representation of fools, including Hans Holbein the Younger's woodcut, 'The Idiot Fool', which has a young man exposing himself, otherwise dressed in a loose garment, with no cap and bell. Sullivan reads the absence of signifying cap and bell as imputing that the guileless natural, or idiot-fool, does not dress up and cavort in clever and confusing ways like the artificial fool (1977: 61). The innocence of the natural/idiot fool was generally accepted: Stainton (2004) repeats a quotation from Piers Plowman (c 1380, and also quoted by Billington): "in children and in fools the devil has no influence over what they do, whether wicked or not," while artificial fools are "flatterers and fools ... the fiend's disciples to entice men through their stories to sin and harlotry" (2004: 228). In this way 'true' ignorance results from excessive pride or pedantry, rather than from idiocy.

The association of folly and arrogance, too, had a long history, and is represented in a Biblical passage:

> Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. (1 Corinthians 3:18-19 King James Version)

One can be a "fool-for-Christ," forsake worldliness and battle pride, or one can be a fool who does not recognise the far greater knowledge of the divine being.

In the literate classes throughout the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries the inconsiderate, ridiculous, and often sinful behaviour of the foolish was regularly documented. In Brand's *Ship of Fools*, much referred to by Foucault (1965), each fool represents a specific sin; the late fifteenth century paintings of Hieronymous Bosch show the removal of the stone of folly from a man's head; the cap-and bell-fool is there among the carping, quarrelling fools in Bosch's visual rendition of the *Ship of Fools* (Stainton 2004). In the late medieval period, an association of the artificial or cap and bell fool with the particular sins and weaknesses of pride and avarice was notable (Billington 1984), and Erasmus's (1509) satirical *In Praise of Folly* both relies on, and further produces, the connotations of folly as hubris. All of these effectively distinguish foolishness from idiocy. Examining the work of Peter Breugel the elder, Sullivan (1977) also notes that:

> Madness and Folly are the dual – and related – themes of *Dulle Griet*. These two concepts – so popular in sixteenth-century didactic art and literature – are not presented in a vague or generalized way, but in the manner of his time Bruegel has indicated them quite precisely. (Sullivan 1977: 59)

At their worst, artificial fools were threatening, sinful, well outside the dominant order, at their best they had 'the wisdom of fools', and woe betide the person who did not listen well to them. Shakespearian fools often bear the stamp of the wise, insightful fool: in *King Lear*, Lear's Fool, who has no personal name, follows the pattern of the versifying wise servant, the jester who jests not. Lear does not 'hear' his fool, indeed the Fool had to speak in riddles because Lear is so averse to the truth. Lear, himself, is therefore a *foolish* man, one whose hubris results not only in his own downfall, but that of his entire family. Lear's foolishness can be opposed to that of Bottom, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Bottom, as his name declares, is 'behind'; a simpleton who might (or might not) be re-classified today as having mild intellectual disability. Bottom is a natural, a man with no artifice, worthy of a happy ending.

All of this can be seen informing the *Essay*, in which it is people *without* disability who are foolish,[1] and folly is irresponsible behaviour by people who should know better.[2] It is interesting to note that the distinction of natural and artificial fools is also found in *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695). Even though Locke was not, in his younger adulthood, a committed anti-nativist (von Leyden 1954), he made it clear in the early *Essays on the Law of Nature*, just as he did in the later, much longer *Essay*, that ideots did not know the law of nature, or the requirements of civil law.[3] Consistent, then, with a (Lockean) text that has the moral or natural law at its core, there are no idiots mentioned in *Reasonableness*. There are, however, two 'fool' usages: quoting Proverbs 26, 5, Locke writes in *Reasonableness*, "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit," and goes on to comment, "hereby showing that self-conceitedness is a degree below ordinary folly" (*Reasonableness* in *Works*, Vol. 6 1824: 230). When not dealing with understanding, a topic in which people with idiocy have a significant role, Locke has reverted to the lay-term fool, but qualified it with 'ordinary' –

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[1] 2.33.10; 4.3.23; 4.11.10.

[2] 3.6.44; 3.10.5; 4.3.22; 4.11.10; 4.16.4; 4.17.24. The instance which does not fit this pattern is 2.11.13, discussed below.

[3] See *Essays on the Law of Nature* (1954): 95, 98, 105, 143, and *Essay* 2.27, discussed below.

a word that aptly describes the unpretentious dress of the natural, as well as the more general lack of artificiality. There are also eighteen references to 'folly', sixteen to 'foolishness', all with moral overtones, in *The Reasonableness of Christianity*.[4] Plainly, in Locke's way of thinking, it is only people who are naturals-idiots who have anything to tell us about human understanding; fools are a moral, not a psychological, issue.

Idiocy in legal discourse:

As a student Locke – momentarily, it must be said – went up to Gray's Inn (Woolhouse 2007); later he was a senior civil servant, and he was adviser to Ashley Cooper, first Earl of Shaftesbury (1621-1683). Shaftesbury, brought up under guardianship himself, was an opponent of the Court of Wards (Haley 1968), the court responsible for the estates of orphaned minors, and that had greatest formal jurisdiction over the lives of people with intellectual disability. Shaftesbury was also Chancellor of the Exchequer when Locke worked for him. There is every chance Locke was conversant with the legal definitions and status of idiocy that I now outline.

Blackstone's *Commentaries of the Laws of England* (the *Commentaries*) was published in four volumes between the years 1765 and 1769. So popular were they that Blackstone was made rich and they remain to this day a, if not the, source book for information on English statute and common law as it developed from "the times of the highest antiquity" (Blackstone 1765-1769: 64).[5] In the *Commentaries*, Blackstone describes the final branch of the King's ordinary revenue, found in the Praerogativa Regis. The Praerogativa was a statute developed in the fourteenth century,[6] and in use until the twentieth century. It detailed guardianship (financial and personal) of people

[4] Locke, for example, includes foolishness with the sins of covetousness, wickedness, lasciviousness, and deceit (*Reasonableness* 1824: 70).

[5] I have used an excellent online copy of Blackstone's *Commentaries* which reproduces the original text, with eighteenth century spelling and grammar: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/blackstone. There is, however, no clear discrimination of which books of the *Commentaries* were published in which years.

[6] Maitland (1891), still quoted as authority on the Praerogativa, explains that there has been debate, over several centuries, about the precise timing of the development of the 'law', which Blackstone situates as being written during the reign of Edward II. There is debate also about whether or not the Praerogativa is technically a statue. Relatively recent legal research has found that the wardship of 'all born fools' had been claimed by the crown at least since Edward I (1239-1307) (Bell 1986).

with intellectual disability, as well as for people with mental illness, and those who were orphaned minors. Blackstone's description indicates a careful definition of the ideot-natural, and also gives us a little of the history of the Praerogativa:

> AN idiot, or natural fool, is one that hath had no underftanding from his nativity; and therefore is by law prefumed never likely to attain any. For which reafon the cuftody of him and of his lands was formerly vefted in the lord of the feeh ... but, by reafon of the manifold abufes of this power by fubjects, it was at laft provided by common confent, that it fhould be given to the king, as the general confervator of his people, in order to prevent the idiot from wafting his eftate, and reducing himfelf and his heirs to poverty and diftrefsk. (Blackstone 1765-1769: 292)

One of the most interesting aspects of the law is that, while the crown had automatic guardianship of minors, formal assessment was required before the crown could take control of the estates of idiots and lunatics. Thus, well before Locke wrote the *Essay*, definitions of idiocy were in place.

The assessment of idiocy generally consisted of a jury, or inquisition, of at least twelve 'ordinary men', taken from the local population, who heard the testimony of those charged with being unable to manage their own estates, as well as of those applying for, or supporting the call for, guardianship (Neugebauer 1996). The judgement of incompetency was not simply a matter of assertion or counter-assertion, testing was required. Digby (1996) notes that "it is interesting to discover that naturalistic tests rather than demonological criteria were used to evaluate mental impairment in the English court hearings" (1996: 2). The specific, albeit basic, testing was naturalistic, but sensible, along the lines of Fitzherbert's (1632) influential definition: "he who shall be found to be a sot and idiot from birth, is such a person who cannot accompt or number twenty pence, nor can tell who his Father, or Mother, nor how old he is" (quoted in Stainton 2001: 21). This set of defining features, echoed in the definition twentieth century legal analyst, Bell, cites (1986: 128, f4), is rudimentary but pragmatic: no matter whether apportioning guardianship of both person and wealth was a good thing or not, the ability to count, to do basic calculations, to nominate one's parents, to know whether one is a minor or not, or whether one was aging or not, were, and remain,[7] possibly incomplete, but common and reasonable evidence of the ability to administer one's own

[7] People with intellectual disability today often have difficulty knowing their parents outside the role and nomination of 'mother' or 'father': this is still taken into account when assessing competency for, for example, the ability to travel independently.

estate. In fact, "the elementary test of mental status ... sounds remarkably modern in method and tone, no matter how archaic the syntax" (Neugenbauer 1996: 28).

This small but substantial check-list was not enacted in an entirely simplistic or casual manner either. Seventeenth century commentators, Michael Dalton and H. Swinburne, provided detailed information to assist magistrates and the makers and interpreters of wills (Rushton 1996). They recognised a number of groups: natural fools as those who had been so from birth, and for whom "there is no hope of recovery;" people with acquired disability (trauma resulting in lack of memory in particular); people with mental illness who sometimes had lucid intervals with understanding and memory apparently intact (Rushton 1996: 48). The distinction between ideots and lunatics was integral to the legal purposes - and to Locke's analysis of process (2.11.13).

> A MAN is not an idiot, if he hath any glimmering of reafon, fo that he can tell his parents, his age, or the like common matters. ... A LUNATIC, or non compos mentis, is one who hath had underftanding, but by difeafe, grief, or other accident hath loft the ufe of his reafon. A lunatic is indeed properly one that hath lucid intervals; fometimes enjoying his fenfes, and fometimes not, and that frequently depending upon the change of the moon. But under the general name of non compos mentis (which fir Edward Coke fays is the moft legal namer) are comprized not only lunatics, but perfons under frenzies; or who lofe their intellects by difeafe; thofe that grow deaf, dumb, and blind, not being born fo; or fuch, in fhort, as are by any means rendered incapable of conducting their own affairs. (Blackstone 1765-1769: 293-294)

The distinction was not entirely innocent: monarchs ordered commissions to search for idiots and lunatics, as well as for "concealed lands, alienation without licence, or the goods of felons or thieves" (McGlynn 2005: 4); guardianship was a means of gaining income. Henry VIII was particularly active in these commissions (Bell 1986). Wardship of minors was most lucrative,[8] but the crown also favoured idiocy over lunacy: the Praerogativa provided that, in the case of idiot, while the monarch was not to waste the lands or the products thereof, s/he had only to give rudimentary support for the idiot throughout his/her life (and, after 1540, and the establishment of the Court of

[8] The crown had automatic guardianship of minors. On the death of their father any minor could be, and often was, removed from their mother's care and placed with strangers who had discretionary power over their lifestyle, accommodation, education and all other aspects of support. The crown sold the wardships, which included the right of the guardian to arrange the marriage of the minor (Bell 1986). In the century after the Court of Wards was formed (in 1540) sales or wardships and marriages became the principal stream of the Court's revenue, showing a thirty-one fold increase over the reigns Edward VI to Charles I (Bell 1986).

Wards, their immediate family), and could make use of all assets until the death of the ideot, when the estate was returned to the heirs. For persons with lunacy, the monarch had not only to provide for the whole family of the lunatic, and the lunatic her/himself, but to do so *without* keeping the profit of the lands, and with the caveat of returning them to the owner at any time should s/he recover (Bell 1986; McGlynn 2005). [9]

Attitudes were not all attuned to the needs of the monarch or non-disabled petitioners. Humphrey Warenar, for example, was alleged to be an idiot, but the case was dismissed by Henry VII, who judged Warenar had "sufficient discretion" to look after his own person and lands (McGlynn 2005: 1). The Court of Wards, formed in 1540, tried to ensure the reasonable provision of education and living conditions for wards, and overseers were appointed to supervise the treatment of people with idiocy (Bell 1986). In the latter half of the life of the Court (which ceased in 1660), the proportion of wardships granted to family members, rather than to the crown, or auctioned off to the highest bidder, also increased markedly (Bell 1986). Neugenbauer (1996), after many years researching the records of the crown's legal incompetency jurisdiction from the medieval to the early modern period, concludes that,

> [t]hese documents provide incontrovertible evidence that medieval Englishmen employed naturalistic criteria in evaluating persons thought to be mentally ill or learning disabled. Furthermore, records ... indicate that under the Tudor monarchs, efforts were made to enhance the humanitarian and beneficial features of this jurisdiction, a change that necessarily involved a loss of potential Crown revenues. (Neugenbauer 1996: 24)

Moreover, although the association of poverty and idiocy was significant, the Praerogativa's 'pitch' was for the property and inheritance of the comparatively well-to-do; apparently without shame at the 'stain' of incompetence, the crown recognised ideots and lunatics among its gentry and aristocracy. For example Millington (2006), found an example of 1464, when:

> Grant to Henry Curteys of Grantham and his assigns of the custody of Alice Fysh, who is an idiot, and of all her lands and tenements in Harreardby co Lincoln, and of

[9] There is, of course, an implied hierarchy in this, with the person with idiocy of less importance than the person with lunacy. This may not have been the complete story, of course; there is a pragmatic edge to such a law too, a recognition of the sometimes transitory or episodic nature of mental illness and, possibly, a reticence to encourage reprisal if the person found to be lunatic were to challenge the decision.

> all other lands and tenements held in chief which came into the King's hands by reason of her idiotcy as appears by an inquisition taken before John Burgh, escheator in the county of Lincoln, to hold the same during her life. (Millington 2006: 3)[10]

On the other hand, the estates brought forward for administration varied considerably:

> Only 40 per cent of its cases belonged to the landed classes, both the gentry and the great aristocratic families. Of the remainder, some were tradesmen and merchants; an occasional blacksmith and yeoman also found his way into the Court. (Neugenbauer 1996: 27).

Renaissance and pre-modern Britain had a number of other statutes which were applied, albeit not exclusively, to people with disability. In 1388 the Statute of Cambridge gave responsibility of the impotent poor to the country Hundred,[11] thus making the shire or county ultimately responsible for any person who through impairment, illness or lack of saleable skill was one of this 'impotent' group (Bell 1986). A little over a century later The Vagabonds and Beggars Act of 1494 determined punishment for vagrancy, and also required that the vagabond or beggar reside in his or her local area; while in 1598 An Act for the Relief of the Poor made it mandatory for parishes to appoint supervisors, and to find work for the unemployed (Millington 2006: 3). The importance of these acts in relation to intellectual disability is two-fold: firstly there was in-built recognition that some people were unable to work, and should have some form of welfare or support. Secondly, the insistence that such people were a local village or shire responsibility ensured that those who could not work due to disability were not a separate category, not requiring formal, prescriptive services, based in medicine, education, and enforced remediation. They were provided for under what we now call mainstream service provision.

Thus, it was well-established for some centuries before the *Essay* that intellectual disability affected people from all sectors of the community. Locke reflects his awareness of legal definitions, referring to "some, through the default of their memories ... cannot retain the several combinations of numbers," and going on to explain that "he that will count twenty ... must know that nineteen went before, with the distinct name or sign of every one of them, as they stand marked in their order" (2.16.17). Also consistent

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[10] From http://www.cdp.org.uk/timeline.htm, page numbers refer to webpages.

[11] A "Hundred' was a group of towns/villages of approximately that number. Groups of 'Hundreds' formed shires or counties, and the movement of labourers, servants and invalids was restricted with all expected to remain within their Hundred.

with legal definitions, Locke recognised idiocy as a permanent disability, but mental illness as episodic (2.11.13). Whether or not this emphasis on permanence was pessimistic, as Goodey describes it, (1994: 215) or realistic, as the recognition of inborn disability surely is, it was not of Locke's making. It was also an emphasis to be found in medical discourse, which I now turn to.

Idiocy and medical discourses:

Romanell (1984) has argued that Locke's medical bent was far more significant in his way of thinking than is often credited, and in recent years considerable information has been uncovered or made public about Locke's medical reading and interests (Martensen 2004; Meynell 1997; A. N. Williams 2003). We can be confident then that Locke was aware of much of the information examined in this section.

Seventeenth century medicine, at both the professional and lay levels, still owed considerable allegiance to that of second century C.E. Roman physician, Galen (c. 129-199). Galen's medicine was, in turn, partially inherited from earlier Greek and Roman physicians, influenced by Plato and Aristotle, and was taken up and refined by Avicenna and other Arabic physicians for some centuries before being rediscovered in Europe (Porter 1997). Galen insisted that the physician should be well versed in philosophy, and his system was premised on, and served the idea of, "a divinely ordered universe" (Porter 1997: 74). The Galenic model had four forms of madness: frenzy, mania, melancholy and fatuity. Although sited in the brain, these disorders were due to an imbalance in the 'humours' (Porter 1997: 75). Many aspects of life could affect the humours: too much activity or indulgence could produce too much black bile (equated with melancholy), or an overproduction of phlegm, blood or bile, with resultant impacts on the spirits in the brain. Such theories permeated seventeenth century thinking: Burton, for example, followed Galen in his 1621 *Anatomy of Melancholy*: "[i]f the brain be hot, the animal spirits are hot; much madness follows, with violent actions: if cold, fatuity and sottishness" (2007: Sub-section 1.1.3).[12] Locke, whose medical interests were strong, read and was impressed by Galen (Meynell 1997).

Galenic medicine was challenged by the self-confident, largely self-taught

[12] From http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/b/burton/robert/melancholy/. No pages numbers supplied.

Paracelsus (c. 1493-1542), who developed a medical approach that included gathering information from "tramps, butchers and barbers" (Porter 1997: 201). Paracelsus replaced Galenic elements and humours with chemical principles and analysis - such as the effects of acid digestion in the different organs - and asserted that nature was supreme in determining health and wellbeing (Pagel 1958). Sennert (1572-1637), on whom Locke made many notes, defended Paracelsus; Flemish physician, von Helmont (1579-1644), also the subject of Locke's study, as well as of Locke's contemporaries, Boyle and Willis, was influenced by him (Meynell 1997; Pagel 1958).

Paracelsus wrote directly on the subject of intellectual disability: he saw the person with idiocy as having an intact inner man, or immortal soul, with an imperfect animal body and mind. Idiocy was congenital, and this raised specific questions about man being made in God's image. This problem was overcome by the notion of "vulcani ... those natural forces – ununderstandable, unpredictable, uncontrollable – that are responsible for the intra-uterine 'processing' of the seed into the child" (Cranefield & Federn 1967:165). In this way God created things "in their 'prime' but not in their 'ultimate' matter," and, "thus, since there are always many clumsy vulcani, there are always many fools" (1967: 165-166). Cranefield and Federn suggest that Paracelsus was not necessarily straying from "traditional common knowledge, handed down from antiquity," in considering what they call feeble-mindedness as an incurable defect of the "instrument" of the mind (1967: 171).

Medical interest was not divorced from the theological or moral: for Paracelsus, ideots fitted in the framework of the fall of Eden (Paracelsus preferred Ebron as the site), and the Augustine doctrine that ideots are proof of the essential place of grace in recuperating the consequences of Adam (Cranefield & Federn 1967). Thus for Paracelsus, "the fool is the victim of the fall of Adam, he ought not to be scorned, only his animal body is defective, and when his animal body comes to die, naturally his inner man comes to the fore" (1967: 174). According to Cranefield and Federn, underlying the concept of soul that informed Paracelsus's psychology of the ideot were also beliefs which possibly stemmed from Gnosticism, and which emphasised the animal nature of human reason. The inner man, or true man, was an individually created entity, manifested in intuitive knowledge (accessible even to fools), and in will-power, which

enabled the animal body (of the wise man) to conquer the passions or animal nature (1967: 174). We see the acceptance of this attitude to idiocy in Locke, with "the only confessed difference" between naturals and other humans being in the "organs of the body" (1.2.27).

Felix Platter (1539-1614) also described people with idiocy. Locke's commonplace books show that he read, and made notes on, at least some of Platter's work (Meynell 1997). Platter treated many patients with mental illness (Midelfort 1999), as well as being credited with reports of thymic abnormalities and the first description of meningioma (James 1991). Platter's three volume, major work, *Praxeos Medicae* begins with a chapter 'Of a weakness of the mind', in which he elaborates on weak intellectual function in those who are not otherwise sick. Supporting the distinction between natural and artificial fool, Platter refers to the use of the term foolishness in both Eramus's *Praise of Folly* and Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools* as misappropriated and misapplied. Instead:

> [t]he term foolishness, however, is properly applied to those who are truly born foolish (*stultitia)* and silly (*insipientes*) and who give signs of foolishness (*stultitia*) in early childhood by gesturing in a way that is extraordinary even for children. They do not readily obey nor are they docile, with the result that they often neither learn to speak not to perform any other functions in which application is required. (Platter, quoted in James 1991:104).

Both the content and style of Platter's remarks are remarkably modern. There are foolish people who "gaze at the sun, put sticks in the spaces between their fingers," and otherwise exhibit unusual behaviours, and whom Platter differentiates from those whose foolishness resides in an over-active desire for praise. Some fools, Platter suggests, may "prove outstanding in some art such as painting, sculpture, architecture, or music" (James 1991:105): he may well have been describing a person who would now be known as a 'savant'.

Treatment was not a significant issue for Platter. Thomas Willis, on the other hand, endeavoured to explain how idiocy came about, and to formulate (limited) treatment - the latter aimed primarily at an improvement in general functioning, rather than cure. Willis was a physician "and like experimentalist physicians from Herophilus on, he tended to push knowledge in terms of its potential use in practice" (Martensen 2004: 141). His treatments, like Platter's identifying descriptions, were not terribly distant

from present day approaches. Willis writes,

> though it [idiocy] be not usuall be cured, yet it is want to be amended. ... Therefore they are to be instructed in all things by an assiduous and very diligent Master, and the same things are to be inculcated again and again. For by this means the Spirits, tho dull and torpid, will in some measure by actuated by perpetual Exercise: and being continually stirred up, will make at length for their Expansion some Tracts or passages, tho imperfect, in the Brain, how gros soever. (Willis 1672, quoted in A.N. Williams 2002: 557. Original spelling)

A. N. Williams (2002) contends that Willis's proposed interventions were little noticed, suggesting that "the only long term influence ... [was] of an adult case of 'stupidity' which had resolved after a fever; in later centuries this gave rise to fever therapy or inoculation with malaria" (2002: 555). It should be kept in mind, however, that it is unlikely we would now know of any implementation of Willis's recommendations unless it was carried out by a state or church authority large enough, and organised enough, to make and store appropriate records. Willis himself left records of a specific case of a child with cerebral atrophy, published in his 1664 *Cerebri Anatome*, and provided a more extensive chapter, 'Instructions and Prescripts for the cure of Stupidity or Folly', in *de anima Brutorum* (1672). In this, he suggests that a small brain is likely to be associated with "too much Foolishness (too little or too much Brain argues for Stupidity)," and, although this does not always happen, "yet it does for the most part" (Willis 1672, trans. Cranefield 1961: 295). Similarly the substance of the brain needs also to be "well temper'd and of a laudable frame;" brains that are thick or too earthy in texture ensure "the Spirits do not easily irradiate it," and there will be dullness of the senses (1961: 295).

Willis also describes "Degrees of Stupidity," from some who "were wholly unfit for learning ... [but] apt enough to mechanical arts," to those who were "mere Dolts, scarce understand any thing at all, or do any thing with Knowledge" (Willis 1672, quoted in A. N. Williams 2002: 556). He distinguishes between those with stupidity who, "by reason of the defect of the Imagination and Memory, as well as of Judgment, do neither apprehend well, or quickly, nor argue well; besides they behave themselves ... sottishly, foolishly, or like a dull ass," and those with 'foolishness' who have animal spirits which are sometimes active, "though less firm," and "leaping," or inconstant (Willis 1672, trans. Cranefield 1961: 300-1). Those with stupidity, according to Willis,

"shew so the Disease in their countenance and behaviour," while those with foolishness are able to "performs the acts of the Animal Functions," at least some of the time, and even if only "perfunctorily … or ridiculously" (1961: 301).

Willis offered a systematic approach, with clear, material explanations based in direct observation, which situated impairment in the physical brain, rather than as the result of any mystical or demonological intervention. He also elaborated a theory of antecedent causes, which included stupidity being acquired through brain trauma, alcoholism and other "diseases of the head," thus emphasising earthly origins (A. N. Williams 2002: 556). A.N Williams quotes Willis: "Fools beget Fools," but also that it "frequently happens, that wise men and highly ingenious, do beget Fools and Changelings, or heavy witted" (2003: 357). The latter Willis put down to the parents spending too much of their time reading, studying, or in meditation, thus wasting the Animal Spirits, or to too much luxurious living (2003: 358). The former he explained as being due to "the same weak Particles flowing for the constituting the Animal Organs in the Son, which were in the Father" (2003: 358), although, as we see in more detail below, this did not imply biological inheritance as we know it today, but rather a process of generation. Willis also described parents being "broken with old age, or of such as are not yet ripe or too young, or of drunkards, soft, and effeminate men," as begetting the "heavy witted" (Willis 1672, translated Cranefield 1961: 298), all of which suggests close observations of 'real' people, rather than assumption, or book-learning.

Willis is credited with being the first neurologist (Porter 2000; Zimmer 2004), he dissected and examined the human brain, identified diseases including diabetes, had one of the most fashionable practices in London, and passed on much of what he thought and learned in lectures at Oxford University. Both Locke and his friend, physician Richard Lower (1631-1691), took extensive notes when they attended Willis' lectures at Oxford in the mid-1660s. The attention Willis paid to fatuity and stupidity suggests that, at around the time Locke began thinking about the *Essay*, idiocy was being treated as an increasingly worthy clinical subject. It was not the case, as many have assumed, that "[f]ools were considered to be marked out by God and not stricken by disease," (Dewhurst 1980, quoted in A. N. Williams 2002: 555): idiocy had clinical definitions and characteristics, which accorded with the legal discourses, and which were by no

means confined to theological or lay notions of God's will. Where God and nature were much more closely involved was in the issue of changelings and monsters, to whom I turn below. First, however, I consider the less formal discourses that recognised a general, and sometimes more specific, notion of idiocy.

Idiocy in popular culture:

Informal references to idiocy can be found in a variety of records from the seventeenth century, suggesting that the notion of idiocy was indeed threaded throughout the social body. At the beginning of the century we have Shakespeare's Macbeth railing against "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing" (Act 5, Scene 5). In mid-century, Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle (1623-1673), poet, commentator, philosopher and playwright suggested that women should participate in intellectual life, "lest in time we should grow irrational as idiots" (quoted in Perry 1985: 480). Cavendish was anything but alone in situating idiocy as the antithesis of the rational man (sic), although this was not always done to the detriment of idiots. Samuel Butler's (1612-1680) *Hudibras*, a satire published a few years after the 1660 Restoration, deals extensively with reason and folly, and with then very popular representation of human behaviour or type as animal-like: proselytes, for example, are cattle, proud men are owls, a bumpkin is a horse, and so on, through over one hundred and eighty examples. In *Hudibras* there are fools who are natural in the way Locke saw them, and those who are affected, pretentious or are foolish through ignorance or wilfulness. The natural fool is, in Butler's satire, superior to the rational man, while the wilful fool is lower than the beasts (Waasserman 1973). Erasmus's (1466-1526) *In Praise of Folly* has a similar ironical juxtaposition of natural ideots with the 'braying' monks and 'supercilious' divines. Each of these works employs idiocy as a conceit to demonstrate the arrogance and stupidity of those *without* idiocy: idiocy is thus, to some extent, constructed in opposition to the failures of the non-ideot, and positively valued. Effectively, however, aside from occasional references, these texts say little about idiocy itself, and the focus remains on the non-ideot.

Bunyan's (1623-1688), *The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come* (*The Pilgrim's Progress*), remarkably never out of print, and still well known

as a Christian allegory, has a more interesting inclusion of an ideot figure. *The Pilgrim's Progress*, published in two parts (1675, 1684), has a large cast of characters, good and evil, a hero, and a less defined, and less active heroine; there are obstacles, temptations, and an eventual resolution that favours true observance of evangelical Christian principles. The second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* has among its characters a Mr Feeblemind. Mr Feeblemind is a pilgrim who becomes part of the group surrounding the hero, Christian's, wife, Christiana, and her four children (all boys). The roles are very clear throughout the story, and that of Mr Feeblemind no less, or more, so than anyone else. He rests with the other pilgrims in the home of Gaius, where the servants wait upon him, and he is feasted, but when they must leave on their journey his role is to incite a discourse by Mr Great-Heart on care of the weak. Immediately afterwards Mr Feeblemind comfortably accepts that he should journey with Mr Ready-to-Halt, who walks with the aid of crutches. This latter companionship can be construed as the setting aside of the disabled, although in *The Pilgrim's Progress* it is presented as the choice, and to the pleasure, of Mr Feeblemind. It is also pragmatic: the pilgrims go on their way, in a hierarchy perhaps, with the fastest first, the slowest last, but this organisation is also what allows the group to stay together.

It would be difficult to argue that it is accidental that Mr Feeblemind is attached to the family, and often to be found in the company of others who have impairments. However, in so positioning Mr Feeblemind, Bunyan is also placing him in a positive, domestic position, defined by a web of interconnecting relations, rather than positioned by occupation, physical prowess, success, social status. In this second part of the *Progress,* the pilgrims draw strength from banding together: it is their interactions, their inter-relations, their sometimes complementary or supplementary skills that enable them to move forward in the right direction, both in the narrative per se and in the allegory of Christian redemption.

> The sequel [i.e Part 2 of *The Pilgrim's Progress*] is at base a feminine analogue of the masculinist first part, and it operates out of a value system which prioritizes nurturance, compassion, benevolence and regeneration over ego, power, struggle and transcedence ... As Part 1 variously deals with the Self as heroic, spiritual and narrating event, so the sequel dramatizes Greatheart's proposition, 'Relations are our second self.' (Swaim 1990: 387-8)

I have not investigated whether or not Locke read *The Pilgrim's Progress:* Bunyan

was a Bapist, and Locke might thus have avoided the work of this 'enthusiast'. Locke would have had sympathy with Mr Feeblemind however. When we first meet him, Mr Feeblemind tells the story of becoming a pilgrim and his progress to date:

> when I came at the gate that is at the head of the way, the Lord of that place did entertain me freely; neither objected he against my weakly looks, nor against my feeble mind; but gave me such things as were necessary for my journey, and bid me hope to the end. (Bunyan 1684: 242)

The line "gave me such things as were necessary for my journey" is very reminiscent of Locke's assertion:

> For though the *Comprehension* of our Understandings, comes exceeding short of the vast Extent of Things ... Men have reason to be well satisfied with what God hath thought fit for them, since he hath given them ... Whatsoever is necessary for the Conveniences of life, and Information of Virtue; and has put within the reach of their Discovery, the comfortable Provision for this Life and the Way that leads to a better. (1.1.5)

Like the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Book 3 of the *Essay*, as we shall see, is fattened with the notion of our relationships; Locke was highly aware of the domestic, the set of discourses we visit briefly below.

Idiocy in domestic discourses:

Colie (1965) calls the *Essay* "that lifelong investigation of knowing," and "an experiment in definition ... a document in the conciliation of various traditions" (1965: 31), and notes that,

> [t]he *Essay* is remarkable; in its modest, almost offhand, way, it states most of the modern problems in philosophy and in life; in spite of its relative informality and its failure to cure authority for most of its length, the *Essay* relies heavily upon the store of western philosophical ideas, and refers to and *draws strength from nonphilosophical ways of thinking* current and concurrent in Locke's own period. (Colie 1965: 31-32. My emphasis)

Locke sets criteria that define ideots and changelings with some precision; he also relies on a fairly common-garden familiarity on the part of his audience with all people with disability (including physical and sensory disabilities). He is able to do so because ideots, changelings, and monsters were not simply theorised or abstract entities, but were people who lived in a variety of settings in the 'real' world.

In the seventeenth century, "[i]diocy was seen mainly as a domestic or family problem" says Anne Digby (1996: 4). Digby's next words, however, demonstrate the

difficulty we now have of separating state and family discourses, and highlight our current determination to find oppression:

> institutional remedies were thought largely inappropriate in the early modern period … far from indicating a pre-industrial golden age or social integration this situation suggests that the family was 'at the centre of the state-enforced system of care' (Digby 1996: 4).

We are used now to the notion that there is such a thing as State care, and that such care should be directed at people defined by prescribed measures as having intellectual disability. We accept that this care should be delivered in a set of specific, separate, documented and accountable ways, and assume that this is the way it has always been, or that this is the way that families, over the centuries, have always wanted it to be. Such assumptions are erroneous. The seventeenth century was not a time when remedies were sought, or, in the English context at least, institutions a matter of debate (Porter 2003). The state was neither aware of, nor held responsible for, welfare benefits in any organised way: there were no unemployment benefits, any more than there was a disability pension, no public housing, health care funds, or free public education. There were laws, such as already noted for vagabonds, and there was parish care, as we see below, but to present people with idiocy as the victims of an 'enforced system' of family when only ad hoc, reactive 'systems' were in place for any member of the community is to present a false view. It is important not to employ such a view, with its connotations of passivity and marginalisation when thinking about Locke's inclusions of ideots.

Indeed, Rushton (1996), from whom Digby quotes, while he does suggest that the 'local state' (the parish), only stepped in when familial care was not available, discusses this in the context of the surprising amount of support for ideots he found in the documentation from, and around, the time Locke was writing. Rushton examined early-modern parish records from the north of England. Similarly, Jonathan Andrews (1996), and Richard Neugenbauer (1996), investigated, respectively, the primary source records of caring for the intellectually disabled in early modern London, and those of the Crown's legal incompetency jurisdiction from the thirteenth century on. As did Rushton, these researchers found consistency in the definitions of idiocy and mental illness, all three found that people with intellectual disability, their families or their representatives, petitioned various courts, usually at the parish level, for financial aid. Each of their

papers goes some way, then, toward demonstrating the less formal, more domestic, and often very demanding side of living with idiocy.

> The character of the petitioners, and their reasons for coming to court, reveal much of the dilemmas of the individuals in need ... The majority were women, the largest category being mothers of needy persons. Their reason for requesting aid was largely their own poverty, frequently the result of age or injury. (Rushton 1996: 54)

One early modern petitioner reported on her "innocent son" of twelve years, whose behaviour upset the neighbours, who required constant watching, and who did not recognise her, his own mother (Rushton 1996: 54). Another instance was of Elizabeth Radcliffe, unemployed, with three small children, and herself a 'foolish' woman who was provided with relief from the parish of Bishopgate for seven years: this relief began as occasional payment, but went on to become a regular pension and rent relief (Andrews 1996: 75). While the majority of petitioners for aid were mothers, underlining the familial nature of support, practical care of 'innocent' children was also provided by non-family members and "[s]ome parishes paid for the mentally abnormal year after year" (Rushton 1996: 56). Indeed, Andrews, sifting through cases in London in the latter part of the seventeenth century, found naturals-ideots, or their families, provided with not only alms for food and clothing, but also payment for nursing care and even "snuff ... and shaving" (1996: 76). This is not a picture of plenty, but it is not one of neglect.

Stainton (2001), examining an earlier period than those considered by Rushton and Andrews, identifies poverty, rather than disability, as the more common presenting factor for a person living in a medieval charitable house. Surviving outside an institution was the more common option, however, with Bethlem, more often called Bedlam, holding only 150 mates in the grand hospital rebuilt after the great fire of London in 1666 (Allderidge 1985). Wealthy families also cared for their children with idiocy: in a further study, Andrews (1998), quotes the 1667 record of a Scottish family which made provision of one thousand marks for their ideot daughter, during their lives and after their deaths (1998: 196). That idiocy was acknowledged in the wealthy and aristocratic classes in the pre-modern and earlier periods suggests that, although poverty may have been an outcome of disability just as it is today, low levels of achievement were not linked to poverty or other sites of social disempowerment (race, gender etc) or social

disadvantage (isolation, lack of access to education and so on) in any causative way.[13]

Although it is important not to deny that there must have been instances of abuse, as there are today, ideots were neither confined nor disregarded at the domestic and family level. The records indicate, for example, that some people with idiocy were married:

> Grant to the king's servitor Thomas Witham, chancellor of the Exchequer, of the custody of the body of Katharine Metcalf, late the wife of Edmund Metcalf, who has been an idiot from her birth, and of all her lands and tenements in the county of York and in Kingeston on Hull, to hold during her idiotcy without rendering anything to the king but finding a competant sustenance for her and supporting all charges. (Millington, 2006: 2)

We cannot now know whether or not Katherine's was a marriage of economic and/or family imperative, and/or a marriage in form only,[14] but the judgment does not read as if the inquisitors thought so. Were the 'charges' mentioned children, or servants, or both?

The picture which emerges of the lives of people with disability, as Peter Rushton concludes, is "not a simple one" (1996: 59), but it is one of that suggests the everyday aspects of life were as important to our ancestors living with disability as they are today. Parishes sometimes argued over which was responsible for the person in question, relief was largely only forthcoming when it had to be, and was always dictated by the limited economic resources available, but "the overwhelming evidence suggests that there existed much more careful and organised policies of relief than has hitherto been recognised" (Rushton 1996: 45). This does not mean there was a period during which all persons with idiocy were living peacefully in the community, or wandering the byways as happy and indulged vagabonds, but this pre-institutional period was not characterised only by neglect and disinterest. Which put Locke in a relatively safe position when including people with intellectual disability as evidence of certain ways of processing

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[13] These linkages were not made until the nineteenth century, when, teamed with the developing notions of biological inheritance which we will explore later in this thesis, led very quickly to the type of 'negative eugenics' that Locke raised concerns about in his discussion of the abbot of St Martin (3.6.26) and, more frighteningly, eventually to the mass 'cleansing' of people with intellectual disability, mental illness, physical disability as well as of Jewish ancestry or faith in the Holocaust of World War 2 (Kevles 1985).

[14] Some marriages were ones of convenience, or perhaps inconvenience: Burks (1995) describes the forced marriage of Frances Cokes to the unstable, and possibly ideot, older brother of the Duke of Buckingham, a favourite of James 1. The marriage was set up by Frances's father, Sir Edmund Coke, in order to reinstate himself in the King's favour.

and retaining information; ideots (changelings and monsters) were unlikely to appear either unusual to, or unworthy of, his readers' consideration. Changelings and monsters did, however, raise different questions from those with 'simple' idiocy.

Pre- and early-modern notions of changelings and monsters:

Locke, as we have already seen, differentiates ideots from changelings, and both from those he calls monsters. Generally speaking, his ideots are slow and dull, his monsters have physical anomaly, while his changelings appear to have little or no remnant of reason or communication. This latter is, in fact, a relatively precise usage which both carried with it common cultural meanings, and deviated from everyday definitions.

In general, in the pre- and early-modern eras, changelings, alongside artificial fools, were popular cultural tropes. Some changelings came from the fairies, a replacement for a 'real' child whom they stole. Fairies were not the whimsical creatures we know today, but more capricious and pernicious, and thus, unlike Locke's changelings, the substitute children they left were predominantly malformed, and/or did not grow (Ashliman 1997). In popular culture, the changeling was more often than not a problem being: a changeling babe, for example, was the cause of the dispute between Titania and Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Middleton and Rowley named their 1620s play of intrigue, chastity (or not), jealousy and revenge, *The Changeling*. In *The Changeling* there is no clearly delineated changeling character, but Burks (1995) argues that the changeling is a reference to general perceptions of women who, in the figure of Beatrice-Joanna in the play, are those able to substitute, and disguise themselves. Ashliman (1997) notes that, unlike many fairy tales with their 'once upon a time' beginnings, changeling stories tended to have an identified time and place, and to stake a claim for truth. He quotes a changeling tale from the Grimm's 1816 book *German Legends*, which begins with: "The following true story took place in the year 1580. Near Breslau there lived ..." (1997: 2). Changelings function, he suggests, to explain otherwise incomprehensible events. Martin Luther was an example of a 'learned' adult believer in changelings, or substitute children (Ashliman 1997). For Luther, changelings were malformed children, not left by fairies, but by Satan in exchange for more proper

human children. Hence changelings were not natural, as nature was aligned with God, and never with his fallen angel. Such a belief, Ashliman argues, provided Luther with justification for the infanticide he recommended.

Ashliman also finds a predominance of male changelings, and of children who are voracious eaters, impossible to satisfy. In these qualities there is probably more than a grain of observational reality. Estimates of the precise proportions vary, but without doubt there are significantly more male children with birth defects than female.[15] Of the children with congenital difficulties who survive birth, a number have what is now called Prader Willi syndrome.[16] Prader Willi children tend to have facial stigmata, insatiable hunger, feeding difficulties when babies, and persistent low muscle tone. Although they may appear 'normal' at birth, such children do not grow at the usual rate, and the difficulties they experience become more pronounced as the child develops. Seventeenth century and earlier changelings may indeed have their roots in the reality of the experience of mothers, families, communities living with children with severe disabilities. As scholars of 'wonders' and of the period in question, Daston and Park (1998) put it:

> [l]ocal monstrous births, unlike distant peoples, required immediate decisions regarding attitude and behaviour. Writers like Augustine and Thomas of Cantimpre could speculate at length on the human status of the monstrous races, but the parents, the midwife, and the parish priest had to determine if a monstrous baby was human and should be baptized. (Daston & Park 1998: 57)

Locke spends some time (3.6.26) on the very problem Daston and Park identify, the determining of whether or not a 'monstrous baby' should be baptised, an issue we will turn to later in this thesis.

Their popularity in myth and in drama ensured, or perhaps was a result of the fact that changelings, like cap and bell fools, were at least partially unsanctioned, outside the

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[15] Male foetuses are generally smaller and more liable to pregnancy and birthing problems, while the male y chromosome contains much less genetic information then the x chromosome. Where there is a defect in one x chromosome, a female, with another x can usually 'overcome' this; a male, with a y, cannot. Males thus have a higher incidence of 'x linked' difficulties such as 'fragile x syndrome,' haemophilia and a number of other identified disorders (Rose 1993).

[16] Praeder (or Prader)-Willi syndrome, as is the custom, is named after the professionals who first wrote up and published the characteristics that families and communities had been recognising for centuries (http://www.pwsausa.org/syndrome/history.htm.)

church's domination.[17] They functioned to deal with peculiarities the audience found tantalising, wondrous, enjoyable, and for which neither the Bible or church could offer a viable explanation. Although there is nothing in the *Essay* that clearly indicates Locke believed in fairies or baby exchanges, it seems likely that his choice of terminology was conscious: in the *Essay*, as in popular culture, those he calls changelings are so different from other humans that they might well be unsanctioned, unnatural, and, at least in a world of (Lockean) nominal species, might be better placed in a species-group of their own (4.4.16 for Locke's discussion, and see Chapter 4 below). Changelings, for Locke, as well as the broader community, inhabited the realm of the not-quite-explicable.

In the popular imagination of the late medieval through to pre-modern periods, there seems to have been considerable overlap between changelings and monsters: both might have physical, cognitive and or behavioural anomalies, both might be the work of God, but could equally be the work of the fairies or Satan. Changeling myths persisted in parallel with an interest in 'wonders' who or which had significant, and exotic, physical peculiarity.

> The archetypal medieval wonder was the Blemmy or basilisk, member of an exotic race or species, whereas late fifteenth-and sixteenth-century writers increasingly privileged individual monsters like Brant's two headed baby or the apparently inexhaustible supply of human-animal hybrids and conjoined twins that graced popular broadsides as well as learned books. (Daston & Park 1998: 173)

The Renaissance and early-modern worlds were ones in which chance played little or no part. Everything fitted in, in some way or other, and everything demonstrated the goodness of God, or had to be accounted for in a way that maintained the power of God. Babies born with unusual physical attributes, from six fingers to pointed heads, or children who did not grow and develop as they were expected to do had to be explained. Some might be considered substitute children or changelings, others carried with them the inscription of the marvellous, and were thought to be portents (Daston & Park 1998). Monsters were not slated as the outcome of evil, if for no other reason than,

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[17] It is interesting to note that changeling myths have persisted. As late as the final years of the nineteenth century there was a case in Ireland, for example, of a young woman, Brigit Cleary, burnt to death in the effort to exorcise the changeling from her. Her husband and various members of her family and community were gaoled for their part in the event (Bourke 1999).

> [b]ecause there have always been too many sinners and nor enough monsters, monstrous births were never easily pitched to the people as punishment for individual moral failings ... by encouraging us to reflect on our behavior, monsters were meant to move us away from sin. (Blumberg 2009: 20)

Medieval and even early-modern taxonomies were not biological, but were developed with an eye for the emblematic significance of the animals or plants (Bowler 2003). Bowler (2003) cites Conrad Gesner's *History of Animals* (1551-1558), as an example of the listing of animal species, some we would recognise today, some entirely imaginary, and all described "along with their roles in mythology, heraldry, and other aspects of human culture" (2003: 43). The heightened interest in wonders in late medieval, into the pre- and early-modern periods was part of a shift in the conceptual framework of the orders of nature, and therefore,

> [a] history of wonders as objects of natural inquiry is therefore also a history of the orders of nature. A history of wonder as a passion of natural inquiry is also a history of the evolving collective sensibility of naturalists. Pursued in tandem these interwoven histories show how the two sides of knowledge, objective order and subjective sensibility, were obverse and reverse of the same coin rather than opposed to one another. (Daston & Park 1998: 14).

Consistent with the classificatory systems, the distinctions of natural and supernatural that we might now take for granted are not ones that Locke would have been familiar with. They are not ones that Locke's predecessors would have recognised at all. Early in his career, for example, Thomas Aquinas (c 1225-1274) followed the Augustine doctrine that miracles as described in the Bible were events to inspire wonder, rather than extra-ordinary events to convince or convert to faith; that is, miracles were not supernatural, not beyond nature and explanation. This way of thinking was part of a framework in which "nature mirrored the will of God; hence all nature was a miracle and nothing was contrary to nature" (Daston 1998: 154). The Bible told of God's creation of the world, and all the creatures upon it. Creatures did not evolve, humans had little freedom or ability to act upon and influence the world around them. The "very categories of nature and culture ... are of relatively recent provenance" (Daston 1998: 153): previously there was only nature.

However, Aquinas began to conceive of a natural order "that was at one remove from the immediate volitions of the deity" (Harrison 2006: 497). In this new, developing formulation, accidents and miscarriages, such as the birth of a baby with six fingers

"might not be miracles," but could occur as "marvels or portents - preternatural events," associated either with angels or with malevolent spirits (Harrison 2006: 497). Or "God might engineer a monstrous birth or celestial apparition as a warning to sinful Christians – but so might a deceptive demon, a wily sorcerer, or nature itself" (Daston 1988: 158).

Aquinas, and many of his contemporaries, were concerned to downplay the intervention of the demonic and supernatural (Daston & Park 1998), but, as with the artificial fool, the unsanctioned remained popular: at the 'street-level' our late medieval and pre-modern ancestors were as fascinated with what they called monstrosities as any fairground 'freak show' attendee of relatively recent times. People with physical anomalies, such as the girl-child with full facial hair, dressed in ornate Elizabethan costume, whose image is the frontispiece for Daston and Park's twenty year study, *Wonders and the Order of Nature*, or the imagined Ravenna monster, with its fabulous mixture of fish, bird and human feature pictured in Heut (1993: 2), had connotations of an immaterial and less knowable world (Huet 1993). The fascination with wonders was not restricted to the purchasers of penny pamphlets or the like. Stillman (1995) refers to the "legions of monster tropes in polemical literature" in the mid seventeenth century (1995: 795). Particularly as dissemination of information flourished with the invention of the printing press, stories and pictures of monsters, many with a mixture of human and animal heads, or tails, with hair all over their body, or the legs of a horse, were eagerly exchanged (Daston & Park 1998; Huet 1993). Nature was "capricious" (Bowler 2003: 45), and there was neither taboo nor knowledge to prevent the idea that monstrous births might come about, as they were often thought to do, by the union of two different species. Locke, as we see below, refers to reports of this latter in the *Essay*.

As the gap between God and nature widened in pre-modern times, wonders, previously occasional expressions of a wonderful God to whom nature was attached, took on a much more foundational role, moving to centre stage particularly in Protestant England: wonders became miracles, and proofs of the truth of Christianity (Harrison 2006). Harrison cites both Locke and his friend, chemist-philosopher, Robert Boyle, as exponents of the evidentiary role of miracles in Christian religion, and Daston and Park note that "Boyle and many of his contemporaries saw wonder as a goad to inquiry, and wonders as prime objects of investigation" (1998: 13). Locke's support of the human

status of the abbot of St Martin – he who was born with "so little of the figure of a man, that it bespake him rather a monster" (3.6.26) - while questioning whether those who had a 'proper' human shape, but none of the social attributes Locke saw as given by God to humans, should be relegated to an in-between status, suggests that he was influenced by the notion of (physical) wonders as examples of God's truth.

Chapter summary: idiocy had significance in the pre- and early-modern periods:

This chapter has demonstrated that it is erroneous to claim a lack of documentary evidence concerning intellectual disability prior to the nineteenth century. The above information can, and should, be regarded as part of the history of intellectual disability. The information in this chapter also makes the case that Locke's ideots were not his alone, not an abstract or imagined collection of individuals conveniently theorised for the purposes of the *Essay*. They were individuals from every stratum in society, of both genders, adults and infants, some with children of their own. The many and various references to people with intellectual disability in the pre- and early-modern periods reveal why it was that Locke thought to include people with intellectual disability in his "great part of mankind" - a term that, as aforesaid and as I show below, is to be found repeatedly in the *Essay*, and was of considerable importance to the argument. The plethora of cultural meanings for idiocy, monstrosity, and for changelings also helps explain why Locke could be confident that the evidence from ideots would be recognised by, and would resonate with, his readers.

Discussing the seventeenth century, Nussbaum (1953) noted that "[t]he advancement of science was in large part the function of an elite. As far as the general population was concerned, then as now it was little aware of the problem of the scientist" (1953: 9). This chapter has shown that concepts of changelings and wonders seem to have functioned in much the same way as popular science, in particular popular genetics, functions today: they offered explanations for unexpected birth events, for children – and adults – who did not behave as expected. Parents were, of course, sometimes to blame (see Willis's explanations for stupidity, for example); they were intemperate, immoral, or simply aging. But idiocy, in all its manifestations, was natural, something to be – occasionally, at least - expected.

Chapter 3

Idiocy and anti-nativism

The readership of the *Essay* would have been familiar with ideots, changelings and monsters. They were people that the churches, particularly at the practical, parish level, the families, medical and legal practitioners were well aware of, and in whom painters, playwrights and early novelists found characters to meet their creative needs: their appearance in the *Essay* was not a questionable idiosyncrasy. However, this does not explain *why* Locke chose to refer to ideots in what Aarsleff describes as the "best-known and most dramatic feature of Locke's thought" (1994: 255), the refutation of the doctrine of imprinted knowledge (nativism).

This chapter concentrates on the evidence from idiocy in the *Essay*'s short, but highly polemical Book 1, 'Of Innate Ideas', beginning with a summary of the debate around nativism in the second half of the seventeenth century. From this it can be seen that Locke would have wanted to be sure of his evidence when he undertook to refute such a popular belief. Locke's arguments against the doctrine are then examined, with an overview of all the supporting evidence, but with a closer examination of that from people with intellectual disability. I review the seventeenth and early eighteenth century responses to ideots in the polemic. This leads into the questions that Buickerood has asked: "What is it about idiots that makes them an apposite example here? Why did Locke appeal to them to make the point?" (2004: 5). This chapter mounts the argument that the anti-nativist polemic was at its most effective because of, and could not have survived without, the evidence of people with intellectual disability. Finally, I turn to 'all Mankind', a term repeatedly employed in Book 1, arguing that this diverse group was central to Locke's thinking, and needs to be further considered, as it will be in the next chapter of this thesis.

The theory of nativism in the seventeenth century:

Nativism, in the seventeenth century, took two basic forms (Rickless 2007). In what commentators have since called the naive or occurrent form of innatism or nativism, it was believed that specific maxims, principles and ideas were fully formed at, or before, birth in the human. In more sophisticated form, now often referred to as dispositional innatism or nativism, and to which Descartes and Leibniz subscribed, (Mabbot 1973; Rickless 2007), what was in-born was the inalienable potential to fully recognise, *without sense experience,* the immediate and absolute truth of the notion of God, and, importantly, of various other maxims when they were presented, and/or as a person came into the use of reason. Locke took both forms of nativism to task. However, as he states in the introduction to his argument against innate principles, and as Yolton

(1993) has convincingly demonstrated, Locke was more concerned with the "established Opinion amongst some Men" (1.2.1), or the beliefs of the educated public, than the details of the more academic or rigorous theories. In this vein, Locke argued firstly against 'maxims', such as "*Whatsoever is, is;* and 'tis *impossible for the same thing to be, and not to be*" (1.2.4), (also known as the principles of identity, and of non-contradiction), being in-born. Comfortable that he had proved these maxims not to be innate, primarily as he had shown they were not universally assented to (1.3.1), he moved on, in Chapters 2 and 3 of Book 1, to dispute the in-born, absolute and universal nature of prohibitions against theft and murder, and of moral principles, such as 'do as you would be done by'. In Chapter 4, he examined ideas and principles such as those of mathematics, of identity, and of the notion of God: he found none to meet criteria for innateness, even that of God.[1]

In the third millennium it is hard to imagine that there was a time when it was thought that we were born with such specific ideas intact, but when Locke was writing, "the vast majority took for granted that God, in his infinite goodness and wisdom, had inscribed in human minds innate principles that constitute the foundation of knowledge" (Rickless 2007: 33). In the second half of the seventeenth century, in particular, the notion of God's imprimatur of ideas was held by some with such strong conviction that, despite the *Essay*'s length, its breadth of treatment of human understanding, its many sub-topics, and its detail, much of the initial distrust of the *Essay* was on account of its anti-nativism (Yolton 1993: 1-63). Locke recognised this himself, writing that the "short epitome of the treatise, which was printed 1688, was by some condemned without reading, because innate ideas were denied in it" (Locke 1975, Epistle: 10).

Why was nativism such a current and important issue? Apart from some interest on the part of Aquinas, who followed the Aristotelian doctrine that nothing was in the mind that did not come through the senses, it does not appear to have concerned the Medievalists, for whom it would have made little sense to argue about whether or not God inscribed maxims on our minds or souls: God was the origin of our lives, our

[1] As noted in the Introduction to this thesis, for ease of reading in the following discussion, I sometimes employ 'innate ideas' to cover all three categories of maxims (such as those of identity and non-contradiction), principles (moral propositions), and ideas (such as that of infinity or duration). As did Locke, I also use or 'innate notions' as a general term.

conscience, and therefore, unquestionably, the origin of our thoughts and ideas. Thus, "the connection between innateness and truth may have been taken for granted as often as it was because of the widespread acceptance of belief in the teleological ordering of nature according to divine intent" (Greenlee 1972: 254).

However, in the seventeenth century much was being questioned. It was a time of political, social, scientific and theological upheaval, with the English going through civil war, the beheading of a king, the rule of Oliver Cromwell and the Commonwealth, the Anglo-Spanish war, the Restoration of the monarchy, religious turmoil, particularly with the ascension of the Catholic James upon the death of Charles II. The colonies of northern America were being settled, but puritans remained a vocal religious minority in England. Not only in the puritan sects but more generally, religion as a relationship between the individual person and her/his God was gaining in popularity, and natural religion, with its roots in reason and ordinary experience, rather than supernatural revelation, meant that mysteries such as the workings of the mind were of interest, and could possibly be explored. As noted in Chapter 2 here, in this century, nature began to take on a life of its own, and the power of the deity to will or control every event was diminishing. Discoveries in science – Harvey's of circulation of the blood, Newton's physics – were rapidly reworking the landscape of knowledge. The increasingly experimental approach of natural philosophy, stressing the accumulation and testing of information, implicitly challenged the belief that the deity had given humans ideas before birth, and that such ideas (maxims and principles) could provide the source, and determine the extent, of human knowledge. In this tumultuous atmosphere,

> innate moral ideas, were avidly defended by virtually all of Locke's contemporaries who believed that these self-evident truths were absolutely necessary for the stability of morality and religion. Only in this way, it was thought, could morality be given an objective foundation, could a crisis in the epistemology of morals be avoided; to deny innate moral ideas seemed to smack of Hobbesian relativism, and this the seventeenth century refused to tolerate. (Spellman 1987: 480)

This made for considerable debate: early in the century, Bacon (1561-1626) dismissed the idea of the *tabula rasa*, although it was Descartes who, some years later, evinced a conscious pro-nativism: "[i]t is Descartes's programme that requires that the idea of God be innate, or at least so he believed" (Rogers 1996: 2). French philosopher, Malebranche (1638-1715), despite an alignment with Descartes, posited objections to

the doctrine, although his case was "not well presented" (Jolley 1988: 73). Just a year after Descartes's death, Hobbes published the incendiary *Leviathan* (1651), which caused him to be accused of what was considered a dangerous atheism. In this, he presented children as essentially blank and teachable.[2] Gassendi (1592-1655), who is said to have influenced Locke,[3] was anti-nativist, and expended considerable time and words on the notion that all knowledge originated in sensation, that the mind, therefore, was essentially a blank slate (Michael and Michael, 1990). However, "[i]n spite of the protests of Gassendi and his followers, the theory of innate knowledge had gained in favour during the seventeenth century both on the Continent and in England" (Aaron 1971: 83).

The Cambridge Platonists[4] were pro-nativism, although with various modifications of the naive form of the doctrine (Yolton 1993). The Platonists were not necessarily conservative: Lord Herbert, one of the very few people Locke mentions by name in the *Essay*, was hoping to further the cause of deism, and the Platonists in general viewed innatism as providing a basis for natural, rather than revealed religion (Lamprecht 1927), both radical positions at the time. At the same time, "[the] appeal to innate, pre-experimental principles was opposed to the empiricism of this new [Royal Society] movement" (Yolton 1993: 45).

Nativism, then, was not just in the air, but "the innate hypothesis was a corner-stone of the major philosophical and theological systems of Locke's day, English and foreign, orthodox and heterodox" (Barnes 1972: 195). As Greenlee (1972) reads it,

> [m]any writers of the period believed that fundamental moral principles were grounded in natural law and that natural law required an innate conscience provided with innate moral principles. Similarly many thought the doctrine of God's existence required an innate knowledge of that existence, with the consequence that a denial of such innateness was taken as a denial of the possibility of knowledge of that existence. (Greenlee 1972: 254)

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[2] In *Leviathan* (1660) Hobbes, like Locke, ascribes the senses a seminal role in knowledge: in fact, nothing in inborn except the sense (Chapter 8). However, elsewhere he sees the "appetites and aversions" as inborn (Chapter 6), while reason is not (Chapter 5).

[3] The degree of *direct* influence of Gassendi on Locke is the subject of debate (Aaron 1971; Kroll 1984; Michael and Michael, 1990).

[4] The Cambridge Platonists included philosophers and theologians Ralph Cudworth, Henry More and Nathaniel Culverwell. John Norris, who gave the first published criticism of the *Essay*, was a younger follower of the Platonists.

That is, although bishop and philosopher, Richard Cumberland (1631-1718), was actually anti-nativist (Kirk 1987), both Ashcraft (1969) and Aarsleff (1994) have noted that support for the doctrine was primarily moral and theological: "whenever a doctrinal explanation was met with a challenge, the clergy retreated to the fortress of innate knowledge" (Ashcraft 1969: 200). In this context, Locke, a man whom all the available biographical data paints as careful, a man sometimes willing to make "extreme accommodations ... to different audiences and occasions" (Forde 2001: 408), must have felt very strongly to open the only major work he put his name to with an outright rejection of a doctrine that many established thinkers adhered to.[5] Furthermore, Locke was a highly moral man, and when he penned his polemic against nativism, "the stakes could not have been higher," given that "knowledge of our duties is founded on innate 'practical' axioms, the absence of which seemed to make room for moral disagreement and relativism profound enough to destabilize entire societies" (Rickless 2007: 34). Clearing the ground of nativism, for Locke, and in his time, was not a diversion from the main game, not an issue to be taken on lightly.

Why was Locke so determined? Contrary to what I remember being taught at university, the evidence is against Locke being intent on producing a theory of humans as all born empty or blank slates, in such a way that only experience determined everything from personality to one's mental health, or that all minds were equal (in intellect, or any other characteristic). It is important to pause and look at this issue for a moment, as the evidence from people with intellectual disability, from the aged, from non-European people makes no sense without the recognition that Locke did *not* spend the first book of the *Essay* setting up a nurture versus nature argument.

Firstly, it can be noted that Locke was writing at a time, too, when (supposed) innateness was not biological, was not a matter of genetic inscriptions or prescriptions that account for everything from the size of our feet to our ability, or not, to do long division in our head (Muller-Wille 2007; Terrall 2007, for discussion of developing concepts of generation and inheritance). Innate and natural were firmly linked, but it was the conscience, not biology or genetics or even intelligence, that was "the most natural

[5] Locke did not admit to his authorship of the *Two Treatises*, published in the same year as the *Essay*, and, in fact, went to considerable lengths to hide this (Horwitz 1990).

of faculties" (Yolton 2004: 32). Consistent with this, it can readily be seen - when the *Essay* is actually read - that Locke was well aware that the "Ways, whereby our Understandings come to attain those Notions of Things we have" are inevitably various, as well as inevitably limited (1.1.2). At the same time as he emphasised the bounds and restrictions of human knowledge, he positioned the faculties necessary for developing knowledge as dependent on "the bountiful Author of our Being;" it was the divine author, not our parents or ancestors, who "bestowed on us ... Whatsoever is necessary for the Conveniences of Life, and Information of Vertue" (1.1.5).

Furthermore, seventeenth century innateness concerned an idea or set of ideas rather than an individual characteristic or trait:

> First, the term 'innate' involves (1) a contrast with *importation* from without, the idea thus characterised being held not to be learned or in any way acquired; and there is also (2) a contrast with internal *manufacture,* the idea in question being claimed not to be synthesised or in any way generated by oneself.
> Second, the term 'idea' itself involves a whole series of significant contrasts. It indicates that we have to do with *concepts* or *notions*, and not, strictly speaking, (1) knowledge or (2) intellectual *capacities* or (3) mental *propensities*. (Rescher 1966: 205-6. Emphasis in original)

Without a concept of biological heredity, or at least without a refined, research-based one, but with a notion of natural differences in *capacity* - as evidenced by people with intellectual disability - Locke was happy to accept the mind is not 'naked', that, for example, "Nature ... has put into Man a desire for Happiness, and an aversion to Misery" (1. 3. 3), and that, in fact, these:

> indeed are innate practical Principles, which (as practical Principles ought) do continue constantly to operate and influence all our Actions, without ceasing: These may be observ'd in all Persons and all Ages, steady and universal; but these are Inclinations of the Appetite to good, not Impressions of truth on the Understanding. (1. 3. 3)

Similarly, he noted:

> I say most of the Antipathies, I do not say all, for some of them are truly Natural, depend on our original Constitution, and are born with us; but a great part of those which are counted Natural, would have been known to be from unheeded, though, perhaps, early Impressions. (2.33.7)

Thus, there was quite a lot that was innate, but none of it ideas as such. God furnished us with the capacity for language (3.1.1), as well as provided us those faculties sufficient for our understanding (1.2.1) and it was those, not an innate impression, that

are sufficient for us to have an idea of God:

> Though GOD has given us no innate *Ideas* of himself: though he has stamped no original Characters on our Minds, wherein we may read his Being; yet having furnished us with those Faculties, our Minds are endowed with, he hath not left himself without witness. (4.10.1)

According to Spellman (1987), the desire for broader education programs in the Enlightenment and later, has meant that "the infectious lure of the *tabula rasa* concept has often led to an overemphasis of the environmentalist aspects of Locke's thought" (1987: 478). It is important, in considering Locke's anti-nativism, and the function of the evidence from idiocy within it, that we remember Locke was *not* proposing that all the faculties, or indeed motivators of, knowledge came from the environment. In other words, even if we "suppose the Mind to be, as we say, white Paper, void of all Characters; without any *Ideas*," and ask, "[h]ow comes it to be furnished?" (2.1.2), white paper is a substance. Paper is blank but it is not a void; the mind at birth is unwritten, with no ideas inscribed on the paper, but has – in the analogy with paper - thickness, density, colour and texture. Or, to follow Locke's own alternate metaphor, the mind is an empty room or domicile: it requires furnishing, but we can assume it already has the walls, floor and ceiling. The mind of the baby is a contained space, ready to be filled, and according to its own limits. In fact, the idea and terminology of nature/nurture was one that *post*-dates Locke by going on for two centuries. It was developed and coined by Francis Galton, cousin of Charles Darwin, and the man who also coined the term eugenics in the second half of the nineteenth century (Kevles 1985). It would be very foolish to confuse Locke, the investigator of process, with Galton, the hereditarian. Although, there is at least one thing on which they would agree: "[a]ctually, there was nothing further from Locke's mind than to suggest that all men were initially equal and that subsequent differences were due solely to their individual educational experiences" (Spellman 1987: 478). Any other assumption, Spellman argues, leads to significant misreading of Locke's work (1987: 474-492). This misreading has, as this thesis demonstrates, included an obscuring of the role of ideots.

If not to instigate a nature/nurture split, why did Locke so vehemently oppose innate ideas? As we have just, indirectly, seen, he was not simply producing a political, liberal humanism, either. In the *Essay*, unlike the *Two Treatises*, Locke is interested in

understanding, not political responsibility: the *Essay* is not a call for equality, its humans are diverse in age, capacity, nationality, the likelihood of being citizens. In rejecting nativism, Locke was, according to Lowe (2005), wanting to clear the ground of a "socially and intellectually pernicious buttress for all sorts of obscurantist and authoritarian views" (2005: 17-8). Greenlee (1972) puts it similarly, saying that Locke wanted to "to further intellectual adventurousness" (1972: 264). Biddle (1976) suggests that he was "adamantly opposed to the procedure by which such laws of opinion, reputation, or fashion were given the status of divine law through the claim that they were implanted in men's minds by God" (1976: 413). Another highly respected Locke commentator, Hans Aarsleff (1994), describes a less grand project: noting that "the best known and most dramatic feature of Locke's thought is the dismissal of innate ideas and principles from epistemology and the philosophy of mind," and that this came about simply as "no matter how he looked at the issue he found it impossible to distinguish what was claimed to be innate ideas and principles from what we can acquire by our natural faculties, which of course are innate" (1994: 256).

Perhaps, then, we should take Locke at face-value: his own statements suggest Aarsleff's is the nearest to correct estimation of intent. In the Epistle Locke says that "[*t*]*o break in upon the Sanctuary of Vanity and Ignorance, will, be I suppose, some Service to Humane Understanding*" (Locke 1975, Epistle: 10). In the same passage, he characterises himself, not as an intellectual adventurer, but as an "*underlabourer*," and in the following paragraph describes the argument against nativism simply as "*taking away false foundations*" (Locke 1975, Epistle: 10). So, while he was clearly irritated by the "*Abuse of Language hav[ing] for so long passed for Mysteries of Science*" (Locke 1975, Epistle: 10), it seems likely that there was no grand scheme, and most certainly not in terms of proving that humans were all born with the same, complete emptiness. Identifying and understanding the processes of understanding, and their impact on the extent of human knowledge – the *Essay*'s aims – and doing so on the basis of the evidence of humans from all states and stages of life, (the latter as we see in more detail below), made Locke realise he had to clear away the rather silly idea that God would give us pre-formed and not all basic ideas, as the basis of knowledge.

Interestingly, within a year of the *Essay*'s release, Locke's friend and supporter,

James Tyrrell, wrote that the theologians were "much scandalized that so sweet and easy a part of their sermons: as that of Laws written in the heart, is rendered false and uselesse" (quoted in Yolton 1993: 52). Quite quickly, despite the apparently deeply held convictions, "Locke's arguments against innate ideas were apparently accepted by the great majority of thinking men" (Armstrong 1969: 192). The question, now, is how did Locke go about erasing the theory of nativism so effectively?

Locke's arguments against nativism:

Having asserted that human capacities are limited, various, but in-born, Locke, in Book 1, Chapter 2, tumbles head-first into his refutation of innate ideas. The approach he takes is to seek out the arguments usually given in favour of nativism, and destroy them, not with rational argument, but with evidence: "Locke refuted the claim of innate ideas or principles by treating their existence as an empirical question, a matter of fact subject to determination through historical research" (D. Carey 2004: 260). In Book 1, he gathers together everyone that can be observed - from children's nurses to Peruvians - under the rubric 'all Mankind', and shows how their behaviour either evidences learning of ideas, or demonstrates, by absence, the lack of inborn inscription.

According to Locke's reading of the common view, the first, and major, argument for nativism is "drawn from Universal Consent," but this proof has two "misfortunes" (1.2.3). The first misfortune he deals with summarily: even if "all Mankind" did assent to any truth this, of itself, would not demonstrate the truth was imprinted (1.2.3). The second misfortune, for the nativist, is that there simply are no innate principles to which *everyone* agrees (1.2.4). This is not to say Locke disputes the truth of the aforementioned maxims, "*Whatsoever is, is*" and "*'tis impossible for the same things to be, and not to be*" (1.2.1); his point is that there are some Men who simply know nothing of these truths. He immediately sets out who it is that has no such "apprehension":

> For, first 'tis evident that all *Children*, and *Ideots*, have not the least Apprehension or Thought of them (speculative principles) and the want of that is enough to destroy that universal assent, which must needs be the necessary concomitant of all innate truths. (1.2.5)

Given the forceful support for the doctrine in the second half of the seventeenth century, Locke's opening salvo needed to be highly effective. He could not afford

questionable evidence. That the "want" of speculative principles in ideots and children was, in Locke's eyes, proof-enough to immediately destroy the logical support for nativism, gives each group both a significant function and a depth of meaning. They are not just examples of lack, they are *the* evidence that there are no innate ideas. In a recent analysis, Rickless (2007), in a somewhat backhanded way, has recognised this. He says,

> [w]hat irked Locke was that the proponents of AUC [the argument from universal consent] needed to show more than just that there are principles to which *many* humans assent: they also needed to show that there are principles to which *no* humans *fail* to assent. Whence the importance of what might otherwise appear to be an unnecessary reminder of the existence of humans who are insufficiently mature, intelligent, or educated to assent to the principles commonly thought innate. (Rickless 2007: 46)

However, idiots, as we have seen in Chapter 2, were part of the cultural landscape of Locke's time, and he clearly does not appear to feel he has produced an "otherwise ... unnecessary reminder": the evidence from people with idiocy is not aside, not an inclusion Locke keeps in the margin, but rather it recurs, and is positioned so that it has it real import. Section 5 continues, making the point that it would be absurd to suppose some people have these principles imprinted but are not aware of them:

> If ... Children and *Ideots* have Souls, have Minds, with those impressions upon them, they must unavoidably perceive them, and necessarily know and assent to these Truths; which since they do not it is evident that there are no such Impressions. (1.2.5)

Goodey (1994) has suggested that the 'if' in the above section signifies an unwillingness to accord ideots (and presumably children – although Goodey does not say - as Locke includes them under the 'if'), the having of souls. This is an illogical claim, as it would be counterproductive for Locke to, particularly at this early point, strip his most prominent evidence of humanness. Logically, it seems we are on relatively safe ground in taking the "if" in the above quotation to be rhetorical, not conditional. Doing so is also supported by the fact that, in keeping with Locke's asserted 'underlabourer' position and his easy-going, often conversational style (Colie 1965), 'if' is used, indeed perhaps over-used, throughout the *Essay*, both in the form 'if a is true, then b follows', and very often in the 'if I may say' style of politeness.[6] Locke is not questioning whether

[6] 'If' is also often used as exhortation to the reader to do something: see, for example, in the Epistle where Locke exhorts the reader to "if thou wilt make use of thy own Thoughts in

or not ideots and children have souls or minds – his proof would be invalidated if he did - he is asserting that, *as* they do have souls/minds (even if imperfect in the first case, and undeveloped in the second), they *should* show some evidence of imprinted or embedded notions, *if* there are such. God is the author of human capacity, ideots are natural; they (and children) would have maxims, if these were indeed God's bounty.

Of course, children would not have to show innate ideas immediately, at least in the dispositional form of nativism. Between the section above (1.2.5), and the next reference to idiocy, Locke attempts to demolish the counter-claim he assumes his interlocutor would present - that imprinted ideas might lie dormant, or at least unrecognised, until the child attains the use of reason. Interestingly, it is not children's realisation, but the centrality of reason itself that Locke attacks, discounting the role of reason in the knowing of innate maxims (and much else):

> But how can these Men think the *Use of Reason* necessary to discover Principles that are supposed innate, when Reason (if we may believe them) is nothing else, but the Faculty of deducing unknown Truths from Principles or Propositions that are already known? ... Those who will take the Pains to reflect with a little attention on the Operations of the Understanding, will find, that this ready Assent of the Mind to some Truths, depends not, either on native Inscription, or the *Use of Reason*; but on a Faculty of the Mind quite distinct from both of them as we shall see hereafter. (1.2.9 & 11)

Thus, "according to Locke, reason by itself provides no primary notions and thus cannot be regarded as a source of knowledge" (von Leyden 1954: 46), and it is a tautology for nativists to argue that reason is what determines the acknowledgement of inborn maxims, because reason, in the nativist argument, is dependent on inborn maxims in the first place.

It can also be pointed out that the *Essay* does not begin, or ever reach, the position that it is reason per se that is the defining faculty of the human mind: for example "[w]e may as well think the use of Reason necessary to make our Eyes discover visible Objects, as that there should be need of Reason, or the Exercise thereof, to make the Understanding see what is Originally engraven on it" (1.2.9). In downplaying the

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reading" (Locke, 1975: 7), implying that the reader ought to make use of her/his own thoughts, rather than follow the herd. A little later he employs the somewhat obsequious form "if I may be permitted to speak freely" (Locke 1975, Epistle: 9) and later again, "If I may so speak" (2.29.16).

centrality of reason, Locke, I suggest, was opening the category of Man to those often excluded: idiots, children and, indeed, women.[7] This is a point I return to in detail below.

Mathematical demonstration is introduced in 1.2.10, again as part of the discussion of reason. It is one of the few non-human examples in Book 1; mathematical truths (not innate, not necessarily immediately assented to when proposed) act primarily only as an analogy for speculative maxims. Then there is the question of the differences among knowable truths (1.2.13), and the argument that even if children do assent to maxims when they "come into the use of reason" (1.2.12), this would not show such maxims to be innate. Furthermore, "[h]ow many instances of the use of reason may we observe in children, a long time before they have any knowledge of this maxim, 'That it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be?'" (1.2.12).

Locke is building up the evidence here, and doing so using familiar and valued examples: all readers had been children; mathematics was seminal to the thinking of the seventeenth century. The analogy of mathematical truths, and the example of children's use of reason are not the complete picture, however, and the evidence from children is followed immediately with: "[a]nd a great part of illiterate people and savages pass many years, even of their rational age, without ever thinking on this and the like general propositions" (1.2.12). This is the crux of the matter, that children are not sufficient evidence: proof that some people *never* come to show or assent to these principles and maxims, not even when they have reached adulthood, is the missing piece. Non-European people are not fully satisfactory either; I return to this point below.

Another branch of the dispositional theory of nativism, assenting "at first hearing" is then called into question; several sections on this issue (1.2:13-24) presenting

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[7] In particular, reason was not generally ascribed to women in the seventeenth century. The editors' introduction to *Her Own Life: Autobiographical Writings by Seventeenth Century Women* (1989), describes women as subject to "beliefs around 'natural' or divine hierarchies [that] related to very precise ideas about the 'nature' of women: being composed primarily of cold and wet humours, they were subject to a 'changeable, deceptive and tricky temperament'" (Graham, Hinds, Hobby & Wilcox 1989: 7). Women were also much more libidinous creatures than men: Thomas Bacon instructed girls from the age of fourteen to strive to "suppress that lust and desire in them: these 'lower' passions supposedly "ruled the higher ones of reason and intellect, which were the province of the male" (1989: 7). From the first book of the *Essay*, women, even if they were thought of as not as reasonable as men (this not necessarily being what Locke would have thought, as we see below) need not be excluded from having understanding, because understanding is not dependent on reason.

evidence from children's learning and awareness of ideas, and arguing that there is generally a significant confusion about what should, could, or would, be innate. Locke insists that nativists cannot claim a proposition to be innate on the basis of criteria that can also be met by other propositions; they must be able to *evidence* that the innate differs from the adventitious. This is followed up with a return to his own evidence:

> I agree with these Defenders of innate Principles, That if they are *innate*, they must needs *have universal assent* ... But then, by these Men's own Confession, they cannot be innate; since they are not assented to, by those who understand not the Terms, nor by a great part of those who do understand them, but have yet never heard, nor thought of those Propositions; which, I think, is at least one half of Mankind (1.2.24).

When Locke concludes this particular point with the summary "[t]hat the general Maxims, we are discoursing of, are not known to Children, *Ideots,* and a great part of Mankind, we have already sufficiently proved" (1.2.27), it is clear that those who do not understand "the Terms" are people with idiocy. It is also clear that their lack of innate principles is not an isolated example, an exception that demonstrates the truth of a generalisation: ideots are a primary *case* against nativism.

Evidence from other groups is offered, too, in Chapter 2, and again in Chapters 3 and 4. This evidence is discussed below. However, it must be noted here that it is the data from ideots and children that frames Chapter 2, and it is this chapter that provides the template for those that follow. In the final point of Chapter 2, ideots again play a significant role: if the wise and benevolent God were to imprint innate ideas in his (human) creatures, then they would be most observable in those humans who were most "uncorrupted," and in need of them. This uncorrupted group is the by-now familiar "*Children*, *Ideots*, *Savages* and *illiterate* People" (1.2.27). This is a point Locke does not readily let go:

> That these Characters, if they were native and original Impressions, *should appear fairest and clearest in* those Persons, in whom yet we find no Footsteps of them: ... they are not innate, since they are least known to those, in whom, if they were innate, they must needs exert themselves with most Force and Vigour. For *Children, Ideots, Savages*, and *illiterate* People, being of all others the least corrupted by Custom, or borrowed Opinions: Learning, and Education, having not cast their Native thoughts into new Moulds; nor by super-inducing foreign and studied Doctrines, confounded those fair Characters Nature had written there; one might reasonably imagine, that in

> their Minds these innate Notions should lie open fairly to every one's view, as 'tis certain the thoughts of Children do. (1.2.27)

And again:

> It might very well be expected, that these Principles should be perfectly known to Naturals; which being stamped immediately on the Soul (as these Men suppose) can have no dependence on the Constitutions or the Organs of the Body, the only confessed difference between them and others. But alas, amongst *Children, Ideots, Savages* and the grosly *Illiterate,* what general Maxims are to be found? (1.2.27)

And finally,

> such kind of general Propositions, are seldom mentioned in the huts of Indians: much less are they to be found in the thoughts of Children, or any Impressions of them on the Minds of *Naturals*. (1.2.27)

In this section, Locke slips from ideots to naturals, as if they are one and the same, reflecting contemporary useage, and the recognition of idiocy as an in-born state, with capacities, as they are in all humans, not a matter of biological inheritance, but in some way part of God's plan. Stressing ideots, ahe three instances of ideots are italicised, as is one of the two references to naturals; all five instances of ideots/naturals are capitalised. The only other italicised words are children, savages, and illiterate, and the part sentence "*should appear fairest and clearest in*." The reader's attention is thus drawn to these particular groups of people, as it has been throughout this chapter: ideots – as well as children, savages and the illiterate - are to be taken notice of.

Eventually, Locke turns what was probably for him the final screw on maxims and principles, describing them as "the Language and Business of the Schools, and Academies and learned Nations … where disputes are frequent" (1.2.27). This is "artificial Argumentation, and useful for Conviction; but not much conducing to the discovery of Truth, or advancement of Knowledge" (1.2.27). In short, maxims are not really natural, just as they are not found in the minds of naturals.

Book 1, Chapter 2 provides both the structural template, the key evidence and the major arguments against nativism for the entire book, and *Essay*. It shows clearly that the answer to my question of whether or not ideots have an actual function in the *Essay* is 'yes'. However, there is more detail to explore yet. At this stage, we can see that idiots function to show that there are some people, even as adults, who never have use of innate ideas. Could that function have been performed by another group? Like Locke,

before elaborating on that question and answer, I will build up the evidence. Chapter 2 was, after all, not the whole story, and I turn to the later chapters below; firstly, while ideots are fresh in the mind, I review the contemporary response to the evidence they are called on to provide.

The response to the *Essay*: the dismissal of ideots:

The *Essay* created a minor tsunami of response; some of it positive, some of it suspicious, much of it antipathetic. Yolton (1993) firmly places Locke's anti-nativism as the most disturbing feature for his contemporaries. Greenlee (1972) agrees, saying that the "stir that immediately followed the publication of the *Essay* ... can be understood only with the realization that the *Essay* was interpreted as posing a threat to religion and morality because of the attack on innate ideas" (1972: 254). Lowe (2005), too, notes that "[t]he initial hostility was largely directed at features of the *Essay* thought by some to be damaging to religion and, by implication, to morality – notably, its apparently sceptical air and its repudiation of the doctrine of innate ideas" (2005: 16). On the other hand, the *Essay* was powerful enough, convincing enough, that, as aforenoted, it is widely acknowledged Locke's arguments won the day, even though the triumph over nativism was not by any means either immediate or total. What is interesting to this thesis is that the immediate responses to the *Essay* showed awareness of the presence, and to some extent, the import of idiocy in the evidence. Here I consider the attention to idiocy found in two, and less directly in a third, of the most important, effective and lingering objections.

English philosopher, John Norris, was the first to produce an extended criticism of the *Essay*, in a work republished and well read over a number of years (Yolton 1993). Following the first book more or less point by point, Norris's *Cursory Reflections* concerns itself almost immediately with the evidence from ideots (and children):

> Now I always thought the Universality of Consent had been sufficiently secured by the Consent of all, and the Dissent of none that were capable of either. And what then have we to do with Ideots and Children? Do any or all of these Dissent or think otherwise? No, that he will not say, because they think not at all. (Norris 1690: 5-6)

Norris supports a dispositional form of nativism; a little later he again dismisses Locke's references to children, on the more reasonable grounds that children may later

come into awareness of innate maxims, and therefore pose a dubious illustration of the lack of these (1690:11-12). In this, we can note that he does not refer to the other evidence – the savages, illiterates, people from Peru and so on – suggesting he perceived children and ideots as in some way more significant than other evidence.

Norris's rejection of the evidence from idiocy lacks, when examined, subtlety and credibility. Firstly, Norris does not have Locke's inclination or ability to perceive the shades of difference among people: his position on idiocy is an absolutist one. Ideots don't think at all; an either/or dichotomy that is both simplistic, and ignores the empirical data Locke relies on. Similarly, Norris is playing games with meaning and definition. Just prior to attacking idiocy, he criticises Locke for failing to define the term 'idea'. While this criticism may well be warranted, considering the above-quoted passage we should ask, what does Norris mean by the 'thought' or 'thoughts' implied by the clause "they [ideots] think not at all"? Does he count only abstractions? For surely people with intellectual disability must be said to think at least about various day-to-day events? Bunyan, in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, considers this to be so, and Leibniz (see below) acknowledges thought about bodily needs. Similarly, the aforementioned case notes from the Court of Wards show that many of Norris's contemporaries or near-contemporaries assumed some power of thought to be available to people with intellectual disability, even if the ability to compute numbers was not (Bell 1986; Neugebauer 1979; 1996). In his desire to dismiss anti-nativism, Norris ignores both the evidence, and the general consensus with respect to ideots. Which may go some small way to explain why his criticisms did not prevent the acceptance of the *Essay*'s anti-nativism.[8]

Norris was also effectively throwing thoughts, ideas, maxims, abstractions all into the one mix. He was not alone in doing this, and the problems inherent were not unnoticed. Malebranche found a similar 'muddle' in Descartes' conflation of thoughts and ideas, and,

> [a]ccording to Malebranche, once we resist the temptation to conflate ideas and thoughts or perceptions, we must realise that the question of whether there are any

[8] To return to Goodey's (1994) concern about the human status of people with idiocy, it is Norris, rather than Locke, who can justifiably be accused of rendering people with intellectual disability as marginal, possibly sub-human.

> innate ideas makes no sense. Indeed, the whole doctrine of innate ideas turns out to be a conflation of logic and psychology. (Jolley 1988: 75)

Perceiving the confusion inherent in the conflation that Norris, some years later, revisited, Malebranche, despite having become a convert to Cartesian ideas, was anti-nativist. Leibniz, who met Malebranche in Paris and corresponded with him for many years after, wrote his first pro-nativist tract in response to Malebranche's work, four years before the *Essay* was published (Jolley 1988). Malebranche's anti-nativist stance had nothing of the effect of the *Essay*'s, but Leibniz later compared Malebranche with Locke, to Locke's disfavour:

> [a]lthough Locke's book on the human understanding contains much that is of great value, I found it fundamentally unsatisfactory. He did not adequately appreciate the dignity of our mind, nor did he adequately understand that the principles of necessary truths are latent in it. ... Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Hobbes in places and Malebranche wrote with much more depth. (Leibniz, quoted in Jolley 1988: 81 f24)

Despite this disregard, Leibniz eventually composed a full volume in response to the *Essay*: *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding* (*New Essays*).[9] In this work, he was more alert to Locke's enterprise than was Norris, and more willing (and possibly able) to engage with the *Essay* in detail than was the Englishman. After a little chest-puffing about a 'new system', (his own), Leibniz produces a dialogue between Theophilus and Philalethes, his own, and his ascribed-to-Locke's, alter-egos respectively. Philalethes repeats most major, and many minor, points of the *Essay*; Theophilus interrogates the statements, and offers alternative views. Early in the *New Essays* Leibniz/Theo acknowledges that Locke/Phil might have a point in rejecting innate ideas when these are proposed as a cover for laziness (1996: 74), but suggests that "praiseworthy zeal has carried him too far in another direction," resulting in an alleged failure in distinguishing between "necessary truths ... and truths of fact, the source of the former is in the understanding, where the latter are drawn from sense-experience and even from confused perceptions in us" (1996: 75). Thus Leibniz diminishes, indeed dismisses, Locke's reliance on empiricism.

Having separated out, and sidelined the import of what we glean from the world

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[9] Leibniz did not publish the *New Essays* in his lifetime. Reportedly he was about to do so when Locke died. However, he corresponded with Locke and his criticisms circulated during Locke's lifetime, and have been known to scholars since (Remnant and Bennett 1996).

around us, Leibniz is now in a position to make Locke's use of numerous examples appear a distraction. In the section on innate ideas, he puts forward what is a sophisticated and beautifully worded defence of nativism in relation to a natural and inherent belief in God, to the disposition for mathematical truths and for maxims and principles, but largely ignores any of the everyday evidence of the *Essay*. This is not to say Leibniz completely refuses to deal with Locke's evidence, but he does manage to slip away from engaging in any close critique. To Phil's, "[i]f general maxims were innate they should show up best in people who in fact don't show any trace of them. I allude to 'children, idiots, and savages'," he has Theo reply:

> I think that the argument at this point should run quite differently. Innate maxims make their appearance only through the attention one gives to them; but those people have almost no attention to give ... They think about little except their bodily needs; and it is appropriate that pure and disinterested thoughts should be the reward for having nobler concerns. (Leibniz 1996: 87)

Locke would probably have agreed with Leibniz that "nobler concerns" than attention to bodily needs are required if one is to have "pure and disinterested thoughts." Where they differ is that Locke does not see innate ideas as noble, or as evidence thereof – in fact he dismisses at least some innate notions (for example, maxims, such as the principle of identity) as useful only for "artificial Argumentation ... but not much conducing to the discovery of Truth, or advancement of Knowledge" (1.2.27). Nor does he see lack of attention as sufficient reason to forego consideration of humans who do not engage with such nobler concerns: for Locke, many of the "general Propositions ... [are] seldom mentioned in the Huts of Indians [or] found in the thoughts of Children, or any Impressions of them on the Minds of Naturals" (1.2.27). This means that are demonstrably inessential to humankind: at their most important, they "are the Language and Business of the School, and Academies of learned Nations, accustomed to that sort of Conversation" (1.2.27). What is more, if such maxims and principles were required for more than abstract thinking, the 'bountiful Author' would have granted them to idiots, as to any other of his children, as Locke makes very clear in the sections quoted above.

Leibniz's response clearly does not show the same regard for differential detail, or the *Essay*'s willingness to allow a wide variety of humans to be representative.

Moreover, Leibniz's rationalist approach poses reason as the core characteristic of being human: he believes that reason is an "all or nothing," not a matter of degree, and essential to humanity (Remnant & Bennett 1996: xxix). Such a position naturally obscures the viability of children, non-Europeans who do not appear to employ reason in the way of the West, and idiots, as evidence, simply because they do not meet a criterion of being human, in Leibniz's schema. Leibniz objects to Locke's downplaying of reason in general, and is unsettled by the idea that any human might not have reason.

However, that both Leibniz and Norris recognised the evidence from idiocy, and felt that they had to make the point that ideots were unable to think, rather than allow Locke's description of them as reasoning (only) a little, or ignoring them, demonstrates that the inclusion of idiocy actually had currency at the time.

Nor did ideots go away: Thomas Morell's (1703-1784) posthumously published *Notes and Annotations on Locke on The Human Understanding* (1793) includes comment on 1.2.5 of the *Essay*. Morell makes much the same conflation as Goodey, discussed above: he muddles changelings and idiots, despite the fact that they appear in very different parts of the *Essay*. Morell also makes far more extreme Locke's consideration of changelings from Book 4, asserting that "the author himself ... plainly reckons embryos no other than vegetables, infants no better than brutes, and ideots a sort of animas between men and brutes" (Morell 1794: 3. Spelling in original).

Well before Morell, was the much better known, Bishop Berkeley (1685-1753), an opponent of Locke, particularly in relation to what Berkeley considered Locke's materialism and anti-nativism, and the scepticism he saw as outcome of these (Rogers 2007: Woolhouse 2004). Berkeley did not discuss idiocy per se, but he did show an acute awareness of the importance of Locke's presumption of "the natural weakness and imperfection of our understandings" (Berkeley 2004: 37). Berkeley disliked uncertainty, inconsistency, and the (implied) materialism of the real human examples the *Essay* continually brings to the fore. For him, it is these "uncouth paradoxes, difficulties, and inconsistencies" that lead us eventually to "sit down in a forlorn scepticism" (2004: 37-8), and these are problems to be considered in moral terms. He is irritated by attention to dullness:

> My purpose therefore is, to try if I can discover what those principles are, which have introduced all that doubtfulness and uncertainty, those absurdities and contradictions into the several sects of philosophy; insomuch that the wisest men have thought our ignorance incurable, conceiving it to arise from the natural dullness and limitation of our faculties. (Berkeley 2004: 38)

There is no direct mention of people with intellectual disability here, but Berkeley clearly has Locke's constant references to *natural* imperfections in his sights. He goes on to concede a blind man as a valid example, but any imperfection in the mind that blocks knowledge is not acceptable: Berkeley reflects the belief that "the theory of innate knowledge was meant to explain cognition at its highest and best, something far beyond the reach of animals" (Aaron 1971: 95).

Dismissing innate ideas, and especially doing this by reference to imperfect humans, Locke threw the theory of Man's (innate) superiority up in the air, and played with it. In so doing, he also undermined the hope of many of his seventeenth and eighteenth century colleagues and readers that they were moving toward "restoring the fabled encyclopaedic knowledge of the first man" (Harrison 2002: 239). The *Essay*, as Leibniz's wish for "nobler concerns," and Berkerley's fear of incurable dullness suggest, and as I argue in more detail below, got down and got dirty: Locke's ideots contributed to the understanding that humans could be human, without being ideal.

There is much more to Berkeley, to Leibniz and to Norris than there is time to examine here. The brief survey should suffice to demonstrate that, for Locke's contemporaries at least, the inclusion of people with intellectual disability was not one to be totally ignored.

The importance of 'all mankind' in the evidence in Book 1:

As we have seen, Locke's first and major argument against nativism was that "[t]his Argument of Universal Consent, which is made use of, to prove innate Principles, seems to me a Demonstration that there are none such: Because there are none to which all Mankind give an Universal Assent" (1.2.4). The actual maxims and speculative principles, Locke accepts, just not their innateness. He is wise not to allow his opposition to rest on the principles themselves, as it is always possible to keep changing the goal posts, as it were, by finding other principles to claim as innate. With similar

wisdom, Locke does not confine his evidence to any one group who have, or do not have, such ideas, but instead collects data, and more data. He does not bring this data together on graphs and tables, and under statistical analysis as would occur today, but what he presents is data nonetheless. The emphasis, in Book 1, Chapters 3 and 4 is, as it was in Chapter 2, on data collected from, and about, *observable* human behaviour. The key strategy is again simply to show that the evidence presented makes untenable the arguments put forward for nativism, whether naïve or dispositional.

There is much at stake, in Locke's Christian view, in practical principles, the subject of Chapter 3: they are the laws we should all be living by. The evidence in Chapter 3 is often emotive: we have "Outlaws and Robbers ... those that live by Fraud and Rapine" (1.3.2), "whole Nations, and those of the most Civilized People, amongst whom, the exposing their Children, and leaving them ... to perish by want or wild Beasts" (1.3.8). Not everything is extreme: children can be misled into adopting doctrines taught to them by their nurses, and can feel these doctrines to be "ancient because they have no memory of anything further back or before" (1.3.23). Or principles can be taken as truth due to simple laziness (1.3.24). Universality remains an important criterion: it would have to be shown that people who are deaf (or speak various languages), or those are "ignorant of Words, or untaught by the Laws and Customs of their Country" (1.3.19) had awareness of all the strictures against murder and adultery, theft and so on, if universal agreement for practical principles were to be supported. Altogether, there is significant attention to diversity *within* a population in Chapter 3, rather than the differences between cultures: there are a "great variety of Opinions, concerning Moral Rules, which are to be found amongst Men, according to the different sorts of Happiness, they have a Prospect of" (1.3.5).

More 'real life' examples follow in Chapter 4. There is the question whether a child distinguishes between its mother and a stranger on the basis of ideas of impossibility and identity: emphasising the domestic, Locke asks "is it from the Knowledge of this Principle, that it concludes, that Wormwood rubb'd on the Nipple, hath not the same Taste, that it used to receive from thence?" (1.4.3). To demonstrate that the idea of God is not innate, even within the communities Locke lives in, it is proposed that if we "[t]alk but with country people, almost of any age, or young people

almost of any condition," we will discover that "though the name of God be frequently in their mouths, yet the notions they apply this name to are so odd, low, and pitiful, that nobody can imagine ... they were characters written by the finger of God himself" (1.4.17). Locke also relies heavily on anthropological data to show that not even the idea of a deity is innate (1.4.7). It is also here that he introduces and underlines the seminal role of experience in our understanding. The following passage is fascinating in this respect:

> Had you or I been born at the Bay of *Soldania*, possibly our Thoughts, and Notions, had not exceeded those brutish ones of the *Hotentots* that inhabit there: And had the *Virginia* King *Apochancana*, been educated in *England*, he had, perhaps, been as knowing a Divine, and as good a Mathematician, as any of it. The difference between him, and a more improved *English*-man, lying barely in this, That the exercise of his Faculties was bounded within the Ways, Modes, and Notions of his own Country, and never directed to any other, or farther Enquiries: And if he had not any *Idea* of a God, it was only because he pursued not those Thoughts, that would have led him to it. (1.4.12)

Locke's grasp of the importance of available resources to the content and extent of learning is sophisticated.[10] As aforenoted, there has been some recent interest in the inclusion of information from geographically distant peoples. Jad Smith (2006) contrasts Descartes, Bacon and Hobbes's view of custom with Locke's, and finds the former authors "tend to construct custom as anything from a hopeless to an abject category, aligning it with chance, superstition, and faulty common knowledge," while "Locke refuses to bracket off or theoretically circumvent custom, choosing instead to ask whether it has it own immanent logic and standards of assent" (2006: 832). Daniel Carey (2004), specifically notes the importance of such data to Locke's rejection of nativism, making the pertinent point that "Locke was able to advance the polemic against innateness by setting an important condition ... that we must regard people's *actions* as the best interpreters of their thoughts" (2004: 262-263). Like the evidence from ideots, the anthropological data was not attached example or analogy, but part of the subject of

[10] Unfortunately, passages such as this are taken in isolation, while the numerous references to those with either dull or exceptionally acute faculties are ignored (but discussed later in this thesis). This results in misinterpretations of the Locke's thesis as presenting a blank slate, or page that effectively has no substance (no capacities), as well as no inscription of ideas at birth (Spellman 1987).

the *Essay*. Indeed, Paxman (1995) regards travel literature as important in promoting the thinking behind the *Essay*:

> Travel literature made the *Essay* possible in two ways. First, in conjunction with the metaphors of exploration and navigation, it helped Locke define new landmarks on the terrain of knowledge. It pushed out intellectual boundaries that most thinkers considered fixed and well marked, making the familiar appear strange and altogether less certain than before. (Paxman 1995: 461)

Throughout Book 1, Locke collects all the diverse people – those from cultures and times other than his own, those who differ in age, inclination or capacity within his own culture, the nurses, the babies, the mothers, the outlaws and robbers – under the rubric of 'all Mankind'. The term 'all Men' occurs fifty times in the *Essay*, and 'all Mankind' occurs seventeen. Of these, the first appears twenty times, and the second eight times in Book 1, all in questions or statements that are essential to the dismantling of nativism. There are no ideas to "to which all mankind give an universal assent" (1.2.4). Similarly, that ideas "have not an actual universal assent from all mankind, as we there proved" (1.3.1) is the criterion for continuing the discussion of anti-nativism. Locke also asks of the ideas of impossibility and identity, "[a]re they such as all Mankind have, and bring into the World with them?" (1.4.3). There are also several instances of phrases with similar or the same meaning: "a great part of mankind" (1.2.4; 1.2.27; 1.3.6; 1.4.9); "the greatest part of mankind" (1.4.15); "at least one half of mankind" (1.2.24); "all the tribes of mankind" (1.4.11). There is also the "unthinking part of mankind" (1.4.10), and many references to "mankind" in general.

In fact, nativism most effectively founders when confronted with the barrier of 'all men'/ 'all mankind', even if no known nativist ever put forward universal assent as a proof in so many words: "if therefore any thing be imprinted on the Mind of all Men as a Law, all Men must have a certain and unavoidable knowledge [of it]" (1.3.13). The criterion of all mankind can be opposed to the "private Perswasions," that all too often "pass for universal Consent ... when Men, presuming themselves to be the only Masters of right Reason, cast by the Votes and Opinions of the rest of Mankind as not worthy the reckoning" (1.3.20). In discussing the idea of a deity Locke makes the point that some opinions are all too often taken as the measure of universality:

> If it be said, That *wise Men* of all Nations came to *have true Conceptions* of the Unity and Infinity *of the Deity*, I grant it. But then this,

> First, Excludes universality of Consent in any thing, but the name, for those wise Men being very few, perhaps one of a thousand, this universality is very narrow. (1.4.15)

Once established as a major criterion of proof, the references to 'all mankind' reduce, but the concept continues to pervade the *Essay*, with thirty more uses of 'all men' and nine of 'all mankind', with occurrences of synonymous terms, and a permeation of the concept in the other three books of the *Essay*. One example will suffice here, with further discussion in the later chapters of this thesis. Toward the end of the *Essay*, in the chapter 'Of Reason', Locke again reminds the reader that there are a select few, and there is 'all Mankind':

> Now if of all Mankind, those who can make Syllogisms are extremely few in comparison of those who cannot, and if of those few who have been taught Logick, there is but a very small Number, who do any more than believe that Syllogisms in the allowed *Modes* and *Figures* do conclude right, without knowing certainly that they do so; If Syllogisms must be taken for the only proper instrument of reason and means of Knowledge, it will follow, that, before *Aristotle* there was not one Man that did or could know anything by Reason; and that, since the invention of Syllogisms, there is not one of Ten Thousand that doth.[11] (4.17.4)

Clearly, those who make syllogisms are not the essence, apotheosis or representative, but just one group among 'all Mankind', and not a large group at that. Much the same could be said of people with intellectual disability; they are not an huge proportion of a general population, but they are there, (whether we like them or not), and, as the *Essay* demonstrates, must be counted and considered if we are to make general remarks about a general population.

As Rickless (2007) has noted, Locke was determined that proponents of nativism should show that innate ideas were *universal*: this meant that no one can *not* have innate ideas for the doctrine to be proved. Consistent with this – or perhaps as the horse pulling the cart of this argument – Locke attends, over and over, to 'all Mankind'. In his way of thinking, and observing, every one must be counted, whether or not they are interested in, or indeed capable of syllogism. This inclusiveness is not, as I show below, simply an inert strategy of the *Essay*: it produces proof, and it produces a very broad-based humankind.

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[11] This passage is also an example of Locke's often extravagant use of 'if': while the form is 'if a, then b follows', it is clear that, for Locke, there is no conditional in the claim that only a few men make syllogisms.

Idiocy as key evidence in the dismissal of nativism:

Among all mankind, ideots and children are, as we have seen, important groups. Indeed, they are perhaps the most important, as Book 1, Chapter 2, sees it. We can interpret the reliance on idiocy in Book 1, if seeking oppression, as Goodey (1994) has done, as ideots (and children) carrying the *burden* of proof. On the other hand, a much more fruitful reading, both in relation to people with intellectual disability, and the *Essay* itself, acknowledges ideots as a quiet, but major force in the disruption of the commonly held doctrine of nativism. This is a very reasonable interpretation given ideots are a much stronger proof against nativism than children or savages could ever have been.

Why were ideots particularly strong evidence? Daniel Carey (2004) has noted that the attention to travel literature in the *Essay* "not only confirmed the absence of unanimous consent, as Locke referenced it, but it also constituted up-to-date information, supplying empirical testimony on human practice which could be cross-checked and confirmed" (2004: 261). This use of up-to-date material was important in the early modern period, a time in which "[t]he material world was dissociated from the world of God and assumed to be rational, so that it could be apprehended and mastered by observation and measurement" (Nussbaum 1953: 4). Locke's up-to-date evidence was also presented in a colloquial accessible style (Colie 1965, 1969). The information from travel literature had certain problems, however, as conclusive evidence. While the seventeenth century was one of religious turmoil, a time no longer comfortably under any united, or unquestioned, theological influence, the predominant view in the Western world was still a thoroughly Christian one. In such a world, the lack of innate principles among *heathens*, no matter how civilised they were, was questionable evidence: after all, what was there to suggest that God would have given to heathens what he gave to Christians? Locke recognises this in Book 1, Chapter 4, where he puts forward the argument that the ideas of God vary among different humans (1.4.13), expounds on the lack, or peculiarity of idea(s) of God in the heathen world (1.4.15), but has to return, at length, to a similar demonstration in the more local and familiar context of the limitations of "our weak Capacities ... to receive so incomprehensible and infinite an Object [as the Idea of God]" (1.4.17).

So, while Locke took great interest in cultural diversity, in custom and tradition of

peoples outside the usual European purview, 'savages' were effectively a geographically distant group, not readily known to the 'person in the street', and Locke was writing the *Essay* for the (educated) person in the street (see Locke 1975, Epistle: 9). Furthermore, in the dispositional form of nativism, it could have been held that natives might have innate ideas, but were not, yet, aware of them - exposure and education might spark awareness of principles and maxims. Locke says as much himself; the "*Virginia* King *Apochancana*" might become a mathematician, he might also become a divine" (1.4.12); such a development would show support for an only slightly modified, dispositional form of nativism.

Closer to home were 'illiterate' people, children, and people with intellectual disability. The trouble with the evidence of lack of innate ideas in children was that it was subject to the same difficulties as that from foreigners: children *might* (and quite a few probably would) show some awareness of the ideas thought to be innate, at some point in their lives. Locke tried to get around this: immediately after asserting that, if impressions were to be imprinted and innate, children and ideots would demonstrate them, he followed up with "[f]or to imprint anything on the mind without the mind's perceiving it, seems to me hardly intelligible" (1.2.5). Children, prior to the use of reason, would somehow know the ideas, if they were innate. He also tried the argument that children show many other signs of knowledge, long before they come into the use of reason (1.1.12), but, in the end, the lack of innate ideas in children could not be water-tight evidence. 'Illiterates' or people who were uneducated, may have provided a stronger case, and it is interesting to speculate why Locke didn't make more of them: perhaps they were too close to the foolish, or those who wilfully ignored practical principles.

Ideots, then, were only the only people who showed a lack of innate ideas *through the whole life cycle*, and particularly through the life of a human being who was not wilfully mischievous. They grew up in English communities, could be rich or poor, were recognised in English law, were cared for by English parishes, could be observed in English streets; and they never showed evidence of innate maxims and ideas. They were the clear evidence Locke needed. Ideots were very important evidence.

The importance of idiocy is also clear if the issue is looked at from the other side:

what if people with idiocy *had* demonstrated maxims and principles? In those circumstances, would Locke have had an argument? Considering the points raised against nativism in the *Essay*, in particular the emphasis Locke places on the requirement for demonstrated universal consent, it is clear that, if adults with idiocy had shown the slightest evidence of maxims and principles, Locke would have had a tortuous time presenting a credible refutation. As he himself says, ideots were people who generally lacked the "arts of concealment." They were generally uneducated, and as such were an effective 'control group', to use the terminology of modern psychology. If adults with idiocy had had any sign of the maxims and principles Locke discusses, then such maxims and principles would *have* to have been in-born: ideots, by their very nature, could not have acquired them through education, or environmentally developed reason, nor could they have hidden such maxims in any way.

Moreover, if people with idiocy, who were English, were seen to have such inscriptions, while foreigners did not, the inherently racist position that foreigners, and savages, in particular, were less well developed humans, questionably of the same species as Englishmen and other Europeans, would seem proven. The evidence from savages would have been undermined. Imagine the satisfaction of a what we might now call an 'eugenically-inclined' Englishman being able to say: "even our idiots have principles!" Idiots having innate principles, but foreigners not, would have invalidated much of the evidence in the rest of the *Essay*.

In short, Locke's anti-nativism is dependent on the presence of ideots. Savages were too distant, too foreign, not-Christian; outlaws and robbers were clearly immoral; children were, at best, a possibility. Ideots were a familiar, well-defined, demonstration: they were the only people who provided evidence of the lack of innate ideas through the whole life cycle.

This is a radical position; that the absence of a certain type of idea in a group that was neither large nor highly valued *can upset the assumption that such ideas must exist within the species as a whole*. Yet, this is what the *Essay* effectively demonstrates. Whether or not Locke likes or cares about the lives of ideots is not the issue; he has recognised that their presence, their way of 'being' and knowing in the world, says something about the way of being and knowing of 'all Mankind'.

Chapter summary: ideots have a significant function in the *Essay*:

At the outset of this thesis, I asked whether or not people with intellectual disability had a function in Locke's *Essay* greater than being either exceptions that might prove a rule, or casual examples that could readily be replaced by other examples. A close reading of the text of Book 1, clearly shows that people with intellectual disability, as naturals-ideots, provided evidence that was quite specific to their own way of being. It was not evidence that any other individuals or identified group in the immediate community, or from distant lands, provided, or could provide. Although often coupled with children in the text, ideots were the only group who demonstrated a lack of innate ideas – either as philosophical maxims, moral principles or even in the much-revered idea of God – throughout the life cycle. And the dismissal of nativism, particularly in its dispositional form, needed that demonstration.

Ideots were an excellent standard of proof, too, simply because they existed within the local community. They could be observed and, if not observed directly, they would be known about: as we have seen in Chapter 2 here, there were laws, statutes, books, medical theories, circulating myths, pieces of theatre, all acknowledging naturals-ideots. Parishes were petitioned on their behalf, families left bequests, others just coped with the inherent difficulties of supporting the more severely disabled. Respondents to the *Essay* questioned the validity of including idiots – such was the power of their evidence – but none questioned their existence.

What is more, in employing the evidence from this small group to deny the possibility of inscribed knowledge, Locke set the role of idiots as one with implications for further acknowledging human imperfections. The *Essay* manages its "deed of disenchantment" (Aarsleff 1994: 255) of the mystery and outer-worldliness of our knowledge, by promoting a nitty-gritty, process-orientated analysis and theory of understanding, through every day language, and relying on evidence that its readership could recognise. In the processes that lead to understanding, dependent as they are on sensation and experience, no one is perfect. The *Essay* achieves its "deed of disenchantment," too, by applying all that it argues to 'all Mankind'. No one person, no group, no culture or civilisation is exempt. Idiocy, as we see in the following chapter, thus also served to demonstrate that that our knowledge is 'naturally' limited.

Chapter 4

Ideots, changelings and monsters, in knowledge acquisition and species delimitation.

The project of the *Essay* was to come to grips with how humans know what it is they do know. Locke was dissatisfied with the orthodox response to the question: that God gives humans something special - imprinted maxims, and principles (identity, non-contradiction, moral law) – and, ergo, we have knowledge. Once he had countered that assumption with enough evidence that it was, at least in his view, no longer a tenable, or sufficient, explanation, Locke was able to move on to his own positive account of knowledge acquisition.

Book 2, titled 'Of Ideas', contains this positive account. In this chapter, I examine the evidence Locke gathers for this book, beginning with the distribution of the evidence throughout the book, before concentrating more closely on that in the first twelve chapters, those in which Locke explicates the actual sensory and cognitive processes that take information, gained through the senses, and work on it to make it into ideas. I show that people with idiocy contribute to the thinking behind, and investigation of, Locke's theory of process more often, and more deeply than is represented by the five occurrences, all in Book 2, Chapter 11, Sections 12 and 13, of direct naming of ideots.

Why was idiocy a pertinent inclusion in Book 2? I argue that the characteristics of idiocy - the dull perception, the difficulty with retention, the slowness in, and paucity of, the mind's operations on the information received through the senses - permeate Book 2 with apparently osmotic ease, and have significance greater than their association with people with identifiable, life-impacting, disability.

This chapter then turns to people with (severe and profound) intellectual disability – changelings – and people with physical anomaly – monsters - and the evidence they provide in Books 3 and 4 of the *Essay*. I show here that, consistent with their meaning in popular culture, changelings, contrasted with monsters, challenge essentialism, particularly as manifested in commonly accepted notions of natural kinds.

Scholarship has favoured a single chapter of Book 2; Chapter 27, which addressed the topic of identity and diversity. I do not consider that chapter here. Instead, I argue that the consideration of ideots, changelings and monsters reveals that the attention to 'Of Identity and Diversity' has largely obscured the detail, and the importance, of a theme that runs throughout the *Essay*: humankind's ordinary, irredeemable, and necessary imperfection. On the basis of the analysis here, I introduce the argument of Chapter 5 of this thesis; that the *Essay* dissociates human imperfection from the once pervasive Christian interpretation of Adam's fall from grace. The *Essay* makes imperfection secular, to-be-expected, and permanent.

The evidentiary strategy in Book 2:

There are essentially four sections to Book 2, although Locke makes no firm separation, and there are many overlaps. For the purposes of the discussion here, I note

that the first twelve chapters of the book concentrate on the sensory-neural processes that take experience and make it into ideas and knowledge. Chapters 13-24 (inclusive) identify and analyse specific ideas, such as that of infinity, and substance, while Chapters 25, 26, 27, 28 concern relations. Among this latter rough grouping, Chapter 27, 'Of Identity and Diversity', was added in the second edition of the *Essay*. The last eleven chapters of Book 2 deal with the assessment of ideas, whether they are real or fantastical, adequate, true or false and so on. The final chapter of Book 2, 'Of the Association of Ideas' was, like 'Of Identity and Diversity', an addition; in this case not included until the fourth edition of the *Essay*.

Thinking of Book 2 in these sections it is easier to see that the eclectic 'all Mankind' is retained in Book 2, but not as data presented in any haphazard fashion: Book 2 exhibits a clear, persuasive, and empirically determined organisation. Although the *Essay* is not a record of experiment, quantitative or even qualitative analysis as we know it today, if the evidence had not been as it was, the conclusions of Book 2 may, at least in some cases, have been different. The evidence is indeed evidence, the analysis of which confirms or denies the hypotheses and leads to the conclusions; it is not illustrative example.

Book 2 has a general thesis: that "*Experience*" is the base on what "all our Knowledge is founded; and ... ultimately derives it self" (2.1.2), and that it is our sensory apparatus, through perception, and the "*internal Operations of our Minds*" that "*supplies our Understandings with all the materials of thinking*" (2.1.2). Hence, firstly, there is a large amount of evidence brought together to tease out the detail of the general hypothesis, to examine and conclude what those operations of perception and 'reflection' (the name Locke gives to one of the key internal operations of the mind) are, and how they work together to produce the materials of our thinking, which are ideas.

Yolton (2004) suggests that "[t]he bulk of the *Essay* locates man in the immediate physical environment" (2004: 39); while this is perhaps true of the 'bulk' of the *Essay*, this statement neglects section 1 – the first twelve chapters - of Book 2 , which is far more interested in the effect of sensory-neural, than environmental variation. Chapters 1-12 demonstrate that there is a complex, sequential, cumulative and ruminative process, or sets of processes, required for the acquisition of knowledge. This section brings

forward evidence of variations *within* a population – developmental change, imperfection of the in-born sense organs, degeneration with age. We are told at the outset of Book 2, to consider "the state of a *Child,* at his first coming into the World" (2.1.6). We also have old men, who have lost so much of their memory and faculties as to be little different from a cockle (2.9.14), but we do not have savages and illiterates in this first section; evidence from cultural difference is not relevant.

I return to the evidence from section 1 below. Here it can be noted that it is only once the requisite psychological processes are established (in Section 1), that environmental/cultural evidence is truly brought into play, to establish how specific ideas, of space, time, substances, are culturally configured, and how these configurations differ. It is only after the general human processes are established that Locke notes environmental exposure as efficacious in delimiting *what* is known (rather than *how* it is known). For example, differing interpretations or explanations of substance are associated with an "Indian philosopher" (2.13.19), and an "intelligent American" (2.13.20), the latter of whom, despite capacity, would no more understand the notions of pillars and bases in architecture than Englishmen would, without education, comprehend Latin. People from Japan show that the measurement of lengths, and measures of duration are not universals (2.14.23), while ideas of virtue and vice differ according to the beliefs and customs of different countries (2.28.11). In Chapter 16, 'Of Number', Locke provides evidence for the theory of simple and complex ideas, and their dependence on words, which are in their turn dependent on culture. "Names or Marks" enable the best use of the simple idea, but names and marks differ with different cultures: the "scanty" language of "Americans," whom Locke says he has personally found to be "otherwise of quick and rational Parts enough," is cited as the reason the Americans cannot count to one thousand (2.16.6).

With the processes of gaining them established (through evidence from children, ideots, the aged, the mentally ill, as we see in more detail below), the consideration of abstract ideas does not need to, and cannot necessarily always rely on observable evidence; particularly in the discussion 'Of Power' (Chapter 21), the strategy switches from evidence to example and illustration. By the third section of Book 2, Locke turns to relation, a process of comparison that he sees as central for human knowledge (Book 2,

Chapter 25; here, in particular, with the processes of understanding empirically established, he is able here to rely primarily on explication and example. "*Time* and *Place* are also the Foundations of very large Relations," Locke tells the reader (2.26:3), "[b]ut having already shewn in another Place, how we get these Ideas, it may suffice here to intimate, that most of the Denominations of things, received from time, are only Relations" (2.26.3). He then gives the example of our estimation of the time of the reign, and life of Queen Elizabeth (I), and of the time back to the invasion of William the Conqueror. Unlike idiocy in Book 1, these are replaceable examples; it could have just as well been Shakespeare's life, and his time at the Globe, or the time back to Christ's crucifixion.

As with Book 1, non-human examples occur throughout Book 2, although, as befits example rather than data, they are less common than the more detailed observations of humans. They occur as illustration in the discussion of specific ideas, rather than in the analysis of process. Most non-human examples are familiar, drawn from everyday: chess pieces illustrate concepts of place (2.13.9), sun-dials and candlelight show duration (2.16.11), for example.

In short, Locke is not simply cobbling together any support he can think of: the distribution of data suggests a careful consideration of available evidence, an analysis of its import, and the employment of example only when appropriate evidence has already established the basic tenet. Where evidence is required to establish, demonstrate, analyse and argue, people with intellectual disability are, as they are in Book 1, a cog in the turning of the wheels that drive the theory of Book 2, and not one among a number of possible analogies or illustrations. I now examine the evidence ideots provide in some detail.

Ideots in the evidence for cognitive process (section 1, Book 2):

The first section of Book 2 employs and puts into focus the work of Book 1: "what I have said in the foregoing Book, will be more easily admitted, when I have shewn, whence the Understanding may get all the *Ideas* it has, and by what ways and degrees they may come into the Mind" (2.1.1). Sensation and experience, not *a priori* maxims, are the basis of all our knowledge: "*Our Senses* ... do convey into the Mind, several

distinct *Perceptions* of things," and this is the "great course, of most of the Ideas we have" (2.1.3). Locke's positive account of understanding is much more complex than a reliance on experience, and he is not to be caught in reductionism. He quickly distinguishes between simple ideas that can be directly attributed to sensory experience, and those ideas "which could not be had from things without" (2.1.4), but instead require reflection, or 'inner work'. Quickly, too, he introduces the first piece of evidence for the sense-based development of ideas: he calls on his readers to "attentively consider(s) the state of a *Child*" (2.1.6).

Children are the perfect case study. They begin without ideas (having none innate), but with in-born capacities (they are white paper, but without inscription), and gradually develop increasingly sophisticated ways of manipulating data, storing it, and employing it in their interactions with the world. The study of children presents readers with straightforward evidence with which it was easy to identify: all readers have been children, so that, as Locke suggests, attention to a very young child, or even to the memory of their own childhoods, will show readers that there is a gradual furnishing of "Ideas, that are to be the matter of his future Knowledge" (2.1.6). Some ideas "of obvious and familiar qualities" imprint themselves "before the Memory begins to keep a Register of Time and Order," but others are "often so late ... that there are few Men that cannot recollect the beginning of their acquaintance with them" (2.1.6). Observation of the child also shows that reason comes late, simply because children give little attention to what is passing in their minds (2.1.8). This is the case "till the Understanding turns inward upon it self, *reflects* on its own *Operations*, and makes them the Object of its own Contemplation" (2.1.8).

Thus, Wood (1975) describes the project of the *Essay* as a description of "the emergence of human understanding, the evolution in ontogenetic terms of the capacity in man to have ideas and to know what exists" (1975: 65). The theory of knowledge acquisition in Book 2 is indeed ontogenetic, and this developmental model was of itself novel in a world-view primarily reliant on a pre-formed Adam as its human - a point I return to at greater length below. Locke does note some environmental influence here, but only as articulated with the processes that occur within the mind, saying that,

> Men then come to be furnished with fewer or more simple *Ideas* from without, according as the Objects, they converse with, afford greater or less variety; and from the Operations of their Minds within, according as they more or less *reflect* on them" (2.1.7).

He will elaborate on this statement in section 2 (as per the example of the Amerindians quoted above), but it is the second point, the "Operations of their Minds within," that Locke concentrates on in section 1. Here, it is the *Essay*'s argument that many, and various, aspects of the perceptual apparatus affect the operations of the mind. In general,

> *Perception* then being the first step and degree towards Knowledge, and the inlet of all the Materials of it, the fewer Senses any Man, as well as any other Creature, hath; and the fewer and duller the impressions are, that are made by them. (2.9.15).

Indeed, there can be sensory disturbance and even neural disturbance or degeneration:

> And if these Organs, or the Nerves which are Conduits, to convey them from without to their Audience in the Brain, the mind's Presence-room (as I may so call it) are any of them so disordered, as not to perform their Functions, they have no Postern to be admitted by; no other way to bring themselves into view, and be perceived by the Understanding. (2.3.1)

With the emphasis on the developmental aspects of understanding, and on the variation that can occur within each step of the process, it is characteristics of, or within, the individual that are of interest, not cultural or environment difference. Faults in the sensory organs, which result in particularly deafness[1] and blindness,[2] are important data in understanding what might impede the clear access to, and/or reception of, specific sensory information. Blind or deaf people cannot, according to Locke, have ideas of colours or sounds respectively, because the mind can only be filled by what comes in from outside, through the senses. Such ideas cannot be learned through declarative description or teaching (2.7.6).

Difficulties with sensory material, either at the peripheral or neural level, are one thing. Without wanting to be dismissive, it can be said that these are relatively obvious evidence that knowledge gained from the senses will have limitations, albeit treated by Locke, particularly in the case of Molyneux's problem (2.9.8), with considerable interest. It is the *Essay*'s identification of the need for attention (Book 2, Chapter 9) and memory (Book 2, Chapter 10) to gain effective use of the perceptions that, above all,

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[1] See: 2.2.2; 2.4.5.
[2] See: 2.2.2; 2.6.5,6; 2.9.8; 2.10.5; 2.14.20; 2.22.11.

make for a more subtle understanding of process. Locke implicitly recognises that the causes of variation in learning and knowledge are not necessarily extreme or pathological; everywhere we look there "are defects, we may observe in the Memory of one Man compared with another" (2.10.9). The gradual, sometimes halting or wayward processes of perception and reflection will eventually result in some knowledge. In general, in humans this knowledge will always be much less than those greater intellectual beings, the angels and spirits, will almost always probable, rather than certain, and will always vary with the organs of sense, and the internal processes of memory and attention. People with intellectual disability are an important group among those who vary.

In considering people with intellectual disability in Book 2, it should be kept in mind that 'thinking' was a term in a state of flux in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, when there was a "general picture in which no radical lines are drawn between thinking, imagining, meaning, understanding" (Bennett 1971: 222). Descartes, for example, was "prepared to use 'thinking' to cover mental goings-on of any sort at all" (Bennett 1971: 25). Gassendi, on the other hand, "distinguished the activity of imagining, or awareness by means of corporeal ideas, from pure understanding, which is non-imagistic cognition," positing an incorporeal human soul that had the power of reflection (not available to animals) and pure understanding (Michael and Michael 1989: 42). According to Woolhouse (1994), "Locke follows Descartes and uses 'thinking' to convey not just reasoning but also all other mental activities such as sensing, perceiving, remembering, imagining," with the result that "ideas not only figure in thinking and the understanding of language, but are also identified with perceptions of objects and their qualities, and with sensations like pain" (1994: 152). For Locke "[i]n many cases, an instance of thinking or perceiving is merely that, an instance of being conscious or aware of something" (Chappell 1994: 28). Thinking in the *Essay* is not confined to the specifics of rationality or abstract reason, but includes day-to-day processes and relatively passive understanding (such as that which leads to simple ideas). In this context, ideots, even those who "make very few or no propositions, and reason scarce at all" (2.11.13), can perceive, make simple ideas, think.

Moreover, ideots do not make an appearance in Book 2 until Locke has spent

considerable time elaborating the notion that the soul does not always think, and/or may not always be conscious of thinking (2.1.10,11). (The erratic nature of consciousness raises the question of personhood, which Locke does not fully deal with until much later in Book 2, and to which I turn later in this thesis). In Book 2, Chapter 9, Locke raises and attends to the question of *how* simple and complex ideas are made into knowledge. The first step, as aforenoted, is "Perception" which is "the first faculty of the Mind ... by some called thinking in general" (2.9.1). This is followed by "Retention ... or the keeping of those simple *Ideas*, which from Sensation and Reflection [the mind] hath received" (2.10.1). The latter faculty may be evidenced in limited fashion in animals other than humans: Locke cites the example of birds that can learn tunes and try to hit the right notes while singing them (2.10.10). He makes detailed comment on memory, which he argues is essential if our perceptions and thoughts are to go beyond the immediate. Here Locke turns, as he so often does in Book 2, to those who do not have the ideal or perfect use of the faculty:

> he who, through this default in his Memory, has not the *Ideas*, that are really preserved there, ready at hand, when need and occasion calls for them, were almost as good be without them quite, since they serve him to little purpose. The dull Man, who loses the opportunity, whilst he is seeking in his Mind for those *Ideas*, that should serve his turn, is not much more happy in his Knowledge, than one that is perfectly ignorant. (2.10.8)

What Locke is insisting upon here, is that all people have to go through a number of steps, some of which they will complete with more or less efficiency, depending of a number of factors – such as faults, or not, in the memory. As is the case with children, this is clear and familiar evidence: it is a rare person who has never had a sense of being slightly, or more embarrassingly or worryingly, 'stuck', and having to search around in their memory before they can continue the thought or conversation. Thus, it is easy to comprehend that the slow memory that "retrieves not the ideas that it has, and are laid up in store, quick enough to serve the mind upon occasion" (2.10.8), comes in different degrees; if it "be to a great degree, is stupidity" (2.10.8). Stupidity, as we have seen, was one of Thomas Willis's terms for idiocy; in the *Essay* it is not a condition divorced from the mainstream; stupidity is only a degree of the dullness that can affect us all.

With the importance of memory established, Chapter 11 of Book 2, 'Of Discerning, and other Operations of the Mind', is a compact chapter that works through

the several steps Locke sees as essential for the development of active understanding. From the point of view of the discipline of psychology, this is a seminal chapter. It deals with discriminating and comparing information to enable judgement, introduces "COMPOSITION; whereby [the mind] puts together several of the simple [ideas] it has received from Sensation and Reflection, and combines them into complex ones" (2.11.6), passes over "Enlarging" (2.11.6), or a putting together of several ideas of the same sort, before moving quickly on to "Abstraction" (2.11.9), the process of taking of ideas from the particular to the general.

Sections five to eleven of Chapter 11, include nine references to 'brutes' and four to 'beasts'. Locke's brutes and beasts are not Descartes's machines, not automatons that lack any ability to engage in novel acts. Instead they show some capabilities that humans also have: some brutes, for example, are able to make communicative sounds. At the same time, Locke knows of no evidence that they can use these in meaningful language: that is, these animals do not have the capacity for sounds to become representative of general ideas that can be composed and reformulated in new and novel ways. Thus, he comes to the conclusion that in the area or step of abstraction "*Brutes* come far short of Men" (2.11.7). Abstraction, for Locke, it should be noted, does not apply to 'abstract ideas' such as the idea of goodness. Goodness is a 'mixed mode'. Abstraction is the process in which a general concept can be extracted from specific instances: I can know Jane, Jennifer and Sophia; it is by abstraction that I develop the general idea of women.

Chapter 11 has now arrived at the point in the process that beasts/brutes cannot reach, and all references to them disappear. Locke moves on, in a somewhat plodding fashion, to consider the case of specifically nominated ideots and their "want or weakness of any, or all of the foregoing Faculties" (2.11.12). It is the availability and use of faculties that is of interest, not ideots per se, but it is here he makes the famous distinction between ideots and madmen. The two sections provide insightful descriptions of each impairment, but we can also notice the direct relevance to the elucidation of process:

> How far *Idiots* are concerned in the want or weakness of any, or all of the foregoing Faculties, an exact observation of their several ways of faltering, would no doubt discover. For those who either perceive but dully, or retain the *Ideas* that come into their Minds but ill, who cannot readily excite or compound them, will have little

> matter to think on. Those who cannot distinguish, compare, and abstract, would hardly be able to understand and make use of Language, or judge or reason to any tolerable degree; but only a little and imperfectly about things present, and very familiar to their Senses. And indeed any of the forementioned Faculties, if wanting, or out of order, produce suitable defects in Men's Understandings and Knowledge. (2.11.12)

As befits the careful data-gathering approach of the *Essay*, the suggestion is that we would need to make further observations in order to formulate any detailed diagnosis of the areas of weakness in idiocy. What is more important to the *Essay*, however, is that the faltering of ideots demonstrates that there must be interaction of the senses, perception, and memory, for the having, or not, of "matter to think on." As Goodey (1994) noted, Locke does not quite say that idiots do no abstract, that is, do not make generalisations. He does not say this, for although difficulty with generalising information is indeed a problem for people with intellectual disability, Locke is arguing that such difficulty is due to an accumulation of various difficulties in the sequence of processes: "[i]n fine, the defect in *Naturals* seems to proceed from want of quickness, activity, and motion in the intellectual Faculties, whereby they are deprived of Reason" (2.11.13). That is, idiocy results from various problems, at various stages, in one or more of the many steps and processes that form human understanding. Thus, each idiot will differ from each other; they have various ways of faltering, but, more importantly for the general argument, they are evidence that each process does need to be enacted for knowledge to be attained.

Beasts/brutes, on the other hand, come to a stop at a certain point in the processes of knowledge acquisition. The point at which they stop, differs – the cockle may have no processing at all, the bird may have considerable powers – but this is not a matter of faults and imperfections among capacities and processes, it is simply that they are not meant (perhaps not designed) to continue to abstraction. Abstraction, or the making of useful generalizations, is something humans do, when all the other psychological processes have been more or less gone through: imperfections, such as those found in the organs of sense in ideots, compound, and reduce the individual's knowledge. Again, children do not demonstrate this, as they are young, and cannot yet be expected to make too many generalisations. Evidence from people from non-Europeans cultures does not demonstrate the accumulating process, because their differences in concepts and

language are environmentally, not developmentally, dependent. Ideots, and people with mental illness – adults within a single culture – are the only good evidence.

Making the point that it is a *disordering* of the *processes* that is of interest, Locke goes on to compare ideots with people with insanity:

> whereas *mad Men* ... do not appear to me to have lost the Faculty of Reasoning, but having joined together some *Ideas* very wrongly, they mistake them for Truths; and they err as Men do that argue right from wrong principles. For, by the violence of their Imaginations, having taken their Fancies for Realities, they make right deductions from them. (2.11.13)

This is followed up with specific examples that ring observationally true: a man, who fancying himself to be a king requires due observance of his status, is an example of right inference from a wrong premise (2.11.13). Similarly, a woman who imagines herself to be made of glass, and has therefore "used the caution necessary to preserve such brittle Bodies" (2.11.13), demonstrates that right deductions can be made from wrong ideas.

Idiocy is clearly a disorder tied in with the *processes* of understanding far more than is madness, but neither madness or idiocy are absolute: "there are degrees of Madness, as of Folly; the disorderly jumbling *Ideas* together is in some more, and some less" (2.11.13). The reverberations of established legal and community definitions are evident in the differential criteria Locke presents:

> In short, herein seems to lie the difference between Idiots and mad Men: That mad Men put wrong *Ideas* together, and so make wrong Propositions, but argue and reason right from them; But Idiots make very few or no Propositions, and reason scarce at all (2.11.13).

The above represent the final, by-name references to people with idiocy in the *Essay*, but Book 2 repeatedly returns to the argument that the process of knowledge acquisition is dependent on the human faculties, which can be imperfect. Memory is very important among the faculties, and its limits, limit us, so that for a Man, as distinct from God, for example, "[w]hat is once passed, he can never recal; and what is yet to come, he cannot make present" (2.15.12). Similarly, toward the end of Book 2, we read again that, "[t]he *cause of Obscurity* in simple *Ideas*, seems to be either dull Organs; or very slight or transient Impressions made by the Objects; or else a weakness in the Memory, not able to retain them as received" (2.29.3). In the same vein, numeracy is dependent on being able to place ideas in an order and this requires memory, which

takes time to develop in children and, in some, never fully develops:

> And some, through the default of their Memories, who cannot retain the several Combinations of Numbers, with their Names annexed in their distinct orders, and the dependence of so long a train of numerical Progressions, and their relation one to another, are not able all their life-time, to reckon, or regularly go over any moderate Series of Numbers. (2.16.7)

Again, Locke is clearly well aware of the definitions and assessments of idiocy in the legal framework, and presumably relies on this familiarity being present in his readers, for the persuasive strength of his evidence. Further to this, he has given some thought to *why* it is that some people have difficulty counting to twenty:

> For he that will count Twenty, or have any *Idea* of that Number, must know that Nineteen went before, with the distinct Name or Sign of every one of them, as they stand marked in their order; for where-ever this fails, a gap is made, the Chain breaks, and the Progress in numbering can go no farther. (2.16.7)

In general, the evidence from idiocy suggests that understanding is a series of interdependent processes, and dull faculties lead to accumulating and broader defects in understanding and knowledge. In the twenty-first century, this may well appear a statement of the obvious; in the context of the seventeenth century, the evidence from idiocy can be read, firstly, as an assertion that it is the *human* sensory and neural apparatus that accounts for poorer - or more - effective understanding, rather than super- or preternatural intervention, or disfavour. The corollary is that it is not *a priori* knowledge that accounts for knowledge or learning in general, nor it is any other action on God's part. Secondly, the description of idiocy provides clear diagnostic criteria that emphasise that there is variability among all people. People with very dull faculties are able to reason a little, albeit imperfectly. The degree of this imperfection will depend on both perceptive and reflective faculties. However, dullness, indeed idiocy, is not divorced from the ways of thinking (which include, as aforenoted, imagining, perceiving, even feeling) that characterise all other humans. In fact, it is, I argue below, dullness that characterises humans.

Idiocy and the inevitable dullness of Man:

Very early in Book 2, Locke says of himself that he is "one of those dull Souls, that doth not perceive it self always to contemplate *Ideas*" (2.1.10). In his empiricist epistemology, however, Locke could not rely on himself as representative of others; his

approach required a gathering of evidence that could be tested against other evidence. For maximum effect, it also had to be evidence that his readers could observe for themselves: dullness among 'all Mankind' permeates Book 2. There are some seventeen uses of the specific terms, 'dull' and 'dullness' in the entire *Essay*, of which fourteen occur between Chapters 1 to 29 of Book 2. There are also numerous references in Book 2 in particular to humans with 'defect',[3] 'impaired' memory,[4] whose processes are 'slow',[5] whose resultant ideas are therefore 'imperfect'.[6] In the latter steps of idea formation, any form of dullness or blunting of the senses and processes becomes particularly important and apparent. Put simply, "the duller the Faculties are ... the more remote are they from that Knowledge, which is to be found in some Men" (2.9.15).

Dullness is not necessarily a simple term. As well as all the impairments of memory and reason that Locke identifies, dullness implies 'want of quickness'. Quickness, particularly in the seventeenth century, cannot be reduced to speed, or to speed alone. The term held then, and can still hold now, a more nuanced and subtle sense of alertness, readiness to learn, ability to grow and change. A pregnant woman is 'quickening' when the baby first moves. There is an implication of hope and of future in 'quickness' that there isn't in the much more linear notion of speed: loss of quickness involved loss of vitality, of a quality that is a much more global loss than a decrease in speed of performance. Yet, according to Locke, all humans are effectively at least a little dull - although not necessarily at every stage in their lives. There is, for example, the case of "Monsieur Pascal, that till the decay of his health had impaired his memory, he forgot nothing of what he had done, read, or thought, in any part of his rational age" (2.10.9). Monsieur Pascal's memory was out of the ordinary, "a privilege so little known to most men" (2.10.9), because, in general, we are on this earth "in a state of mediocritie, finite creatures, furnished with powers and facultys very well fited to some purposes, but very disproportionate to the vast and unlimited extent of things," as Locke wrote in his journal of 1677 (quoted in Woolhouse 1994: 147).

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[3] See: 2.9.4; 2.10.9 (two references); 2.11.11 (two references); 2.11.13; 2.17.21; 2.23.9.
[4] 2.2.9; 2.21.73
[5] See: 2.10.8 (two references); 2.16.7-22 (several references, and general discussion); 2.32.6.
[6] See: 2.7.5; 2.11.2,5,12; 2.17.15; 2.21.4,47.49 (several references and general discussion); 2.23.34; 2.25.3,8; 2.26.14,16; 2.31.5,6,11 (two references); 2.32.18.

Similarly, "it is not in the Power of the most exalted Wit, or enlarged Understanding, by any quickness or variety of Thought, to *invent or frame one new simple* Idea in the mind, not taken in by the ways before mentioned [sensation and reflection]" (2.11.2). All sources of knowledge are earth-bound. We have only the exterior world as taken in by our senses. Moreover, we don't need to improve what we have (although we can make better use of it); God has fitted us with capacities that are good-enough for our mortal lives (1.1.5). In fact, all creatures, human or not, ultimately have what is "sufficient for, and wisely adapted to, the state and condition of that sort of animals who are thus made" (2.9.12). Anything better or greater can be reserved for those who are in realms of existence outside the earth, those "superiour created intellectual Beings," who are the attendants of God, who is omniscient (2.10. 9). Acceptance of imperfection is necessary because even the most acute human minds are dull in comparison with these superior beings, the angels and spirits, who "may so far excel man, that they may have constantly in view the whole scene of all their former actions, wherein not one of the thoughts they have ever had may slip out of their sight" (2.10.10).

Locke is unconcerned that humans are imperfect at the level of faculties and ideas, because "Locke is entirely rejecting... the doctrine of original sin. ... He admits that, as a result of Adam's sin, men are born mortal; he denies, however, that they are born with an innate inclination towards depravity" (Passmore 1970: 159). Passmore is speaking of Locke's *Thoughts Concerning Education*, but the denial of depravity also informs the *Essay*: Man, for Locke, was simply "not big enough to grasp every thing" (Harrison 2006).[7]

What I am suggesting is that the assessment of human imperfection, and the contrast of our mortal failings with the far more erudite and knowing spirit world (with God as the most knowledgeable of all beings), not only removed Locke from "philosophical tradition, stemming from Aristotle and including Bacon and Descartes, [that] embodies the view that the proper aim for science is certain knowledge of the real

[7] Locke's political philosophy, particularly his belief that government is required if the behaviour of men is to be usefully restrained, is premised on the notion of the imperfect, and imperfectable, human, on a human who needs external guidance. See Aarselff (1969) for discussion along these lines.

essences of things" (Osler 1970: 3), it also freed him from the need to recuperate a pre-Fall human, from having to fit humankind into a model that might, in some way, mimic God. Humans, imperfect as they were, could stand on their own two feet. Thus,

> Locke's empiricism was not simply an alternative proposal for acquiring knowledge which was ultimately of the same kind as that proposed by the rationalists. Rather it involved a fundamentally different estimate of what kind of knowledge is possible, and of the extent of that knowledge. (Harrison 2002: 250)

Locke's "fundamentally different estimate" of both the acquisition and extent of knowledge available to humans arose from his observations of the people around him, and to a lesser extent from his reading of travel, and other literature. On the basis of that evidence, Locke concluded that certain steps were required for information taken from the environment, in through the senses, to be made useful. These processes were universal, but their success was dependent on the individual's sensory apparatus and neurology, and not on whether or not God had imprinted maxims and principles. Hence, the process and the resultant knowledge were never perfect, as individuals were never perfect. Again, people with intellectual disability, as *naturally* imperfect in 'organs' and neurology, offer a standard of proof that no one else can provide. It is they, human as they are, children of God as they are, who are the evidence that the state of imperfection is permanent.

Locke is telling us something here, something about humankind that is quite simple, but, in his own theological time, quite radical: human imperfections are what is to be expected. For him this matters, and below I will argue that for us, in the third millennium it should also matter. Firstly, I turn to the stand-out cases of imperfection in the *Essay*: changelings and monsters.

The challenge of changelings and monsters:

By the end of Book 2, Locke has outlined all the psychological processes that bring about understanding. He has explored, in some depth, various specific ideas, and, at least since the second edition of the *Essay*, raised and examined the complex topic of personal identity. I turn briefly to ideas, and in more detail to the chapter on personal identity, in Chapter 5 below. On Locke's own account, originally Book 2 was to be followed by the content of Book 4, 'Of Knowledge'. However, in the final *Essay*, before

coming directly to theories of knowledge, he opens up the subject of words and language, and includes an entire book on this topic. The reason for this is that,

> there is so close a connexion between *Ideas* and Words; and our abstract *Ideas*, and general Words, have so constant a relation one to another, that it is impossible to speak clearly and distinctly of our Knowledge, which all consists in Propositions without considering, first, the Nature, Use, and Signification of Language. (2.33.19)

This prosaic sounding introduction belies the complexity of the task Locke set himself. He is intent on demonstrating that language is conventional, rather than natural: "[t]here is no doubt that for Locke the relation of signification between words and ideas in a human artefact and a product of voluntary activity" (Losonsky 2007: 288), but, as with anti-nativism, the recognition of this meant the dismissal of God's hand in our use of language, a point I also return to in the following chapter. In Books 3 and 4, the issue of evidence is an important one, for "[w]hat is an abuse of language, according to Locke, is to suppose or assume that words refer to things *without the appropriate evidence*" (Losonsky 2007: 308. Losonsky's emphasis). Furthermore, Losonsky reads Locke as asserting that,

> we ... must ground our beliefs about the reference of our names of substances in empirical research. Although we will not attain certain knowledge about this, and there will always be some uncertainty about the reference of our natural kind terms, this is the same uncertainty that attaches to our '*Science* of natural bodies.' (Losonsky 2007: 308)

Thus, in bringing forward his evidence that language is not pre-set, but is conventional, Locke embeds within the discussion of language a polemic on classification and species boundaries: "Locke's theoretical discussion of the nature of language and classification and his discussion of the imperfections of language and their remedies are not two separate themes, but parts of a single argument" (Guyer 1994: 116). In this, Locke, according to Guyer's analysis, was attacking the Platonic theory of ideas, a theory that was having a resurgence in the seventeenth century. He was also rejecting the Aristotelian assumption "that the qualities of objects that are the most salient in our perceptual experience should also be the most fundamental in scientific exploration" (1994: 116). Atherton (2007) agrees that Locke's anti-Aristotelian position with respect to classification included a rejection of the notion that there were a fixed number of unchanging natural forms, and that classification was therefore based on

objective criteria. The argument around classification, and nominal versus real essence (see below for discussion), leads into, and bleeds into, Book 4, 'Of Knowledge'. It is in this argument in particular, in both Books 3 and 4, that the evidence from changelings and monsters, repeatedly, has a role to play.

In recent commentary on the *Essay*, attention to changelings and monsters has been of greater magnitude than that given to ideots, although, as with Armstrong's (1969) placement of ideots as a 'last resort', and Rickless's (2007) claim that reference to them was an 'unnecessary reminder', this attention has not always been of great depth. According to Remnant and Bennett (1996), "Locke pounds away at borderline humans," implying "that 'strange issues of human birth' throw us into an unprincipled taxonomic dither" (Remnant and Bennett 1996: xxviii). Similarly, Lockean scholar, Michael Ayers (1981) describes Locke as "continually recur[ring] to the topic of monsters and changelings" (Ayers 1981: 268). Ayers also inadvertently demonstrates the lack of truly scholarly attention to people with disability, reducing changelings to a single, startlingly retrospective, diagnostic category: "the changeling," he says, "has an extra chromosome" (1981: 269-70). We can make an educated guess that Ayers means Trisomy 21, or Down Syndrome, in which people have an extra 21st chromosome, and which is a well known 'cause' of intellectual disability: although there are many other aetiologies and manifestations of intellectual disability, it is not unusual to take the reductionist stance and equate idiocy and Down Syndrome, or, as it was once known, 'Mongolism'. However, why a scholar such as Ayers would read such a diagnosis back into a seventeenth century text is a puzzle: at the formal level, the cluster of symptoms called Down Syndrome was only recognised by Dr Langdon Down in 1866 (who coined the term 'Mongolism'), and although around a century and a half after the *Essay*, that was long before anyone had any idea of chromosomes, or indeed of biological inheritance as we now understand it. More importantly, the text of the *Essay* itself does not support the interpretation: it is possible some of the *ideots* of Books 1 and 2 are people with Down Syndrome, but *changelings* in the *Essay* lack both the physical 'stigmata', and the communicative nature of people with Trisomy 21, as we see below. Most importantly, there are many, many people whom Locke may have called ideots or changelings who do not have Down Syndrome, or any other syndrome that is the

phenotype of having of an extra chromosome.

More recently, Atherton (2007) gives greater credence to Locke's citing of changelings and monsters, pointing out that,

> Locke did indeed set much store by such cases ... Locke ultimately regards the existence of these so-called borderline cases as a reason to recognize that our ideas of species are not made by nature, and cannot be based on real essences. (Atherton 2007: 272-3)

Like Ayers, Atherton recognises monsters as "e.g., physically deformed humans" and changelings as "reason-impaired humans" (2007: 273), but lumps together the function of all 'borderline cases', and so fails to perceive that the difference among them is relevant, not only in 'real' pragmatic terms (lived lives, provision of services), but – more importantly in this instance – in the way of evidence in the *Essay*.

In this section I will argue that changelings and monsters, like ideots, were evidence that Locke considered in the rejection of the established viewpoints, the formulation of his hypotheses, and in the proof of his theories. In particular, changelings and monsters challenge essentialism, the long held belief that there are recognisable, real, permanent properties of a species. The evidence from changelings and monsters, or more precisely, of their (continued) existence, enables the replacement of that theory with one of nominal, flexible, variable groups. In this, changelings and monsters are not examples "in service" of already formulated theory, as Atherton (2007) suggests; rather they are, as Locke's repeated return to them suggests, seminal in the thinking that lies behind much of Books 3 and 4. In this the, admittedly at times fine, distinction between evidence and example is also important in the case of changelings and monsters. Evidence cannot be discarded, while theory can - if the evidence does not support it, the theory needs to be changed: this lends the changelings and monsters considerable weight in the *Essay* - if Locke were wrong about them, his theory requires revision.

Locke, in fact, does not bundle changelings and monsters together in a group, as most commentators do, and certainly does not refer to 'borderline cases'. Instead, he presents two discrete groups and, very often, juxtaposes and compares them. He could do this, in part, because there were meanings for changelings and monsters already established: there were, as we have seen above, books on categorisation, penny pamphlets, literary and dramatic work, all spreading stories and impressions of monsters

as wonders or portents, and of changelings as exchange or substitute children, in the pre- and early-modern periods. The *Essay* however, although not with absolute consistency,[8] delimits and characterises each group with some precision, and these differences are important to the function of both changelings and monsters.

Having read the first two books, the reader of the *Essay* knows of the ideot as a person with slow and dull faculties, who reasons only a little, but who is driven by the motivators of pleasure and pain, and is alert to these in her/himself. The reader has also been told that most people, including our author himself, are – like ideots - somewhat slow and dull much of the time. Neither changelings nor monsters, on the other hand, are likened to the general reader. However, we can glean that monsters are relatively frequent, and occur across species, while changelings are one of a number of "strange issues of humane Birth" (3.3.17). Further to this, some changelings are "drivling, unintelligent, intractable" (4.4.16), and, less emotively, some are those "who have lived forty years together, without any appearance of Reason" (4.4.13). A changeling may also be one who has "the outside of a rational Creature, when his Actions carry far less marks of Reason with them, in the whole course of his Life, than what are to be found in many a Beast" (4.4.15). A changeling, as Locke describes her or him, is akin to a person who, today, might be said to have severe or profound intellectual disability, rather than mild or moderate disability, (the latter, and rarely the former, being the 'categories' within which most people with Down Syndrome, or Trisomy 21, are placed for educational and other service needs). Such a changeling resembles the son of the parish petitioner Rushton (1996) found seventeenth century records of - an 'innocent' who at twelve years required constant watching, did not recognise his own mother, and consistently upset the neighbours. This changeling, difficult to interact with, and probably to 'control', has little in common with Bunyan's Mr Feeblemind, who is slow of wit and movement, needing of support, but able to use language, even if somewhat imperfectly.

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[8] The first use of the term changeling is in 2.21.51, the section in which fools also appear. From the context, and from comparison with the more precise usages of changelings in Books 3 and 4, and given the avoidance of the term fool in the *Essay*, my reading is that this passage is a 'stand-alone' in its use of terminology. Changeling in 2.21.51 appears to be a generic term for a person with intellectual or moral impairment, just as fool appears in this passage, as the generic 'silly' person.

Buickerood (2004) has asserted that Locke's particular changelings "do not conform" to the "the common medieval and early modern usage that signifies a creature substituted for normal human infants and children by supernatural beings" (2004: 10-11). To the extent that there is no overt reference in the text of such fairy or demonic intervention, the *Essay* supports this contention. Indeed, the *Essay* asserts that "[t]here are Naturals amongst us, that have perfectly our shape, but want Reason, and some of them Language too" (3.6.22), suggesting that the defects in changelings are, as they are in ideots, in-born, not artificial or adopted (as would be the characteristics of the cap and bell fool), nor preter- or supernatural (they are indeed 'naturals'). On the other hand, Locke was probably aware that he could rely on changelings being somewhere on the edge, already straddling two worlds, the human and the 'other', when he put them up as evidence in Book 4. Clearly he was not entirely sceptical or unimpressed with the stories of 'wonders' that circulated in pre- and early-modern times. He tells us that:

> I once saw a Creature, that was the Issue of a Cat and a Rat, and had the plain Marks of both about it; wherein Nature appear'd to have followed the Pattern of neither sort alone, but to have jumbled them both together. To which, he that shall add the monstrous Productions, that are so frequently to be met with in Nature, will find it hard, even in the race of Animals to determine by the Pedigree of what *Species* every Animal's issue is; and be at a loss about the real Essence, which he thinks certainly conveyed by Generation, and has alone a right to the specifick name. (3.6.23)

Such wonders have a role to play in the *Essay*, and Locke returns to them, more as hypotheticals than as clear evidence, three sections after the above. It is, however, monsters who are quite dissimilar from changelings, and who are not wonders, but, in his estimate, thoroughly human, that interest Locke. For this group, Locke provides a specific example: the abbot of Saint Martin, who was born with "*so little of the Figure of a Man, that it bespake him rather a Monster*" (3.6.26). Reportedly, there was debate as to whether or not this baby should be baptized. In the end, he was, and thus "*declared a Man provisionally*" (3.6.26). The child turned out to be clever, despite his shape remaining odd for all his life. Locke remarks that we can see that he "was very near being excluded out of the *Species* of *Man*, barely by his shape" (3.6.26). The image of the monster as having physical anomaly, but not intellectual affect, recurs in Book 3. In Book 4, this image is strongly reinforced in Chapter 4, discussed below. Without a doubt people who are monsters in the Lockean schema exist, as do the changelings. His sharp

delineation between the groups is not lacking in insight; as books like *Annie's Coming Out* (1984) testify, centuries after Locke, it is still too often assumed that people with physical disabilities also have significant cognitive impairment.

Species, we need to note, was not for Locke, and his contemporary readers, a biological division, identifiable by external characteristics in the way Linnaeus, half a century later, insisted species were, but something along the lines of 'sortal group' or groups. Early in Book 3, Locke puts it that,

> Since all (except proper) Names are general, and so stand not particularly for this or that single Thing; but for sorts and ranks of Things, it will be necessary to consider, in the next place, what the Sorts and Kinds, or, if you rather like the Latin Names, *what the Species and Genera of Things are*; wherein they consist; and how they came to be made. (3.1.6)

Later, in Book 4, he explains why he chose to use the words species:

> I ... have made use of the Terms of *Essences*, and *Species*, on purpose to shew the absurdity and inconvenience there is to think of them, as of any other sort of Realities, than barely abstract *Ideas* with Names to them. To suppose, that the *Species* of Things are any thing, but the sorting of them under general Names, according as they agree to several abstract *Ideas*, of which we make those Names the Signs, is to confound Truth, and introduce Uncertainty into all general Propositions, that can be made about them. (4.6.4)

In making – repeatedly – his points about species, the *Essay*, as is well recognised (Ayers 1981; Guyer 1994; Ruse 1987), is spurning the sorting systems that had been favoured for centuries, in which "[a]ll men, or all quantities of gold, have a common nature or essence. Indeed each particular *is* that nature, so Aristotle seems to think," as Ayers put it (1981: 249). The problem with systems that rely on a belief that there is an essential "very being of any thing, whereby it is, what it is" (3.3.15), is that either all individuals have to be the same, or the properties that define them have to be so limited as to be able to found in every instance. As we have already seen, the *Essay* recognised a diversity of peoples, ages, behaviours, capacities, ways of learning; a species with limited, fixed properties was in direct contradiction with all the evidence Locke had presented in the first two books of the *Essay*.

For Locke, what was at stake was not only the evidence and theories of Books 1 & 2, but also a theory of language, and a theory of species, and he did not support essentialism in either of the latter. The inclusion, and comparison, of changelings and

monsters occurs in "the first modern treatise devoted specifically to the philosophy of language" (Kretzmann 1968: 175), an analysis of the relationship between signifier (the spoken word, or signs such as used by the deaf, already allowed for as effective language in 2.11.11), referent and signified. Locke was most concerned to show that language represented (internal) *ideas*, and did not have a transparent or exact relation with an (external) concrete or invariant referent; hence what was signified was culturally and socially dependent, and in no way immutable.[9]

Thus, the right and communicative use of words, Locke argues, is dependent on getting away from simplistic assumption that all people attach precisely the same meaning to words, and the attendant assumption that there is indeed a fixed meaning for a word that can be in some way known or revealed. Proper nouns pose little problem – we can know Peter or Paul - but bringing together particular examples (Peter and Paul, or a dozen different trees, perhaps) to arrive at general terms (Man, forest) is much more difficult. Arriving at, and using, general terms for mixed modes is particularly fraught with possibilities of misunderstanding.

The *Essay*'s central example of how complex, and variable, are general terms, is the sorting and species delineation in one of our most influential concepts – Man. Thus, questions of the nature of language are thus built into those on the nature, or lack of naturalness, of species (and vice versa). Locke suggests that although "the proper original signification of the Word [essence], as is evident from the formation of it; *Essentia*, in its primary notation, signifying properly, *Being*," (3.3.15) is reasonable, as, in this way, essence-being is merely a useful appellation for what we cannot properly know or name (as we do not, and cannot know the real inner constitution of anything). However, "the Word *Essence* has almost lost its primary signification; and, instead of the real Constitution of things, has been almost wholly applied to the artificial Constitution of *Genus* and *Species*," and thus

> it being evident, that Things are ranked under Names into sorts or *Species*, only as they agree to certain abstract *Ideas*, to which we have annexed those Names, the

[9] This is my simple reading of Book 3. Kretzmann (1968) discusses, and tries to clear up the 'imprecision' and 'inconsistencies' of Locke's semantic thesis, while Bennett (1971), too, finds significant weaknesses in Locke's theory of meaning. Losonsky (2007), as aforenoted, is more sympathetic to the empirical attributes of Locke's language theory. All of these, and other work on the Locke's theories of language, are interesting, but outside the terms of this current thesis.

> *Essence* of each *Genus*, or Sort, comes to be nothing but that abstract *Idea*, which the General, or *Sortal* (if I may have leave so to call it from *Sort*, as I do *General* from *Genus*), Name stands for. (3.3.15)

This latter is what Locke calls "nominal essence" (3.3.15), an abstract, general idea, and not a complete or unquestionable representation of any real, unchangeable constitution, or set of properties that are natural to, or dependent on, the same. When we say Man we are, according to Locke, representing a complex idea – or nominal essence - and not an idea that is linked to invariant properties, or even that is agreed upon by all. It is the frequent production of changelings and monsters that is the most significant evidence that the concept, Man, is mind-dependent, and not the result of recognising fixed properties (3.3.17): it simply could not be debated that a "*Foetus* born of a Woman were a *Man* ... if the abstract *Idea* or Essence, to which the Name Man belonged, were of Nature's making" (3.3.14). Thus, if we contrast our own attitudes to some unusual 'humans' with our attitudes to other (unusual) humans, we will have clear evidence that our sorting is not set. To make this point Locke compares changelings and monsters (and most certainly does not lump them together):

> What will your drivling, unintelligent, intractable *Changeling* be? Shall a defect in the Body make a *Monster*; a defect in the Mind (the far more Noble, and, in the common phrase, the far more Essential Part) not? Shall the want of a Nose, or a Neck, make a *Monster*, and put such Issue out of the rank of Men; the want of Reason and Understanding, not? (4.4.16)

Locke, in personalising monsters with the example of the abbot of St Martin, and in his descriptions quoted above, clearly prefers monsters to changelings. But his preference is not the point. The comparison of changelings with monsters allows for effectively challenging hypotheticals:

> The well-shaped *Changeling* is a Man, has a rational Soul, though it appear not; this is past doubt, say you. Make the Ears a little longer, and more pointed, and the Nose a little flatter than ordinary, and then you begin to boggle: Make the Face yet narrower, flatter, and longer, and then you are at a stand: Add still more and more of the likeness of a Brute to it, and let the Head be perfectly that of some other Animal, then presently 'tis a *Monster*; and 'tis demonstration with you, that it hath no rational Soul, and must be destroy'd. Where now (I ask) shall be the just measure; which the utmost Bounds of that Shape, that carries with it a rational Soul? (4.4.16)

Locke is reasonably intemperate in his wording here, using the second person pronoun frequently, ascribing opinions and statements to the 'you' of the reader, employing emotive language. One explanation for this is that he is annoyed by, and

wants to ridicule, the tendency humans have to go round in circles: "This is to bring all back again to what was exploded just now," he says: it is "to place all in the shape, and to take the measure of a man only by his outside" (4.4.16). However, presaging what was to be formalised in the eighteenth century, the *Essay* also repeatedly acknowledges that, in the common estimation, appearance is the measure of the human, at the same time as it sees such reductionism as insufficient: "People," Locke says, "do lay the whole stress on the Figure, and resolve the whole Essence of the Species of Man (as they make it) into the outward Shape, how unreasonable soever it be, and how much soever they disown it" (4.4.16). Indeed, confusion of shape with essence may lead to dire consequences:

> And if this be not allow'd to be so, I do not know how they can be excused from Murther, who kill monstrous Births (as we call them,) because of an unordinary Shape, without knowing whether they have a Rational Soul, or no; which can be no more discerned in a well-formed, than an ill-shaped Infant, as soon as born. (3.11.20)

On the other hand, rationality should not be seen as an, or the, essential property:

> He that annexes the name *Man*, to a complex *Idea*, made up of Sense and spontaneous Motion, join'd to a Body of such a shape, has thereby one Essence of the *Species Man*: And he that, upon further examination, adds rationality, has another Essence of the *Species* he calls *Man*: By which means, the same individual will be a true *Man* to the one, which is not so to the other (3.6.26)

Hence, we need to think carefully, and not make assumptions:

> I would gladly know what ... sort of outside is the certain sign that there is or is not such an Inhabitant within? For till that be done, we talk at random of *Man*: and shall always, I fear, do so, as long as we give ourselves up to certain Sounds, and the Imaginations of setled and fixed Species in Nature, we know not what. But, after all, I desire it may be considered, that those who think they have answered the difficulty, by telling us, that a mis-shaped *Foetus* is a *Monster*, run into the same Fault they are arguing against, by constituting a Species between man and beast. For what else, I pray, is their Monster in the case, (if the word *Monster* signifies anything at all) but something neither Man nor Beast, but partaking somewhat of either. (4.4.16)

The changeling then comes back for comparison:

> And just so is the *Changeling* before-mentioned. So necessary is it to quit the common notion of Species and Essences, if we will truly look into the Nature of Things, and examine them, by what our Faculties can discover in them as they exist, and not by groundless Fancies that have been taken up about them. (4.4.16)

Despite Locke's evident dislike of changelings, as he moves into Book 4 and the discussion of the limitations on knowledge, changelings have more to tell us than

appears at first glance. Among all the various to-ing and fro-ings, claims and counterclaims (often rhetorical), that arise from the issue of nominal versus real essences, and the therefore contingent nature of knowledge, Locke devotes a chapter to what he calls 'trifling propositions'. These can be identical propositions, such as "a law is a law," or they can be such that "*a part of the complex* Idea *is predicated of the Name of the whole*," such as "*Lead is a metal*" (4.8.2, 4). Trifling propositions may also be ones in which the predicate states only a part of the definition, such as "*Gold is yellow*" (4.8.5). Such propositions are among the few that are self-evident and certain, but they are not instructive, or useful for the accumulation of knowledge, according to Locke. 'Man is rational' would be another common proposition, one based in the Aristotelian view: to disrupt the apparent certainty and completeness of it, Locke needs a predicate that brings with it the potential to disturb, contradict the apparently obvious. In his discussion of trifling propositions, he states that:

> he that would enlarge his own, or another's Mind, to Truths he does not yet know, must find out intermediate *Ideas*, and then lay them in such order, one by another, that the Understanding may see the agreement, or disagreement of those in question. (4.8.3)

The idea of a changeling – the complex idea, not the actual individual someone who might be called changeling - is an instance of an intermediate idea, an idea that, included as predicate, can upset the superficial homogeneity of the subject, Man. They, Locke suggests, could be another species, neither 'Man' nor 'Beast', neither of which, the *Essay* has argued, are fixed, natural categories, but are names or what we might call words-for-ideas, that do not truly represent any real essence of what is Man, or what is Beast. The idea of changeling – "the Shape, the Motion, and Life of a Man without Reason" (4.4.13) - is as much a distinct *Idea* as any other. Locke is clearly aware that there is a certain shock value in what he is proposing: "T'would possibly be thought a bold Paradox, if not a very dangerous Falshood, if I should say, that some *Changelings* ... are something between a Man and a Beast" (4.4.13).[10] The insertion of changelings between Man and beast might well be interpreted by the zealous as threatening religion,

[10] It should not be passed over without comment that Locke refers here to '*some* Changelings', suggesting he was aware of differences among 'changelings', and was not prepared to conclude that *all* those he thought of as human in shape, but lacking in the development of intellect could, even at the level of nominal essences, be thought of as another, or in-between, species.

and similarly threatening the chance of an after-life for changelings. In the end, Locke leaves it to the "faithful Creator and bountiful Father" to determine the after-life as, unlike us, the creator "disposes not of his Creatures according to our narrow Thoughts and Opinions, nor distinguishes them according to Names and Species" (4.4.14).[11]

Having suggested that those who apparently completely lack a mind might be *thought of* as another species (all species being a matter of ideas, not fixed essence), the *Essay* proceeds into a discussion of the necessary, or not, relationship of soul to body: "placing immortality in a certain superficial Figure" has led to a consideration "more to the outside, than inside of Things; to place the Excellency of a Man, more in the external Shape of his Body, than internal Perfections of his Soul" (4.4.15).[12] Thus, Locke hammers home the point that our categorisations and names are idea- and not essence-dependent.

In his final reference to changelings, Locke returns to the notion that species or sortal groups are agreed-upon, not natural, not tied to essential, pre-given and immutable qualities. Book 4, Chapter 7, 'Of Maxims', revisits the *Essay*'s anti-nativism, again presenting the argument that we gain complex ideas through "Collection and Observation" (4.7.16), rather than having them imprinted in us. Locke also returns to the example of species classification and naming: "Another that hath come farther in framing and collecting the *Idea* he calls *Man*, and to the outward shape adds *Laughter*, and *Rational Discourse*, may demonstrate, that Infants, and Changelings are no Men" (4.7.17). The superficial reading is that this is support for Goodey's (1994) contention that Locke's changelings are not Men. However, as with the example of the child who, only having had experience of white people, will not necessarily recognise a 'Negro' as belonging to the same species (4.7.16), changelings will only be excluded from Man by those who insist that laughter and rational discourse are necessary attributes of Man. If

[11] The unwillingness to fully follow through with the implications of what he has suggested – consign changelings to a mere mortality as they are not fully human - could be read as Locke not wanting to take personal responsibility, except that, throughout the *Essay*, Locke truly takes his omniscient God to be the final arbiter, and humans to be inevitably limited in absolute truth.

[12] Such an argument had not gone out of date and should, with a moment's thought, be familiar to anyone who lived through or has come after the 'women's liberation', feminist or anti-racism movements with their analyses of the objectification of the person and of the reduction of the 'soul' or 'essence' of a woman/black person to her external appearance. Perhaps this is something we owe to Locke.

one thinks that it is the shape, or being born of woman, or any other set of qualities that make the human, a changeling may well be among Man.

In short, as the *Essay* proposed at the beginning of the extended discourse around names and essences, "the *Species of Things to us, are nothing but the ranking them under distinct Names, according to the complex* Ideas *in us,* and not according to precise, distinct, real *Essences* in them"(3.6.8). The word-sign is arbitrary, essences – at least those we can think we know - exist only in our minds, and are arbitrary, too. This means, of course, that any exclusion of changelings or any relegation to another, intermediate species, is similarly arbitrary.

The evidence from changelings and monsters: was it replaceable by other examples?

In all this arbitrariness, would it have been possible to replace changelings and monsters with other evidence? It seems unlikely. In Book 4, knowledge is defined as the "perception of the connexion and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our *Ideas*" (4.1.2); earlier, the *Essay* asserts that "*Truth* or *Falsehood*, being *never without some Affirmation, or Negation*, Express, or Tacit ... is not to be found, but where signs are joined or separated, according to the agreement, or disagreement, of the Things they stand for" (2.32.19). Agreement and disagreement are central to knowledge acquisition, and the process of comparison, of perceiving the 'connexion' or 'repugnancy', affects identity and diversity, co-existence, relation and real existence (Schankula 1980: 467-468). Indeed, "Locke makes comparison so central in his theory of knowledge that we can easily overlook it" (Paxman 1995: 467). Changelings and monsters, as two groups for comparison had particular qualities: they were of human parentage (4.4.16), they were 'naturals' in the way that the seventeenth century understood this term (non-demonic, not artificial). As shown in Chapter 2 here, both groups were well-recognised in family, legal and medical practice, as well as imagined within popular culture, particularly as substitute children, and as wonders or portents, respectively. Furthermore, Locke himself saw the issue of 'monstrous births' as seminal to the proof of species, as essential, or not:

> To distinguish substantial Beings into *Species*, according to the usual supposition ... these Things are necessary:

> §15. *First*, To be assured, that Nature, in the production of Things, always designs them to partake of certain regulated established *Essences*, which are to be the Models of all Things to be produced ...
> §16. *Secondly*, It would be necessary to know, whether Nature always attains that *Essence* ... The irregular and monstrous Births, that in divers sorts of Animals have been observed, will always give us reason to doubt of one, or both of these.
> §17. *Thirdly*, It ought to be determined, whether those we call *Monsters*, be really a distinct *Species*, according to the scholastick notion of the word *Species*; since it is certain, that every thing that exists, has its particular Constitution: And yet we find, that some of these monstrous Productions, have few or none of those Qualities, which are supposed to result from, and accompany the *Essence* of that *Species*, from whence they derive their Originals, and to which, by their descent, they seem to belong. (3.6.14 -17)

Unlike the aforementioned length of life of good Queen Bess, given as an example of duration, it is hard to think of another 'example' to replace either changelings or monsters. Perhaps Locke could have contrasted women and men to show the non-essential nature of categorisation, but even in the patriarchal hierarchy of the seventeenth century, it is likely that the suggestion that, generic, women (or, with rather greater challenge to the dominant order, generic, men) could be a species between humans and beasts would have provoked anything except bar-room humour. As it is with the case of ideots, changelings and monsters are evidence that cannot readily be replaced.

Chapter summary: the natural imperfections of humankind:

While the most powerful role for people with intellectual disability was as ideots in Book 1 of the *Essay*, they were not used up and finished with at the end of argument against nativism. This chapter has shown that Book 2, especially the first section thereof in which Locke examines the processes required for knowledge, requires the evidence from idiocy. Their way of being and learning are evidence that specific processes – from perception, through enlarging, retention and abstraction – are necessary to gain knowledge from the world around us. Although Locke avoids any overt statement of materialism – telling us at the very beginning that he will not "at present meddle with the Physical Consideration of the Mind" (1.2.1) - these processes are dependent on the 'organs' of the body, and it is in these, and only in these, that ideots differ from 'other' humans (1.2.27). However, in its repeated descriptions of dullness in humans, Book 2 also asserts that people with idiocy are one among many when it comes to human

imperfection.

Book 2, in its inclusion of people with intellectual impairment and with mental illness, but also in its insistence that dullness is common (including in Locke himself), makes cognitive imperfection ordinary - a result of faulty organs of sense, erratic neurology, poor memory, degeneration over time, and never punishment from God. Locke also shows that imperfections come and go, are the result of accident or change; even the most peculiar are never, in the *Essay*, related to generational sin, or implicated as supernatural portents. Dullness is the general measure of humankind.

The interest in, and acceptance of, imperfection that is so noticeable in Book 2, bleeds into Books 3 and 4 of the *Essay*, in which Locke covers a broad swathe of topics under the larger subjects of language and knowledge. Thus, the cultural relativism that was considered in Books 1 and 2 is no longer relevant, and evidence from people of non-European cultures appears far more rarely than it had earlier in the *Essay*. The falterings (the unsteady, erratic performance) and the faulterings (the mistakes), of people with mild intellectual disability also tell us little: in Books 3 and 4, as we have seen here, Locke turns to other naturals, those whose way of being offers greater challenges to our all too easily assumed essentialism: he turns to changelings and monsters.

In the end, Locke's critique of language, his inclusion of changelings and monsters, and his insistence on the construction of the species, Man, as the best example of the arbitrary, unfixed nature of our concepts and our knowledge, is part and parcel of the rejection of the singularity and perfection of humankind. Thus, as I show in the next chapter here, Locke not only "rejects the then-current view that there was a non-conventional language of nature, usually associated with Adam's language as described in Genesis 1:27" (Losonsky 2007: 288), Books 3 and 4 further erode the possibility that a perfect pre-Fall Adam was, or would ever be, recoverable. Including people with severe disabilities as legitimate evidence in questions of language, categorisation and knowledge, reinforces the inevitable imperfection of humankind.

Chapter 5

Locke's Humankind

The *Essay* set out to investigate human understanding. In so doing, it attended to a range of humans, including a variety of non-European peoples, and those with cognitive or physical impairment. There was, necessarily, a concept of human produced in, and through the consideration of all these people in the *Essay*. This chapter argues that without making any statement thereon, Locke effectively, although perhaps unconsciously, made a distinction between a political Man or Person, who operated in the limited sphere of government, and a much more everyday Man who could, and should, be observed and assessed in developing theories of human understanding. This chapter argues that this latter concept is one that should be noted, and given credence.

I begin here by pointing to a number of terms and concepts in the *Essay* that are consistently plural in form and meaning. I go on to show that, unlike many of his contemporaries, Locke was interested in anything but a singular, representative being; plurality is at the heart of the *Essay*.[1] I move on to examining the influential chapter, 'Of Identity and Diversity', in the light of the fact that it was written after the investigation of human understanding was completed, and could not represent the total or even executive summary of Locke's thoughts about humans. Finally, I discuss humankind as the *Essay* presents this group, suggesting that the diversity that characterises the evidence in the text is retained in the concept of human. This is a potentially radical formulation of a humanness that is never perfect, and that defies distillation to a single, representative man.

The *Essay*: an exercise in plurality:

Colie (1969), analysing the "powers of attraction" of Locke's major work, promotes his choice of the essay form - rather than treatise or other more formal exegesis - as one factor to account for the popularity and influence of his work among "seventeenth century bluestockings ... middling men ... considerable critics ... the thought of Berkeley and Hume" (1969: 234-235). The essayist, she says, was able to speak "directly and personally to his readers" (1969: 238). What Colie does not note is that, in speaking directly to his readers, Locke's address was far less often the first person 'I' addressing the second person 'you', than it was with the plural, inclusive,

[1] I have chosen 'plurality' rather than 'pluralism' because the latter, as I understand it, implies a more conscious belief in the autonomy and equal value of different strands of the 'thing' (e.g. cultural pluralism, religious pluralism), than I think Locke was indicating. Locke's is a necessary plurality – a huge range of people, ideas, and so on, without being a positive theory of pluralism.

pronouns 'we' and 'our'.[3] In this section, I show that this plurality was not confined to pronouns alone, and was not simply a rhetorical device: plurality of point of view, of meaning, and possibility is at the heart of the *Essay*. This plurality, as we see later in this chapter, extended to the *Essay's* human.

In the opening remarks to the *Essay,* Locke states his desire to reach not "men of large thoughts and quick apprehensions [but] men of my own size," and to encourage these readers to be active, to "make use of thy own thoughts in reading" (Locke, 1975, Epistle: 7). He suggests that "Some objects had need be turned on every side ... it is not one simple view of it that will gain it admittance into every understanding, or fix it there with a clear and lasting impression" (Locke 1975, Epistle: 8): multiple views are, from the outset, signalled and encouraged. Following the Epistle, the *Essay* exhibits a rapid shift from the authorial 'I' to the inclusive 'we', inviting the reader to collude with the author in the investigation, at the same time as offering the potential for these multiple points of view. The very first section of Book 1 exemplifies this:

> [t]he Understanding, like the Eye ... takes no notice of it self ... But ... whatever it be, that keeps us so much in the Dark to our selves; sure I am, that all the Light we can let in upon our Minds; all the Acquaintance we can make with our own Understandings, will not only be very pleasant; but bring us great Advantage, in directing our Thoughts in the search of other Things. (1.1.1)

Throughout the *Essay*, 'our' is generally attached to a plural noun: 'our understandings' (1.1.2; 2.14.4, for example), 'our minds' (1.2.6; 1.3.19, for example), 'our purposes' (1.1.5), 'our faculties' (1.1.5; 2.10.8, for example).[4] Thus we not only have much collective ownership, but also multiple possible minds, purposes, faculties. Compare this with the language of Descartes who, concerned with (his own) individual consciousness, is so bound within the first person singular that the 'mind itself' becomes 'myself': "But finally," he asks, "what shall I say of the mind itself, that is, of myself?" (*Meditations* 1901: 2 §15).

Such differences in form are often ignored in the literature on Locke. Chappell (1994) has asserted that the "very word 'idea' appears more frequently in the *Essay*

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[3] 'We' appears in the *Essay* at roughly a proportion to 'my' of 10:1, while 'our' to 'your' is a proportion of roughly 18:1.

[4] For example: "our understandings" in 1.1.2 and 2.14.4; "our minds" in 1.2.6 and 1.3.19; "our purposes" in 1.1.5; "our faculties" in 1.1.5 and 2.10.8.

concerning Human Understanding than any other noun" (1994: 26). This is not actually correct: while 'idea' does appear more often than 'man' or 'men' (but far less often than the total of the two terms), while it also appears very slightly more frequently than 'he', the word 'ideas' (plural) occurs nearly twice as often as 'idea' (singular). Chappell does not provide statistics, so it is not possible to know whether he has ignored the 's' on the end, or ignored the word 'ideas' altogether, although his essay tends to favour the latter interpretation. Idea/ ideas is not trivial distinction in the *Essay*: idea (singular) is used in specific contexts, such as when an idea is being referred to in theoretical discussion (the idea of God, the idea of fire, for example), analysed, or questioned (the idea of infinity, for example). But idea (singular) is often a cover-all for the multiple possible ideas that are observed when a single idea is teased out. For example, the idea of identity gives way to multiple ideas of identity: "For I suppose," Locke says, "every one's *Idea* of *Identity*, will not be the same ... And which shall be the true? Which innate? Or are there two different *Ideas* of *Identity*, both innate?" (1.4.4). Similarly the idea of infinity is really "our Ideas of their [the attributes of God's] infinity" (2.17.1). Moreover, the *Essay* insists that the failure to recognise multiplicity of ideas occludes their origins, and very often leads to wrong notions, such as nativism:

> Can it be thought, that the *Ideas* Men have of God, are the Characters, and Marks of Himself, engraven in their minds by his own finger, when we see that, in the same Country, under one and the same Name, *Men have far different*, nay often *contrary and inconsistent Ideas*, and conceptions *of him*? Their agreeing in a Name, or Sound, will scarce prove an innate Notion of him. (1.4.14)

Neither Locke's analysis of language, nor his theory of probable rather than certain knowledge, relied on the notion of an idea, singular, but rather on the having of innumerable ideas, which would vary according to the circumstances in which perception took place, and according to the capacities of the perceiver. Many ideas simply do not exist in any singular and determined way: the idea of infinity, for example, can never be clear to anyone, and must always rely on positive or negative inference (accumulative, or negative in the sense that infinity is so great as to be incomprehensible, and can only be thought of comparatively), and there are many ideas that different people will have that all come under the idea of infinity (2.17.15). Similarly, the term 'substance' might well be better treated as "three several distinct

Ideas ... to prevent ... Confusion and Errors" (2.13.18). Furthermore, there are many people who, for cultural or cognitive reasons, will not attain those ideas that can be given a single, quasi-proper name. With respect to number, for example, Amerindians, as we have seen, "otherwise of quick and rational parts enough," will not have the idea of one thousand (2.16.6); children need to learn number and specific ideas thereof through a combining of simple, then complex ideas, and use of memory (2.16.7); some people, who have defects in their memories, may never attain the idea of twenty (2.16.7).

Idea (singular) is useful for argument, and for communication; not recognising ideas (plural) puts us at risk of setting an idea, any idea - from that of duration to that of God - in concrete, as if it could never be nuanced or change. Simple ideas – those gained more or less directly through perception – are easy to agree on, but conscious examination of our differing, complex ideas is required to prevent 'wrangling', especially among the bookish and learned (2.13.28). Ignoring or sidelining the plurality of ideas effectively refuses the motivation of the *Essay*, which was to "*examine our own Abilities*," with the supposition that "*every thing does not hit alike upon every Man's Imagination*" (Locke 1975 Epistle: 7, 8), rather than to develop a 'doctrine'.

> 'Idea' was used in ordinary language in a broad sense to denote images, plans, or general notions in a human mind, where the term 'mind' is used without clear ontological commitment to a theory of whether the mind is independent of or includes the brain, and without any explicit distinction between corporeal ideas and cognition that is purely intellectual. The term 'idea' is found in some philosophical writings in this ordinary-language sense. (Michael & Michael 1989: 32)

Furthermore, despite critics such as Farr (1987), who asserts that much confusion and disputation might have been avoided if Locke had defined idea more clearly, it is the case that Locke was probably just as alert to the ordinary language sense of idea: he "was not much interested in their [ideas] exact nature: are they mental states or modifications? ... He thought the answer to such questions was of little consequence for what he wanted to say" (Woolhouse 1988: 80). Ideas in the plural are much more in tune with the *Essay's* purpose and its intended audience than an idea, singular, defined, contained.

Consistent with Locke's privileging of what could be observed, and his reliance on the accumulation of evidence, everywhere we turn in the *Essay*, there are multiple

possibilities; not only of ideas, but of opinion, custom, fashion, of capacities, abilities, likes and dislikes. In the *Essay's* world, nothing is set or singular: throughout Book 1, fashion (in the broader sense of preference and behaviour) is culturally dependent, and changes with time; the (plural) "capacities of our understandings" (1.1.7) vary according to sensory and neural acuity; even primary qualities, although they really exist (2.7.17), cannot be perfectly understood and known (4.3.13), and cannot therefore have a one to one correspondence of signifier and signified. Meaning, as well as action, will always be multiple and contingent.

The use of Man, Men, Mankind, and man is another case, and the one in point for this chapter. Throughout the *Essay*, most instances of man (without a capital) are preceded by a definite or indefinite article, by 'a' (man), 'the' (man), 'one' (man), 'any' (man), 'this' or 'that' (man), making them a single human. There are also many instances of 'man' with a descriptor, such as poor man, and, as we have seen, mad man, blind man, dull man. There are some twenty odd instances of 'every man', but Locke (almost) exclusively uses the singular form 'Man' (capitalized) to mean 'Mankind'. With the use of capitalization, and with the diversity of humans who appear, not just as example, but as proofs in the text, Locke clearly intends to have more than one type of man included in his Man. He constantly concedes to differences among Men, and refers to Men's Ideas; some Men (plural), for example, having the opinion that there are innate ideas, and some do not, and so on. In fact, the term Men appears very nearly as often as man,[5] reinforcing the plurality of humans and their capacities and ways of behaviour. In this, Locke differs from Hobbes, who, throughout *Leviathan*, generally avoids personal address, and also avoids the plural: the *Leviathan*, in presenting a much more clinical, uncompromising, and unified view of humankind as driven by very limited characteristics, and best ruled by a despotic monarch, prefers to speak of 'a man' rather than of 'men'.

Such usage of the plural does not occur in the *Essay* alone. In discussing Locke and gender, Waldron (2002), quotes a passage from the *First Treatise*, commenting that, "[i]ntriguingly ... this passage [First Treatise: 30] is also a meditation on pronouns" (2002: 25). Waldron then requotes the passage from Locke, which announces that

[5] My estimate is approximately 920 instances of 'man' and 905 of 'men' through the *Essay*.

"'[t]he word *Them* in the text must include the species of Man, for it is certain *Them* can by no means signifie *Adam* alone'" and further asserts, on the meaning of the word Man " '*Man* there, as is usual, is taken for the Species and *them* for the individuals of that Species' "(2002: 25). Waldron then comments that "[t]his whole strident passage of Locke's makes no sense unless we assume that 'Them' includes Eve, that 'Man includes 'Eve,' and that even 'him' includes Eve" (2002: 25). Speaking more generally, Waldron also notes that this does not mean Locke had an understanding of equality in the way we now understand it, although he does make a case for Locke being an early, and important theorist of equality. "There are," Waldron says, "all sorts of things that interest us about equality on which it would be silly and anachronistic to look to John Locke for any help. His writings have nothing to say about affirmative action or universal health insurance or minority cultural rights" (2002: 7).

Less incipient than his equality, Locke, in his insistence on plural forms of pronouns and terms, also proposes and progresses a largely contingent view of meaning. This is not a simple contingency, but rather one in which there is not only the possibility of change, but of synchronic multiplicity. Amid this, this chapter here argues, is an emerging understanding of humanness as including more than the characteristics of the *animal rationale*, or any other single being. Such plurality and inclusiveness was in conflict with accepted contemporary views of representative Man, as I discuss in the section below.

The challenge of the *Essay*'s humans (plural):

When Locke was writing there were two key beliefs about what it was to be human, both of which had a long history of influence. The first I consider here is the older, the *animal rationale* that Locke rather sarcastically attributed to Aristotle (4.17.4). The other, the Adamic Man, was having, as Harrison (2002; 2007) has demonstrated, something of a resurgence in the second half of the seventeenth century, not only as a means of explaining morality – which Adam since his biblical inception had done – but as a vehicle for a notion of perfectibility.

Aristotle, as did Plato and Socrates, thought that there was something special to humankind, something that animals did not have at all. The details differed, but the

general notion that humans had a rational soul, a faculty of reason that no other creature possessed, persisted well into the seventeenth century. Aristotle, in particular, made reason a *function* of the human (*Nicomachean Ethics* Book 1, § 7). Furthermore, for Aristotle,

> [t]hough all men are human, some are actually more human than others. It is in these men that we see most clearly what gives sense to human structure and society. ... It is the adult and the sane human being who is primary. He is the standard, the best judge of the world, for it is he who makes most use of his natural capacities. (Clark 1972: 283)

Although Clark, quoted above, points out that Aristotle was not asserting that each and every human will instantiate *logos* or have *nous* (that is, roughly, be rational), nor even that all *ought* to do so, those who did were, without equivocation, superior: "if human beings have a function, then human virtue consists of performing it well" (Wakefield 2000: 18). The problem for the actual majority of humans was that they, lacking the right level (or style and expression) of *nous* were automatically not be fully human: Aristotle situated slaves as 'naturally' not properly human; true humans were political men of reason. Trigg (1999), in the second edition of his well-received *Ideas of Human Nature: An Historical Introduction*, blithely summarises Aristotle, for whom citizenship and humanness were indissoluble, but who was "unwilling to give any but a subordinate place to women" (1999: 26), for whom "only males were going to be citizens," and who thought that any "random behaviour is typical of slave mentality and of animals" (1999: 24-25).

Frank (2004) tries to present a more sympathetic view of Aristotle's notions of nature, slaves, citizenship and humanness, but even if she is right, and he does not truly seek to completely eliminate certain humans, it is the case that when Locke was writing a relatively strict *animal rationale* was the order of the day. Conservative divine, Richard Cumberland (1631-1718), for example, who wrote on the law of nature, "follows Aristotle's doctrine that the nature of a species is discerned in mature specimens without accident or deformity," and thus contends that it is "only when discipline and experience have transformed the child into a rational adult that its nature become fully human" (Kirk 1987: 28). Hobbes could be more extreme: according to Kirk, in doing this "Cumberland takes the sting from Hobbes's contention that man is

born unapt for society" (1987: 28).

Locke saw and presented it differently. His challenge to the Aristotelian notion of set properties by which we might classify species, and in particular humans, has already been noted above. More than that, as Wood (1975) puts it, "[a] persistent and fundamental theme of all Locke's writings from his correspondence of 1659 onwards ... is that reason has little part in determining men's actual outlook and conduct" (1975: 76): "Locke only claims human beings are potentially or intermittently rational" (Harrison 2007: 227). Locke, as we have seen, insists on children being important among those who should show imprinted ideas, if there were to be such, and takes into consideration a myriad of people who would fail the criteria of being "adult and sane," (as Clark above-quoted described Aristotle's favoured humans), lacking accident or deformity. Fundamental to the *Essay* is the realisation that reason and rationality are not required, in any perfect or absolute sense, to have knowledge:

> [t]hose who will take the Pains to reflect with a little attention on the Operations of the Understanding, will find, that this ready Assent of the Mind to some Truths, depends not, either on native Inscription, or the *Use of Reason*, but on a Faculty of the Mind quite distinct from both of them as we shall see hereafter. (1.2.11)

In fact, as we have already seen, rationality is optional in human (3.6.26; 3.11.20), and, as Mattern (1980) has also noticed, if we do include rationality, it cannot be a complete definition: rationality can be a confusing criterion, a verbal agreement that does not truly reflect our underlying notions of what is uniquely human:

> For however some Men seem to prize their Definition of *Animal Rationale*, yet should there a Creature be found that had Language and Reason, but partaked not of the usual shape of a Man, I believe it would hardly pass for a *Man*, how much soever it were *Animal Rationale*. (3.6.29)

Aristotle, on the other hand, according to Clark,

> assumes certain things about the men who are likely to accompany him [in the quest for a 'good life']. A human vegetable, or a violent lunatic, or one convinced that 'life is evil' is unlikely to contribute anything to the discussion. In general there is no point entering into a discussion with one who denies, or ignores, the basic principles of the discipline in question: 'One should not discuss geometry with those ignorant of it'. (Clark 1972: 275)

As Wakefield (2000) points out, the Aristotelian conclusion that reason is a function of the human being provided a framework for Aristotle's view of virtue. *Animal rationale* was essentially a political man, a set of characteristics defined by the

men who ran the country, and a concept of human that specifically excluded the vast majority of the population. The *Essay* proposed other ways of knowing - *Our highest degree of knowledge is intuitive, without reasoning* (Contents: 4.17.14) - and thus other ways of being (a virtuous) human.

Yet, even in the twentieth century, not everyone was happy that Locke refused the centrality of *animal rationale*. Aarsleff (1969), for instance, asserts: "It is Locke's fundamental belief," he says, "stated again and again and indispensable to his entire philosophy, that man is 'by nature rational' " (1969: 100). Aarsleff gives no references for this apparently repeatedly stated belief, and a survey of the *Essay* does not find this phrase or another that would substitute for it. Aarsleff does add the Aristotelean caveat: "To be rational by nature does not automatically entail the full, let alone perfect, exercise of reason, and there is of course nothing paradoxical in this conception" (Aarsleff 1969: 100). This may be the case in Locke's political writings, but when it comes to the human who experiences and understands, it is not really how the *Essay* sees it. Although a number of examples of the phrase 'rational man' can be found there, there are also those who are "dull and irrational" (2.27.8), others who are old, or young (2.22.4), foolish (2.33.10) and so on: in the *Essay*, as we have seen, all these people must be considered if we are to understand the processes of human understanding.

Of course, the Aristotlean *animal rationale* was by no means the only view that equated humanness with rationality. Plato, too, "believes that reason must dominate," and that it is in reason that our true nature is seen. There were difficulties for Plato who, in "exalting reason and locating truth in a different realm [of the Forms], makes it tempting to dismiss the world and its desires" (Trigg 1999: 30). Trigg notes that Aquinas too, thought "[t]he activity peculiar to man is understanding," and regarded "reason as sovereign" (1999: 44), that, in fact, "Aquinas identified the working of reason with the path of virtue, and so it would follow that a human without an inclination to virtue would also lack the power of reason and not be human at all" (1999: 41). For Aquinas there was an hierarchy among people, tied with their rationality: "[a] Christian would believe that people matter more as individuals when they are viewed as possessors of immortal souls" (1999: 37).

Consistent with Aquinas's position, the confusion of political man with a

representative of all the species was complimented, in the seventeenth century, with a desire to restore the theologically favoured man, Adam, to his supposed former glory. Adam was the original human placed on the earth by an all-knowing God, the once-perfect, or near-perfect, prototype who, if he had not sinned, would have been the image of God. There were many in the seventeenth century who felt that it might be possible to recuperate some of the knowledge Adam had reputedly lost at the Fall. Francis Bacon, to whom the Royal Society - of which Locke was a member - admitted considerable allegiance, had believed that "that the human dominion over nature which Adam had lost at the Fall could be restored in some measure by the sciences" (Harrison 2002: 240). Bacon was not alone; despite being an anti-nativist, Malebranche converted to the Cartesian method in order to restore the alleged perfect science of Adam (Harrison 2002: 239). There was a long history to this:

> Augustine took the view that only before the Fall was man's existence natural: thereafter all human practices and customs were at best a means of coping with something for the present age at least irretrievably spoiled. There was another view of fallen man which recognised his reason as well as his sinfulness. By this account, which triumphed in the hands of Aquinas, man retained the clear stamp of God's image; he had in him a yearning for goodness and truth which had survived the Fall. (Kirk 1987: 1-2)

Adam was thought to have had perfect eyesight, greater harmony among his senses, a much greater knowledge of all that was involved in natural philosophy, a greater intellect, all until the Fall. Science was pictured as offering exciting new possibilities of addressing some of the inadequacies of Man since the moment of original sin, indeed of achieving perfection (Harrison 2002).[6] Malebrache, for example, thought "the Cartesian method offered a means of overcoming the limitations of the fallen intellectual faculties of Adam's seventeenth-century descendents, and thus of restoring the fabled encyclopedic knowledge of the first man," and "[a]spirations to recover the science of Adam provided a common motivation for a number of early-modern philosophical projects" (Harrison 2002: 293-294).

Adam was also thought to have produced the first, natural, language, naming

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[6] Passmore (1970) has tried to argue that Locke was a perfectibilist. He achieves this through what I can only see as a significant misreading of Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. I turn to Passmore again in the following chapter. Here it can be noted that he simply ignored the *Essay* in his attempt to make Locke's writing conform to the ambition for perfection.

objects and creatures according to their inner essence: in 1653, British clergyman and chemist, John Webster (1610-1682), wrote, for example, that Adam had "the language of nature infused in his Creation, and so innate and implantate in him, and not inventive or acquisitive, but merely dative from the father of light" (quoted in Losonsky 1992: 526). Leibniz, too, ascribed to an Adamic theory of language: "[a] language is more or less Adamic depending on how natural and non-arbitrary it is" (Losonsky 1992: 529). Moreover, "Adamicism ... is a philosophy of mind as well of language ... wedded to a philosophy of mind according to which ... some of the mind's ideas are innate, universal, natural, nonarbitrary, comprehensive, accurate, and dynamic representations" (Losonsky 1992: 527-528).

Locke, as both the *Two Treatises* attest, accepted Adam as the first human, but he did not subscribe to the theory that Adam's lost knowledge could be recuperated. He dismissed the notion that the weaknesses of our senses and capacities were consequences of the Fall (Harrison 2007), and rejected the belief in nativist ideas that underpinned many theories of (possible) Adamic recuperation. He also, as we have seen, and as Losonsky argues at greater length, rejected the belief that there was natural, non-arbitrary language, universal to all humans. For Locke, there was no perfection, potential or otherwise, any more than there was a pre-given language, or a knowable essential essence of any species, including humankind. Instead, for Locke, and for his mentor and colleague, Boyle, "incapacities ... necessarily attend the kind of beings that we are ... the more important issue is the nature of human capacities rather than the nature of the Deity" (Harrison 2007: 220).

When writing about government, and in particular when rejected the teaching of Robert Filmer, Locke relied, as Filmer had done, on Adam, albeit dismissing Filmer's elision of Eve in no uncertain terms (See *First Treatise* § 30, 31). The *Essay*, on the other hand, generally ignored the Fall, seldom mentioned sin, promoted the central role of custom and education, and questioned the rationality that was supposedly the stamp of God in us. The causes of error were not to be found in our fall from grace, but in individual failures of will (2.21.48). The *Essay* positioned the gaining of pleasure, and the avoidance of pain, as twin motivators in its hedonistic psychology, eschewed absolute truth, replacing the latter with the likelihood that there was only limited

knowledge available to humans. "Men," Locke writes even when himself a young man, "live upon trust and their knowledge is nothing but opinion moulded up between custom and interest, the two great luminaries of the world, the only lights they walk by" (Locke 1659, quoted in Wood 1975: 6). According to the *Essay*, we are only human, and as such cannot be expected to have the capacities and knowledge of the angels and spirits, let alone of the deity (Yolton 2004). What we have is what we have, and we should be well content with the capacities and faculties God had provided for us. "For Locke, as for Boyle ... our current 'state of mediocrity' seems to be less the result of a catastrophic Fall than of the fact that our proper station is quite literally a 'mediocre' or middle state between angelic perfection and the lower orders of the beasts" (Harrison 2007: 223).

Thus, the *Essay* keeps to a clear, although never specifically articulated, distinction between natural imperfection - such as that of ideots - and wilful or volitional transgression of the law, either natural or civil. It is not lack of reason, but self-interest, or hastiness, and the failure to take the power to "suspend his determination," that condemn a man (2.21.57), and which may make some Men pretend to adherence of the rules of conduct, while at the same time they may transgress those rules (1.3.6): it is "Men's actions [that] convince us then that the rule of virtue is not innate" (1.3.7). In short, from the Epistle, and relentlessly through its near 700 pages, the *Essay* expressly contradicted,

> [t]he tradition according to which Adam was in possession of the perfect philosophy [which] implies that human minds were originally designed to know the truth, and that once those impediments which followed upon the Fall had been identified and neutralized, the mind would once again, of its own nature, arrive at truth, or at least be better equipped to do so. (Harrison 2002: 244)

In refusing the centrality of rationality, and in ignoring the hypothesis of the recuperable pre-Fall knowledge, Locke was challenging hierarchies and promises many held dear. For some, as we see below, the power of this challenge was apparently defused by the expansion of the discussion of will and volition (in the additional chapter, 'Of Power'), and by the addition of the concept of an overtly moral Man, or Person. However, the many strange people who have such presence in the *Essay* did not walk off-stage with these additions. Much of the continued suspicion of the *Essay* was, I suggest, at least in part due to the underlying disturbance caused by this very seminal

study of understanding being dependent on such a diverse human. In my reading of it, the radicalism of the *Essay* is to be found more in the stoic refusal to gather all the diverse humans who inhabit it back under any single, universal representation, than in any of its stated theories.

Person in 'Of Identity and Diversity', revisited:

The *Essay* explored a novel topic, human understanding, in a novel way, through observation and evidence. When it was published, it entered a world in which, for most people, it was still the case that "the priest was their cosmologist and the picture he painted was orderly, immutable and universal" (Axtell 1969: 165). This world was governed by the tradition of natural law (also known as moral law), which presupposed a world of good and evil, virtue and vice, had little room for difference, and relied on the belief that it was "God who created the cosmos from nothing ... and who governs all of his creation through law" (Horwitz 1990: 11). God, and only God, fully comprehended the eternal or divine law, but humans could partake of it somewhat. In Aquinas's influential view, the law was imprinted on humans (Horwitz 1990: 12-13 for discussion), while for others, humans could partake in the "unique exercise of human reason in coming to know the natural law" (Greene 1988: 173). Thus, to the early moderns, the *Essay's* claim that God's own imprimatur was not the source of maxims and principles, and hence of human knowledge, was both scurrilous and subversive. Furthermore, as we have seen, Locke not only refuted nativism in ideas (principles and maxims), and thus by extrapolation God's embedding of moral law, he also refused the traditional views of rational man, questioned the centrality of reason as a definitional property of humanness, and made no attempt to replace rational Man with the potentially near-perfect Adam.

Both Locke's great friend, James Tyrrell (1642-1718), and the Irish natural philosopher, William Molyneux (1656-1698), raised the problem of the *Essay's* perceived moral relativity. Tyrrell, trying to inveigle Locke into saying much more about his thoughts on the issue, dressed up what may well have been his own concerns, telling Locke that "some thinkeing men at Oxford" are "dissatisfied with what you have concerning the Law of Nature, (or reason,) whereby we distinguish moral good, from

evil and vertue, from vice" (Tyrrell 1690, in Goldie (ed.) 2002: 147). Locke was generally very testy in response to calls for more detail of natural law and moral Man in the *Essay*, and letters went back and forth.[7] Locke complained that Tyrrell and his friends had not understood him, but would have, except that they were prejudiced by their "phansy (of what) I should say besides my purpose" (Locke 1690, in Goldie (ed.) 2002: 150). In saying this, he made the point that the *Essay* was not motivated by, or designed for, an exposition of morality or law: instead he insisted that, if natural law was innate, and had God as its author, then He would have given it "to mankinde, *which is a terme which in my sense includes all men* (Locke 1690, in Goldie (ed.) 2002: 150. My emphasis). "All men" was Locke's criteria for "mankinde," and clearly not all men demonstrated their possession of natural law. This was not a point made just in passing. Locke elaborated on it, suggesting that it was the law of Moses that was given to the Israelites: the revealed law of the New Testament came 2000 years after Moses, and therefore could not be "cald a law given to mankinde ... unlesse that men borne before the times of the Gospel were no part of mankinde" (Locke 1690, in Goldie (ed.) 2002: 150).

Eventually, Locke responded to criticisms on the moral relativity front by expanding the chapter 'Of Power' for the second, 1694, edition of the *Essay*. He also added 'Of Identity and Diversity' to this edition. Yet, despite personal identity, the topic of this latter chapter, being an addition and appearing, according to Mattern (1980) to be "a digression and an afterthought" (1980: 24), it has garnered a great deal of critical attention. Mattern (1980) quotes from Eric Matthews (1977), who suggests that Locke's concept of Person is "clearly incidental to a discussion of the *Essay's* main theme, 'the original, certainty and extent of human knowledge' " (1980: 24). In her paper, Mattern is aiming to demonstrate that Matthews' remarks were inadequate, that Person had more than the function of "reidentification of the moral agent;" she wants to show that Locke "thought that the systematic moral science which he envisioned required a concept of this sort" (1980: 25). I suggest that both Matthews and Mattern are quite correct – Person has little to do with the project of the *Essay*; on the other hand, the investigation

[7] This was a protracted and intense debate: see letters 1266, 1301, 1307, 1309, 1530, 1538, 1579, in Goldie (ed.) 2002. Also see Horwitz (1990): 20-28.

of the understanding was not Locke's only interest, and his political analyses and ambitions led him to inquire into the who were "intelligent agents, capable of a law" (2.27.26).[9]

By the end of the second quarter of the eighteenth century, Person, as I show in the next chapter of this thesis, did indeed scoop the prize for interest. It is thus important to consider who or what Person was or was not. We can begin by recognising that Person, at least as a term, if not a concept, was certainly not a central one. A search of an online text of the *Essay* shows a total of 138 matches for all the terms Person, persons and personal (capitalised or not).[10] In comparison, there are a total of 2177 matches for the terms Man, Man's, Men, and Men's, and mankind (with or without capitalisation). Of the seventy uses of Person, only eighteen are *not* in Book 2, Chapter 27. Of the seventy-six uses of human (almost all adjectival), only six are *in* that same chapter. Locke was not renowned for returning to the full text to erase any contradictions that came about due to editing and expanding the *Essay* (Walmsley 1995); however, he also makes it clear that human, man and Person are not the same entity. The frequency of Man and Men tends, then, to suggest these were of greater interest to the *Essay*, than was Person,

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[9] Yolton (2004) has asserted, as have so many before him, that Locke's Christianity was important to him, and that his "account of the extent and limits of knowledge is tempered by his concern for immortality and just life" (Yolton 2004: 1). The *Two Treatises* dealt with government and human obligation, but, despite his hope of just life, Locke never produced a work on ethics or morals. At around the same time as the *Essay*, he published *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689), in which he advocated religious diversity, and, some four years later, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), describing his approach to making a young child into a political Man: the former another exercise in plurality, the latter another in political precision. These were followed by *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695), which brought criticism of Socianism and atheism, rather than allayed any fear about Locke's beliefs (Cranston 1957: Woolhouse 2007). Yet, the lack of stated theory on ethics has continued to puzzle commentators: in 1990, Horwitz was still saying, "[e]nemies and admirers alike among John Locke's contemporaries ... have persistently expressed concern that nowhere in his published writing does he deal systematically with the issue of natural law" (Horwitz 1990: 1); Marshall (2000) notes that Locke promised a book on ethics to those friends who knew of his authorship of the *Two Treatises* and "who never for a moment thought that that work set out the majority of Locke's social or ethical vision" (Marshall 1994: xviii); in 2001, Stephen Forde also considered it odd that Locke did not put forward one of several possible proofs of God or the law of nature. My contention is that, in writing the *Essay*, Locke saw an inevitable plurality of people, of views, of ways of being, and of ideas. Anything universally applicable became problematic.

[10] This searchable text (found at http://arts.cuhk.edu.hk/Philosophy/Locke/echu/), originally prepared by Roger Bishop Jones (1994) is a wonderful resource, but is missing some later sections of Book 4, Chapter 7. It is also not entirely clear which edition of the *Essay* it is based in. However, the figures taken from it provide an indicative proportion.

as Matthews, abovequoted, noted.

When it was included, 'Of Identity and Diversity' was embedded in the third section of Book 2, which focuses on relations. For Locke, the "*Ideas of Identity and Diversity*" are the result of "[a]nother occasion, the mind often takes of comparing" (2.27.1). When Locke finally comes to discuss Person in section seven of the chapter, he begins by telling the reader:

> we must consider what *Idea* [of identity] the Word it is applied to stands for: It being one thing to be the same *Substance*, another the same *Man*, and a third the same *Person*, if *Person*, *Man*, and *Substance*, are three Names standing for three different *Ideas*. (2.27.7)

Thus, Person, in the *Essay*, is different from, and can be compared with, Man, not for value, but so we may know more about each. Reading on in the chapter, we find that Person is a question of consciousness, not matter or body, (2.27.16), s/he is "is a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection" (2.27.9). It is the Person to whom rewards and punishments can be given (2.27.18), and this makes Person "a Forensik Term appropriating Actions and their Merit; and so belongs only to intelligent Agents capable of a Law, and Happiness and Misery" (2.27.26). Clearly this Person holds some of the moral, and political value that Locke's contemporaries were disturbed was otherwise absent from the *Essay*: "It must be insisted that Locke's aim is to define 'person' in a legal sense within a Protestant latitudinarian society" (Tennant 1982: 74).

Conversely, "Locke says ... being a human is not logically necessary for falling within the scope of the term 'moral man' " (Mattern 1980: 37-38), the latter being a term Mattern argues convincingly can be thought of as more or less equivalent to Person. In fact:

> [i]n his passage on the concept of moral man, Locke does not go so far as to say explicitly that the concept of human is completely distinct from the concept of the moral agents. But that is the direction in which he is heading here, and his doubts about the universal claim 'all men are rational' give impetus to this move. (Mattern 1980: 37-38)

In the section Mattern is referring to, Locke also asserts that it does not matter "whether a Child or a Changeling be a *Man* in a physical Sense, may amongst the Naturalists be as disputable as it will, it concerns not at all the *moral Man,* as I may call him, which is this immoveable unchangeable *Idea, a corporeal rational Being*" (3.11.16). Man and moral Man (or Person), are not one and the same thing: the first is a

member – or not - of a kind or species, the boundaries of which are contestable. The second, the Person, is a specific idea, which is not open to contestation.

Effectively, then, Person is an idea that has little to say about the concept of human. In the *Essay*, we can see this readily; for example, Locke argues forcefully that a monkey, or any other creature who has enough reason to be able to use general signs and infer consequences from general ideas, could be a or Person or moral Man (3.11.16). He also puts forward the story of the talking parrot that might be considered part of a race of "*rational Animals*," but, because rationality does not alone make the human, would not be thought of as a Man (2.27.8). On the other hand, if a child (of human body) never becomes a Person, s/he would still be a Man or human. Locke says,

> I think I may be confident, that whoever should see a Creature of his own Shape and Make, though it had no more reason all its Life, than a *Cat* or a *Parrot*, would call him still a *Man*; or whoever should hear a *Cat* or a *Parrot* discourse, reason, and philosophize, would call or think it nothing but a *Cat* or a *Parrot*; and say, the one was a dull irrational *Man*, and the other a very intelligent rational *Parrot*. (2.27.8)

Man, as I show in more detail below, was in some way basic, and everywhere. Person, (which could be a rational monkey) was nominal, restricted, pertaining only to specific elements of behaviour and consciousness, and with little or no relation to either substance, or embodied manifestation.

Importantly, while "[t]ypically, for Locke questions of identity ran into matters of public and legal accountability," (Porter 2003: 75), personal identity, as Yolton (2004) has suggested, is not exactly the same as being a Person. Locke, as Yolton is one of the few to recognise, distinguishes

> 'self' from 'person', the latter carrying the moral connotation, *the former referring to self-identity. The agent of action is the man, the self.* Actions are not restricted to moral actions: dancing or singing, fencing or talking are actions of the agent as much as are truth-telling, helping others, honouring others. (Yolton 2004: 17. My emphasis)

What is noteable about this is that this formulation allows that Man can be a self, without being a fully-fledged Person:

> *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*, as far as that consciousness extends. (2.27.17)

Self is less detached from the body than Person, and can be found in a consciousness of what are, for Locke, basic psychological mechanisms – pleasure and

pain, happiness and misery. To understand this fully we need to hold in mind that Locke also "uses 'thinking' to convey not just reasoning but also all other mental activities such as sensing, perceiving, remembering, imagining," and that this means that "ideas not only figure in thinking and the understanding of language, but are also identified with perceptions of objects and their qualities, and with sensations like pain" (Woolhouse 1994: 2). That is, ideas and thinking are not confined to reason, the latter being a faculty which, in Locke's theory, is not at all necessary for "general Knowledge [which] consists in a Perception of the Agreement, or Disagreement of our own Ideas;" reason only really comes into play "both for the enlargement of our Knowledge, and regulating our Assent" (4.17.2). Reason is not the cause or root source of all knowledge, any more than innate maxims, principles and ideas are. We know from early in the *Essay*, that those who perceive dully, and have only simple ideas, can still be Men guided by the twin motivators of pleasure and pain (1.2.27): thus, given self is not a moral sense, but an awareness of pleasure/ pain, and given this more comprehensive view of thinking, the dull human will have claim to being a 'self', even if s/he does not meet the more specific criteria for the idea of Person.

People with intellectual disability, then, even though they do not understand the law of nature, are not precluded from having self-hood, which is a matter of some consciousness (even if imperfect), the aforementioned pleasure and pain, and of being capable of experiencing happiness of misery. Other groups, too, are allowed in when the self is decoupled from the fixed idea of forensic Personhood: aging people may lose Personhood but not necessarily self, children may have a developing self, but have not yet have attained the state of being a Person. Furthermore, in Locke's formulation, agency is attached to self-hood, rather than to Person:

> because such basic moral sensations (pleasure and pain) accompanied almost any perception, being perceptive of something was tantamount to assuming a situation that affected in specific ways one's sense of well-being. Practically situated perceptions, therefore, comprised part of the agents' motive for acting one way rather than another" (Ben-Chaim 2000: 479).

Agency need not be public thing: "[h]uman agents, according to Locke, could legitimately delimit the scope of their intellectual endeavours to issues of practical concern because these limits were set by God's active power" (Ben-Chaim 2000: 480).

In this very broad, but basic, concept of actions/endeavours which involve agency, ideots can also be agents. They are restricted agents perhaps, who do not actively participate in *civil* society, but even this restriction should be thought of in the context of the seventeenth century, when such participation essentially involved landed male citizens, and civil identity was a problematic category for women, illiterate men, those with no estates and so on.[11]

None of this is straightforward, easy to be sure of. However, Locke tells us that, "*Person*, as I take it, 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*" (2.27.26) My reading of this is that Person is not what we experience, but rather the formal term applied by an outsider, who has a different consciousness but is bound by the same moral and civil laws that we are be bound by. I feel myself, not myperson; Person is not my state of being, but is what another calls me when I conform to the requirements of what society or societies commonly agree makes a Person. The characteristics and obligations of Person, as Locke makes clear, are additional to the ones he lists for self: that is, Person is "a Forensick Term, appropriating Actions and their Merit; and so belongs only to intelligent Agents, *capable of a Law*, and Happiness, and Misery" (2.27.26. My emphasis). Holding in mind that Locke is writing in the seventeenth century, which does not have a concept of measureable intelligence (Gould 1996), and that Locke tells us that intelligence can also apply to a parrot, what we have here is Person as an abstract, general word, applied, by an outsider, to another who is aware of self, *and* is mature enough to be aware of the law.

This reading of self/Person is consistent with those of Locke's near contemporaries, and published in the collected works of Locke. In 'A defence of Mr Locke's opinion concerning personal identity', E. Law, in 1769,[12] wrote,

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[11] We can also note the current position, in which people with intellectual disability are similarly excluded from the majority of active civic duties, from voting to sitting on a jury. Some advocates may find this exclusion to be inappropriate or discriminatory, but that is an argument that needs to be mounted elsewhere and not employed in a retrospective reading of seventeenth century writing.

[12] The 'Defence' is not, in the *Works* (1824), attributed. However, the on-line Locke bibliography nominates E. Law as the author, and gives the date 1769 (http://www.libraries.psu.edu/tas/locke/bib/ch3-18ca.html#03595, 2010). According to the bibliography, Law wrote the defence in response to Joseph Butler's 1736 criticism.

> Now the word person, as is well observed by Mr Locke ... is properly a forensic term ... denoting some such quality or modification in a man as denominates him a moral agent, or an accountable creature; renders him the proper subject of laws, and a true object of rewards and punishments. When we apply it to any man, we do not treat of him absolutely, and in gross, but under a particular relation or precision: we do not comprehend or concern ourselves about the several inherent properties which accompany him in real existence, which go to the making up the whole complex notion of an active and intelligent being; but arbitrarily extract one single quality or mode from the all rest. (Law 1769, in *Works,* Vol. 2. 1824: 180)

Law also appends reasonably similar remarks written, he says, by an unnamed friend:

> The word Person then, according to the received sense in all classical authors, standing for a certain guise, character, quality, i.e, being in fact a mixed mode or relation, and not a substance; we must next inquire what particular character or quality it stands for in this place [Book 2, Chapter 27], as the same man may bear many different characters or relations at the same, or different times. The answer is that, here it stands for the particular quality or character, under which a man is considered, when he is treated as an intelligent being subject to government and laws, and accountable for his actions: i.e. not the man himself, but an abstract consideration of him, for such and such particular ends: and to inquire after its identity is to inquire not after the identity of a conscious being, but after the identity of a quality or attribute of such a conscious being. (*Works*, Vol. 2. 1824: 190)

As Law and his colleague interpreted it, Person is a very limited concept; as Yolton (2004), and Mattern (1980), point out, it is also largely an abstract concept:

> Locke's concern that person be appropriately subject both to moral and civil law raises the possibility that *persons* might simply be fictional entities, artefacts of ethical theory or the law, like *legal property* or *legal persons* in a sense in which, say, corporations count as persons. (Martin 2000: 48)

If we accept this reading of Person as a term that "[w]hen we apply it to any man, we do not treat of him absolutely, and in gross, but under a particular relation or precision," as Law, abovementioned put it, we can see that it is indeed possible to have self without Person (and possibly even a Person without a self, as in the case of the intelligent parrot?). It is also possible to understand better Locke's antipathy to nativism, as well as his abovenoted criterion for Mankind – that it includes all Men. What the idea of an abstract, adult Person suggests is the acquisition of moral and political knowledge as we grow through childhood. It allows that some, depending on their social circumstances, will have greater or lesser knowledge, and further allows that the specifics of the knowledge will be culturally dependent, as Locke makes clear throughout the *Essay*. People and cultures differ; such knowledge is most unlikely to

arise from universal, pre-born inscription.

I think Locke is indeed clearing the ground in this chapter on self and Person, the chapter that is additional to the *Essay's* analysis of human understanding. He is clearing the ground of the assumption that it is only fully-fledged Persons who are worthy of consideration, particularly when it comes to the analysis of psychological process. He is demonstrating an emerging recognition that morality can exist without divine inscription (although, for Locke, as the *Two Treatises* attest, not without some degree of divine teaching or reference). He is not making morality entirely secular, but is suggesting Person is an abstract idea, because few if any individuals attain it to any degree of perfection. Moreover, no individual is always and forever a Person; we have to grow into Personhood, as Yolton (2004) has argued; as we age and our faculties diminish we may lose that Personhood (2.9.14, 2.10.9). Thus Locke is, I suggest, telling us that being a Person is not the apotheosis of humanness. It is a state essential to the rule of law and government, but neither definitive of being human, nor the pinnacle of our achievements.

Most importantly, Person is not the entity to which questions of humanness should be addressed. Even without being a Person, we may have a self and a sense thereof (the former through actions and limited agency, the latter through memory, even if this is imperfect), we will be human, we will be physically, and in the continuity of our cellular organisation, the same Man.

Person, however, was clearly of considerable interest to Locke's contemporaries, unused as they were to psychological assessment, or to any discourse that lacked moral overtones, and concerned as they were, in the turbulent times of the Restoration, the ascension and deposing of James II, with legal and moral matters. However, despite Locke's declaration that "*Morality* is *the proper Science, and Business of Mankind in general*" (4. 12.11), and that morality was demonstrable (3.11.16), the purpose of the *Essay* was not to undertake such a science or demonstration. Indeed, as a non-philosopher, I find Locke's stated aims in the *Essay,* and his method of execution of these aims, a relatively straightforward and satisfactory explanation for the "long noted fundamental discrepancies between Locke's effort to construct a moral philosophy—and, more specifically, a theory of natural law—on the one hand, and his work on the

theory of knowledge on the other" (Ben-Chaim 2000: 474). The *Essay* was doing what it says it would do, and Person – the adult who has already achieved, and not yet lost (with degeneration or through accident), the best knowledge humans are capable of, and who is responsible under the law (moral/natural and or civil) - was of little use to the investigation of how humans (differently) acquire, and keep, what knowledge they do have. In terms of the *Essay's* project, if not of Locke's political writings, Person was an afterthought, an inclusion to quiet the critics, a concept largely confined to an additional chapter.[13] Person was secondary to the very diverse and mutable set of humans who were observed for the purposes of understanding human understanding. Person was not, or not to be equated with, human. If that had been better recognised, as Locke himself, above-quoted, suggested, it "would possibly have prevented a great deal of that Confusion ... concerning *Personal Identity*."

Who, then, was the suitable subject, or subjects, for philosophical and psychological, rather than political and legal, investigation?

The diversity of Locke's Man-Human:

Locke had, in fact, written on the subject of natural law in the series of essays only found, translated from the Latin, and published two and a half centuries after his death. These have already been noted as the *Essays on the Law of Nature* (von Leyden [ed.] 1954); they were retranslated in 1990, as *Questions Concerning the Law of Nature* (Horwtiz, Clay & Clay [eds] 1990). According to von Leyden, in these early pieces, "Locke's starting point is simple: it consists in the factual statement that men can reason" (1954: 46). This is a statement of "man's essential nature" and "the very question at issue, namely, whether or not reason is an essential quality of humanity, is decided affirmatively by reason itself" (1954: 46). Locke at that time, accepted Aristotle's notion of Man, quoting from the *Nichomachean Ethics* on the question of human and reason (Locke 1954: 113), saying soon after that "[s]o I admit that all people are by nature endowed with reason, and I say that natural law can be known by reason" (1954:115). It should be kept in mind, however, that in his opening salvo of these early

[13] The concept of moral Man also appears a few sections of other chapters (in particular Book 3, Chapter 11).

Essays/Questions, Locke had noted, "[b]y reason, however I do not think is meant here that faculty of the understanding which forms trains of thoughts and deduces proofs;" reason is instead "definite principles of action from which spring all virtues and whatever is necessary for the proper moulding of morals," and it is this reason "to which everyone who considers himself a human being lays claim" (1954:111). Thus, these early short pieces concern themselves with men who do not behave according to moral reason; some individuals who have been brought up "in vice," and some families which, it seems, are English who have "established barbarous habits, and evil customs have perverted even matters of principle" (1954:115). There are also those who are "led astray by the violence of passions or being indifferent through carelessness or degenerate through habit," and many other behavioural indulgences, as well as those who "through natural defect the acumen of the mind is too dull to be able to bring to light those secret decrees of nature" (1954: 115). The language in the early *Essays-Questions* is direct, and there are many binary oppositions along the lines of 'virtue or vice', 'good and evil' 'violence of passions', 'honour or baseness'; such oppositions are rare in the later *Essay*.

By the time Locke "wrote the first draft of the *Essay* ... a decade later, he was deeply troubled about the status of universal claims such as "all men are rational" (Mattern 1980: 25). Indeed, "Locke's early confidence that ethical truths could be drawn from the concept of human nature was undermined by his doubts about the possibility of any universal, certain, nontrivial knowledge" (1980: 25). Colie (1965) largely agrees with Mattern:

> By the time he finished his eighth and last essay, in 1663, Locke's hopes for security founded in a traditional natural law framework had been dashed. His inquiry had led him, as so many of his later investigations were to do, into the positing of further problems rather than to the definition and solution of those problems with which he began. (Colie 1965: 31)

Of particular interest to us here, is that, "[p]art of the basis of Locke's denial of the certainty of the claim that *all humans are rational* is his contention that this generalization fails to fit all known instances" (Mattern 1980: 26. Emphasis in original). Mattern quotes from Locke's journals: "it is evident," he writes, "that children for some time and some men all their lives are not soe rational as a horse or a dog" (quoted in

Mattern 1980: 26). This did not lead Locke, as it could have done, to discounting these apparently irrational people, but rather to asserting, "Soe that by frameing such Ideas [as all humans are rational] within us we cannot make universal propositions which shall be true of all thing" (quoted, 1980: 26). Which returns us to his above-quoted response to Tyrrell: Locke claims his critics wanted him to write about something (natural law), beside his actual purpose (an excavation of human understanding), and the great problem for him in this was that he questions the universality of natural law, and its origin in God, *because* he cannot see that there is any evidence that such a law has been given to all mankind, "*which is a terme which in my sense includes all men*" (Locke 1690, in Goldie (ed.) 2002: 150. My emphasis). Natural law was something that Locke saw as the province of a very limited group.

Thus Man is the far more repeated term in the *Essay*, and Man, as a 'proxy' for human (Yolton 2004), was not so much the key protagonist (singular), as the key set of protagonists (plural). Man was many possible people, with many possible qualities: "[r]ather than being neatly divided into natural kinds, the Lockean world is comprised of a myriad of individual objects, most of which resemble each other in a least some respects" (Jones 2005: 171). The *Essay* gives no absolute statement of what delineates Man as human, but it gives clear indications of the breadth of the concept. Jad Smith (2006), as aforenoted, situates the *Essay*, and some of Locke's shorter works, as seminal in the pre- or early-history of cultural awareness, saying that, today, while Locke, given current approaches to the anthropological past, may seem an unlikely key figure in anthropology, he is so as he "refuses to bracket off or theoretically circumvent custom, choosing instead to ask whether it has its own immanent logic and standards of assent" (2006: 832). Paxman (1995), also as aforenoted, positioned the information drawn from people around the globe as central to the inspiration and reasoning in the *Essay*. There are many humans in the *Essay* who do not come from Locke's immediate, or regularly known, environment. Throughout the *Essay*, there is also, as I have shown, sustained interest in the diversity *within* any given population, including Locke's own.

In observing people and process, over the years of writing the *Essay*, and over the life course of individuals, Locke was possibly setting up the first longitudinal study in the discipline that came to be known as psychology:

> Follow a *Child* from its Birth, and observe the alterations that time makes, and you shall find, as the Mind by the Sense come more and more to be furnished with *Ideas*, it comes to be more and more awake: thinks more, and more it has matter to think on. (2.1.22)

Indeed, writing specifically on childhood, Ezell (1983), suggests that the references to children in Locke's work – including *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, marks "one of his most radical breaks with seventeenth-century thought. ... It is concerned with the recognition of the child as an individual human being and the sanction of childhood as a stage of development" (1983: 152).

As we have also already seen, the *Essay* also incorporates humans who, in the past one hundred and fifty years or so, have been more likely to appear in a medical text than as subjects in philosophical analysis. Mad Men make several appearances, and Porter (2003) suggests that there is much to be made of this inclusion: "[q]uestions of fractured and multiple personality, with all their anarchic implications, were thus being raised, as early as the close of the seventeenth century, as in the inevitable consequences of Locke's dethroning of the Cartesian *cogito*" (2003: 75). There are also deaf people, blind people, aged Men whose senses are failing, and those who raise the problem of how much a Man who has lived all is life with his senses "stopped up" might actually know (2.9.13). What is more, these people with impairments are not an underclass; they could, as the Praerogativa Regis discussed in Chapter 2 here recognised, be anybody, from any social level. Furthermore, even if not born with impairment, all humans are mortal and liable to accident (3.6.4). Thus, people who did not have so much matter to think on were just as important to consider as any, or the many, others; as this thesis has demonstrated, Locke's Man-human could be an ideot, and ideots were the most reliable evidence that pre-formed ideas are not inscribed by a benevolent God prior to birth.

People with intellectual disability, mental illness, sensory disability, with dementia, can all then be human. The children, the Amerindians, Peruvians, Japanese, Indian and many others, are all human. Furthermore, Locke's Man can also be a woman: Locke rejection of Filmer's patriarchialism (in the *First Treatise*) involved clear statements, as noted above, on the inclusion of Eve (as well as Adam), and of humans as a group, not a singular representative individual. Pertinent to the *Essay*, in 1696, Judith Drake penned 'An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex', which drew on the *Essay* in

order to "construct a rationalist framework upon which to argue that it was custom and language which engendered the belief that women were intellectually inferior to men" (H. Smith, 2001: 728). Among Locke's strongest supporters were female philosophers, Catharine Cockburn and Damaris Cudworth-Masham, and while the few minor examples of specifically gendered females are confined to traditional roles in the *Essay* - the foolish maid (2.33.10), the sensible gentlewoman who can gauge the weather and suit her behaviour accordingly (4.17.4), the midwife (2.28.19), and more appearances of women as mothers or nurses - recent scholars, too, have noted that the *Essay's* human was, at least potentially, sometimes a woman. Ready (2002), in fact, suggests that the *Essay* was "gender neutral," Waldron (2002) as aforenoted argues strongly for Locke's inclusion of Eve (and therefore, given the status of Adam and Eve, women in general) in the Man of the *First Treatise*, while Nyland (1990), speaking of Locke's work as a whole, asserts he should "be given credit for pioneering research into both the economics of the social position of women and of the study of the economic relationship between husband and wife" (1990: 2).

The *Essay* further suggests that a being, whether female or male, physically ordinary or extra-ordinary, is human by virtue of being bound by origin and from birth into a web of human relationships, or "natural relations" (2.28.2). Relation is not a weak element or characteristic. Locke sees relation (including comparison and opposition) everywhere in the processes that forge human understanding, he asserts that "[t]he ideas, then, of relations, are capable at least of being more perfect and distinct in our minds than those of substances" (2.27.8). He sees many aspects of human identity (with the latter used in a more colloquial sense than it is used in 'Of Identity and Diversity'), but also quite possibly of Persons, as made in relation:

> One single Man may at once be concerned in, and sustain all these following *Relations*, and many more, *viz.* Father, Brother, Son, Grandfather, Grandson, Father-in-Law, Son-in-Law, Husband, Friend, Enemy, Subject, General, Judge, Patron, Client, Professor, European, English-man, Islander, Servant, Master, Possessor, Captain, Superior, Inferior, Bigger, Less, Older, Younger, Contemporary, Like, Unlike, *etc.* to an almost infinite number. (2.25.7)

Moreover, natural relations, which are the "circumstances of their origin or beginning," are the concern and province of humans, and not of other animals (2.28.2). Thus Man is made, at least in part, by her/his origin in, and relation with, other human

beings. Which might well explain why Locke was defensive in placing changelings as a species somewhere between humans and brutes: if changelings were born of women, or "of rational parents," as he asserts they are (4.4.16), this positioning could be problematic. If, however, they were the fairy children of legend, perhaps, even though Locke never writes down this possibility, perhaps then they could be an in-between species.

Near the end of Book 2, Chapter 11, in which ideots make their final, by name, appearance, Locke says:

> And thus I have given a short, and, I think, true *History of the first beginnings of Humane Knowledge*; when the Mind has its first Objects, and by what steps it makes its *Progress* to the laying in, and storing up of those *Ideas* out of which is framed all the Knowledge it is capable of. (2.11.15)

Once he had observed and included ideots, and children, mad Men, those with sensory disability, those with prodigious memory, in developing the "true History of the first beginnings of Humane Knowledge," how could Locke have brought all the children, the nurses, the people of Peru, the ancients, the dull men, the foolish, the mathematicians, the relations, the savages, those with memory impairment, the changelings and monsters, the sleeping people, those with prodigious memories, together to one, homogeneous category, suitable for an acceptance of natural law? He could not deny that any of these people was actually human, as this would negate the evidence he had presented from them. But many of the people he had considered as human could not be Persons in the forensic sense. What definition of human would encompass them all?

Fortunately, Locke was not silly. His concession to the critics, in the form of the additional chapter on personal identity (and diversity) gave an abstract, but useful Person, while in general Locke maintained the split of the political Person from the much more earthy human. The Person in 'Of Identity and Diversity' is not discussed in her/his capacity to understand, or in relation to her/his ways of knowing, because that Person is an abstract concept, generated from the property of already being able to understand: Person says nothing about humanness. The *Two Treatises* deals with humans in relation to government, leaving us with the *Essay*, as it should be, relatively unpolluted by the very limited *animal rationale* many of his critics would have felt far

more comfortable with.

Chapter conclusion: Locke's diverse human:

According to Jacovides (1999), Locke had an enormous antipathy to the notion of essential, immutable, natural kinds. Such an antipathy is consistent with, and displayed by, his insistent use of plural forms. According to Waldron (2002), who produced a full book on the subject, Locke's mature work (in which Waldron specifically includes the *Essay*) "is as well-worked out a theory of basic equality as we have in the canon of political philosophy" (2002: 1). Although Locke's equality may not be that we know today, the humans who were observed, and included could not sensibly be limited to the Person, whose only real appearance is in a chapter added well after the *Essay* was written, and inserted largely at the behest of friends. Locke's Person was a moral Man, an abstract term describing the effectively enfranchised adult. Instead, when it comes to Man(kind) as a sort, Locke was prepared to consider the inclusion in a natural kind on a case by case basis (hence the abbot of St Martin), and there is little evidence that he sought to pare back all the complications, or resolve all the possibilities to discover some inner core of any human.

Locke's version of human, rather than the forensic Person, gradually unfolds over the course of the *Essay*, and is always multiple, diverse in gender, aptitude, custom, and taste. This was in contradiction to generations of philosophers, political monarchists, and theologians, from Aristotle to Aquinas, who had imagined reason as the key to virtue, and relegated those who lacked a very active reason to being hardly human at all (Trigg 1999). For Locke, reason, as we have seen, was not the source of our knowledge, our rationality was episodic (interrupted by sleep), and our will more likely than reason or intellect to be the faculty on which our moral behaviour rests. His Man or human could be a woman, a child, an ideot, a blind woman, a decrepit, aging man.

In considering this human, the *Essay*, in fact, did not directly posit the question of what it is to be human, or of what is human nature? Perhaps simply because distilling the many presented characteristics to come up with a concept that we might call human nature would have been a very difficult exercise. But also because, in Locke's thesis, as

humans, with their limited senses and cognition, can know it, human nature too is plural: a set of ideas, and not a pre-determined, natural or fixed category that can be identified without equivocation or change. Thus, although the *Essay* speaks in terms of common characteristics of the human – Man is a "sociable Creature ... under a necessity to have fellowship with those of his own kind' (3.1.1.), for example – such generalisations are made on the basis of the consideration of many, many humans, and are always provisional.

What is important to take out of this chapter, is that Locke's mutable human is not a problem exercise, such as the comatose patient who is popular in provoking questions along the line of 'is this the same person, now that she has no brain responses?' Such a comatosed person does indeed raise issues of identity, self and personhood, but precisely for the reason s/he doesn't present a problem for humanness. The coma is acquired. It is an accident that, as Locke notes, could happen to himself or anyone else (3.6.4). The coma could be said to be secondary, an add-on attribute, rather than Personhood in reverse. An ideot, a changeling or a monster may also be found in an acquired coma.[18] In thinking on this we, as noted in Chapter 4 here, can hold in mind that Locke considered relation a significant means to understanding, and considered, in this context, the multiple relational roles a human might have: mother, aunt, cook, dancer and so on. Like Bunyan's Mr Feeblemind, Locke's humans inhabit a world that sometimes favours relations over individual prowess.

Locke, in the *Essay*, this chapter suggests, effectively realised that a unified, singular human with a mature and complete set of properties may be an ideal, but it is not a useful representative if one is to learn anything about human understanding. The insight that it would be absurd to try to identify how human understanding works, and what knowledge it was fitted (or not fitted) to glean, and make use of, on the basis of the adult, male – or even female – citizen with no impairment, was a radical one. It was also a very sensible one: one does not examine the end point to find the origin. One does not investigate one person to discover how something operates in all persons. Nor does one

[18] There are various possible scenarios, which would make interesting problem cases. For example: if a person with intellectual disability, limited memory, episodic consciousness had a head injury that resulted in a sudden gaining of memory, cognitive capacity, and, one would expect, a very confused consciousness. Where and when does their Personhood start, and end?

examine one end point (in this case, the ideal or assumed-to-be-ideal adult) to find either limitations or greater potentials in others. Locke's invocation of an array of evidence, drawn from a variety of people, represents an extraordinary opportunity for how we might best understand ourselves as humans; it was an insight that could have led to a much deeper and broader questions, collections of evidence, interpretations of a myriad of topics, if it had not been stymied by the search for the universal in the eighteenth century, and for the biological origin in the nineteenth. It is these latter this thesis now turns to.

Chapter 6

The Enlightenment return to the universal human.

Roy Porter (2000) credits the *Essay* with being Locke's "masterwork," with "presenting a persuasive vision of the new man for the new times" (2000: 60). Porter doesn't describe this Man, nor tell us what was her fate once the initial furore that greeted the *Essay* subsided. The previous chapter described Locke's new Man, although possibly not quite as Porter would have done. The chapter here takes on the task of asking what happened to this new Man in the new times of the Enlightenment.

I begin with a survey of Locke's influence in the eighteenth century, before turning to describe the eighteenth century desire, in both Britain and Europe, to identify characteristics of secular human nature. I argue that the search for universal characteristics forced thinkers to ignore people who were out of the ordinary. This was emphasised by the increasing enthusiasm for improvement, and even perfectibility, that took hold in the Enlightenment. Secondly, I argue that developments in education and classification, while in many ways liberatory (for some women, sections of the poor), worked to position people with intellectual disability as marginal, where previously they had been one among a variety of natural humans. I show that, on the other hand, there was a bourgeoning interest in people with physical anomaly, particularly in discussions of nature, and of generation, in the Enlightenment period. This leads to the nineteenth century, social physics, and the theory of natural selection in humans, which are the subjects of the following chapter here.

I make no pretence to offer a comprehensive survey, or to have distilled some essence of the Enlightenment,[1] even with respect to marginal groups: the following is hopefully sufficient for the purposes of this thesis, and to provide a beginning for further research elsewhere.

Locke's influence in the long eighteenth century:

The seventeenth century dissolved into the eighteenth century: as Tomaselli has put it: "[t]he Enlightenment's indebtedness to the philosophical and scientific

[1] In this chapter, I use the term Enlightenment to refer in general to the period, in Britain and in Europe, between the late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries. I understand the Enlightenment as a complex of not always consistent discourses and practices. Highly respected scholar of the period, Lester Crocker, maintains that the word, Enlightenment, is justified, "but the meaning, content and value judgements attached to it have varied prodigiously" (Crocker 1991: 1). He does not provide a definition of it, on the grounds that "the complexities and inconsistencies ... overflow the rationally convenient reduction to a definition. ... To do so is to extract part of the reality and take it for the whole" (Crocker 1991: 1). I have followed his lead here.

achievements of the seventeenth century were such that the Enlightenment's debates were like the continuations of earlier conversations" (1991: 355). Even though the Enlightenment is often thought of more in terms of a French phenomenon (Crocker 1991), with the British – Scottish, Irish and English - occupying a fringe position, Locke, it seems, was not so much one among these conversational interlocutors, as the giant among them, not only for women and men in his homeland but also for Continental thinkers (Porter 2000; 2003).[2] Many philosophical works showed Locke's influence: "[t]he philosophes intended to do no more than occupy the territory that Locke had discovered" (Gay 1969: 167); Locke was the "guide and master" of eighteenth century psychology (Cassirer 1951: 17); "[if] the Enlightenment had a 'father', Locke's paternity claim is better than any other" (Porter 2000: 481).

Recognition and influence were not always agreement. Influential polymath, Gottfried Leibniz, was known for his optimism, for his continued belief in innate ideas, his theories of harmonious interaction of mind and body, and for his refutation of the *Essay*. Scotsman, Thomas Reid (1710-1796), was to some extent in accord with Locke, although he thought we could perceive objects directly (Nichols 2002), rather than as, or through, ideas. Reid also followed, but simplified, Locke's definition of will (Houranszki 2002). Locke was more clearly taken up by Scottish philosopher, Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746) who, in contradiction to Hobbes, wanted to show, among other things, that virtue was a natural disposition and that "the natural Dispositions of Mankind will operate regularly in those who never reflected upon them, nor form'd just Notions about them" (Hutcheson 2002: 7). Cobban (1960) describes the 1749 work of David Hartley, *Observations of Man*, as starting "from some suggestions that Locke had thrown out" (1960: 485). Locke is there behind the utilitarian philosophy of Bentham (1748-1832) (Bronner 2004: 52), and alongside Hume (1711-1776), "[t]he philosopher, par excellence, of the Enlightenment ... another heir of Locke" (Cobban 1960: 133). Hume does indeed refer directly to Locke on several occasions in his *A Treatise on*

[2] Not everyone is of the opinion that Locke was triumphant. Fischer (1975), investigated the German Enlightenment with the stated aim "to dispute, if not destroy, the exaggerated importance ascribed to John Locke in eighteenth century Europe" (1975: 431). The fact that Fischer feels the need to do so does, however, suggest that it is fair to lay considerable stress on Locke's influence. More recently Israel (2001) argues, at book length, for a more diffuse Enlightenment, with less singular and clear influences.

Human Nature: Being an Attempt to introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects (1739-1740), and although he is by no means uncritical of Locke or the *Essay*, his works show "their author's commitment to the experimental method, or to a form of empiricism that sees both the advantages and the necessity of relying on experience and observation to provide the answer to intellectual questions of all kinds" (Fate Norton 1993: 3).

Condillac (1715-1780), too, overtly and perhaps even sycophantically, echoed Locke, introducing his *An Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge, Being a Supplement to Mr Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding* with the statement of aim:

> Our first object ... is the study of the human mind ... not in order to discover its nature, but to understand its operations, to observe in what manner they are combined and how we should employ them that we might acquire all the intelligence of which we are capable. (Condillac 1746, quoted in Gay 1969: 177)

But, despite Condillac, for one, focussing on the human mind (and language), much attention to Locke's work was directed to the single question of Person and personal identity, as elaborated in the additional chapter of Book 2 (Fox 1988). Early in the century, for example, personal identity was a significant issue with Locke's pupil, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, who in "talking up man's capacities," and supporting "good humour," as a means of dispelling the influence of religious enthusiasm, eventually became "absorbed in the enigmas of selfhood" (Porter 2000: 160,166). Such enigmas were also soon to be explored in the literature of Daniel Defoe and Laurence Sterne, the philosophy of Diderot. Fox quotes "such writers as Berkeley, Butler, Browne, Clarke, Watts, Felton, and Holdsworth" as being inheritors of Bishop Stillingfleet's response to Locke, on account of the desire to protect the belief in the "substantial self" (Fox 1988: 45), a belief also central to Descartes' rationalist, always-thinking self. Fox devotes an entire book to the Scriberlians, the authors of the satirical magazine, *The Spectator*, and of *Memoirs of the Extraordinary Life, Works, and Discoveries of Martinus Scriberlus*, which, too, deals with the problem of personal identity and self-in-consciousness, as Locke had set it. The interest in personal identity pressed on as the eighteenth century unfolded, and, as we see below, became the search for a distilled human nature.

Human nature versus human understanding:

"Human nature was the single most important subject for Enlightenment thinkers" (Tomaselli 1991: 229); indeed " 'human nature' is engraved with the hallmark of the Enlightenment" (Hacking 1990: 161). The previously neglected – in Enlightenment eyes – science of man would provide the common, and only adequate, ground for everything from jurisprudence to aesthetics, and all the other sciences. Particularly "[i]n repudiating Christianity, the philosophes gave the question of human nature new poignancy" (Gay 1969: 167). Decades later, Porter (2000), agrees with Gay, saying, "[w]ith the displacement of scripturalism that was brought about by rational religion, the need to resolve the human condition moved centre stage in Enlightenment thinking" (2000: 156).

Enlightenment thinkers approached the topic of human nature, as they did other topics, with "a new sense of life ... an expansive sense of power" (Gay 1969: 3). They had "fresh joy and the courage of discovery," and produced thought that not only "seeks new, hitherto unknown goals but ... wants to know where it is going and to determine for itself the direction of its journey" (Cassirer 1951: 4). In the Enlightenment, "for the first time in history, confidence was the companion of realism rather than a symptom of the Utopian imagination" (Gay 1969: 3). The period is thus "permeated by the idea of intellectual progress," in which "[v]ariety and diversity of shapes are simply the full unfolding of an essentially homogeneous formative power," and "[w]hen the eighteenth century wants to characterize this power in a single word, it calls it 'reason'" (Cassirer 1951: 5).

The authors who raised discussions involving human nature are among those remembered as the key figures in eighteenth century thinking. English poet, Alexander Pope penned *An Essay on Man* between 1732 and 1734; Bishop Berkeley had quite a bit to say in *Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710); Scottish philosopher, Thomas Reid, produced *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (1764). On the continent, Rousseau (1712-1778), "attributed the confused state of natural jurisprudence to the prevailing ignorance of the true nature of man" (Tomaselli 1991: 229), addressing the problem in a number of ways, and in a number of works including

the *Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality among Men* (1754), *Julie, or the New Heloise* (1761), *Emile, or, on Education* (1762) and *The Social Contract, or Principles of Political Right* (1762). By the latter part of the eighteenth century, Kant (1724-1804), had made a "sharp disjunction between reason and the passions" (Teuber 1983: 384), and had formed his thesis of respect for persons on the basis of a dutiful, but never emotional, moral law. This separation of reason and passions informed Kant's view of human nature, as expressed in *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781).

Scottish philosopher, David Hume, is among those who remain well known for work on human nature, having penned *A Treatise on Human Nature; Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects* (1739-40), *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), and *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751). Hume saw himself as developing a foundational science: "[t]he 'total alteration' and 'revolution' he regards his new science as bringing to the intellectual scene consists in becoming what he calls an 'anatomist' of human nature" (Fate Norton 1993: 39). In his theories of human nature, Hume employed, and redeployed, Locke's empiricism. Yet, there is an important difference.

When Locke wrote the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, he set out to explore the limits of human *understanding*, the processes thereof, and the kinds of knowledge that might be available to humans, given the imperfections of these processes, and of the organs they relied upon. Despite Yolton's assertion that "'[h]uman nature' is another important concept [in the *Essay*]" (2004: 5), Yolton can only describe four references that mention or describe human nature - simply because there are no more. Locke indexes ideots, learning, liberty, he indexes madness, but he does not index human nature. Instead, where he might have placed human nature, under "Man," he has "We know not his real essence" (Locke 1975: 735): for Locke, without knowing the real essence of humans, we cannot know their true nature. We can observe their behaviours, their use of language, their "several ways of Faltering" (2.11.13), but we do not know their constitution. Yet, just half a century later, when Hume wrote *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, he began, despite his title, with the statement on human *nature*: "Moral philosophy, or the science of human *nature*, may be treated after two different manners," and promised "an accurate scrutiny into the powers and faculties

of human *nature*" (Hume *Enquiry*: Sect. 1, §8. My emphasis).[3] Human understanding is surely not co-terminus with human nature?

It seems that Locke had realised several things that his successors did not: firstly, that understanding is only one aspect of human behaviour, and does not, and cannot, represent an essence of the human. Secondly, that observation of human behaviour will only ever be confined to the external, and thus can only stake probable claims of what is actually happening in, and for, the individual. Indeed, even today when we have techniques of functional magnetic resonance imaging, which allows technicians to track the specific and interacting sections of the brain that respond to specific stimuli, we cannot *see* an idea, we cannot *see* a personality, either as a whole or in part. We can, at best, make informed best guesses, contingent theories. Thirdly, that there are so many different humans, with so many different ways, extents, limitations in processing information, that it is only a very general process that can be described, not one that is fully applicable, or employed in every circumstance. Hence, Locke's diverse humankind, his species that did not equate to a real, inviolable essence, and could only be defined nominally, should have been of unparalleled importance in the new secular age. But it was largely ignored, and the goal of human nature 'research' was to identity universals:

> It is universally acknowledged that there is a great uniformity among the actions of men, in all nations and ages, and that human nature remains still the same, in its principles and operations. The same motives always produce the same actions. The same events follow from the same causes. Ambition, avarice, self-love, vanity, friendship, generosity, public spirit: these passions, mixed in various degrees, and distributed through society, have been, from the beginning of the world, and still are, the source of all the actions and enterprises, which have ever been observed among mankind. (Hume *Enquiry*: Sect. 8, Part 1, §65)

Gay (1969) has asserted that this was a fruitful exercise, that the Enlightenment's emphasis on uniformity in human nature allowed philosophising about Man. But, while it may have allowed for pleasant theorising, merging the results of Locke's (or any other) investigation into human understanding, with an articulation of human nature,

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[3] I have used an online version of *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* - http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext06/8echu10h.htm- which is beautifully clear to read, has section numbers, but does not have page numbers.

necessarily relied on reducing each to elements, or an element, that might be common. Which is, of course, where reason put its hand up in the eighteenth century.[4]

In the *Essay*, although without a doubt reason is an important faculty of the human mind, Locke also "described in detail ... how and why most men would, throughout their lives ignore the call of reason and the importunities of education" (Spellman 1987: 480). He allowed the passions to have effect in understanding, but did not pretend that his theory of understanding explained altruism, the desire for reproduction, hatred, the ambition to climb the highest mountain, the repetitive behaviours Felix Platter had observed in ideots, or any other cognitive state, or human behaviour, outside understanding. However, given the longevity of the various versions of the *animal rationale*, if one does not actually read the *Essay*, it is easy to assume that human understanding is equivalent with human reason(ing), and that the one or both are imbricated with human nature.

Reason was thus, and again, in the Enlightenment, seen to provide an universal characteristic. In doing so, it obliged the limiting of the humans who were in 'all Mankind': if reason were to be essential to humanness, the inclusion of those whose reason was dramatically different from the ordinary could not be countenanced. Understanding had been, for Locke, something that 'belonged', even if imperfectly, to all humans, in all states and stages of life: it was not the same as, or restricted to people who exhibited, mature personhood. But how could a uniform human nature be distilled from such diversity? How could such diversity be accepted into a uniform human nature? By the time Hume was writing, it was Locke's Person, his "thinking intelligent Being, that has reason and reflection," and "unity of consciousness," that were the key concepts (Hyland 2003: 352).

Person, as discussed in the previous chapter here, was a concept with a long history, a history that upheld dominant hierarchies. Person's history was also of a political concept, a Man who could be, or was, a citizen. Enlightenment philosophy was,

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[4] Which is not to say that all eighteenth century figures declared reason to be the key to, or even essence of, human nature: Rousseau, for one, preferred "free will" and the "faculty of improvement" (2003: 18), although each of these is largely dependent on a notion of inherent reason.

not without exception, but certainly as a generalisation, attuned to political motives.[5] So, although Locke's exploration of human *understanding* was developed, written, and published well before he wrote the chapter on personal identity, the thick history of Person as a political Man, combined with Locke's particularly radical view of continuity of self through consciousness (which may not always require personhood in the first place, but that is another argument to be made elsewhere), made it almost unavoidable that his successors confused human nature with understanding, and both with reason and the very limited Person. The outcome of the desire to identify an universal human nature, particularly when human nature and human understanding were confused, was a reinvigoration of the adult male, without defect, as a representative for human. He was not the only human, as we see below, but he was the most perfectible one.

The remaining diversity in humankind in the Enlightenment:

Despite the desire for universals, or perhaps as a way of finding the same, many eighteenth century authors continued to include a diversity of people in their work. Rousseau put the noble savage centre stage, with his attempt to promote what he imagined as a natural over civilized state. The image of natives living in a gentle and happy state was generally popular in the mid-eighteenth century, with Diderot and others inspired by Louis Bougainville's (1729-1811) account of life in Polynesia. Voltaire peppered his work with travel references, and later in the century Adam Smith, too, turned to 'savages': "it was supposed that primitive men would pass progressively through more advance stages of development," as their economy responded to pressures of population growth (Wolker 1991: 473). Non-Europeans were also popular in literary representation, with Defoe's 1719 novel, *Robinson Crusoe's* 'Man Friday' being one who has remained present in the popular imagination to this day.[6]

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[5] Rousseau in particular was an enlightenment political philosopher. Farr (1988) also argues for the emergence of political science in the Scottish Enlightenment, while the close association of the French Enlightenment with the French Revolution makes a clear case in point.

[6] The tendency to read the past through post-modern eyes is one that has already been mentioned in this thesis, and Enlightenment references to non-European people should not be always assumed to be damning. For example, analysing race in *Robinson Crusoe* (*Crusoe*), Wheeler (1995) quotes comments on Defoe made by highly respected novelist and social commentator, Toni Morrison. Wheeler argues that Morrison, caught up by the way that, "in general, only one group at a time is positioned as other, marginalized, or disenfranchised," (1995: 824), erases the

The eighteenth century in Europe was not a time of fixed attitude or category: Wheelan (1995) points out that "race [w]as an emergent, rather than rigid, concept in the eighteenth century" (1995: 821). The binary opposition of the time was Christian versus savage, rather than white versus black. Race, as a concept, was also at a different stage in its development than gender or class-value, given that this was a time that Europeans were becoming increasingly aware of peoples they had hitherto only imagined existed. McLaughlin (2007), too, sites the concept of race as emerging, in particular with the concept of heredity in the work of Immanuel Kant (McLaughlin 2007: 280).

People with sensory disability also remained subjects of some interest, not necessarily marginalised. Before Locke, Montaigne (1533-1592), had shown interest in a man who is both blind and deaf, who, according to Tunstall (2008), "is a sign to the reader, revealing to her her own possible defectiveness ... [and] a figure who far exceeds the philosophical purpose of the ancient exemplum" (2008: 410). In the mid eighteenth century, Diderot, influenced by Montaigne as well as by Locke, published extensive works that, as aforenoted, featured people with vision impairment and/or hearing impairment. Diderot was particularly interested in Molyneux's problem, the question of the perception of a blind man who has had his sight restored, as it appeared in the second (1694) edition of the *Essay*. In this, he too was, according to Tunstall's recent reading, "sensitive ... to ... philosophically subversive possibilities" (2008: 411). Diderot wasn't alone: Molyneux's question, as expressed by Locke, was taken up with some verve in the eighteenth century, by Berkeley, and Reid, among others. Diderot was also interested in the question of generation (Terrall 2007), and in this context, had much to say about monsters (Curran 1997). Monsters, or people with physical anomaly were, in fact, increasingly of interest as the eighteenth century progressed, as we see below.

Thus, with the questions raised by people with sensory deficit, and by non-European people, the conglomerate human the *Essay* had promoted might well have

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character, Friday's, ancestry. In *Crusoe*, Friday is actually a "Carib, an Amerindian attached to a group with specific customs, religious and social beliefs, and rules of governance," (1995: 823), but Morrison's reading of *Crusoe* replaces this Friday with an African man, whom she asserts the novel situates as "black, barbarous, stupid, servile, adoring," (1995: 823). Wheeler points out that "in the novel, Friday is neither 'black,' 'stupid,' nor considered 'biologically handicapped,' and that these descriptions of themselves are not applicable to the time in which Defoe was writing: "Such stereotypical features are enabled by a peculiarly nineteenth-century racism and a north American, post-Civil Rights critique of the construction of race," (1995: 824), she argues.

been maintaining a life, perhaps under the radar of human nature studies, and at least in the first half of the eighteenth century. Hume, in particular, was relatively wide-ranging, referring, in *A Treatise of Human Nature*, to the tastes of Laplanders and Negroes, and showing interest in environmental influences on human's control over passions and emotions. Hume also considered the effect of blindness, and of deafness. Also like Locke, he considered human faculties to be faulty and weak, and knowledge to be an issue largely of probability rather than certainty. However, there were subtle, and lastingly influential, changes: the impairments and infirmities Locke recognises as affecting others are added to the mix of Hume's individual self, thus becoming more metaphorical than real. Hume ends the first book of *A Treatise of Human Nature* with a description of himself on a voyage, nearly shipwrecked, with a memory of past errors, but still with "the temerity to put out to sea in the same leaky weather-beaten vessel": he imagines himself to be like "some strange uncouth monster," whose "deformity" keeps him out of society: however, "beside those numberless infirmities peculiar to myself, I find so many which are common to human nature" (*A Treatise* Book 1, Part 6, §7). We are beginning to see here not observation of others, but the rise of eighteenth century's interest in interiority and explorations of the self.

Of particular interest to this thesis is that, despite Locke's influence, and despite the interest in sensory impairments, it was rare for people with idiocy to make an appearance in the philosophical tracts, suggesting that the having, or not, of reason was indeed taking on implications and value. Leibniz, as we have seen, rejected Locke's inclusion of idiots and changelings; Berkeley's *Principles of Human Nature* (1710) has no idiots or mad men, and no women, savages or natives. Interestingly, Hume uses the term fool on a number of occasions in *A Treatise of Human Nature*, but this was largely the artificial or silly – immoral – fool, as in "fool and coxcomb" (Book 1, Part 2, §13). There were, however, other fools, and in mentioning those, Hume was shifting the position of people with intellectual disability, making them more contained. Volume 2 of the *Treatise*, has a section devoted to compassion, in which Hume describes 'our' response to those who "who behave themselves foolishly before us": we "blush" for them, and "[a]ll this proceeds from sympathy, but 'tis of a partial kind, and views its objects only on one side, without considering the other, which has a contrary effect, and

would entirely destroy that emotion which arises from the first appearance" (Book 2, Part 2, §7). The other side – that without sympathy? - would produce presumably disdain, or something akin to this, rather than compassion. Ideots were on the way to being objects to be assessed by a clinical gaze, looked-at, the objects of kindness, perhaps, so long as we closed our eyes to other possibilities. The chances of people with intellectual disability being disruptive of an hegemonic discourse such as nativism, were being quickly obliterated.

By the latter part of the eighteenth century, it was becoming less and less likely that Locke's diverse human would come in for consideration. "Enlightenment," declared Kant in 1784, is man's release from his self-incurred tutelage. ... *Sapere aude*! [Dare to know!] 'Have courage to use your own reason!' – that is the motto of enlightenment" (Kant, 1784, in Hyland (ed.) 2003: 54). But this "step to competence," as Kant called it, was only for the few: such courage, and release from tutelage, he assured his reader, was "held to be very dangerous by the far greater proportion of mankind (and by the entire fair sex)" (in Hyland (ed.) 2003: 54). Kant's reference to the "entire fair sex" indicates what at least some Enlightenment women, and some (non-white, non-landed) Enlightenment men, were well aware of: neither human nature, nor the Enlightenment project of increasingly informed democracy, and human rights, applied properly to them.

Catherine Macaulay (1731-91), writing in 1790, some six years after Kant's declaration, argued that:

> whatever might be the wise purpose intended by Providence in such a disposition of things, certain it is, that some degree of inferiority, in point of corporal strength, seems always to have existed between the two sexes; and this advantage to the barbarous ages of mankind, was abused to such a degree, as to destroy all the natural rights of the female species, and to reduce them to a state of abject slavery. (quoted in Tomaselli 1985, in Hyland (ed.) 2003: 401)

Diderot asserted that women had been treated like "imbecile children," that women had no redress among civilised people, other than in the domestic sphere, and any retribution here only led to contempt, while Montesquieu "applied his description of the nature of slavery of women, domestic slavery, to help conceptualise what he called 'real slavery' – productive labour" (Tomaselli 1985, in Hyland (ed.) 2003: 402-403). For Kant "the propensity and vocation to free thinking" was the seed that nature would uncover and nurture, so that, gradually, 'men' would become more capable of managing

freedom (in Hyland (ed.) 2003: 58). But, as Scott (1989), eloquently argues, toward the end of the eighteenth century

> [i]n the intersecting discourse of biology and politics, theories of complementarity (active/passive, political/domestic, education/maternal nurture, universal/particular, male/female) resolved the potentially disruptive effects of sexual difference. Species reproduction and social order were said to depend on the union of opposite elements, male and female, on a functional division of labour that granted nature her due. (Scott 1989, in Hyland (ed.) 2003: 407).

Despite diversity – including all the aforementioned interest in 'noble' and sometimes ignoble savages, the blind and the deaf men, and so on – the search for an universal human nature produced an homogenous, and - as Scott (1989) notes - embodied, male. When applied in the rights discourses that became increasingly prevalent in the years leading to the French Revolution, the abstract, embodied male 'human' posed problems: "the persistent question of the relationship of specific, marked groups to the embodied universal [male]: how could the rights of the poor, of mulattos, blacks, or women be figured as the rights of Man?" (Scott 1989, in Hyland (ed.) 2003: 406).

How could the rights of those who might never become Persons, in the forensic sense, be figured in the rights of Man, either? Not easily; and it was not only in discourses around human nature, and human rights, that people with intellectual disability, among others, were effectively losing face, and even limited agency.

Enlightenment perfectibility, measurement, and the increasing marginalisation of people with intellectual disability:

The eighteenth century began with some concern to keep traditional beliefs in human origins strong (Berkeley, for example), but quite quickly thinkers became more sceptical of God's active hand in creation (Hume, for instance), while, by the middle of the century, many were determinedly atheist (Diderot for example). Taken as aggregate, the general movement in the eighteenth century was increasingly away from God as designer, and from humans as linked in image and intent to, the divine being. At the same time, nature was increasing mechanistic and soulless through the first half of the century; by the end of the century, it moved to being pictured as more bountiful and romantic, albeit now quite separate from God. Once God was no longer viewed as a

designer, and nature was pictured as more mechanistic and knowable, or was moving toward perfection (as it was in the latter part of the eighteenth century), people with intellectual disability no longer had the protection and value of being God's children. Locke's evidence from ideots, and their inclusion in the large, messy conglomerate of humankind, was intimately tied in with an understanding of ideots as 'naturals', where being a natural meant being of divine creation, even if the purpose of God's unusual creation was not clear. As shown here in Chapter 2, at least up until the seventeenth century, ideots were among humankind, even if most theorists thought little of, and largely ignored, them. With an increasingly mechanistic nature, ideots became fruitless, pointless, errors; and errors were anathema to the eighteenth century (Bates 1996), which aimed for control and perfection.

The increasing secularism in the eighteenth century also meant that "it no longer seemed profitable ... to inscribe the human actor in scenarios of sin and Satan, faith and Fall. ... What was needed was a dispassionate, objective study of human faculties, motives and behaviour" (Porter 2000: 163). Enlightenment humans were no longer to be measured against biblical or church standards, by their saintliness or sinfulness, their likelihood of an afterlife; they were to be assessed against each other, and by very earthly criteria. Early in the century, Alexander Pope hinted at what was going to become an obsession less than a hundred years later. His *An Essay on Man* opens with a statement of purpose:

> Having proposed to write some pieces on Human Life and Manners ... I thought it more satisfactory to begin with considering Man in the abstract, his nature and his state: since to prove any moral duty, to enforce any moral precept, or to examine the perfection or imperfection of any creature whatsoever, it is necessary first to know what condition and relation it is placed in, and what is the proper end and purpose of its being. (Pope 1903: Introduction)[7]

Not only were humans no longer to be measured against God, or by the adherence to God's teaching; they were to be considered in the abstract, and man against man. For this to be possible, for the determination of "his nature and his state" to be made in a way that allowed comparison, new criteria of human behaviour and mores were

[7] From http://theotherpages.org/poems/pope-i.html, no page numbers supplied.

required: human nature needed to be imagined not only as uniform, with characteristics that could be extracted and described, but with characteristics that could be *assessed*.

Pope's implied measurement of human characteristics did not properly come about as reality until the nineteenth century, when, as we see in the following chapter, everything from the breadth of men's chests to the number of cows a farmer owned was measured, and analysed. However, the Enlightenment envisaged measurement and calculation as an objective and powerful tool for 'truth'. Daston (1994) quotes Condillac extolling the virtues of calculation:

> This analysis is the true secret of discoveries, because it makes us ascend to the original of things. ... It does not investigate the truth by the assistance of general propositions, but by a kind of calculation; that is, by compounding and decompounding the ideas, in order to compare them in the most favourable manner to the discoveries we have seen. (Condillac 1756, quoted in Daston 1994: 184-185)

Daston also describes the 1793 Parisian celebration, which featured 'goddesses' dressed as Reason and Liberty, and an array of large monuments to calculation, specially designed and built for the occasion. She suggests that,

> [t]he history of calculation in the Enlightenment is a chapter in the cultural history of intelligence. Calculation had not yet become mechanical, the paradigmatic example of processes that were mental but not intelligent. Indeed, eighteenth-century philosophers conceived of intelligence and even moral sentiment to be in their essence forms of calculation. Allied with the higher mental faculties of speculative reason and moral judgment, calculation was remote from the realm of menial labor, of the automatic and the habitual. (Daston 1994: 182)

In saying this, Daston is not, as she points out, equating eighteenth century notions of intelligence with the ones that we have today. Mid-eighteenth century intelligence a much more limited concept: intelligence was like a superior calculator, not so much problem solving, but able to take apart, and recombine, ideas or their original elements, into new, novel ideas. By the very latter part of the eighteenth century, romantic thinking posited intelligence as spontaneous and organic; for the most part, consistent with intelligence as cumulative calculation, developments in mathematics and calculation (some stemming from Leibniz, others represented in tables of logarithms) were seen as increasingly useful and representative of human capacity. Economists such as Adam Smith (1723-1790) also made calculation seem an inevitable tool for the achievement of modernity. As we see in the next chapter here, the counting of populations, parish goods, criminals, suicides, and much more, began in the eighteenth century, and has not stopped

since.

At the same time as measurement really took hold, perfectibility became something of the order of the day. Indeed, "Rousseau's *Discourse* had considered human perfectibility to be a main agent of historical progress, in fact the initiator of history through the 'fall' " (Armenteros 2007: 121). Tied in with perfectibility, for Rousseau at least, was a perception of, and a concern for, inequalities among humans, but what is not generally realised is that this perfectibility excised the 'naturally' imperfect before it even began worrying about inequality. One of Rousseau's most enduring texts, *A Dissertation on the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality of Mankind*, opens with the statement:

> I conceive that there are two kinds of inequality among the human species; one, which I call natural or physical, because it is established by nature, and consists in a difference of age, health, bodily strength, and the qualities of the mind or of the soul: and another, which may be called moral or political inequality, because it depends on a kind of convention, and is established, or at least authorised by the consent of men. This latter consists of the different privileges, which some men enjoy to the prejudice of others; such as that of being more rich, more honoured, more powerful or even in a position to exact obedience. (Rousseau 2004)[8]

From the beginning Rousseau dismisses interest in the remediation of any natural inequality: "[i]t is useless to ask what is the source of natural inequality, because that question is answered by the simple definition of the word" (2004: no page numbers supplied), but then continues for many thousands of words to discuss what he regards as artificial and recuperable inequalities. Rousseau's answer to inequalities, apart from his critique of civil society, was to aim for perfection in both humans and the social order: "[f]or Rousseau ... the only road out is the artifice of a new order, a construct of reason and will, not of nature" (Crocker 1979: 247). This kind of thinking is echoed by the Marquis de Condorcet (1743-1794) who, in 1795 wrote: "[o]ur hopes for the future condition of the human race can be subsumed under three important heads: the abolition of inequality between nations, the progress of equality within each nation, and the true perfection of mankind" (in Hyland (ed.) 2003: 29).

It was not that eighteenth century thinkers theorised that any human or group of humans was actually perfect, and that ideots were therefore marked as inadequate. Quite

[8] From http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/11136/pg11136.html, no page numbers supplied.

the contrary: Rousseau decried and dismissed much of what passed in the eighteenth century as (civilised) perfection, while Hume was quite sure that our mental capabilities were anything but perfect. At the same time, there was an increasing desire to see error as avoidable, often reprehensible: "[w]hether the Enlightenment project is romanticized or subjected to relentless criticism, the opposition between truth and error ... remains. Once error was uncovered and recognized by the light of Reason, it was have no place in science and society" (Bates 1996: 307). No longer protected by their relation with God, people with idiocy, particularly those Locke called changelings, presented an extreme that could readily be interpreted as a mistake, an aberration, an error to be ignored, if not erased.

By the end of the century, in *On the State of Nature*, French diplomat and philosopher, de Maistre (1753-1821), was again conjuring an imaginary lone man who had never been a child, and had always possessed all the strength and knowledge necessary for his survival: "Maistrian perfectibility neared the tradition of entelechy that Aristotle began, St. Thomas Aquinas Christianized, and Leibniz eloquently represented in modernity" (Armenteros 2007: 124). For de Maistre, healthy societies "develop naturally toward their natural end, improving inherently and continually as ambition and imitation operate to impose voluntary, ever-evolving in-equality and therefore a social order emulative of nature" (Armenteros 2007: 124).

It is not my purpose here to discuss particular instances, or to argue in any depth for, the reconstruction of idiocy as marginal through the discourses and practices of eighteenth century human perfectibility, although this is a topic that has been addressed in relation to the body,[9] and is one that should be considered in relation to impairments of the mind. The point to be made here is that eighteenth century thinking no longer relied on ascetic withdrawal (forty days and night in the desert, for instance), the demonstration of good works, or the attainment of an ideal physical state, to imagine or attain perfection. Eighteenth century perfectibility was earth-bound, and thus apparently much more easily achieved than its predecessors. It could also be calculated. Perversely, in making perfectibility more available, those who were less likely to measure up, with measure as the operative word, to its standards, rapidly became ever more marginal,

[9] See, for instance the essays in Rosenthal and Choudury (eds) 2002.

more de-valued. This can be seen most clearly in developments in education, to which I turn now.

Education, classification, a place in theory lost for those with disability:

Passmore (1970) sees Locke's writings on education in the context of a perfectibility of Man. He asserts that Locke "denies that there is any innate 'bias' which education is powerless to correct" (1970: 159). This reading of Locke's anti-nativism, and promotion of education, is consistent with what Spellman (1987) has called the "infectious lure of the *tabula rasa* concept" (1987: 478), a lure that has led many commentators, particularly those interested in education, to ignore the fact that in the *Essay*, as we have seen, Locke clearly allowed for differing capacities. Yet, even when discussing education, Locke insists on in-born, and not readily amendable capacities: in *Some Thoughts on Education* he says that,

> it is evident, that strength of memory is owing to an happy constitution, and not to any habitual improvement got by exercise. 'tis true, what the mind is intent upon, and, for fear of letting it slip, often imprints afresh on itself by frequent reflection, that it is apt to retain, but still according to *its own natural strength of retention*. An impression made on bees-wax or lead, will not last so long as on brass or steel. (*Some Thoughts* 1692: §176)

Locke's admission of difference is cheerful, but definite, "each man's mind has some peculiarity, as well as his face, that distinguishes him from all others; and there are possibly scarce two children who can be conducted by exactly the same method" (*Some Thoughts* 1692: §217). This seems to have had little effect on the delivery methods in mainstream education, where homogeneity was the order of the day, at the same time as, by the middle of the eighteenth century, education was pictured as the key to progress, (and progress something more or less natural). Rousseau in *Emile*, Helvetius in *De l'homme*, and Diderot through the *Encyclopedie*, among others, promoted the wonders of education.

> The historical skepticism of Bayle, the Lockian rejection of innate ideas, the belief that man is moulded by education and environment and by changing these can in effect change himself. ... Education and legislation were now the keys to the reform of society. (Cobban 1960: 126)

There may be an echo of Locke's attention to sensory impairment in the development of schools for the deaf and blind. Davis (1995) points out that at the

beginning of the eighteenth century there were no schools for the deaf; by the end of the century, they had mushroomed all over Europe. However, it was the education of wild or feral children that attracted public interest, and became something of a *cause célèbre* (Douthwaite 1997; Gay 1969).

In the mid- to late-eighteenth century, a small number of children and young adults were found, apparently feral, in various forests. Both the intellectuals and the general population were fascinated with educating, or civilizing, them. It is easy to see the validity of Foucault's 'great confinement' here: wild children and adults, as well as those often called monsters, were taken from an apparently free environment, cleaned, dressed, paraded, taken in as objects of curiosity and study. Douthwaite (1997), describing several of these attempts at civilising, argues that "[c]hanging images of the wild man reflect an evolution from speculative, descriptive *histoire naturelle de l'homme* in the early eighteenth century to experimental *sciences de l'homme* in the nineteenth" (1997: 176). Largely "these children represented a sort of hybrid between man and animal, and considerations on their cases were filled with musings on whether they reasoned, had a moral sense, and were capable of learning language and being integrated into society" (Coski 2003: f31). Peter of Hanover, for example, was a child of somewhere between eleven and fourteen, found in a dishevelled and isolated state in a German forest in 1724. Montesquieu and Rousseau both refer to Peter (Douthwaite 1997: 183). Peter was regarded as an idiot, as his education, like most of the experiments with wild children, failed to enable him to talk and reason beyond a rudimentary level. In fact, hopeful educationalists, the Edgeworths, published a description of "a series of tests to measure the extent of Peter's idiocy" (Douthwaite 1997: 184).

The common and repeated failure of education of such children, at the time that "the concept of perfectibility informed much of ... human science" (Douthwaite 1997: 177), obliged an explanation for the strangeness, of the unpredictable and unruly behaviour of people whom some called monsters (Daston and Park 1998). One form of control was a classification, which 'categorically' moved people with severe disabilities outside the main group of humans, soon to be known as *homo sapiens*. The 'father' of classification was Carl Linnaeus (1707-1780), who, Douthwaite notes, called himself the "second Adam" (1997: 178). Porter (2000) has situated Linnaean classification within

the greater discourse of the fascination with, and promotion of science, while Schiebinger (1993) has analysed the cultural forces leading to, and Linnaean categorisation itself, (particularly of mammals), as a politically and ideologically gendered move. Whichever way Linnaean classification is looked at, it can be said that "where Locke, and later Diderot, recognized the arbitrary basis of any such classification, others forgot this salutary caution in their zeal to systematize a *scala naturae* of living creatures" (Douthwaite 1997: 178).

Linnaeus did exactly the opposite of what Locke had proposed half a century earlier; he set fixed categories, based on external features, suggesting there were essences that could determine inclusion or exclusion in the group. The superior group in Linneaus's schema were *homo sapiens*, or thinking humans. Under *Homo Sapiens*, Linnaeus had four sub-groups; *Americanus* who were reddish, stubborn and temperamental, *Asiaticus, who were* yellow, greedy and absentminded, *Africanus*, black, lazy and irresponsible, and *Europeanus*, who were white, gentle, and intelligent. Linnaeus further separated out people found abandoned in harsh environments as *homo ferus*, and any person who displayed body type or behaviours that did not fit with an ideal as *homo monstrous*. *Homo monstrous* was

> an inclusive category of various aberrations of 'the other' within the natural order of things. ... Metaphorically speaking, Linnaeus provided a universal language by which all monstrous children could be read. His language stigmatized deviance because it distinctly distanced monsters from humans, treating them as separate species. (P. Wilson 2002: 7-8)

Classifying in this way, the Linnaean system asserted differences were solid, biological, and immutable.

Similarly, medical classification, and the increasing emphasis on medicine as a science contributed to the separating out of difference, and to the making of such separation as apparently natural. Fenno (2002) points out the importance of medicine, and improvement in medical knowledge, to pre-Enlightenment and Enlightenment thinkers:

> Medicine is deeply tied to the ambitions of the innovators of the scientific revolution ... In his *Discourse on Method*, Descartes ... identifies medical improvement as the prime motive for his work. ... Bacon's *The New Atlantis* makes the preservation of health and the prevention of disease a topic of concern, Berkeley writes treatises

> extolling the medicinal effects of tar-water, and Locke is not only a philosopher, but also a physician. (Fenno 2002: 91)

Medicine's role in "efforts at social improvement through innovation and the application of reason – in, for example, the political projects of the philosophers" (Fenno 2002: 91), gained considerable momentum over the period of the Enlightenment. According to Fenno, innoculation against smallpox, introduced to Britain by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762), meant that even if England didn't have a political Enlightenment, "it seems that at least to the *philosophes*, England had already achieved the aims of medical Enlightenment" (2002: 91). Success in medicine was intimately tied to the desire our enlightenment ancestors had to control or overcome nature. Medicine would help humans triumph in the great struggle with the chaotic natural world.

Education, medical diagnosis, and treatment, situated people as passive recipients, subject, for their own benefit, to the assessment of authorities. The development of such services made classification and categorisation imperatives. Classification and categorisation required measurement, and measurement, as we see in more detail below, required standards. The challenge that the messy conglomeration of humans, and in particular the ideots among them, had made to the doctrine of nativism was beginning to be a dim and long past moment. Monsters, too, lost much of their power to disrupt in the eighteenth century, and not only with Linnaean classification. I now turn to the discourses of nature and generation in which monsters were most commonly found – and contained.

Nature and monsters in the Enlightenment:

There was a general move in eighteenth century from theocentric to anthropocentric world-views (Tomaselli 1991: 355). Part of the move to place humans as the central, or even originary, point of view, was the divorce of nature from God, a move which had been underway in the seventeenth century, and was more or less complete early in the eighteenth century. Diderot, for one, stressed that nature was not God: in doing this, "he was eager to dissuade interpreters of his work from seeing in it little more than a monistic system which had eliminated the supernatural only to confer divine properties on matter" (Tomaselli 1991: 356). Rousseau transformed nature in an idea central to his work - that man had upset the natural order - insisting "that we must

not confuse what is natural in the original man with what is natural to man in the social state" (Crocker 1979: 249). At the same time, nature was a bountiful source: mid-century, French naturalist, Buffon (1707-1788) asked,

> Why are the works of nature so perfect? Is it because each work is a whole, and because she labours on an eternal plan from which she never departs: she prepares in silence the seeds of her harvest; by a unique act she sketches out the primitive form of all living beings, develops it and perfects it by a continuous motion and in a prescribed time. (Buffon 1753, quoted in Tomaselli 1991: 357)

The human mind was not of itself able to create, but humans, in Buffon's view, could achieve greatness if they sought to imitate nature "in her progress and in her labour" (Tomaselli 1991: 357). On the other hand, nature could be cruel:

> [l]ong before the Lisbon earthquake (1755) shook the confidence of men like Voltaire in the operation of nature, others, such as Diderot, spoke of nature as man's enemy, as a cruel and heartless mother ... Every day in the life of the species was a victory scored against nature (Tomaselli 1991: 357).

Thus nature was both bountiful and mechanistic, and could be both organised and cruel: "[p]resented in some discourses as unjust, brutal and potentially self-destructive as it brought the existence of some species to an end, nature was, of course, nonetheless the subject of admiration in others" (Tomaselli 1991: 357).

That nature's work was essentially perfect, and never not-so by a design that was too grand to be understood by humans, placed people with intellectual disability in an increasingly uncomfortable position. Ideots could be placed as foils to demonstrate 'our' compassion, as we saw in Hume's work above, and as can be seen in Wordsworth's (1798) poem, *The Idiot Boy*, but this was a position that set them outside, as 'other', as aberration, rather than natural. Without the use of distinctive reason, they were seldom considered in theories of human nature. They failed at education, and their power as dramatic or carnival trope decreased as secular society no longer had need for them. The implications of secular, rather than divine, nature, were, however, more obvious for people with physical anomaly both at the time, and retrospectively, than was the subtle sidelining of ideots as errors. In one of a significant number of studies of the place of monstrocity in the Enlightenment,[10] Curran (1997) notes that "[h]istorians of thought

[10] Curran (1997) describes the bibliography on monsters as "enormous" (1997: 13, f.12). This work includes his own (Curran 1996; 1997), Dreger (1993), and since Curran, Benzaquen (2006), Blumberg (2009), Deutsch and Nussbaum (eds) 2000), Leroi (2003), to name a few.

have long underlined the epistemological shift that the concept of monstrosity underwent during the eighteenth century" (1997: 1). This epistemological shift can be seen in the work of d'Alembert who,

> valorized a supposedly disinterested inquiry into monstrosity; freed from the domain of metaphysical speculation, attached to the realm of anatomy, the study of deviant births should—according to the geometrician—provide an excellent means of reorienting man's understanding of nature's order. (Curran 1997: 1)

Diderot, too, was fascinated with monstrosities, or those with significant physical anomaly. Monstrous children were no longer wonders or portents, hints from a God communicating with his own creations. Instead, they were useful yardsticks, so popular that, materially, "in their deceased form," they became collector's items, not only in museums and universities; monstrosities, pickled in see-through glass jars, "served as symbols of status for gentlemen collectors of curiosities" (P. Wilson 2002: 8). Monstrous births were motivators for the development of classificatory categories of human, with the result that "[m]etaphorically speaking, Linnaeus provided a universal language by which all monstrous children could be read. His language stigmatized deviance because it distinctly distanced monsters from humans, treating them as separate species" (P. Wilson 2002: 8).

Monsters were the group that Locke was somewhat outraged should be possibly refused baptism (and thus, in seventeenth century terms, human status) on the basis of their physical shape. But, by the end of the eighteenth century they were a species all of their own, and not a highly valued one at that. As the eighteenth moved into the nineteenth century, while ideocy came under increasing scrutiny as an educational and social problem, interest in monsters became a science all of its own: the science of teratology. The early leading lights of this science, St Hilaire, his disciple Etienne Serre, and his son Isodore were fascinated not so much with adults who were misshapen or others who suggested a peculiar lineage (a merging of species), but with aborted monsters (foetuses), with embryology, and theories of generation (Vorzimmer 1963). Charles Darwin, as we see in the following chapter, was one who was most impressed with the notions of foetal development and inheritance that came out of teratology: but first, a brief outline of such theories.

Secular Man, theories of generation, and the body:

When Locke was writing the *Essay*, the favoured theories of human reproduction were preformationist, or preexistence theories. These implied that "all future organisms had to be present in either Eve or in Adam, or else seeds have to be created directly by God in each generation" (Terrall 2007: 256). The notion of an order that had been imposed by God at creation had advantages for our seventeenth century ancestors, one being that it simply avoided the problems of intelligible explanations. It was only in the late seventeenth century, with the development of microscopy, and the resultant discoveries, particularly Leeuwenhoek's recognition of sperm, that an understanding of the actual mechanism of generation became possible. This was a limited understanding: the ovum would not be 'discovered' until well into the nineteenth century, and even then there were no notions of chromosomes, genes, the meiotic division that accounts for the halving of chromosomes in each parent cell. Without a strict notion of heredity, pre- and early-modern species could be inconstant, not only in Lockean terms of nominal, and not real essence, but because species could merge: there could be wonders, such as the mixture of the cat and the rat Locke claimed to have seen. The early modern period was "a world full of transmutations, monstrous births, and bizarre couples" (Muller-Wille 2007: 178). Nature was promiscuous, and everything from what a woman ate, to the paintings she might have viewed during pregnancy, were thought to have an effect on the child. At their most prosaic, "[t]he foundations for similarities between parents and offspring was provided by the fact that similar conditions prevail, as a rule, during procreation and development" (Muller-Wille 2007: 178), and not because of a physical, biological link:

> in this premodern perspective – which prevailed ... well into the seventeenth century – specific and individual similarities between ancestors and descendents result from similarities in particular constellations of climatic, economic, political, and social factors. ... The phenomenon of heredity – that 'like begets like' – was thus as trivial as it was precarious: it was trivial insofar as it was stabilized and reinforced by municipal rules; it was precarious insofar as it always remained open to trangression against such rules. (Muller-Wille 2007: 178)

By the middle years of the eighteenth century, new evidence, from freshwater polyps and the like, affected the debate. In a shift from seventeenth century preformationism, enlightenment thinkers began to perceive that "[i]nheritance of traits,

whether abnormal or not, was one kind of evidence brought to bear on the fraught topic of generation" (Terrall 2007: 254). The problems of generation were not always studied by scientists in laboratories; "precisely because biology was not yet constituted as a discipline, this topic was open to interpretation, speculation, and experimentation by philosophically minded materialists, as well as physicians, anatomists, and naturalists" (Terrall 2007: 254). Buffon investigated reproduction as a property of matter, rather than metaphysics; Diderot, influenced by Buffon, was fascinated with the power of nature to transform organs. Both had much to say about the issue (Terrall 2007). Linnaeus, too, proposed a theory of generation, but "based on a peculiar inversion of a common representation of ancestry;" in this system "[t]ransmutations and equivocal generations are thus not only excluded as rare events, but in principle (Muller-Wille 2007: 184-185). Mid-century, Diderot was saying "this procreative power that operates perpetually ... is for us ... a mystery whose depths it seems we not be allowed to sound" (Diderot, 1751, quoted in Terrall 2007: 255). It was mid-century, also, when "several factors forced physicians to reconsider hereditary disease. This decade produced what Robert Darnton calls the "double explosion" of writings about sex and nature" (Quinlan 2006: 655). There was "experimental work on generation pioneered by John Turberville Needham, P.-L. Moreau de Maupertuis, and Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon" (Quinlan 2006: 655), concerning, in particular, embryology. According to Quinlan, this interest spilled into popular culture, at least in France, and "fashionable society found itself discussing the materialist implications of regeneration in crayfish and polyps, parthenogenesis in aphids, and albinism among black Africans" (2006: 655).

The interest in the physical mechanism of generation was symptomatic of one of the major shifts that can be seen from the end of the seventeenth, to the end of the eighteenth centuries: the materialism of mind that Locke hinted at, particularly in his description of the (apparently neurological) processes of understanding in the *Essay*, Book 2, became, by the end of the eighteenth century, not something to be frightened of, but almost an ordinary, everyday notion. What Israel (2001) calls the " 'Nature of God' controversy" of the early eighteenth century, where "Spinoza's godless conflation of body and soul into a single *substantia intelligens*, unifying extension and mind" (2001: 436, 438), had caused virtual war among scholars, was, at least in secular thinking, over.

Sciences such as the embryology, the Linnaean classificatory system, teratology (the study of monsters), all proclaimed that the mysteries of human life could be read on the body, if only it were studied well enough, and with the right tools.

Consistent with the increasing awareness of biology, in the latter eighteenth century, "the idea of hereditary disease abruptly reemerged in lay and medical circles, now with a deep sense of moral urgency and alarm" (Quinlan 2006: 658). Heredity was still seen "in complex and contentious ways. ... [it] raised overlapping, holistic problems about mind and body: it meant a mix of predisposition, ancestral qualities, embryological development, and the inheritance of acquired characteristics" (2006: 651). Unfortunately, this also meant that even though some Enlightenment thinkers, physicians and scientists, "saw human nature in more nuanced and sometimes skeptical ways," it was the case that:

> most believed that many of "the people"—women, children, manual laborers, the poor, and non-Europeans—lacked the physical aptitude to improve themselves, while others worried about moral decay and feared that decadence and degeneracy threatened the body politic. For these medical critics, innate biological qualities limited Enlightenment efforts to perfect society. (Quinlan 2006: 654)

Women were caught up in these and allied debates, and in all questions of physical difference (Armstrong 1996; Quinlan 2006). Similarly, by the latter part of the eighteenth century, the concept of biological race, where characteristics were inevitably tied to physical appearance, was being articulated, studied, and taken on as part of a way of thinking about the world. Montesquieu's (1689-1755), mid-eighteenth century classification of peoples based on their modes of subsistence (savages or hunters; barbarians or shepherds; civilized nations) was influential, but by the end of the eighteenth century, race, too, was beginning to be presented as biological, measureable and fixed. Linnaeus, as aforenoted, divided *homo sapiens* into four races, associating characteristics such as aggression or peacefulness with colour and body type. By the end of the century, Kant had written, defensively, knowing that he would insult, of national characteristics (Armstrong 1996). Influentially, too, German physician, Blumenbach (1752-1840), had published his theory of race, with five groups, white, yellow, brown, black and red. Blumenbach was one of the purveyors of the importance of measurement: his division into races was based in craniometry, the measurement of skulls. This

'science' of craniometry was very popular in the nineteenth century, much to the detriment of women, who were thought to have smaller heads and brains, and to people with intellectual disability, many of whom were thought to have even less adequately sized craniums.

"In the end, the Enlightenment believed that armed with the new method of science, men could solve their religious, philosophical, social, psychological, and political problems and achieve great progress" (Ravitch 1973: 39). The trouble was that the men who could solve these problems were, despite the liberatory rhetoric of the Enlightenment, very specifically men: "[f]or women, the legacy of the French Revolution was contradictory: a universal, abstract, rights-bearing individual as the unit of national sovereignty, *embodied*, however, as a man" (Scott 1989, in Hyland (ed.) 2003: 406. My emphasis). Thus, the Enlightenment desire for a distilled, universal human nature, achieved its aim only by looking back at the Man that had 'run the show' for millennia, abstracting him, and, in an not entirely perverse (given the history of male dominance) move, embodying him in form that could be seen, heard, touched, felt, could win races, write poetry, reason, engage in discursive debate, and so on. At the same time, all who did not conform to the ideal – women, black people, monsters, and ideots – became examples of peculiarity to be subjected to scrutiny, dissected, measured, and, in the nineteenth century, put on graphs and charts.

Chapter conclusion: human nature, without diversity:

I have argued in this chapter that, during the Enlightenment, human nature, an essentialist concept, was muddled with human understanding, a descriptive concept. The latter, particularly as expounded by Locke in his seminal study, covered an array of processes employed by people with varying capacities, with varying results. Human understanding however, was, and can still be, seen, if not studied in any depth, to imply a centrality of reason. In the eighteenth century, reason was ontological. Even with the proviso that not everyone had to actually instance reason all of the time, it was essential, in the sense that "[t]he Enlightenment idea of 'reason' embodies ... the theory that there is a relation between the ahistorical essence of the human soul and moral truth, a relation which ensures that free and open discussion will produce 'one right answer' " (Barlett

2001: 2). There was a growing sense that those who did not evidence reason, as the Enlightenment understood it (educative, discursive), were unnatural, were errors, and were degenerate. Disease was linked with depravity (Quinlan 2006), and those with disability were increasingly viewed as, in some way, diseased.

Idiocy emerges at the end of the eighteenth century as, at best, a reason for compassion. Attention to people with intellectual disability was redistributed into ancillary services, such as education. While this can, and probably did at the time, seem an humane approach, the effect of compassion is to strip the object/recipient of agency, shutting off the possibility that the object of compassion could comment, in any way, on the giver of care. Ideots were no longer part of God's work, they no longer carried the essential characteristics of humanness.

As I asked at the beginning of this chapter, what happened, in all this, to Locke's diverse human? It seems that this human was subsumed under the overwhelming desire to find an universal human nature, not attributable to God, that could be scientifically categorised, studied, assessed, measured, an human nature that could be made ever more nearly perfect, through education and social progress. As would be expected, with such a brief, many humans were left behind, or outside, this human nature.

The interesting question this raises, is what would human nature have looked like if people with intellectual disability had been included in the consideration thereof? What would it have looked like, if women, black people, people with physical anomaly had been included? This bears considerable thinking about; but first, I turn to the nineteenth century, and Charles Darwin's biological human, in the effort to understand why this very question does not seem to have been raised – at least not with ideots and changelings included – in the past two centuries or more.

Chapter 7

Idiocy: the nineteenth century context, Darwin's *Descent* and *Expression of Emotions*

Centuries are, of course, arbitrary limits, but the cusp of the eighteenth to nineteenth was far more marked than the previous one, underlined with the reverberations of American independence, revolution in France, consequent war throughout Europe, massive industrialisation in Britain, the subsequent dislocation of people, the rapidly changing class structures.[1] Perhaps it was all the disarray that caused the passion for categorisation to intensify. Everywhere we turn in the nineteenth century, we find measurement and the distribution of people, things, ideas, into diagrams and graphs. There were also continued calls for education, democracy, and an increasing confidence that humans had the wherewithal to control their own destiny. In the first section of this chapter, I examine the rise of social physics, and the other technologies for the measurement of humans that developed in the first half of the nineteenth century.

This chapter then considers Charles Darwin's *The Descent of Man* and *The Expression of Emotions*. I begin with very brief notes on Darwin's own background, and on the background to *The Descent* and *The Expression of Emotions*. The evidence from idiots in *The Expression* is presented here first: the work's thesis is less grand, and its influence less lasting than *The Descent*. I move on to idiocy in *The Descent*.
What was the function of the references to people with idiocy? I show here that idiots were more analogy than evidence in Darwin's theory of human natural selection. On the other hand, they had a significant explanatory power. Ideots functioned, in particular, as a means of filling in the gaps in the fossil record. The analysis of this function leads to the subject of the subsequent and final chapter here – the question of greater interest to this thesis than that of eugenics or oppression: what effect this positioning of people with disability, in the radical, all-encompassing theory of evolution by natural selection, had on nineteenth century and future considerations of humanness?

This chapter contains quite lengthy quotations from Darwin's work on humans. As Quinn (2007) has shown, there is much that Darwin wrote that Darwinists don't like us to know about: both popular interpretations, and Darwin scholarship tend to avoid the detail of *The Descent* and *The Expression of Emotions*, and knowledge of their content therefore cannot be presumed.

The rise of social statistics:

The topic of Book 4 of the *Essay* was knowledge, pictured, as a result of the investigations reported in the previous three books, as limited and probable, rather than

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[1] Various reference texts have been consulted for a picture of pre- and early to mid-Victorian England, the most useful here being A.N. Wilson's *The Victorians* (2002). Roy Porter's work on medicine (*The Greatest Benefit to Mankind*, 1997) has again been of help.

certain. Locke devoted an entire chapter to probability, which, in its straightforward manifestation, "is likeliness to be true" (4.15.3). Ian Hacking, a philosopher who has written extensively on probability, quotes Byrne (1968) to help distinguish between past and more nearly present meanings of probability:

> Attribution of probability to opinion ... in the first place ... refers to the authority of those who accept the given opinion and from this point of view 'probability' suggests *approbation* with regard to the proposition accepted and probity with regard to the authorities who accept it. In the second place, 'probability' refers to the arguments which are presented in favor of the opinion in question; and from this point of view it suggests *provability* ... In the third place, 'probability' takes on a somewhat pejorative connotation precisely insofar as the proposition in question is *merely* probable; for, from this point of view the proposition is only *probationary*. (quoted in Hacking 1984: 23. Emphasis in original)

Locke's was an interactive and effectively subjective probabilism, which relied, as Byrne describes it, on approbation, provability and the acceptance of a probationary status. This was a radical shift from certainty in knowledge, but it did not require or promote mathematical calculation. Half a century later, Hume also favoured probability (Gower 1991), but by then the emphasis was changing: Hume, in *A Treatise*, uses the throw of a die as example, and includes the specific calculation of chance, in much the way we would today.

By the end of the eighteenth century, statistical laws that did not rely on divine providence were apparently new tools for a new age, and ones that took the human error out of probability. A term, the 'law of large numbers' was coined. The law of large numbers insisted that if there were enough events there would always be regularities. It "was taken to denote a profound fact about the world. Against the advice of sceptics, statistical law was enthroned" (Hacking 1990: 104). Whether or not there was anything natural or immutable about these perceived regularities, the effect was a sense that the law "was not something to be checked against experience; it was the way things had to be" (1990: 104), a belief which is still with us today. Perhaps it need not have concerned or confined humanness, but combined with other forces, it did.

A great deal of social change went along with the increased interest in probability: nation states and local municipalities began counting their births, deaths and marriages, their land, buildings, exports, and other possessions. Numerical representations of criminal behaviour and suicides attracted interest. Initially, there was no collection of

information about our bodies, or what we might perceive as our selves: however, soon the excitement of something that seemed so apparently stable and unequivocal as statistics spilled over the edges of census figures and arguments about the likelihood of just and unjust convictions, and formed a great pool of information about the mass of ordinary people. Yet, in the early nineteenth century, there were few statistical tools, and no clear notion of what to do with the all numbers: it was still mostly counting.

Eventually, mathematics teacher and astronomer, Adolphe Quetelet (1796-1874), having already collected large swathes of birth, death, marriage, suicide and crime rates, did something novel: to this social data he applied the probability calculations that had been used in astronomy to assess and plot potential measurement errors. Thus, we now have the Gaussian or bell curve, the standard normal distribution, applied to an incredible variety of apparently human characteristics. Although the applicability of the tools of astronomy to variable human attributes was not guaranteed, Quetelet's work was immediately influential and his influence long lasting: it is now seen as natural and unquestionable that most people, and most human characteristics, will cluster near the middle of a bell curve, leaving the ones on the edges to be unusual, deviant.[2]

Quetelet was also able to convince his contemporaries that the measurement of attributes enabled the prediction of other attributes. In its simplest form, this meant that a person who was average in physical characteristic was likely to be so in mental, and moral, characteristics, too. Quetelet valued his *l'homme moyen* or average man, as an ideal, a peculiarly low-key, new Adam, against whom all others, as he clearly states, were to be measured (1842: 8). Further, in setting the average as something to aspire to,

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[2] Both Hacking (1990), and Davis (1995) have exposed significant difficulties in Quetelet's reasoning. However, some caution should be exercised when retrospectively evaluating the 'moral' impact of Quetelet's work: before I had read Quetelet himself (but had read Davis, 1995), I had an unambiguous image of Quetelet as a nefarious populiser of a 'social physics' that effectively led to the exertion a spectacular level of control over individuals. Yet, Quetelet's interest in criminology led him to understand specific criminality as being socially, not individually, or class, determined; and this, "[g]iven public opinion, which identified the criminality of the dangerous classes with working class failures and rebellion," meant that Quetelet's idea "that criminal propensities were distributed *throughout* the population was an affront to the sensibilities of the law abiding citizenry" (Beirne 1987: 161-2. My emphasis). If eugenicist, Francis Galton, had not used Quetelet's methodology in support of eugenics, perhaps Quetelet's 'pioneering' work, in giving the (fictional) average person the spotlight, and asserting that all classes can be criminals, would be more often associated with democracy. Having said that, his insistence of the eradication of deviance should not be forgotten.

Quetelet repeatedly asserted the importance of limits, and the "part they play in the social order" (1842: x). Limits were of two kinds: "ordinary or natural, and extraordinary or beyond the natural," the former "deviate more or less from the mean, without attracting attention by excess," while the latter have "deviations [which] become greater," and are thus "on the outer verge of which are things preternatural, or monstrosities" (1842: x).

Thus, in developing the notions of (ideal) average and deviant limits, Quetelet's social physics invented, then reified, solidified, the concept of normal as applied to humans, and situated any one who was not within a statistically defined average range as ab- or sub-normal. Armenteros (2007) sees a strong connection between this 'development' and the perfectibility that had been elaborated in the latter eighteenth century. She studies the work of lawyer and diplomat, de Maistre (1753-1821) who believed strongly in perfectibility. Yet, in his 1795 work, *On the State of Nature*,

> Maistre never uses the language of normality: four decades would have to pass before the word 'normal' left the ambit of geometry where it had first been coined, and entered the vocabulary of Comtian positivism. Yet it is clear that Maistre's critique of Rousseau made many of the philosophical preparations necessary for the introduction of the French concept of normality, in the sense of the morally necessary, of the 'good and right.' (Armenteros 2007: 127)

Normal, as Armenteros points out, had been a term related to the measurement from a carpenter's square, and only gained its new meaning and application to humans with the plotting of physical, then moral, and then mental attributes of humans on the ubiquitous bell curve in the 1830s (Davis 1995). This needs to be stressed: *the apparently natural concept of human normality is a nineteenth century one*, and not one that was held prior. There had been for centuries, as we have seen, an ideal Man, an Adamic Man, a normative (moral) Man, and in the seventeenth century there was Locke's Man, followed by the uniform, and again abstract, Enlightenment Man, but prior to Quetelet there was *no average man*.

What also needs to be stressed is that this average man, whose adherence was to the middle in all characteristics, was a measure that was of enormous significance to the early industrial age. The expanding middle classes were still stalked by a monarchical social structure in which they had little place: they wanted validation. Speaking of the 1830s, historian A.N. Wilson has said, "[p]rogress was the watchword of the age:

advance, improvement, struggle and climb ... [but] social climbers wish[ed] to kick away the ladder from beneath their feet" (2002: 94). The middle classes didn't want people to know where they had come from, which, as the "social journeys of ... Reverend Patrick Bronte (born in the meanest hovel), Herbert Spencer, the Gladstone family" demonstrate, was anywhere except from the upper classes (2002: 94). Instead the middle classes sought "popular scientific inquiry, entertainment, and communal self-congratulation" (2002: 93). All of which made the average-as-ideal, easy to swallow. All of which goes some way to explain why the early industrial era took so readily to the new classifications, and sciences described below.

Normalisation, classification, medicalisation:

The average man was, at least theoretically, independent of class or family background, he was not required to be heroic beyond the day to day; his very ordinariness was predictor and proof of his moral worth. The only prohibition was of excess; the average man could never deviate far from the mean. As Quetelet put it,

> One of the principal acts of civilization is to compress more and more the limits within which the different elements relative to man oscillate, The more that enlightenment is propagated, the more will deviations from the mean diminish ... The perfectibility of the human species is derived as a necessary consequence of all our investigations. Defects and monstrosities disappear more and more from the body. (Quetelet 1842, as quoted in Davis 1995: 28)

Normalising, which promoted pervasive physical, intellectual, social and behavioural averages, replaced normative morals, and became a nineteenth century project. Novels with domestic themes replaced Romantic poetry, the neatness of taxonomy and categorisation flourished (butterflies were literally pinned in the millions), children went to schools with regulated curricula and neat rows of desks, behavioural norms for all levels of society were stringent (with the now (in)famous double standards in relation to sexual conduct). Educational, health and philanthropic interests flourished, many aimed at making deviants more nearly approach the average. Social physics, with its attendant normalising, was the order of the day: "Comte would extrapolate (and transmit to Durkheim) the systematic and consummate truth of social knowledge ... that 'social physics' is the ultimate positivist science toward which all previous forms of human knowledge tend, and within which they are contained" (Armenteros 2007: 129).

Normalising required classification of those who were not normal. Medicine helped. By the turn of the nineteenth century, medicine was beginning to see itself as able to explain causes and cures for people with disability, and particularly those with mental illness and idiocy. The untrained, but successful physician, Jean Marc Gaspard Itard (1774-1838), is remembered for attempting to educate one of the most famous of the wild children cases, Victor of Aveyron, and for going on to classify various syndromes, including Tourette's. His colleague, Phillipe Pinel (1745-1826), was instrumental not only in the 'moral treatment' of the insane, but in the development of classification of mental disorders. Both these doctors appear in the hero-histories of intellectual disability, as liberators from harsh, indifferent treatment that had gone before (Judge 1987; Kanner 1964; Schereenberger 1983). Against this hero-interpretation, Pinel is read by Foucault, in *Madness and Civilisation* (1988), as the representative of the institutionalisation of the mentally ill. Both these perspectives can be held simultaneously: Pinel did improve treatment for people with mental illness while, at the same time, his desire for precise identification of one 'illness' from another forced people into categorical boxes, dominated by medical labelling, ignoring all other aspects of the person, and buttressing the bridge 'reason' provided to 'civilisation'. What is important to note is that, in all scenarios, classification ensured people with disability were no longer one among the crowd of humans to be considered in any theory of understanding (or human nature): they were fast becoming objects of study by a specialist profession.

The asylums, mushrooming in Britain now as they had earlier in France, also "provided a mountain of information to support new models and classifications of mental diseases" (Porter 1997: 505). Categorisation of idiocy became increasingly important. Institutions were run by medical superintendents, such as Dr Langdon Down, of the Earlswood Asylum for Idiots, whom Darwin refers to on many occasions, and whose nieces eventually married into the Darwin family. In 1866, Down published his short but lastingly influential paper, 'Observations on the ethnic classification of idiots'. Among the many groups described there were the mongoloid type, or people with Trisomy 21, an extra 21st chromosome (those Ayers thought Locke was exclusively referring to), who are still today referred to as people with Down's or, more recently,

Down Syndrome.

Aetiology was not much attended to, although the link between iodine deficiency and cretinism, noted by Platter in the sixteenth century, was fully established in the 1830s (Kanner 1964). The other popular activity, consistent with the new statistics, and with concepts of measurable intelligence, was the determination of the level of disability. Medical practitioners, such as Langdon Down, and later M.W Barr (1894; 1899) in the United States, led the charge for differentiation, particularly along lines of who or who could not be trained to be a productive worker. "Training ... became the keynote in the major idiots' asylums. Hopes were expressed that stimulating institutional environments would lead to mental improvement" (Porter 1997: 506). Locke's intuitive categories became precisely defined ranks, each rank, consistent with the views of the influential social physics, with prognosis attached. Often with the best of intentions, disability was becoming managed, contained, and segregated, and to be associated with other devalued groups.

Phrenology, craniometry and intelligence:

Measurability and *l'homme moyen* were further saturated with meaning when they, firstly, coalesced with the idea that human character, intellect, and even moral value, could be read from the body, and, secondly, when intelligence came to be viewed both as an entity of itself, and assessable. Reading the body was, in various guises, an obsession of the nineteenth century. Philip Wilson (2002) describes "[o]ne key difference distinguishing this [nineteenth century] discourse on monstrosities from that of the previous century was the way in which maternal marks came to be read as indelible marks of moral character" (2002: 11). The study of marks on the body, and of physiognomy, "the 'science' of reading people's character by studying their facial features, became common as a form of physical diagnosis, and as parlor entertainment in the nineteenth century" (2002: 11).

Phrenology, the notion of that an individual's capacities, character and propensities (for good or evil, among other things) can be mapped on the external protuberances of the skull, also had incredible appeal. Franz Joseph Gall, the Viennese physician who died in 1828, developed the theory, which spread rapidly, and became

established as an apparently scientific truth. As head of the Phrenological Society in England, George Combe (1788-1858), described it in 1835, phrenology believed that "[t]he quality or constitution of the brain partakes of that of the body generally, and this is indicated by the temperaments" (1835: 5). No longer was it the clothing (as marker of class) that made the man, it was those talents which could be ascertained by the inspection of his skull. Such readings of the skull were considered scientific fact.

Leany (2006), and McLaren (1974), have both argued for the importance of phrenology and similar sciences to the middle classes in the nineteenth century, as parlour games, as new, exciting sciences, and as "as a medium by which the ideas of one age and class were transmitted to another" (McLaren 1974: 87). Incredible claims were made for what the exterior of the head could tell us about the interior, phrenological societies flourished, learned journals included articles, popular magazines published maps of the regions of the skull. Many of the claims were dependent on assessment of the size of the skull rather than the protuberances or depressions: phrenology, in many instances, merged with craniometry, the science of skull measurement. In 1870, for example, the *Journal of the Anthropological Society* reviewed *A Handbook of Phrenology*: the author of the *Handbook* had found that men with small heads could not be bread-winners, and that clumsy servants were sure to have a small brain weight (1870: 198). The link of mind and body, and predictive size of the cranium was one of the most determinedly promoted measures of the nineteenth century, and one that, as we see below, Darwin was not only impressed with, but used to considerable advantage.

These theories, their measurements and classifications produced and, in what might well be described as an incestuous move, bred, with what Steve Gould has described as the nineteenth century development of a reified, thing-like, and quantifiable intelligence (Gould 1996a).[3] In the *Essay*, Locke only uses the word intelligence on very limited occasion (2.27.2; 4.3.27), and as a very general term for a whole being with

[3] Gould's thesis, that it was only in the nineteenth century that humans began to think of intelligence as something that could be, in some way, separated from other qualities of the person, is supported by the histories of intelligence, and histories of intellectual disability, which almost invariably begin with the nineteenth century (see Cianciolo and Sternberg, 2004, for example). Sternberg and Powell (1982), in the still authoritative *Handbook of Human Intelligence*, negate even the nineteenth century, citing early twentieth century psychologists, Spearman, Brown and Thomson as originators of the concept, intelligence.

some sort of consciousnesses (that is, you or I might be 'an intelligence'), rather than to refer to a faculty of the being that could be discussed, without the being. In 4.3.27 he refers specifically to non-corporeal substances (angels) as 'intelligences'. While Locke used intelligent as an adjective (including to describe a parrot), being intelligent was a description, like having charm, or bad temper; having a separate thing that was a quantifiable intelligence was not. In the nineteenth century, intelligence became something you could have, or not have, just as you could be white or black, male or female, large or small, or just as you could have a commodity from one of the new factory floors.

Thing-like intelligence was, in the early to mid-nineteenth century, measured according to phrenological tenets, but it could not be assessed by testing as we know that measurement today. This began to change when Darwin's cousin, Francis Galton (1822-1911) produce first an article, 'Hereditary talent and character' (1865), and then a book, *Hereditary Genius* (1869). It was the former of these that, according to Gillham (2001), in a not unsympathetic portrait of Galton, opened the debate about intelligence that still continues today. Aiken (1996) also credits Galton with being the person who "initiated the study of intelligence and its origins" (Aiken 1996: 8). It was certainly Galton who introduced the bell-shaped or Gaussian curve to the plotting of intelligence. The problem was that he had no proper measures to plot; he took test results from university mathematics students, and later marks from admission tests for the Royal Military College at Sandhurst (Gillham 2001), and on the basis of these very limited groups, showed a distribution of intelligence, with imbeciles and then idiots at the far left tail-end. In doing this, Galton, as Maccabelli (2008) points out, simply "assumed that talent was distributed normally and that deviations from the mean followed the Gaussian law of errors" (2008: 493). He did this, despite intelligence, talent, aptitude being qualitative qualities, and despite the fact that he had no data on women, children, people with idiocy, men of non-English background, older people, those who had or had not had education, or any other group except his young self-selected males, who had already shown the interest and aptitude (and socio-political inclination) to go to Cambridge, or to Sandhurst.

Galton also "estimated the number of persons belonging to the diverse social

classes, again in ascending order, starting from the class of "true idiots and imbeciles" up to the class of the "geniuses" resulting in "a symmetric representation aimed at demonstrating 'the vast abundance of mediocrity (i.e., the standard of intellectual power)' and 'the rarity of commanding ability' "(Maccabelli 2008: 493). Presented on tables and graphs, these assumptions, coupled with his own stories of meeting (black) Africans, and the like, allowed Galton, in *Heredity Genius*, to make the case that you could be intelligent, or not, *because* you were white, black, male or female, wealthy or poor. Gender and colour became effectively causative, and, according to the graphs and statistics that he produced from his studies of eminent families, not by inference, but by statistical fact. Galton also made a dramatic and emphatic linking of intelligence and heredity through his 'pedigree studies' of men (and they were only men) of industry, the law and science. His thesis was simple: the most eminent men, produced the most eminent children. These arguments, as we see below, clearly impressed his cousin, Darwin.

There had been objections to Quetlet's social physics, primarily as it was thought his views discounted free will, a matter Quetelet himself attempted to address (Quetelet 1842: vii). The importance he placed on the *average* man also worried Francis Galton in particular; it was the antithesis to continual improvement. Galton was responsible for developing many statistical tools himself. He also coined the term, and developed the concept of, eugenics, because of a fear that the average was mediocre, and that the mediocre would become more common if the breeding of the 'unfit' were not reduced, (and the reproductive rate of the 'fit' increased). Eugenics is not our topic here, (it will be discussed in Chapter 8 below), but it can be noted that what Galton offered, in terms of the theories of mental power and heredity in particular, held a great deal of explanatory promise for many of the early Victorians, who were very keen to see themselves as ever-advancing. Despite his hereditarian emphasis (or nature versus nurture – Galton also coined this concept), Galton's eminence was generally 'earned' (judges, men of letters), not aristocratic; at the same time it could be passed on, like the wealth that went with it. This matched neatly with the idea that, if you had 'it', you also had to work at it: "in the Victorian period, genius was transformed by the culture of industry and work … [and] became an endowment of the self-made man, who had to

labor and struggle after truth" (White 2007: 383). Indeed, "[e]ven Darwin, a gentleman of secluded leisure, characterized his scientific activity as 'hard work' and 'hard labour'" (White 2007: 383). People with intellectual disability rarely worked, and as the century progressed, were seen more and more as a burden on society.[4]

The nineteenth century showed some interest in people with intellectual disability. Jean Esquirol (1772-1840) made a "clear distinction between idiocy (mental incapacity) and mental derangement" (Aiken 1996: 6). Ignoring Locke, Aiken situates this 1838 distinction as innovative. Oddly enough, the geologist, Charles Lyell (1797-1875), too, demonstrated awareness of idiocy; referring to, and negating, a comparison of idiot with Neanderthal skulls in Chapter 5 of his 1863 work on *The Antiquity of Man*. By the end of the nineteenth century, Alfred Binet was writing the first 'intelligence test', specifically designed to identify students who required 'special' education. Binet's intentions were, as with many of his forebears, to benefit people in general, and children with intellectual disability in particular (Binet 1980), but his work was very much part of making what had been natural idiocy into a formally recognised pathology, with assessable attributes that set it, or people with it, apart from the average population.

Other forces of the nineteenth century:

There were other forces at work, many of which had bearing on the way of thinking about intellectual disability, and on whether people who were other than average could comment in any way on those who were. To note a tiny but pertinent selection: Curvier's (1769-1832) comparative anatomy was highly influential. Cuvier explored geology, disliked evolutionary theories, and thought it was demonstrable that African women had primitive and excessive sexual appetites. A little later, Von Baer (1792-1876), first showed the scientific world the function of the mammalian ovum, thus putting paid to the notion of preformationism (Vorzhimmer 1963). He also studied embryology and "stressed that the embryos of various species initially share highly analogous and even indistinguishable forms ... [but] rejected the suggestion that the developing human embryo faithfully recapitulated the structures of the lower animals"

[4] The notion of people with intellectual disability as a non-productive burden is reflected in the immigration laws of the late nineteenth, early twentieth centuries. See Bashford (2004), Stubblefield (2007).

(Porter 1997: 326). The latter view, however, remained popular and was infused into the theory of natural selection. Social and political events influenced philosophical, medical and social notions. In the first part of the century, the French and the English were at war; mid-century, the British joined the French to fight the Crimean War, and war figures strongly in Darwin's thinking. Marx (1818-1883) and Engels (1820-1895) promoted the value of the working man, albeit in a theorised, and very different economic system from the one that was sending steam engines out to pull people along new rail tracks or putting them inside huge shelters to power all sorts of new manufacturing industries. John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) talked utilitarianism, usefulness, and the greatest good for the greatest number. Statistical concepts were applied everywhere: to the movements of molecules in a gas (Gribbin 2002), just as, at the more popular level, these analyses also seemed to objectively show, in this "England of canals, factories and counting houses" (A.N. Wilson 2002: 110), people with disabilities and all those who could not work for whatever reason, naturally occupied some kind of tail-end of the graph. In general, "the early nineteenth century witnessed amazing progress in physiological and neurological research;" unfortunately, perhaps, "[t]he result of these models was a renewed optimism of explaining human nature according to its own principles and without the need to refer to external factors such as society and education" (Pethes 2007: 410). The biologically determined human was rapidly replacing Locke's flexible, developmental, educable one.

The combination of all these interests and factors set the stage for evolutionary theory, and in particular for the theory of natural selection. In this, as we see below, Darwin firmly delineated idiots as atavistic, throw-backs to a barely, if at all, human past. In a world in love with progress, he placed idiots in a position of ever-diminishing relevance, a position from which they have not yet escaped.

Darwin's idiots, biological determinism, and human value:[5]

The nineteenth was, as we have seen, the century of the normal Man. It was the

[5] Since completing this chapter, and indeed this thesis, I have been made aware of an article by Steven Gelb (2008), which covers, albeit in less depth, and with less analysis of context and outcome, some of areas of Darwin's positioning of people with intellectual disability presented here.

century that saw the most dramatic diminution in the belief that humans were God's children. The chain of being became descent from a common ancestor. The latter part of the nineteenth century was also the time in which the theory, and attempted practice, of eugenics developed. Holding in mind the notions of the social physics, the enthusiastic materialism of phrenology and craniometry, it is now time to examine the evidence Darwin put forward to support his theory of the evolution of human beings. The evidence from people with intellectual disability, and of people with physical anomaly is examined in some depth.

Darwin's background:[6]

Charles Darwin came from a very different background from that of John Locke. His family was wealthy, educated and intellectual. Darwin himself never actually had to work for a living. His father, Robert, and more famous grandfather, Erasmus, were physicians, but Charles only briefly experimented with this direction at university. The clergy didn't suit him either, but he took to naturalism and, it seems, was rescued from indecision by the invitation to be the gentleman traveller on the *Beagle*. The years he spent at sea were the only (apparent) adventure of his life, although his intellectual life was undoubtedly full of excitement and turbulence. Once off the *Beagle*, he spent time in London working on his journals, married his first cousin Emma Wedgewood, and retired to Down House to live a comfortable life with Emma, and their increasing brood of children. Despite his fondness for a quiet life, Darwin had a strong competitive streak, and finished the *Origin* when threatened with being pipped at the post by the co-discoverer of natural selection, Alfred Wallace (1823-1913).

Darwin's life was not without nuance: there was some illness for Darwin himself, sadness for the family in the death of Annie Darwin at age 10, and young Charles when still a baby. There was controversy over the *Origin*, and continued intellectual hard work over the years, but Darwin avoided public presentations and discussions of his own work, leaving Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-1895), to defend him much of the time. Undoubtedly, he could afford to do so. Darwin's wealth, as Radick (2009) has pointed

[6] Biographical information about Darwin is in the public domain. To refresh my own memory, I have consulted particularly Aydon (2002), Keynes (2001), Lewens (2007), Ruse (2009), and Zimmer (2002).

out, enabled his career, and Darwin himself gave an almost causative importance to wealth and inheritance thereof: "the presence of a body of well-instructed men, who have not to labour for their daily bread, is important to a degree which cannot be overestimated" (Darwin [1871] 1981: quoted in Paul 2007: 227).[7]

This is not to paint Charles as undeserving of acclaim; it is to say that Darwin did not have, nor seek (aside from his time on the *Beagle*), the exposure to the range of people, social attitudes, the breadth of political, community and intellectual practice that Locke – working in civil service, in government and politics, as a physician - was constantly challenged by. On the other hand, there were similarities: both men had a reticence to too dramatically stir the waters, both thought long and hard before putting anything in to print. Like the *Essay*, Darwin's major work, the *Origin*, was twenty years or more in the preparation. In it, Darwin had forborne from discussing human evolution at any length, and it took him eleven more cautious years before he put forth his theories of human descent in *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871). While Locke and Darwin wrote about very different subjects, *The Descent,* and *The Expression of Emotions* (1872), like the *Essay,* included a number of references to idiots. Both also offered to the world, as a result of their investigations, a new way of looking at the human:

> Charles Darwin did not intend to produce a worldview when he wrote *Origin*. ... However, many thinkers have developed from his account of the origin of species, especially as applied to our own species, a distinctive perspective on the universe that merits the label 'worldview'. (Baxter 2007:1)

Unlike that of the *Essay*, this worldview, and the human within it, I argue below, sees idiots, and 'savages' (Darwin's word), as necessarily eventual casualties of the processes of adaptation and selection. It also sees woman as naturally less sophisticated than men. In Darwin's earthly universe, neither idiots, nor any other marginal group, could ever be a challenge to a long held theory, as they were in the *Essay*: challenge was the prerogative of those at the top of the hierarchy, those who were adapting forward into the future.

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[7] Darwin and Alfred Wallace, the latter a man whose family could not afford to school him past the age of thirteen (Berry 2002), had opposing views on wealth and inheritance of capital. Paul (2009) suggests their opposing views stem from their vastly different backgrounds.

The origin of *The Descent* and *The Expression of Emotions*:

While the *Origin* had avoided the topic of natural selection in humans, Darwin's peers were less reticent on the subject, and in the years between the *Origin* and *The Descent* there was much talk about how natural selection affected humans. Although relatively silent, Darwin, too, and Wallace were both "wrestling with the issue [of the social implications of natural selection] for a very long time" prior to *The Descent* (Paul 2009: 220). Wallace initially proposed that selection in humans was likely to cause the spread of altruism, as the most cooperative would survive. At the same time, cooperation was tied with "self-restraint and a sense of right," and those with these traits "would flourish, resulting in constant mental and moral improvement" (Paul 2009: 221). Aboriginal groups, in Wallace's schema, would inevitably die out. Although Darwin deplored slavery, and was "repelled by the cruelty of European conquest," he also "assumed that conquest itself was inevitable. ... And while the means might be repellent, he was sure the results would be beneficent" (Paul 2009: 223).

Like Locke, Darwin, Wallace, and some few of their contemporaries could see that *within* group traits and differences were crucial. They were concerned that "in Britain and other 'civilized societies' it seemed that the process of selection had been checked," that the struggle for existence pictured by Darwin in the *Origin* was being inhibited by "[m]edicine and humanitarian measures [that] prevented elimination of the physically and morally weak" (Paul 2009: 221). This raised, among others, questions of reproduction and generation. These were not new to Darwin: "Darwin's theorising since the Beagle was shot through with generational preoccupations" (Endersby 2009: 75).

Prominent among those who worried about selection in so-called civilised countries, was Darwin's cousin, the aforementioned Francis Galton. Galton, who credited his interest in what became eugenics to reading the *Origin* (Kevles 1985), brought the 'problem' of heredity to the fore. As aforesaid, he produced both an essay of 1865, and a book of 1869, both showing particular concern that the more industrious and purportedly intelligent members of society were not reproducing as quickly as those he regarded as "stupid, lazy and reckless" (Paul 2009: 222). This tendency, Galton managed to convince many of, needed to be "reconciled with Darwin's claim that the

struggle for existence tended to the constant improvement of organic beings" (Paul 2009: 222). In Galton's work, there was actually much less said about racial differences than about the mental characteristics of those within his own population, although particularly in *Heredity Genius* (1869), his unquestioned belief in the inferiority of non-Europeans is frightening to the modern reader. What he implicitly challenged Darwin to explain was "a 'pernicious' decline in the numbers of the prudent, abler classes" (Kevles 1985: 9).

A year before *Heredity Genius*, Wallace "shocked Darwin and many others by denying that natural selection alone could account for humans' higher mental or moral qualities:" Wallace wanted to give credence to evolutionary guidance by "forces from a higher world of the spirit" (Paul 2009: 222-223). Darwin did not wish to be associated with Wallace's position, but his own work shows how supportive he was of Galton's: he quoted "the admirable labours of Mr. Galton" (*The Descent* 1882: 28), on many occasions in *The Descent*.[8]

It was in the climate of both Wallace's and Galton's analyses of the implications of natural selection for humans, and in the light of his own leanings, that Darwin wrote *The Descent*. The book "did not make nearly as much of a splash as had the *Origin*, perhaps because it was not nearly as novel," and perhaps because it also contained known work of others: "[i]n its application of the theory of natural selection, his *Descent* drew heavily on Malthus, Spencer, Wallace, Galton, Greg, Bagehot and other contemporary social theorists" (Paul 2009: 222-223). Darwin had insisted that the *Origin* was one, long argument: he "wrote the *Origin* as an abstract, not a scientific thesis" (Waters 2009: 120). Relying, as it did, on these statisticians and social physicists, *The Descent* was even less a scientific treatise; at many levels, it was an exercise in social theory.

Initially *The Expression of Emotions* had been intended as part of *The Descent*, but the overall size, Darwin tells his readers, was unwieldy (*The Expression* 1872: 3). *The Expression* was written as a counter to Sir Charles Bell's "admirable" argument that

[8] The final edition of *The Descent* describes Galton's *Heredity Genius* as "his great work," (1882: 133 f10), and particularly in Chapter 5 of this volume (1882: 127-145) Darwin repeatedly refers to Galton's findings as evidence for his own theories.

humans had certain muscles used to show emotions that other animals did not, and as "this view is obviously opposed to the belief that man is descended from some other and lower form, it was necessary for me to consider it" (1872: 3) The other object of *The Expression* was "to ascertain how far the emotions are expressed in the same manner by the different races of man" (1872: 3). Thus, *The Expression* is the book in which Darwin puts what could be called, the 'continuity argument' for humans being contiguous with other animal species, demonstrated by their sharing of emotional expression and response, thus 'proving' the theory of gradual transmutation of species.

References to idiocy in Darwin's theory of evolution:

The references to idiots in Darwin's canon are not inconsiderable. There are none in the *Origin*, but in *The Descent* there are twenty-one instances, a further use of the descriptor 'idiotic', as well as descriptive passages that accord with Darwin's definitions of idiots. *The Expression of Emotions* contains twenty by-name references to idiots, and one account of a "semi-idiotic dog" (1872: 44). I have not sifted closely through Darwin's other texts, as it is those dealing with humankind that are of interest here. Darwin has two main 'kinds' of idiots that attract his attention. I will call these, following his nomenclature, simply 'idiots', and specifically 'microcephalic idiots'. Idiots (without descriptor) appear almost invariably in *The Expression of Emotions*, microcephalic idiots feature strongly in *The Descent*. 'Imbeciles' also appear four times in *The Descent*, and twice in *The Expression of Emotions*. There is both reason for, and effect of, this grouping and differentiation, as we see below.

Idiocy in *The Expression of Emotions*:

On the magnificent Darwin online website, which hosts Darwin's complete works in several editions, the introduction to the *The Expression* describes it as:

> an important member of the evolutionary set ... written, in part at least, as a confutation of the idea that the facial muscles of expression in man were a special endowment. Darwin had no personal research experience in the subject, but he had read widely and enquired of his scientific colleagues. (Freeman 1977, no page number supplied)

On the basis of such information from colleagues, rather than personal experience

or research, Darwin includes people with intellectual disability when he discusses joy, an emotion that is evidently less sophisticated than love or devotion:

> Idiots and imbecile persons likewise afford good evidence that laughter or smiling primarily expresses mere happiness or joy. Dr. Crichton Browne, to whom, as on so many other occasions, I am indebted for the results of his wide experience, informs me that with idiots laughter is the most prevalent and frequent of all the emotional expressions. (*The Expression* 1872: 199)

Darwin provides further description, supporting his topic, or "third Principle," as he calls it, "that certain actions, which we recognise as expressive of certain states of the mind, are the direct result of the constitution of the nervous system, and have been from the first independent of the will, and ... of habit" (1872: 66).

> Many idiots are morose, passionate, restless, in a painful state of mind, or utterly stolid, and these never laugh. Others frequently laugh in a quite senseless manner. Thus an idiot boy, incapable of speech, complained to Dr. Browne, by the aid of signs, that another boy in the asylum had given him a black eye; and this was accompanied by 'explosions of laughter and with his face covered with the broadest smiles.' There is another large class of idiots who are persistently joyous and benign, and who are constantly laughing or smiling. Their countenances often exhibit a stereotyped smile; their joyousness is increased, and they grin, chuckle, or giggle, whenever food is placed before them, or when they are caressed, are shown bright colours, or hear music. (*The Expression* 1872: 199)

Darwin paints a picture - the detail of which he passes off, as he almost invariably does, to another authority - of truly 'idiotic' idiots, gambolling around, their silliness out of control. Contrast this with Locke's description, "the defect in naturals seems to proceed from want of quickness, activity, and motion in the intellectual faculties" (2.11.13). Darwin's idiots are inane, truly foolish, limited to very primitive functions; they do not have faculties that are slow or dulled, but rather behave as particularly silly, senseless children. Effectively, and despite the authority of the doctors who provide information, Darwin's idiots carry with them much more of the mythical and carnivalesque tropes of the artificial fool that we saw in chapter 2 here, than do Locke's.

Interpretation, too, is offered: "[t]he joyousness of most of these idiots cannot possibly be associated, as Dr. Browne remarks, with any distinct ideas: they simply feel pleasure, and express it by laughter or smiles" (1872: 199). Idiots exhibit *nothing* other than involuntary emotion. Effectively, Darwin's idiots are thought-less, their emotional responses meaningless, they are empty-headed. This absolute lack – idiots "cannot possibly" have any distinct ideas - accords well with the phrenologists' position; which

was that "[i]diocy is the want of brain; insanity is often excess, and deficiency in equilibrium" (Turner 1858: 6). Darwin also refers to "imbeciles rather higher in the scale," who have some motivators for pleasure and laughter - personal vanity seems to be the commonest cause of laughter, and next to this, pleasure arising from the approbation of their conduct - while idiots are limited to "purposeless movements" (1872: 199). As there was no other scale at the time, we can assume that he is referring to his cousin, Galton's, distribution of intelligence.

The above portrait of the 'complete fool' introduces an extended explanation of the mechanism of smiling, which includes the following:

> The tendency in the zygomatic muscles to contract under pleasurable emotions is shown by a curious fact, communicated to me by Dr. Browne, with respect to patients suffering from general paralysis of the insane. ... Constant tremulous agitation of the inferior palpebral and great zygomatic muscles is pathognomic of the earlier stages of general paralysis. The countenance has a pleased and benevolent expression. As the disease advances other muscles become involved, but until complete fatuity is reached, the prevailing expression is that of feeble benevolence. (*The Expression* 1872: 202)

People with mental illness, then, use the same natural expressions as other people, but in an exaggerated, uncontrolled, and eventually degenerate form.

As R. Richards (2009) notes, in "Darwin's many comparisons of facial movements in children, adults, the insane, as well as in apes, dogs and cats," he was using "comparative evidence" to demonstrate "a common original [for human, and animals] for emotional expression" (2009: 114). Darwin's clinically presented, jargon-rich discourse assures the reader that what he is presenting is without doubt the way it is, scientifically inevitable, not at all dependent on environment, or the circumstances of people's lives. Yet, despite a multitude of supporting examples, Darwin's is not an experimental science in any way. He accumulates facts that might prove his theory, but does not test these against other possibilities, nor even against the possibility that they are no more than analogies: that a person looks, or even uses the same muscles as an animal is not proof that there is a link. He certainly sees no need to undertake "an exact observation of their several ways of faltering" (*Essay* 2.11.13), to elucidate his statements on idiots and people with mental illness. Darwin's idiots are all firmly placed on the negative tail of the bell curve, a distribution that assures they overlap with the

previous, less successful species, and all on the basis of reports from doctors quite (geographically, at least) distant from Darwin.

In later chapters of *The Expression of Emotions* Darwin continues to bring people with idiocy into play when evidence of (supposedly) primitive physical expression is required. He notes a protrusion of the lips when people are enraged, "the meaning of which I do not understand, unless it depends on our descent from some ape-like animal" (1872: 244). This is associated with a further expression, "[t]he appearance is as if the teeth were uncovered, ready for seizing or tearing an enemy ... Mr. Dyson Lacy has seen this grinning expression with the Australians, when quarrelling, and so has Gaika with the Kafirs of South Africa" (1872: 243). It is not exclusively savages who have this "remnant of a habit acquired during primeval times when our semi-human progenitors fought together with their teeth, like gorillas and orangs at the present day;" it has been known in Europeans, and "[e]very one who has had much to do with young children must have seen how naturally they take to biting, when in a passion" (1872: 243).

However, like Locke, Darwin is no fool, and so is not content with cultural and developmental examples, both of which are open to change; he needs evidence of permanence. People with disability again provide it:

> This retraction of the lips and uncovering of the teeth during paroxysms of rage, as if to bite the offender, is so remarkable, considering how seldom the teeth are used by men in fighting, that I inquired from Dr. J. Crichton Browne whether the habit was common in the insane whose passions are unbridled. He informs me that he has repeatedly observed it both with the insane and idiotic, and has given me the following illustrations. (*The Expression* 1872: 244)

Two instances, one of an "uncontrollable outbreak of anger and delusive jealousy in an insane lady," and "of an old soldier, who, when he is requested to conform to the rules of the establishment, gives way to discontent, terminating in fury," are given (1872: 244). These people retract their lips, foam at the mouth, but it is the idiot who rounds up the evidence:

> Dr. Browne also informs me of the case of an epileptic idiot, incapable of independent movements, and who spends the whole day in playing with some toys; but his temper is morose and easily roused into fierceness. When any one touches his toys, he slowly raises his head from its habitual downward position, and fixes his eyes on the offender, with a tardy yet angry scowl. If the annoyance be repeated, he draws back his thick lips and reveals a prominent row of hideous fangs (large canines

> being especially noticeable), and then makes a quick and cruel clutch with his open hand at the offending person. (*The Expression* 1872: 245)

None of this dramatic event, presented in further florid detail in the text, has been observed by Darwin. Yet this passage leads to a seminal question, attributed this time to Dr Maudsley. Maudsley was the author of a "plethora of articles and books … [that] carefully outlined the moral, as well as the intellectual, deficits that marked the defective mind" (Jackson 2000: 35). The question Darwin ascribes to Maudsley is whether "various strange animal-like traits in idiots" could be a "reappearance of primitive instincts— a faint echo from a far-distant past, testifying to a kinship which man has almost outgrown" (1872: 245). Here we have it. The point of the descriptive excess is to produce an image of people to fill the gap, show the long-past links of 'kinship' and descent. In this one passage, Darwin has assured his readership of the veracity of his own theory, indirectly protested his own socio-ethical innocence (by attributing any negativity to others), and demonstrated that idiots are not really people of, or for, the current time. In this passage, too, Dr Maudsley, is being called upon to reinforce the argument already made in *The Descent of Man*, which I now consider.

Idiocy in *The Descent of Man*:

When the *Origin of Species* was published, the first print-run was sold out within the day. There was much more at stake in Darwin's theory than is easy to comprehend from the point of view of the largely secular West of today: "[i]f evolutionism implied that humans were merely improved apes, and nature only a senseless round of struggle and death, where was the divine source of moral values?" (Bowler 2003: 177). Scholarly and scientific opinion was not necessarily favourable, but much of the burgeoning middle-class was persuaded of the theory of evolution, at least in the sense of improvement over time, "because it underpinned their faith in progress" (Bowler 2003: 179). However, not all of even the most enamoured were convinced of natural selection as the process of evolution (Bowler 2003). The theory of gradual evolution through natural, and as elaborated in *The Descent*, sexual, selection also required the establishment and acceptance of continuities between people and various animals, particularly the 'higher' animals: this was a confronting notion. Darwin attempted to portray evolution as a branching tree, but one of the redeeming features for the middle

classes, and for the new breed of scientists who, like Huxley, had to work their way up through the social as well as scholarly ranks, was that evolution produced a ladder, rather than tree, image. The hierarchy implicit in the varying, but apparently increasing, complexity of species in the *Origin* implicitly put people at the top of an effectively linear representation.

When he came, eleven years after the *Origin*, to human evolution, Darwin, as Locke had with his refutation of nativism, required persuasive power. He made great use of analogy and metaphor, as we see in more detail below. As part of this he, consciously or not, transposed the ladder image inherent in the *Origin*, placing it over a single species, so that, in *The Descent* it is increasing complexity *within* humans that "says both that some people are higher or lower than others and that they are capable of moving up or down only along one narrow pathway" (Borthwick 2000: 41). Combined with the nineteenth century penchant for measureability, and identification of the organs of intelligence through phrenology, this worked well for the recently highly successful middle classes of the civilised nations, who could feel confident of their place at the top of the ladder, far from the common ancestor. However, if there is a top of a ladder, there needs be a bottom, and, at least in Darwin's theory of descent, there needed to be another ladder underneath, or close beside, linked in such a way that those at the bottom of the (human) ladder could clearly have come from the same ancestor as those on the nearby ladder (and generally near the top of that ladder - Darwin did believe in progression, as we also see below). With respect to people with intellectual disability, the ladder in *The Descent* "thus necessitates the further assumption that people with mental retardation are like apes: if there is only one possible scale of difference, then things that are different from the same thing must resemble each other" (Borthwick 2000: 41).

The Expression of Emotions contains one reference to "the *microcephalic* idiot," (my emphasis), described as "so degraded that they never learn to speak," but apparently whose eyes "brighten slightly when they are pleased" (1872: 207). It is these, very degraded, idiots that Darwin appeals most often to in *The Descent*. In the first edition of *The Descent* we have the following (and it is worth quoting at length):

> Arrests of Development.—There is a difference between arrested development and arrested growth, for parts in the former state continue to grow whilst still retaining their early condition. Various monstrosities come under this head; and some, as a cleft palate, are known to be occasionally inherited. It will suffice for our purpose to refer to the arrested brain-development of microcephalous idiots, as described in Vogt's memoir. Their skulls are smaller, and the convolutions of the brain are less complex than in normal men. The frontal sinus, or the projection over the eye-brows, is largely developed, and the jaws are prognathous to an "effrayant" degree; so that *these idiots somewhat resemble the lower types of mankind*. Their intelligence, and most of their mental faculties, are extremely feeble. They cannot acquire the power of speech, and are wholly incapable of prolonged attention, but are much given to imitation. They are strong and remarkably active, continually gamboling and jumping about, and making grimaces. They often ascend stairs on all-fours; and are curiously fond of climbing up furniture or trees. We are thus reminded of the delight shewn by almost all boys in climbing trees; and this again reminds us how lambs and kids, originally alpine animals, delight to frisk on any hillock, however small. *Idiots also resemble the lower animals in some other respects;* thus several cases are recorded of their carefully smelling every mouthful of food before eating it. One idiot is described as often using his mouth in aid of his hands, whilst hunting for lice. They are often filthy in their habits, and have no sense of decency; and several cases have been published of their bodies being remarkably hairy. (*The Descent* 1882: 35-36. My emphasis)

This passage appears relatively early in the argument in the later editions of *The Descent* (it was moved from about a third of the way into the argument in the first edition to a much more prominent one in the second, and subsequent editions). It is lengthy, detailed, and clearly describes idiots as, at best, having only incomplete resemblance to "the lower types of mankind," whom they are like in some physical attributes (their small skull size, the eyebrows and so on). Idiots, here, have a much more fulsome resemblance to "the lower animals," with which they are alike in a greater number of behavioural respects (being active, not speaking, smelling food and so on). With this description, Darwin now has a group who apparently belong at the bottom of the ladder.

Darwin's informant for this very precise, and dramatically presented, information, Karl Vogt (1817-1895), also "concluded that the Negro's intellectual abilities could rise no higher than those of 'the child, the female, and the senile white' " (Quinn 2007: 12): perhaps the reliability of this source is not high. However, microcephalus, or small head, does occur very occasionally, although the link Darwin made is not necessarily correct: children (and adults) with intellectual disability do not necessarily have small heads, and

all people with small heads do not have disability. Microcephaly is thought to often be the result from an interruption in development in the gestational period, at about 3-5 months in-utero age, but, despite nineteenth century beliefs, gestational development does not mimic evolution from 'lower' forms. Microcephalus is, in fact, most commonly linked to abuse of cocaine or alcohol, and has no fixed outcome. Instead 'true' microchephalus – rather than a head whose measurement falls just to one side of the mean - results in a broad range of abilities and disabilities, which certainly cannot be characterised as "continually gamboling and jumping about, and making grimaces".[9]

Given that Darwin does not claim to have seen these children or adults himself, and given that both phrenology and craniometry emphasised the impact of brain size at the time, it could be assumed that he, in ignorance, makes the link that anyone who shows signs of significantly impaired function will necessarily have a small brain; the two simply go together. But, as we have seen in *The Expression of Emotions*, Darwin is well aware that there are idiots who do not need to be described by their head-size. The conjoining of idiocy and physical anomaly, may or may not have been conscious; either way it was not value-free: "[a]s incarnations of the prescribed order, body parts and sites pass judgement," writes Roy Porter (Porter 2001: 35), and disability theorists would agree (see, for example, the work of Rosemarie Garland Thomson 1996; 1997). More specifically, physical blemishes, seen as signs of maternal imagination in the Enlightenment, began, in the early nineteenth century, to "figuratively to metastasize inwardly, where they became interpreted as markings of an inborn immorality" (Curran 1997: 10-11). Porter continues: "[c]orporeality ceaselessly registers, underwrites or undercuts the socio-cultural status quo, supporting (or subverting) hierarchies of power and prestige" (2001: 35-6). Microcephalic idiots, with the physical anomaly of small heads, and intellectual difference, are thoroughly corporeal, and thoroughly supporting of "hierarchies of power and prestige."

Immediately following the above-quoted section, Darwin introduces the concept and topic of reversion:

> Reversion.—...Whenever a structure is arrested in its development, but still continues growing until it closely resembles a corresponding structure in some lower and adult

[9] For descriptions of microencephaly and many other 'conditions' see Batshaw (ed.) 2002.

> member of the same group, we may in one sense consider it as a case of reversion. The lower members in a group give us some idea how the common progenitor of the group was probably constructed; and it is hardly credible that a part arrested at an early phase of embryonic development should be enabled to continue growing so as ultimately to perform its proper function, unless it had acquired this power of continued growth during some earlier state of existence, when the present exceptional or arrested structure was normal. The simple brain of a microcephalous idiot, in as far as it resembles that of an ape, may in this sense be said to offer a case of reversion. (*The Descent* 1882: 36)

Reversion had been supposed in embryology since the latter part of the eighteenth century (Vorzimmer 1963), but what is often neglected in the literature is that Darwin gave it a new twist. Reversion had been used to explain the birth of those with some physical anomaly, but reversion primarily meant, and can still mean, any throwback, such as a blonde child born in an otherwise dark-haired family. Darwin's reversion was not general in this way; it referred to reversion to a previous type, a type that was outside the norm of the (current) species. Examples of reversion were bottom-placed in an hierarchy, and were evidence of a past in which humans were ape-like, primitive, savage. The role that microcephalic idiots have to play is now delineated; they are a remnant example of the "common progenitor."

It is worth noting that when Darwin wrote the *Origin*, no gorilla lived in a zoo in England, although there had been two orangutans (the second died in 1844). The first gorilla to arrive on English shores, in 1858, was already dead, and in a relatively advanced stage of decomposition (Keynes 2001). Photography was not advanced and only immobile objects, or subjects who were able to remain very still could be captured on film or plate. Line drawing and etchings circulated, but in the middle of the nineteenth century very few British people had any real idea of what apes were like, and it is always easier to be fearful of something unknown. Conversely, familiar people, who could well be like apes, were a far more effective intermediate kind than they would be today, when we can demand more exact information.

There are more references in *The Descent* to microcephalic idiots, who snarl, grimace, can also be excessively hairy (1882: 36, 601), the latter projected into a schema in which hairiness is a characteristic humans shed when they were firstly diverging from monkey stock (1882: 156). Idiots have peculiar ears, which Borthwick (2000), in some of the very little work already done in this area, finds to be emblematic of Darwin's

merging of idiots with apes. Quinn (2007), discussing "what Darwin's champions won't mention," of what Darwin says, notes the description of idiots as "filthy in their habits," and as having "no sense of decency" (2007:12). What neither of these authors notes, is that Darwin's use of idiocy, as an instance of reversion, and as a stop-gap for the absence of evidence to link humans with a progenitor common to other animals, is at best an analogy and, for the worse, an inappropriate one. I turn to this below, but first we consider monsters.

Monsters in *The Descent*:

In the *Origin* there are references to "such great monsters as the Mastodon and the more ancient Dinosaurian" (*Origin* 1876: 25), and other extinct monsters. Darwin shows little interest in them, however, as "[w]e often see rudiments of various parts in monsters; but I doubt whether any of these cases throw light on the origin of rudimentary organs in a state of nature ... for the balance of evidence clearly indicates that species under nature do not undergo great and abrupt changes" (1876: 400). In *The Descent*, monsters have a slightly greater role to play. Darwin says nothing about the minds of the people he calls monstrosities, but he has, as quoted above, "[v]arious monstrosities," coming under the heading of "arrested development," and some, like cleft palate, as "known to be occasionally inherited" (1882: 35). Monsters are mentioned as examples of variation (1882: 30), of modifications that were "formerly of importance" (1882: 607), and as particular examples to be studied: we can "understand something about the causes of such occasional modifications, especially through the study of monstrosities" (1882: 608). For Darwin monsters were "abrupt accidents ... not adaptive variations produced and propagated and then sustained in response to conditions in the human environment" (Blumberg 2009: 35). In a theory that required continuity between species, monsters could only be mistakes, as the essence of Darwin's evolution theory was that little change is produced. A monstrosity, by definition, could play no role in species formation, but was relegated to the domestic domain, there to be dismissed by Darwin as "'a mere monstrosity propagated by art' " (E. Richards 1994: 409). Furthermore, "[Darwin] retained the teleological emphasis on perfect adaptation. Variations are produced by chance, but only those that have a 'better chance' of

surviving are propagated," and thus "Darwin's domestication of the monster was one critical element in his long drawn-out negotiation of the highly political problem of packaging and presenting a theory associated with atheism and revolution … to make it scientifically and socially respectable" (E. Richards 1994: 409).

Darwin's information on monstrosities is, like much of the data in *The Descent*, second hand, primarily gleaned from Isidore Geoffroy St Hilaire, the son of Etienne Geoffroy St Hilaire, a major developer of the theories of teratology in the 1820s. Monstrosity was of interest to Darwin's readership: "[a]scertaining the precise type of monstrosity became a focal point of the burgeoning nineteenth-century science of teratology," and it was common, following the work of the Saint-Hilaires, to find that "natural philosophers in Britain and the United States reclassified children as *Homo monstrous* according to various states of arrested embryonic development" (Curran 1997: 11). Similarly, the interest in people with physical anomaly was consistent with the new science of physiognomy, and phrenology. Darwin was thus not only on safe ground in including monsters, he could rely on the established, populist images to support his thesis. Hence, over ensuing generations, "[t]he Darwinians considered monsters, whatever their form and origin, the embodiment of discontinuity, and so they were not to be tolerated. Monsters were to have no privileged place in a continuous world" (Blumberg 2009: 35). Which brings us to the question of what place monsters, and idiots, did have in Darwin's theory of human selection.

The function of idiots and monsters in the theory of natural selection: Missing links:

To convince non-scientists, and even many scientists, that the common progenitor was not a God with an in-mind design, Darwin needed evidence. In the *Origin*, he had relied heavily on analogy, inference and common examples (Grene and Depew 2004). Analogy and logic were not enough in a scientific treatise and "the paucity of intermediate forms in the geological record had been presented as a difficulty" (Grene and Depew 2004: 201). According to Grene and Depew, Darwin gets around this in Chapter 10 of the *Origin*. It seems it would be more accurate to stress that Darwin *tried* to get around the problem in Chapter 10, which is long, defensive, and offers little more than assertions to counteract the lack of fossil record. For example, he asks,

> [w]hy then is not every geological formation and every stratum full of such intermediate links? Geology assuredly does not reveal any such finely-graduated organic chain; and this, perhaps, is the most obvious and serious objection which can be urged against the theory. The explanation lies, as I believe, in the extreme imperfection of the geological record. (*Origin* 1876: 264-265)

Accusing the fossil record of imperfection is a little like saying a librarian has catalogued wrongly, or in a way that a particular student finds difficult: it says nothing about whether the book or journal was there to be catalogued in the first place. It is also peculiar that is it is the intermediate, and not any other, kinds that are consistently missing, but Darwin does not address this issue (and most Darwinians still avoid it). In a more positive frame, he presents evidence for his theory of evolution "from the facts of geographical distribution ... from the 'Mutual Affinities of Organic Beings'... from morphology, from embryology, and from the existence of rudimentary organs" (Grene and Depew 2004: 201). This was in the *Origin*, in relation to non-human animals. In *The Descent* he needed to prove that humans, too, sprang from the common ancestry, and that that ancestry was not noble, but instead unthinking, primitive, nothing more, in terms of intention, than the best-chance response to environmental demands. Darwin again attempts again to dismiss the problem of evidence:

> With respect to the absence of fossil remains, serving to connect man with his ape-like progenitors, no one will lay much stress on this fact who reads Sir C. Lyell's discussion, where he shews that in all the vertebrate classes the discovery of fossil remains has been a very slow and fortuitous process. Nor should it be forgotten that those regions which are the most likely to afford remains connecting man with some extinct ape-like creature, have not as yet been searched by geologists. (*The Descent* 1882: 157)

His dismissal works in part, however, because he has again provided analogical example. Firstly, there is the internal ranking that was so fashionable in the nineteenth century,

> I shall make some few remarks on the probable steps and means by which the several mental and moral faculties of man have been gradually evolved. That such evolution is at least possible, ought not to be denied, for we daily see these faculties developing in every infant; and we may trace a perfect gradation from the mind of an utter idiot, lower than that of an animal low in the scale, to the mind of a Newton. (*The Descent* 1882: 127)

Where Locke sees children as evidence for a developmental processing of information, and ideots as evidence of faltering and diminished capacity in that

processing in the adult, Darwin employs idiots as an analogy for an earlier evolutionary stage in which (potential) humans resembled 'lower' animals. Fortunately for Darwin, the forces already noted - Quetelet and the social physicists, the phrenologists and craniometrists - had been paving the way. Statistics apparently proved links between social competency and anatomical and biological characteristic, and promised that this was part of an objective ranking of humans. People with small heads lacked intelligence, and, as aforenoted, were not fit for more than the most menial of occupations. In this climate, people with idiocy could readily be accepted as a stand-in for the missing link, even if the name was never directly applied to them. Thus, where Locke had felt the need to defend his suggestion that changelings might be categorised outside Man, even at the level of naming of a conglomerate of nominal essences, Darwin showed no sense of fear that popular opinion would be against him citing idiots as ape-like, mindless, (and therefore amoral), marked by traits of an earlier version of human. The references to idiots enabled Darwin's readership to follow the deductive reasoning that finds humans as descendents of a common ancestor who also gave rise to apes.[10]

It can also be noted that, long before he published the *Origin*, Darwin was curious about people with "mental disorders, and looked for clues to the workings of the human mind in what his father told him about [his patients'] breakdowns" (Keynes 2001: 41). Perhaps here, he was influenced by Locke. The *Essay* was a standard requirement for his course at Cambridge (Ridley 2009), and in the late 1830s, in the first flush of excitement at his own ideas, Darwin wrote: "Origin of man now proved. Metaphysic(s) must flourish. He who understands baboon would do more toward metaphysics than Locke" (quoted in Keynes 2001: 45). Whether he was right or not in this assertion, and clearly I think he was not, Darwin was familiar with Locke's *Essay*. He was also competitive (witness the supreme effort of getting the mammoth *Origin* to press to trump Wallace), and the situating of references to people with intellectual disability in the 1882 edition of *The Descent*, in particular, tends to mimic their positions in the *Essay*, perhaps providing some support for Dennett's (1995) contention that Darwin wanted to refute Locke's

[10] This is, of course, what Darwin wanted to prove – that humans and apes had a common progenitor. However, what most people apparently took him to being saying (and still take him to be saying) is that humans descend *from* apes. Did the repeated likening of idiots (and some savages) to apes promote this latter interpretation?

'mind-first' position.

Competitiveness and influence aside, idiots, as described by Darwin's informants, were a better standard of intermediate form than women or savages, both of whom Darwin referred (pejoratively) to, as we see in the following chapter. Ideots were, also, of course, less likely to object. Microcephalic idiots were, given the discourses of the time, the most appropriate of all: they, better than any other, could show the missing link. This, I suggest, explains why Darwin sought so much information about people with intellectual disability, why he was so anxious to ascribe that information to authoritative sources, and why he emphasises, over and over, the biological nature of idiocy. It also explains why, in the 1882 edition of *The Descent*, Darwin moved and expanded his description of idiots.

In this final edition Darwin placed sections on 'Arrests of Development' and Reversion', both of which refer to ideots as their prime example, much closer to the front (from pages 121-2 in 1871, to 35-6 in 1882). He also included more mentions in the index, and amplified the detail included under 'Arrests of Development', adding the following:

> Idiots also resemble the lower animals in some other respects; thus several cases are recorded of their carefully smelling every mouthful of food before eating it. One idiot is described as often using his mouth in aid of his hands, whilst hunting for lice. They are often filthy in their habits, and have no sense of decency; and several cases have been published of their bodies being remarkably hairy. (*The Descent* 1882: 36).

In short, idiots, it is relatively obvious, were a stand-in for the missing links, the gradually evolving intermediate forms. They showed us that we, humans, had once been different; more primitive, less advanced, with behaviour and characteristics like apes and monkeys. Idiots were weak, in both body and mind, and this assured us that, even in a world that lacked a great designer, a teleological purpose, even in a world beset by chance and accident, 'we' would prevail. In fact, we would become progressively more unlike this remnant group; we would not only prevail, but become more perfect.

Idiots and incorrect analogies:

For many decades there has been considerable scholarly discussion on and around Darwin's use of analogy in his theory of evolution (Burnett 2009; Gildenhuys 2004;

Grene and Depew 2004; R. Richards 1998; Ruse 1975; Stepan 1986, for example). Much discussion revolves around whether Darwin relied, too heavily, or not, on an analogy of artificial domestic breeding and natural selection, in either developing his own ideas, and/or convincing his readership of evolution as he saw it. Most authors, therefore, read the *Origin*, and pay little or no attention to *The Descent* or *The Expression*. I am personally not qualified to enter this particular discussion, being neither a scholar of the *Origin*, nor a philosopher of science, versed in the details of scientific argumentation. However, it can be said that it is well-recognised that domestic breeding, rather than evidence of natural selection, was highly influential in the theory of natural selection. It can also be said that various analogies enabled Darwin himself to generalise his laws of selection (Gildenhuys 2004). Certainly, it is evident in reading Darwin's work on humans that analogy, metaphor, and similitude are central to explication, illustration and persuasion, whether or not these are the basic inspirations, or forms of the argument. Particularly where Darwin could not find evidence, he invoked what he saw as, or presented as, analogous events, or examples. The making of idiots as like-apes, and as stand-ins for an absence of fossil remains, is a clear case in point.

The problem is that the attempted homology between idiots and animals 'lower' in the (presumed) scale than humans, specifically apes (*The Descent* 1882: 35-36 as quoted above, in particular), is simply incorrect. Dating from the time that Darwin was writing, clinicians have described people with intellectual disability as lacking in functional or adaptive behaviour or skills, and "[c]urrent definitions of adaptive behaviour are consistent with the early conceptualizations of mental retardation" (Borthwick-Duffy 2007: 279). Borthwick-Duffy quotes Tredgold's well-known, early twentieth century description of

> mental retardation as incomplete mental development 'of such a kind and degree that the individual is incapable of adapting himself to the normal environment of his fellows in such as way as to maintain existence independently of supervision, control, or external support. (in Borthwick-Duffy 2007: 279)

That is, idiots are people who have real difficulty surviving in the day to day world, even in a world with well-developed technological and social supports: idiots are thus more *unlike* apes and baboons than is a young man who leaves home to go to college, and fend for himself.

As well as this, people with intellectual disability - as Locke recognised – neither process information, or behave in any other way, as if they were either permanently childlike, or as if they were monkeys, or parrots, or baboons. The slowness of response that is often characteristic of intellectual disability – and a very significant aspect in assessing intelligence in standard intelligence testing – is, for example, anything but an indicator of child-like, or baboon-like behaviour. Children and baboons are – generally speaking – quick, fleeting. Similarly, while people with idiocy may, as Darwin claimed, sometimes climb stairs on all fours, again this anything but because they resemble an earlier ape-like progenitor: instead it is because some people with intellectual disability generally do not have the dexterity, motor control and planning required to execute the task of climbing stairs. They have nothing like the agility of any ape- or monkey-like progenitor. The motor planning skills of some people with intellectual disability, in fact, contra-Darwin (1882: 36), also suggests that their brains – or at least the areas of their brains that 'control' both gross and fine movement, speed of responses and other adaptive skills – as well as their movements, are extremely unlike those of the dexterous, independent-living monkey.

Furthermore, the similitude between idiots and apes was spurious, as it was made largely on the basis of observed *behaviour*, rather than the anatomical, biological, or (as it would now have to be) genetic, similarity needed to demonstrate that there was a closer link between idiot-humans and an ape-like past, than there was between any other human and an ape-like past. Again, this latter should be stressed – Darwin needed to show that there were characteristics of idiots that were more different from apes, than were characteristics of the average man. Darwin attempted homology of anatomical structure (the jaws, the brows as afore-mentioned), but it was idiots "carefully smelling every mouthful of food before eating it," or using their mouths to aid their hands, being "filthy in their habits, and hav[ing] no sense of decency," (*The Descent* 1882: 36), that bore the burden of proof. Making such similarities through behavioural traits, as Stepan (1986) demonstrates with respect to the metaphorical overlap of women and non-whites in Victorian England, takes culturally loaded beliefs about behaviour – such as the belief that the poor were shiftless, the 'lower' humans had no sense of decency – and associates them with another group in a way that appears natural: "in the metaphors and

analogies joining women and the lower races, the scientist was led to "see" points of similarity that before had gone unnoticed. ... The question is, what kind of "likeness" was involved?" (1986: 264). Stepan goes on: "in their 'similarity-creating' capacity, metaphors involve the scientist in a selection of those aspects of reality that are compatible with the metaphor" (1986: 272). Darwin's evidence from idiots is unreliable; it ignores the reality of idiots (who are not ape-like), produces points of similarity that suit the metaphorical relation (being filthy, for example), but which are questionable in their relation to biology, and to the all important heredity: smelling food, for example, is just as likely to be a behaviour learned in a large institution such as that run by Dr Down, as it is to be an indicator on an heredity adaptation that some humans still show, while others don't.[11]

Was Darwin at least correct in assuming that idiots were poorly adapted creatures, destined to die out? There are clear refutations for such a proposition, which I will turn to below, but even if the 'poor adaptation' tag were to be allowed, it would not help Darwin's analogy, nor would it add any other evidence in support of natural selection. As has been pointed out by a number of authors, adaptations are an outcome of selection, not an explanation of evolution (see Campbell 1983: 59-65 for discussion). The argument for poor adaptation (or not) also assumes that "[e]ach character trait variation can be assessed relative to other variations present in a given environment and valued as either advantageous, neutral, or disadvantageous," as Caplan (1979: 347) points out. The assessment of advantageous, or not, is further dependent, although Caplan does not note this, on time, point of view, and value. It is even further dependent on the questionable assumption that there are no traits that are superfluous to, greater than, or lie somewhere outside the set of adaptive ones (see Ruse 1972 for discussion). And, above all, it is dependent on the assumption that all traits are inherited. Intellectual disability, as I note again in the following chapter, is not necessarily inherited at all.[12]

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[11] Of course, wine and spirits are also smelled by the connoisseur, raising some interesting questions about Darwin's selective descriptions.

[12] This is information that is readily accessible: see, for example, the AAMR (American Association of Mental Retardation) discussion posted on http://specialed.freeyellow.com/YAdaptUse.html, or the more recent online *Encyclopedia of Mental Disorders* article, available at http://www.minddisorders.com/Kau-Nu/Mental-retardation.html

Putting the dubious example of idiots into this very dubious mix would prove very little.

Darwin was a progressivist, as I discuss in more detail below. He thought humans would improve. Whether or not he was right in this, he was simply wrong in invoking idiocy as a missing link, as a demonstration of a previous less advanced human. His inaccuracy, however, has remained unchallenged and we live, today, with the limited view of humanness that his elision of idiots, among others, produced. More of that in the next chapter.

Chapter conclusion: a Darwinian, dying-at-the-edges, species:

Both Locke and Darwin recognise that species, as we know them, are not fixed, but they come to this conclusion through very different approaches. For Locke there may well be a real constitution, an underlying set of similarities that make a species, but humans can only know what is on the surface. We have restricted observation and information; we can see what we see, but what this is may vary from one perceiving-and-categorising human to another, between cultures, and over time. Darwin, on other hand, was arguing for a transmutation of biological species, which logically necessitated intermediate forms at the transforming margins. Arguments for, and representations of, such margins, were already well set by the social physics of Darwin's time. People had been measured in everything from chest sizes to (apparent) moral propensities, and those who were found wanting already placed at the tapering tail of the bell-shaped graph, that had stemmed from the law of error. Being on the (left) tail of the graph for one characteristic (such as chest or head size) meant one was destined to be there in almost all characteristics (such as moral sense or intelligence). In this way idiots were conveniently placed to merge with the graph below, be that graph of apes, chimpanzees or an unknown common progenitor. Idiots helped solve the problem of (lack of) evidence of transmutation.

Foucault (1970) has asked:

> How, for example, are we to recognize that nature, starting from a primitive prototype, has never ceased to work towards the provisionally terminal form that is man? By the fact that it has abandoned on the way thousands of forms that provide us with a picture of the rudimentary model. How many fossils are there, for man's ear, or skull, or sexual parts, like so many plaster statues, fashioned one day and dropped the next in favour of a more perfected form? ... Thus, against the background of the

> continuum, the monster provides an account, as though in caricature, of the genesis of differences, and the fossil recalls, in the uncertainty of its resemblances, the first buddings of identity. (Foucault 1970: 156-157)

Darwin, again as I demonstrate in more detail below, preferred monsters (those with physical anomaly) as examples of the discontinuous, the mistake, the abandoned. However, he invoked idiots (whom Foucault may well think of under the generic of monster), as a link with the past, and a contrast with the present, to show that there are indeed progressive improvements brought about by natural selection. He invokes idiots to show what we used to be like. Difference, identity, and above all improvement, are written on the body, and to be found in the behaviour. Atavism, as we see in the following chapter here, had a very significant explanatory power.

To return to a question posed in the introduction to this thesis: what did Darwin do differently from Locke? One answer is that he was simply born in a different time. When Locke was writing, human beings were divided by furiously defended social hierarchies, but not divided along the lines of individual capacity or characteristic in the way they were by the time Darwin was a middle-aged man writing up the findings from his great youthful adventure on the *Beagle*. Darwin inherited Enlightenment thinking – he was particularly influenced by Hume (Radick 2009) - and he lived through the time when social statistics, heavily developed, pushed and propagated by his cousin, Galton, splashed onto the analytical and explanatory scene: his theory of natural selection, Radick has argued "was no gift of sheer, sublime, solitary genius, but in several key respects a product of Victorian culture" (2009: 151).

Darwin also actively did something rather different from Locke, something rather wicked: he cheated. He did not have the evidence he needed, and he turned to best available, most malleable, and most convincing metaphors. He identified the least powerful groups of human beings – not only idiots, but, as I show in the next chapter, non-white groups, women, the physically disabled – and used them as examples of what might, or, in his opinion should, happen, if natural selection were indeed the mechanism for evolutionary change. In this way, idiots show us what we used to be like, when we were nearer the common progenitor: they are remnants of a long lost past. The trouble was twofold: firstly, none of this was actually evidence. It was, at best, analogy. Secondly, it was simply incorrect. Idiots do not resemble apes, baboons, or any other

animal that might be thought to link us to a common ancestor.

Darwin's theory of natural selection by adaptation was actually antithetical to linear progress; if the requirements changed, a different - not more 'advanced' on the old - adaptation would be required: those Darwin regarded as civilised were as precarious, and as linked to the past, as any other living human. But idiots worked for him, because he could, if he pared back the information, selected the right pieces, make them seem to be like those iconic evolutionary creatures, apes. It was a false likeness – idiots would most definitely not survive in the jungle (where a civilised man might) – but a glorious case of similitude. Glorious in that it met the Victorians' need to show themselves as advancing, without the fear or favour of class, and family background, as well as the Enlightenment need for a noble compassion, at the same time as it avoided making the simile with a group that would have the power to object. But, we need to remember, it was not evidence.

Furthermore, it was all based on assumptions. Darwin did not know any more than any one else what earlier humans would have been like, particularly not at the behavioural level that he relied so heavily on in his descriptions of idiots. Nor did he know that any existing humans were more, or less, related to any earlier ancestor than any other. Darwin's examples were choices, based on social values. In fact, it is just as reasonable to suggest a similitude between the most fleet of humans, or those with the most ability to perform high-rope, and apes, as it is to compare the two groups on the basis of an assumed intellectual capacity.

Psychiatrist and highly respected author, Adam Phillips (2000), suggests that in "Darwin's view, to be in nature – not, that is to say, divinely endowed: not believing there is anywhere else to be – is to be in a war dominated by scarcity of resources and potential extinction" (Phillips 2000: 8). No longer God's children, Darwin made sure people with intellectual disability lost the war, and headed, as quickly as possible, toward extinction. He thus made sure that, even if, at a stretch of compassion, idiots might just be considered within the realm of being human, it was in everyone's best interests that they fell off that particular graph.

Chapter 8

Darwin's very limited Man

Darwin's theory of natural selection, or descent with modification, excised people with intellectual and (severe) physical disability from those who would, or even could, be selected for continuation of the species. In this final chapter I argue the case for this claim. Firstly, however, I demonstrate that these groups were not the only ones Darwin presented as unsuccessful. It is not without precedent to note Darwin's belief in the inferiority of, for example, women. What is novel here is the recognition that this has both theoretical and practical implications for humanness, in contexts other than the obvious one of active eugenics. In this chapter, I argue that Darwin's formulation of Man has returned us to a single, adult male, as the representative for all (successful) humans: effectively Darwin's preferred Man is Locke's abstract, and limited, Person. Secondly, I argue that Darwin's Man is thoroughly biological, essentialist, and inextricably tied with both human origin and human future. He is also civilised. This, biological, civilised male effectively excludes all other humans from being part of the 'stock' from which successfully adapted humans might be taken or develop. This biological, civilized man is effectively an eugenic man, informing our thinking even when the theories and policies of eugenics are discarded. This returns us to the advantages of Locke's much broader Man, or humankind, an issue addressed in the Conclusion following.

Darwin's Man:

It is virtually impossible to think of humans, or humanness, today without a filtering through evolutionary theory, and Darwin's theory in particular: "[n]o thinker did more to shape modern consciousness than Charles Darwin. ... Darwin alone is recognized as having altered forever how we humans perceive our station in the vast unfolding of time" (Quinn 2007: 8). Or as Bowler put it: "[w]hatever the success of evolution theory in science, the cultural phase of the Darwinian revolution has not yet reached its conclusion ... evolutionary theory so directly affects our views on human nature and the relationship between humans and the natural world" (Bowler 2003: 2).

Darwin was, from his choice of the title for the *Origin* on, getting at something that at least appeared to be more fundamental than any inquiry into human understanding, or even human nature; he was delving where only God had previously been thought to go, into the very beginnings of our being. The concept of human pulled out from his investigations and ruminations, although in terms of evidence, little more

than a rabbit out of a hat, was seemingly scientifically proven to be the best possible adaptation (so far). This Man, and it was a he, was also frightening influential.

Theoretically speaking, in natural selection, not only should no human be more important than another, no species is more important than another: it is a theory of unthinking, non-valued, biological, origin. However, Darwin's articulation of the theory contains innumerable, repeated, emphatic descriptions of animals or people as 'lower' or 'higher,' forming a strongly promoted hierarchy:

> Man in the rudest state in which he now exists is the most dominant animal that has ever appeared on this earth. He has spread more widely than any other highly organised form: and all others have yielded before him. He manifestly owes this immense superiority to his intellectual faculties, to his social habits, which lead him to aid and defend his fellows, and to his corporeal structure. The supreme importance of these characters has been proved by the final arbitrament of the battle for life. (*The Descent* 1882: 48)

Mankind is a winner, manifestly superior to the 'lower animals', the latter a term that appears, on average, every four pages in *The Descent* (1882).

However, not all men are necessarily included in the superior grouping. As well as idiots and monsters, *The Descent* and *The Expression of Emotions*, are inhabited by women, savages, children, and people with mental illness. Where did these groups fit? Were they to be considered among the better adapted humans, ready and able to pass their advantages on to the ensuing generations: could Darwin's Man be female, be a child, be old, change over her/his lifetime, be culturally diverse? We need to ask these questions, as "simply because Darwin was the culmination, he shaped men's thinking about evolution and man's relation to animals. He rephrased, as no one before him, what it meant to be human" (Degler 1992: 6). Who, then, is Darwin's rephrased human?

Is Darwin's Man ever a woman?

Huxley, Darwin's aforementioned publicist and champion, accorded both reduced brain size and convolutions to women, thus, in the era of craniometry, conferring on them significant signs of inferiority (Bowler 2003). More generally, in the nineteenth century, "[e]specially significant for the analogical science of human difference and similarity were the systematic study and measurement of the human skull" (Stepan

1986: 266). This had implications for both women and so-called savages, and for the ascription of (assumed) characteristics of one to the other, as we see below. In *The Descent*, Darwin concurred with popular science: "the female … in the formation of her skull, is said to be intermediate between the child and the man" (*The Descent* 1882: 557). Darwin mentions women far more frequently than Locke, but in doing so, excavates a much deeper trough between male and female members of the species. That this is the case is not unknown or unaired: Hubbard (1983), and highly regarded Darwin scholar, Michael Ruse (1987), have both quoted Darwin's words on women (with Ruse, in this instance, responding to, and to a large extent, supporting Hubbard's analysis), as has Deutscher (2004). On the other hand, as Quinn (2007) argues, Darwin's descriptions and use of women, savages, and idiots, are far more often swept to the side, regarded politely as products of his time, irrelevant in the light of his grand theory. However, what Darwin said has not gone away; it is there, in the background, of almost all studies today of human biology and nature. I quote Darwin below; his words should not be ignored.

According to Darwin, women have greater "powers of intuition, of rapid perception, and perhaps of imitation … but some, at least, of these faculties are characteristics of the lower races, and therefore of a past and lower state of civilization" (*The Descent* 1882: 563). Although this distinction between men and women is, as Darwin sees it, clear, he notes that he is "aware that some writers doubt whether there is any such inherent difference" (1882: 563), and therefore attempts to provide evidence. Man's superiority is "shewn by man's attaining to a higher eminence," so that,

> [i]f two lists were made of the most eminent men and women in poetry, painting, sculpture, music (inclusive both of composition and performance), history, science, and philosophy, with half-a-dozen names under each subject, the two lists would not bear comparison. (*The Descent* 1882: 564)

And, using the then fashionable statistical average as plotted on a graph, Darwin brings in the work of his cousin, Francis Galton:

> We may also infer, from the law of the deviation from averages, so well illustrated by Mr. Galton, in his work on 'Hereditary Genius,' that if men are capable of a decided pre-eminence over women in many subjects, the average of mental power in man must be above that of woman. (*The Descent* 1882: 564)

Analogy, again, is taken as proof, in Darwin's view of continuity of species: "[n]o

one disputes that the bull differs in disposition from the cow, the wild-boar from the sow, the stallion from the mare, and, as is well known to the keepers of menageries, the males of the larger apes from the females" (1882: 563). Women, in Darwin's formulation, are not only inferior in mental power; they are less powerful in body, less creative: Darwin assumed "men were as intellectually superior to women as white people were to black ones" (Endersby 2009: 88).

For Darwin, sexual selection helped explain how different races came about: the stronger and more attractive men from one group would become 'chiefs', and have the first selection of the women. They would thus reproduce with the healthiest and most attractive women. Darwin also thought that attractiveness was culturally relative: hence, an Asian 'chief' would chose differently from an Amerindian, and over generations, initial differences – in both appearance and intellect - would become more pronounced. "Male ancestors of humans would have had to compete successfully with rival males," and "[a]s a result, men had inevitably become more intelligent and stronger than women" (Endersby 2009: 88).

What authors such as Endersby and Ruse do not note is that Darwin took his thoughts about the inferiority of women a step further than his Victorian counterparts: women were not only inferior, they, like idiots, instanced reversion:

> Now in women, anomalous cases are not very infrequent, in which the mature uterus is furnished with cornua, or is partially divided into two organs; and such cases, according to Owen, repeat "the grade of concentrative development," attained by certain rodents ... No one will pretend that so perfect a structure as the abnormal double uterus in woman could be the result of mere chance. But the principle of reversion, by which a long-lost structure is called back into existence, might serve as the guide for its full development, even after the lapse of an enormous interval of time. (*The Descent* 1882: 38-9)

Darwin produces a metaphorical relation of woman to rodents, and, by implication and juxtaposition with other passages about reversion, to people with intellectual disability. He makes woman a biological remnant, connecting (mindless) woman with a very distant past.[1] He was able to do this in part because there was already a discourse, which

[1] Interestingly, this description connects Darwin's women with another distant past. Aristotle wrote extensively on women, and in particular on their wombs. He did not write about women's minds, rights, or involvement in the public sphere. Women have no mention in the *Poetics*, a very few in the *Nicomachaen Ethics*, of which the following is one: "I mean (A) the brutish

Darwin promoted and made seem an imperative for the species survival, that linked women and savages in the nineteenth century. Stepan (1986) suggests that,

> [w]ithout the metaphor linking women and race, for example, many of the data on women's bodies (length of limbs, width of pelvis, shape of skull, weight or structure of brain) would have lost their significance as signs of inferiority and would not have been gathered, recorded, and interpreted. (Stepan 1986: 264)

Reversion, the linking of women with savages who, as we see below, Darwin also excised from best-adapted Man, promoted anatomy, biology, and (women's inferior) intellect as interdependent. With the superiority of humans being associated with intellectual powers and civilised habits, woman, with her smaller brain, with a wrongly structured uterus, has little to recommend her. She may be human, but whether she is a successful human is clearly, for Darwin, debatable.

Could Darwin's Man, like Locke's human, be a child, an older person?

The reliance, from the beginning of the *Origin*, on analogies between domestic or artificial and natural selection has already been noted. Blumberg (2009) points out that, in this, "Darwin discusses how the breeders of ... domesticated animals ... mate their animals based *solely on the characteristics or traits that are evident in adults*" (2009: 32. My emphasis). Certainly, despite the fact that, logically, if reproduction is to occur, it is those characteristics of children that enable them to survive to adulthood that are key, Darwin shows little interest in children, except in their numbers, as progeny – see for example, the discussion of the numbers of children born to Canadian, Tasmania and New Zealand aboriginal peoples in *The Descent* (1882: 183-188). On the odd occasion that characteristics of children are noted, they, too, tend to exemplify links with the lower animals. For example, some children are described as often having long hairs on their backs (1882: 19-20), and another of Darwin's sources, "Canestrini, concludes,

> that some ancient progenitor of man must have had this [malar] bone normally divided into two portions, which afterwards became fused together. In man the frontal bone consists of a single piece, but in the embryo, and in children, and in almost all

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states, as in the case of the female who, they say, would rip up women with child and eat the foetus" (Book 7, Section 5, from http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.mb.txt:1994-2000).

> the lower mammals, it consists of two pieces separated by a distinct suture. (*The Descent* 1882: 39)

Man, who in Darwin's theory should not be an adult male, but rather the generic human, has a fused bone, while children, clearly not-Man, resemble lower animals. Similarly, a resemblance to monkeys can be found, according to another of Darwin's authorities, Eschricht, "in our children," whence the "limit between the hairy scalp and the naked forehead is sometimes not well defined; so that here we seem to have a trifling case of reversion to a progenitor, in whom the forehead had not as yet become quite naked" (1882: 151). Children are also associated with women, and with the mores characteristic of savages: "Most savages are utterly indifferent to the sufferings of strangers, or even delight in witnessing them. It is known that the women and children of the North-American Indians aided in torturing their enemies" (1882: 117-118).

Interestingly, although, for Darwin, children represent stages of earlier evolutionary development, older people are rarely, if ever, cases of returning to ancestral type. As we see below, Darwin assumes that older men do not weep or blush as do older women; outside this, and the employment of photographs of older men, whose skin allows the underlying muscular structure to be better observed than in young men, older people make only a few appearances in the theory of human evolution. Degeneration, in Darwin's theory, is confined to the ill-adapted, rather than associated with age.

Could Darwin's Man have a disability?

People with idiocy have a role in demonstrating aspects of evolutionary theory. On the other hand, in *The Descent*, Darwin shows little interest in sensory impairments. He uses the example of 'deaf-mutes' to (presumably) refute Locke's assertion that we are not born with any innate ideas, saying,

> [a]s far as concerns infants of from ten to eleven months old, and deaf-mutes, it seems to me incredible, that they should be able to connect certain sounds with certain general ideas as quickly as they do, unless such ideas were already formed in their minds. (*The Descent* 1882: 89).

He also refers once in *The Descent* to deaf and blind scholar, Laura Bridgman,[2] to

[2] Bridgman was a woman with both vision and hearing impairment. She became something of a celebratory when taught to read and write (by Samuel Gridley Howe). Her notoriety was much greater after Charles Dickens (1842) visited her and wrote about her in *American Notes*.

illustrate his belief that complex thoughts need some form of language. In fact, blindness seems to disturb Darwin: 'blind' is a pejorative adjective in *The Descent*. There is "blind instinctive impulse" (1882: 611) and "blind chance" (1882: 613), while acting as if they were deaf and blind can lead birds to being shot (1882: 364). On other hand some birds (presumably not blind) are known to look after blind members of their group (1882: 101-2).

Mental illness garnered even less regard in *The Descent*, both in frequency and value:

> In regard to the moral qualities, some elimination of the worst dispositions is always in progress even in the most civilised nations. Malefactors are executed, or imprisoned for long periods, so that they cannot freely transmit their bad qualities. Melancholic and insane persons are confined, or commit suicide. (*The Descent* 1882: 137)

However, both blindness and insanity are repeatedly called upon in *The Expression of Emotions*. In the explication of the book's method, Darwin tells his readers that it occurred to him that "the insane ought to be studied, as they are liable to the strongest passions, and give uncontrolled vent to them" (1872: 13). The aim of *The Expression*, as aforenoted, was to establish that the musculature of emotions was not specific to humankind, but was derived from "other and lower forms" (1872: 19). To demonstrate the continuity of animals and humans was not easy, and Darwin brought together information from a variety of sources, including from missionaries, protectors of aborigines, various doctors, and his observations of "the expression of the several passions in some of the commoner animals," the latter of which he believed to be "of paramount importance" (1872: 17). He also referred to surveys he undertook of responses to photographs, and his own interpretation of art, in the hope that,

> some of the doubts and difficulties have ... been cleared away by the observation of infants,—of the insane,—of the different races of man,—of works of art,—and lastly, of the facial muscles under the action of galvanism, as effected by Dr. Duchenne (*The Expression* 1872: 18)

The study of the insane was not direct observation: Darwin tells the reader that he had "no opportunity of doing this, so ... applied to Dr. Maudsley, and received from him an introduction to Dr. J. Crichton Browne, who has charge of an immense asylum near Wakefield" (1872: 14). On the basis of reported observations from Dr Maudsley,

himself a firm believer that idiocy and insanity could not be remediated, and that there was a link between such disabilities and moral failings (Jackson 2000), the behaviour of those with insanity became emphatic evidence of primitive, uncontrolled emotional expression, and thus of the originary link between them, the lower animals, and indeed, children, and savages. "Our early progenitors," for example, "when enraged, would probably have exposed their teeth more freely than does man, even when giving full vent to his rage, as with the insane" (1872: 363). Similarly, Dr. Browne reported that,

> the bristling of the hair which is so common in the insane, is not always associated with terror ... it is during their paroxysms of violence that the bristling is most observable. The fact of the hair becoming erect under the influence both of rage and fear agrees perfectly with what we have seen in the lower animals. (*The Expression* 1872: 295-296)

The 'deaf and dumb' are also linked with savages in *The Expression*, forming a group far apart from the civilised. There are, for example, "conventional signs which are not innate, such as those used by the deaf and dumb and by savages" (1872: 61). Evidence from those with blindness also occurs more frequently: the many examples of people who are born blind, but exhibit blushing and frowning, come together in the claim that "[t]he inheritance of most of our expressive actions explains the fact that those born blind display them" (1872: 352). This is not because people who are blind are compared with average or civilised men, but rather because they are associated with those *The Descent* has already established as among the more primitive:

> Women blush much more than men. It is rare to see an old man, but not nearly so rare to see an old woman blushing. The blind do not escape. Laura Bridgman, born in this condition, as well as completely deaf, blushes. The Rev. R. H. Blair, Principal of the Worcester College, informs me that three children born blind, out of seven or eight then in the Asylum, are great blushers. (*The Expression* 1872: 311-312)

Such examples, taken from the insane, from aborigines, from those with sensory impairment, as well as that we have already seen taken from those with intellectual impairment, serve the purpose of providing evidence of cross-species continuity in emotions, and of their physical expression in terms of facial movement and gesture. This continuity pertains between humans, domestic animals (Darwin draws heavily on dogs and cats for evidence), and more exotic species. The question is, why did Darwin attend almost obsessively to these groups; surely he could have called on expressions in

everyday, adult males (or even females), to do the same, if the continuity is so strong? His need, however, was to show that this similarity was of itself evidence that humans have evolved from an ancestor who was, at least in the distant past, in common with other species. Civilised men – those with whom, in *The Descent* and *The Expression*, he constantly compares savages and the more 'barbaric' people - were at the top of the ladder, evidence that adaptation, modification and selection was working. Savages, the deaf and dumb, have an apparently 'natural' inferiority: they 'proved' a link with other species.

Could Darwin's Man be black?

Darwin has recently been lauded for his anti-slavery positions (Desmond & Moore 2009). I wonder, however, how closely modern writers have studied Darwin's texts on human evolution. For, if women were inferior to men, and imbeciles low on the unspecified, but apparently absolute, scale, nonwhite people were, along with microcephalic idiots, quite possibly off the graph. With few exceptions, non-Europeans were savages who could also fill the need to show the not-quite human.

Savages, like idiots, and some women, have vestigial characteristics: "[w]ith some savages, however, the foot has not altogether lost its prehensile power, as shewn by their manner of climbing trees" (*The Descent* 1882: 52). They also have different dental and nasal structures than 'civilised' men (1882: 20, 34).[3] Their jaws differ, as do the muscles attached to them (1882: 197). However, some savages are apparently not as different from the working classes as they are from civilised men:

> It is asserted that the hands of English labourers are at birth larger than those of the gentry. From the correlation which exists, at least in some cases, between the development of the extremities and of the jaws, it is possible that in those classes

[3] Darwin, however, had to explain away the problem that some savages have heads larger than their 'civilised' counterparts: Professor Broca is called on to assert:

> that in civilised nations, the average capacity of the skull must be lowered by the preservation of a considerable number of individuals, weak in mind and body, who would have been promptly eliminated in the savage state. On the other hand, with savages, the average includes only the more capable individuals, who have been able to survive under extremely hard conditions of life. Broca thus explains the otherwise inexplicable fact, that the mean capacity of the skull of the ancient Troglodytes of Lozère is greater than that of modern Frenchmen (*The Descent* 1882: 55 f.81)

> which do not labour much with their hands and feet, the jaws would be reduced in size from this cause. That they are generally smaller in refined and civilised men than in hard-working men or savages, is certain. But with savages, as Mr. Herbert Spencer has remarked, the greater use of the jaws in chewing coarse, uncooked food, would act in a direct manner on the masticatory muscles, and on the bones to which they are attached. (*The Descent* 1882: 33)

Not only do savages have different physical characteristics, they also have different mores. Although, he notes that "[n]o tribe could hold together if murder, robbery, treachery, &c., were common," Darwin immediately tells the reader that not only do some 'tribes' find it honourable to scalp or decapitate, but also,

> [t]he murder of infants has prevailed on the largest scale throughout the world, and has met with no reproach. ... Suicide during former times was not generally considered as a crime, but rather, from the courage displayed, as an honourable act; and it is still practised by some semi-civilised and savage nations without reproach. ... It has been recorded that an Indian Thug conscientiously regretted that he had not robbed and strangled as many travellers as did his father before him. In a rude state of civilisation the robbery of strangers is, indeed, generally considered as honourable. (*The Descent* 1882: 117)

Darwin had a personal stake in such impressions, claiming at the end of *The Descent* "to prefer descent from the heroic monkey that risked its own life to save its keeper's ... as 'from a savage who delights to torture his enemies, offers up bloody sacrifices, practices infanticide' " (as quoted in Paul 2009: 224). Deutscher (2004), too, quotes from the end of *The Descent*, and notes that Darwin's claim of preference for descent from an heroic monkey, rather than from the savage, "ricocheted through the popular cartoonists of the day;" the claim was controversial, she says, but popular in that Darwin was arguing "that there was no real hardship from the perspective of European arrogance in understanding human descent in these terms" (2004: 39). Deutscher suggests that Darwin indeed "profits from the most brutal and exaggerated stereotypes of other peoples deemed primitive, to rhetorically juxtapose descent shared with monkeys as, by contrast, an appealing prospect" (2004: 39).

Certainly, it was the commonly-assumed underdeveloped state of savages (Bowler 2003), that explained their behaviour, and explained the apparent fact that, although many of their emotional expressions were similar to those of civilised men, such expressions were often nearer to a non-human past than was ever the case with

Europeans. Darwin makes this point, repeatedly, in *The Expression of Emotions*. For example:

> With the gorilla, the lower lip is said to be capable of great elongation. If then our semi-human progenitors protruded their lips when sulky or a little angered ... it is not an anomalous, though a curious fact, that our children should exhibit ... a trace of the same expression. ... For it is not at all unusual for animals to retain, more or less perfectly, during early youth, and subsequently to lose, characters which were aboriginally possessed by their adult progenitors, and which are still retained by distinct species, their near relations.
>
> Nor is it an anomalous fact that the children of savages should exhibit a stronger tendency to protrude their lips, when sulky, than the children of civilized Europeans; for the essence of savagery seems to consist in the retention of a primordial condition, and this occasionally holds good even with bodily peculiarities. (*The Expression* 1872: 234-235)

In *The Descent*, non-Europeans are often associated with people with impairment, as we saw above. The examples of this, and of non-Europeans's moral incapacity, are far too numerous to mention individually: in *The Descent* (1882) the reader is referred to, in particular, Chapters 3, 5, 7, 20, and 21. References to savages in *The Expression* are more scattered, although they keep to the pattern of providing evidence of hereditary, biological links to a distant past. As example, "[w]ith savages, the sphincter muscles are often relaxed, just as may be observed in much frightened dogs, and as I have seen with monkeys when terrified by being caught" (1872: 295). However, it is the general positioning of nonwhites, the functions Darwin calls on them to serve, that are of interest here. Non-whites, as I show below, are remarkably alike with idiots, and both are, in Darwin's eyes, damned to oblivion.

Negative selection: the function of people with (supposedly) vestigial characteristics.

Long before he wrote the *Origin*, Darwin was faced with a problem: if descent from a common progenitor were to make sense, adaptations had to be passed on. Thus, he had, firstly, to justify his belief in natural selection in the face of the commonly accepted principle of blending inheritance (Vorzimmer 1963), and, secondly, to explain the mechanism of how we – the civilised humans reading his work, for example – arose through a series of tiny, positive modifications or adaptations that took, or branched, us away from the lower types. It is in Darwin's solving of these problems, that the careful

positioning of idiots, monsters, and some of the savages who appear in *The Descent*, and *The Expression* truly comes into its own.

Natural scientists of various persuasions in the late eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries were, as already noted, fascinated with monsters and embryology. Nyhart (2009) quotes from Darwin's correspondence to establish that Darwin placed great weight on this study, and notes that in "the *Origin* Darwin knitted together the relations of embryology to classification and morphology ... and to variation, inheritance and selection ... as he sought to recast the traditional problems of morphology in his own terms" (2009: 196). For Darwin, "[m]orphology, embryology, and rudimentary organs all offer evidence that the natural system is genealogical" (2009: 197)l, and the similarities among embryos across different species were indicative of common descent. In fact they were among the best evidence he had: "[w]e have no written pedigrees ... we have to make out community of descent by resemblances of any kind" (Darwin 1859, quoted in Nyhart 2009: 199-200). In support of his use of embryology and arrested development as an explanatory device, Darwin tells us that Dr Maudsley also had noted,

> that as every human brain passes, in the course of its development, through the same stages as those occurring in the lower vertebrate animals, and as the brain of an idiot is in an arrested condition, we may presume that it 'will manifest its most primitive functions, and no higher functions.' (*The Expression* 1872: 246)

Neither Maudsley nor Darwin were alone in these assumptions about idiots, and about the brain. Langdon Down, for example, from whom, as aforenoted, we get the common name for Trisomy 21 (Down Syndrome), was influenced by the theory of Robert Chambers (1802-1871), co-founder of Chambers publishing. Chambers put forward a theory of human development in which he described the human brain as passing from a fish-brain, through a reptile, and so on until becoming human: "There is more than this, for after completing the animal transformation, it passes through the characters in which it appears, in the Negro, Malay, American, and Mongolian nations and finally is Caucasian" (Chambers, quoted in Stubblefield 2007: 171). Following Chambers, Down "discussed white feebleminded children who, 'from some deteriorating influence' had been 'removed into another ethnic type' and therefore resembled so-called Negro, Malay, North American Indian, or Mongolian people"

(Stubblefield 2007: 170-171). Darwin invoked Langdon Down regularly, and it is clear that he took such developmental analogies as facts. That is; he thought that the links, changes, progression from one species to another, could be seen in the embryological development of an individual who is a representative of a 'higher' species. Such thinking makes the embryo a stand-in for species development, and the human embryo, or foetus as it approaches birth, a demonstration of species superiority. The problem is that what we have in Darwin's (and Maudsley's) argument is the *metaphor* that had prevailed well into the eighteenth century – that of heredity with the inheritance of property - being replaced by the *metaphor* of the development of the individual body: the human embryo does not actually go through fish, reptile, and 'lower' human phases as it develops in the female uterus.

Nor was embryology enough evidence for natural selection. It helped to show – albeit in part by erroneous metaphor – that neither the Christian God, or any other form of designer, had made us complete and discrete. We were not homunculi in utero; instead, the development of primitive to sophisticated occured in each and every embryo. But this did not explain how adaptations or improvements were passed on. This was an essential problem to address as, without knowledge of genes and the like, the notion of blending in inheritance was "axiomatic" in the eighteenth, and for much of the nineteenth, centuries (Vorzimmer 1963: 373). Blending, based on common observation, presumed offspring to be a mixture of the two parents, sometimes resulting in a conglomeration, sometimes an equal blend of two distinct parental characteristics (large and small becomes medium sized, red haired and brown becomes ginger, and so on). This could lead to swamping: any change had little chance of maintaining itself as it blended with another in reproduction. This posed a significant problem for Darwin: even if he could show there had been earlier adaptations (idiots and monsters, savages), any *successful* adaptation – given slow, incremental change - would quickly disappear as the adapted individual bred back into the larger group. He came up with a clever solution. Vorzimmer (1963), in a highly regarded article, describes this response:

> Darwin solved the blending difficulties along two separate but importantly related lines. First by clearly delimiting his meaning of variation to exclude anything except 'individual differences' he had gained in terms of number and inheritability while eliminating the difficulties which pursued saltations. ... Darwin's second important

> change was with regard to the negative side of selection. ... Darwin in the *Origin* explores the full negative power of selection. He had given some clue in the 1844 essay when, noting that selection would preserve the more fleet predators, he added: 'The less fleet ones would be rigidly destroyed'. It was this hint (for he never explained how or why) of a form of rigid destruction that Darwin was to expand in the *Origin*. (Vorzimmer 1963: 378)

The saltations that Vorzimmer referred to were unusual and generally large differences in physical type, observed in aborted foetuses and stillbirths, and often referred to as monsters. In the late eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries, consistent with the position of wonders in the pre- and early modern periods, these had been viewed necessarily as failures, but as sudden leaps that could sometimes herald positive change. Darwin re-imagined monsters, as we saw in Chapter 7 above, as accidental cases of arrested development; failures or mistakes that showed how humans had evolved from lower animals; in his eyes there was nothing potentially wondrous, no harbinger of the future, nothing even useful in them. He refused and defused the theory of sudden, significant change. But he still had to explain how his own, theorised, tiny changes were accumulated and continued, given a tiny change would be in a big pot (or population), and would be very quickly swamped (not only numerically, but in the process of breeding). Galton had shown that, statistically, the bell curve of a given character – height, for example – remained the same over succeeding generations. Experiments with peas showed the same result. Unless the pot were made smaller, or, in some way, rapidly filled with ever-better outcomes, thus shifting the mean (of characteristics such as intelligence) to the right (quite possibly with all the theological and political implications of 'rightness'), little would change.

Vorzimmer was concerned to show that Darwin had thought through the problem of blending inheritance well before Fleeming Jenkin attacked him on this issue in 1867. Jenkin, a Scottish engineer, was able to convince many that the "demonstration of the existence of natural selection ... required not only clarification of the problem of heredity, but the development of a quantitative approach to ... variation, advantage, rate of survival, rate of reproduction and the role of chance" (Gayon 2009: 287). Darwin tried various theories of inheritance, including gemmules and pangenesis, but never met all these criteria. My reading is that what he did, to solve the problem as best he could, was to produce the aforementioned version of the phenomenon of reversion, or

throwback, and merge it with negative selection.

As I read it, negative selection, not survival of the fittest per se, or exclusively, was Darwin's 'take' from Thomas Malthus (1766-1834). Although there has been, and continues to be, some debate about the detail of the influence of Malthusian population theory on Darwin, there seems little antagonism to the belief that reading his *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) was Darwin's Eureka moment: the flash of inspiration that, through Malthus's theory of the struggle for survival in a world, or area, of scant resources, he had found the means of explaining the mechanism of evolution (Hodge 2009a). I am not talking here, however, about the usually extracted theory of competition and winners, but rather about Malthus's belief that the weak would not survive. Given the problems posed by blending inheritance (and swamping), and the lack of a known transmission mechanism, negative selection – the demise of the weakest - stood up better than did the small variation model, or the survival of the fittest, as a means of reducing the pot for blending and, at the same time, as an explanation for how we, at least as a population, got better all the time. In the final (1872) edition he prepared of the *Origin*, Darwin admitted as much, describing his as a

> theory of gradual evolution, through the preservation of a large number of individuals, which varied more or less in any favourable direction, and of the destruction of a large number which varied in an opposite manner. (*Origin* 1872, as quoted in Gayon 2009: 280).

In *The Descent*, idiots, not redheads born to dark-haired parents (for example), were, as we have seen, examples of reversion: by sleight of hand, they, along with some savages, and women, were thus examples of atavism or return to ancestral type. Mixing atavism and reversion allowed Darwin to promote negative selection, the "more destructive form of selection, [which] eliminate[d] large sections of the unmodified population" (Vorzimmer 1963: 35), as a means of getting around the problem of blending. If the more unusual were naturally selected out, the proportion of 'good' adaptations left in, was greater, and less blending between extremes could occur. Among all the groups, idiots had the best aggregate of characteristics for elimination; they had anatomical, behavioural, visual, and mental features that apparently made them an outstanding example of what we were *before* the benefits of natural selection (gradually) made us 'more human'. For Darwin, "[h]uman intelligence was then, not opposed to

animal instinct but grew out of it in the course of ages" (R. Richards 2009: 99). Those who had a faulty human intellect were therefore, logically, a throw-back to a remnant of an earlier phase in human evolution. The removal of those who did not measure up to modern man could be highly effective:

> In the case of corporeal structures, it is the selection of the slightly better-endowed and the elimination of the slightly less well-endowed individuals, and not the preservation of strongly-marked and rare anomalies, that leads to the advancement of a species. So it will be with the intellectual faculties, since the somewhat abler men in each grade of society succeed rather better than the less able, and consequently increase in number, if not otherwise prevented. When in any nation the standard of intellect and the number of intellectual men have increased, we may expect from the law of the deviation from an average, that prodigies of genius will, as shewn by Mr. Galton, appear somewhat more frequently than before. (*The Descent* 1882: 136-137)

Gould (1996b) sites variability as too-often neglected concept at the heart of Darwin's theory of evolution: what should be recognised is that *The Descent* and *The Expression of Emotions*, in their promotion of negative selection, presupposed that certain variations would be omitted from the diverse population of humans, *well before the counting began*. The elimination of the weak guaranteed progress, without active intervention.

However, idiots were not alone: some women, people with mental illness and, in particular, non-white people had, as we have seen, in Darwin's eyes, many of the characteristics that made them instances of reversion, and a reversion that was particular – not any potentially attractive throw back, but a reversion to a primitive, ancestral type, often closer to a progenitor in common of apes, than to current humans. As with idiots, Darwin employed non-whites when he sought to explain the vexing question of the lack of missing links, or, as he called it, the "great break in the organic chain between man and his nearest allies":

> But these breaks depend merely on the number of related forms which have become extinct. At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilised races of man will almost certainly exterminate, and replace, the savage races throughout the world. At the same time the anthropomorphous apes, as Professor Schaaffhausen has remarked ...will no doubt be exterminated. The break between man and his nearest allies will then be wider, for it will intervene between man in a more civilised state, as we may hope, even than the Caucasian, and some ape as low as a baboon, instead of as now between the negro or Australian and the gorilla (*The Descent* 1882: 156)

Thus, he demonstrated both that there were links between humans and other species, and that those who showed evidence of such links were residual, vestigial and fated to die out, or be eliminated. The result was, in terms of countering blending, and promoting adaptation, that there would be less people to 'pollute' the population, and, ergo, the better adaptations would not be swamped by blending inheritance.

Many, however, continued to distrust Darwin's claim that natural selection was the mechanism for evolution (Bowler 2003). This was not helped by the fact that "the nature of inheritance was the last great area of knowledge to remain obscure" (S. Jones 1996: 12), and "a general concept of heredity emerged only slowly in the second third of the nineteenth century" (Muller-Wille & Rheinberger 2007: 12). Not that long after Darwin produced his great works, some, including geneticist William Bateson (1861-1926), "sensed that not all variation is equally possible – that developmental factors internal to the organism *constrain* or *bias* the range of form that nature produces" (Blumberg 2009: 33):[4] that is, epigenesis needed consideration. But Darwin's way of looking at natural selection needed a straightforward biological explanation: he ignored epigenesis, at the same time as he remained supportive of the possibility of the experience of parents affecting their offspring, in a Lamarckian fashion. Darwin proposed blood co-mingling as a way of passing on traits (S. Jones 1996), and a little later, "pangenesis, which states that the environment induced advantageous organic modifications ... transmitted, by particles he called gemmules" (Kevles 1985: 18). However, he could not show these operating; he turned back to an earlier strategy.

In the *Origin*, Darwin had relied heavily on local and domestic examples of breeding, and in particular on artificial animal breeding, rather than on the mechanism of

[4] Gee (2004), writing a history of the discovery of the human genome, spends a chapter on William Bateson (1861-1926), and much of that on Bateson's exploration of monsters. Bateson was the man who coined the term 'genetics', translated Mendel's work into English and supported a saltationist view of evolution. Prior to discovering the work of Mendel, he published a book *Materials for the Study of Variation* (1894). Gee describes *Materials* as "a kind of medieval bestiary," similar to the aforementioned one of Ambroise Pare (1493-1541), which had classified monsters according to causation – theological, fanciful, practical (including injury to the mother while pregnant). Bateson's book, written partly against Darwin's then apparently inexplicable gradual modification and selection, was something of an anachronism, straddling science, myth, culture, but in the end Gee says of it "[b]etween a single set of covers is a book that looks back to the very dawn of our efforts to understand the origin of form, and at the same time looks forward to genetics and the quest for the genome" (2004: 103). As Blumberg (2009) says, we need monsters.

inheritance. His theory of evolution was not simply a theory of descent, but one of "descent with modification" (Muller-Wille 2007: 188). Thus, domestic breeding, concerned as it was with producing and reproducing preferred – and economically rewarding – change, could, by analogy, show how positive selection might pass on preferred modifications, even if the mechanism itself was not clear. Such breeding was also highly negatively selective, and he reminded his readers of this in his work on humans:

> in the breeding of domestic animals, the elimination of those individuals, though few in number, which are in any marked manner inferior, is by no means an unimportant element toward success. This especially holds good with injurious characters which tend to reappear through reversion, such as blackness in sheep; and with mankind some of the worst dispositions, which occasionally without any assignable cause make their appearance in families, may perhaps be reversions to a savage state, from which we are not removed by very many generations. This view seems indeed recognised in the common expression that such men are the black sheep of the family. (*The Descent* 1882: 137)

Domestic breeding demonstrated that the elimination of all apparent undesirables was a good idea, and a common, familiar, and easily enacted process. Darwin also slips in the notion that poor dispositions are to be thought of as what savages would have, and we are back, again, to analogy. There is no evidence here of either the mechanism of inheritance itself, or of natural selection as the mechanism for how we got to be who we are. But Darwin had already set the script for breeding, variation, atavism, elimination to all appear on the same stage:

> HE who wishes to decide whether man is the modified descendant of some pre-existing form, would probably first enquire whether man varies, however slightly, in bodily structure and in mental faculties; and if so, whether the variations are transmitted to his offspring in accordance with the laws which prevail with the lower animals. Again, are the variations ... governed by the same general laws, as in the case of other organisms; for instance, by correlation, the inherited effects of use and disuse, &c.? Is man subject to similar malconformations, the result of arrested development, of reduplication of parts, &c., and does he display in any of his anomalies reversion to some former and ancient type of structure? It might also naturally be enquired whether man, like so many other animals, has given rise to varieties and sub-races, differing but slightly from each other, or to races differing so much that they must be classed as doubtful species? ... The enquirer would next come to the important point, whether man tends to increase at so rapid a rate, as to lead to occasional severe struggles for existence; and consequently to beneficial variations, whether in body or mind, being preserved, and injurious ones eliminated. Do the races or species of men, whichever term may be applied, encroach on and

> replace one another, so that some finally become extinct? We shall see that all these questions, as indeed is obvious in respect to most of them, must be answered in the affirmative, in the same manner as with the lower animals. (*The Descent* 1882: 5-6)

Darwin was determined to show that selection was operating all the time. He couldn't understand the mechanism, and had to rely on analogy, (domestic breeding), his own particular interpretation of reversion, and some often, as A.N. Wilson says, "chilling ... meditations" that compare people (2002: 375). He had to rely on describing and situating some people in a manner that they appeared so closely linked with an imagined past, they would automatically disappear from the human race. That this was still negative selection – the poorly adapted atrophying, rather than the better adapted multiplying – was not the perfect solution but, with it in place, there was not nearly so pressing a need to identify and describe the mechanism for positive selection.

Furthermore, the notion that some less well-adapted people would be eliminated was consistent with Darwin's particular theory of generation, which was in turn consistent with the familiar "idea that each species existed not just for its own sake, but for the benefit of other species in the system," an idea that "was captured in the phrase 'economy of nature' " (Kingsland 1988: 169). This was a concept derived from antiquity, but given "canonical forms by the Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus," and:

> [t]he idea that pain and death acted for the benefit of the economy as a whole recurs in much of the naturalist literature with which Darwin was familiar. In the economy of nature, predation was a way of preventing overpopulation among prey – overpopulation that would lead to famine and suffering far worse than the total suffering of those killed in the hunt. Moreover, predators removed any prey that were sick, aged, or enfeebled ... Since these deviants had failed to perform 'the office for which Providence designed them,' their removal was thought to be part of the divine plan. (Kingsland 1988: 170)

Darwin's was not a divine plan, but it was equally inexorable. Atavism and elimination, particularly of those who did not contribute to the economy, stood in, very comfortably, for the absence of an explanatory mechanism for natural selection.

Darwin's Man: civilised, compassionate, perfectible.

What can be seen in the above is that much of the evidence Darwin puts forward for human evolution is little more than carefully cobbled together hearsay. Early commentators realised this: in 1872, John Stuart Mill described the *Origin* as,

> remarkable speculation ... another unimpeachable example of a legitimate hypothesis. ... It is unreasonable to accuse Mr. Darwin (as has been done) of violating the rules of Induction. The rules of induction are concerned with the conditions of proof. Mr Darwin has never pretended that his doctrine was proved (Mill 1872, quoted in Hull 2009: 191).

This was damning defence. Similar "line[s] of objection centred on Darwin's methodology. ... Had he employed the true scientific method ... or had he indulged in unwarranted speculation beyond what the evidence allowed?" (Bowler 2003: 197). More recently, Olby (2009), noted that Darwin's style in the *Origin of the Species* was not to scientifically demonstrate, but consisted largely of references to instances, catalogues of facts, beliefs, and that "this very personal style is also couched in double negatives, and qualifiers like: 'It seems to me not improbable that ...' " (2009: 31). In the years following publication of the *Origin*, this style led William Hopkins, a physicist reviewing the book, to note that "where Newton demonstrated, Darwin asserted," while another contemporary, Richard Owen, "remarked that to be served up an 'expression of a belief, where one looks for a demonstration, is simply provoking' " (Olby 2009: 31).

Much the same can be said, perhaps even more acerbically, of both *The Descent* and *The Expression of Emotions*, books that amass an enormous amount of information, most of it second-hand, provided by medical practitioners and other gentleman scientists whom Darwin assumed could be trusted to provide scientific evidence (Endersby 2009). People with mental illness, women, people of colour, people with intellectual disability, were employed as instances of analogy, or metaphor. Even more significantly, much of the information that enabled these analogies, as in the instance of people with intellectual disability, was quite simply wrong. Yet, we have inherited what was said about them, particularly in terms of their likelihood of selection - or not - as scientific fact. With so many groups positioned as examples of reversion, atavism, or inferior adaptation, the concept of Man or humankind that is promoted through *The Descent*, and *The Expression of Emotions*, is a very limited one. This, I suggest, is important to how we think, even today, about humanness.

The Descent and *The Expression* make it easy to ignore savages, idiots and those with mental illness, by making it evident that they are not one of 'us'. They, the apparently poorly adapted groups, are repeatedly compared with civilised men. The term

civilised is used as a positive descriptor, over ninety times in the body of *The Descent* - for nations, times, races, men, people and populations. It also occurs repeatedly in the contents, titles, list of amendments (1882 edition), and index, most frequently attached to nations or men. Civilised is opposed to barbarous (nations, tribes, men and women). Civilised men are opposed to savages. Civilisation can be seen in any, and all, the features that portend successful species survival. Civilisation shows progress. Moreover, and importantly for the effect of Darwin's formulation, unlike Locke's Person, which is a largely abstract, forensic identity, Darwin, consistent with the phrenological societies, and scientists like Paul Broca believed, saw civilisation as there in the body:

> The belief that there exists in man some close relation between the size of the brain and the development of the intellectual faculties is supported by the comparison of the skulls of savage and civilised races, of ancient and modern people, and by the analogy of the whole vertebrate series. (*The Descent* 1882: 54)

Darwin gives civilisation a present biological effect, and a biological future. As we have seen, civilised humans apparently do not have the same dental structure as savages: "Prof. Montegazza ... has lately been studying the last molar teeth in the different races of man, and has come to the same conclusion ... that in the higher or civilised races they are on the road towards atrophy or elimination" (1882: 20 f.45). Civilisation "apparently favours the better development of the body, by means of good food and the freedom from occasional hardships," so that "civilised men hav[e] been found, wherever compared, to be physically stronger than savages" (1882: 136). This, in the face of the fact that Darwin is fervently hoping to convince his readers that adaptive change is a phenomenally slow process, is presumably among what, according to Darwin, is "[e]vidence that civilised nations were once barbarous" (1882: 127).

Civilised man is the most progressed. With adaptation he will improve further. Darwin was open about this at the end of the *Origin*.

> We can so far take a prophetic glance into futurity as to foretell that it will be the common and widely-spread species, belonging to the larger and dominant groups within each class, which will ultimately prevail and procreate new and dominant species. As all the living forms of life are the lineal descendants of those which lived long before the Cambrian epoch, we may feel certain that the ordinary succession by generation has never once been broken, and that no cataclysm has desolated the whole world. Hence we may look with some confidence to a secure future of great length. And as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all

> corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection. (*Origin* 1876: 428)

Such a statement speaks for itself, and the implication of progress has been well-recognised ever since Darwin published these words. Sen (1993), for example, writes that, "[v]ery few events in the history of ideas can be compared in terms of power, reach, and impact with the emergence of the Darwinian analysis of progress through evolution" (1993: 123).[5] But it is not so much in the *Origin* that Darwin insinuates perfectibility – or progress that is highly directional, ever-heading toward a superior organism - it is in *The Descent*. As Steve Gould has noted, Darwin,

> smuggles the idea of progress back into empirical expectation, not by the explicit workings of its basic mechanism ... but by an accumulation of superior designs through successive local adaptations. ... In this Darwinian climate we may still view the evolution of human consciousness as the predictable end of a long history of increasing mentality. (Gould 1996b: 63)

In *The Descent*, the progressive nature of civilisation concerns Darwin so much of the time, that it is difficult – and outside the concerns of this thesis – to know which is cause and which effect. There is the repeated contrast of intellect between civilised and 'lower' peoples: "the mental powers of the higher animals do not differ in kind, though greatly in degree, from the corresponding powers of man, especially of the lower and barbarous races" (*The Descent* 1882: 540). It seems, too, that in Darwin's formulation, the mental powers replace the moral soul or mind (see *The Descent*, 1882, Chapters 4 & 5, in particular). Civilisation, the development and prerogative of those with higher mental powers, is seen in behaviour:

> The American savage voluntarily submits to the most horrid tortures without a groan, to prove and strengthen his fortitude and courage; and we cannot help admiring him, or even an Indian Fakir, who, from a foolish religious motive, swings suspended by a hook buried in his flesh.
>
> The other so called self-regarding virtues ... have never been esteemed by savages, though now highly appreciated by civilised nations. (*The Descent* 1882: 118)

Darwin's Man – the one who will go forward into the future, brandishing his ever-better adaptations - only properly includes the Darwinian-defined, successful, intelligent,

[5] There is a large literature on Darwin's progressivism, and discussion of Darwin's own, and his theory's implied, perfectibility can be found embedded in much discussion around his theory of evolution. See, for example, for direct treatment, Ruse 1996, 2009; Sen 1993.

morally acceptable members of the human species. Man is male, adult, civilised, unimpaired. This is, of course, a very familiar portrait, one that Darwin's readers were unlikely to challenge, even if some might question how morals were slipped into a biological theory. Furthermore, like the various Greek Men, Darwin's Man was not any adult male from the countryside; he was a citizen, a political Man, one who was, above all, civilised. Civilised humans are the progressed, the improved, the better adapted, even if that contradicts the process of very gradual descent with modification.

At the same time, if humans are to continue to progress, or even to continually adapt in such a way that they are responding successfully to their environment, necessarily, not all current human 'types' survive; there will be flotsam and jetsam. As we have seen, Darwin gives quite clear indications of who will be the flotsam: savages, idiots, and possibly those who are in any other way below the average. He clearly would have little problem, personally, if some were jettisoned well before their accidental demise. There is a sticking point for him, however: the nobility of civilised Man's nature.

Darwin's great-great-grandson, Randal Keynes (2001), humanises Darwin with family stories in a book that revolves around the loss of Emma and Charles's daughter, Annie. Keynes attempts to separate Darwin from the proponent of Social Darwinism, Herbert Spencer. In support of Charles's innocence, he quotes from *The Descent*:

> With savages, the weak in body and mind are soon eliminated; and those that survive commonly exhibit a vigorous state of health. We civilised men, on the other hand, do our utmost to check the process of elimination; we build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed, and the sick; we institute poor laws; and our medical men exert their utmost skill to the life of every one to the last moment. Thus the weakest members of civilised societies propagate their kind. (as quoted in Keynes 2001: 269)

Firstly, it should be noted that Darwin provides no evidence that the weak are eliminated in societies of savages. Secondly, he is clearly suggesting that it is not a good thing that the "weakest members of civilised societies propogate their kind." *The Descent* consistently argues against 'weakness', as does, less directly, the *Origin*.

Keynes then goes on to note that Darwin argued it was "the instinct for sympathy, which was originally acquired as part of the social instincts" (2001: 269), that determined the feeling we should aid the helpless, and quotes again from *The Descent*:

> Nor could we check our sympathy, even at the urging of hard reason, without deterioration in the noblest part of our nature. The surgeon may harden himself whilst performing an operation, for he knows that he is acting for the good of his patient; but if we were intentionally to neglect the weak and helpless, it could only be for a contingent benefit, with an overwhelming present evil. (As quoted in Keynes 2001: 269-270)

Darwin's musings have a moral tone to them, but his statement of care effectively sets up an ultimate separation of 'us' and 'them'. 'We' must look after 'them', even though 'we', for the sake of the species, shouldn't. Doing so ennobles us. But, at cost:

> There is reason to believe that vaccination has preserved thousands, who from a weak constitution would formerly have succumbed to small-pox. Thus the weak members of civilised societies propagate their kind. No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man. It is surprising how soon a want of care, or care wrongly directed, leads to the degeneration of a domestic race; but excepting in the case of man himself, hardly any one is so ignorant as to allow his worst animals to breed. (*The Descent* 1882: 134)

These thoughts damn a large number of people to the scrap-heap, to be kept alive, on a very temporary basis, only because of a nobility in someone who is superior to them. The sub-text is clear enough: there are, or should be, limits to care of the weak; allowing them to reproduce leads to degeneration.

In *The Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault (1973) identifies what he calls the medical gaze, in which the object of medical intervention – the body, the patient – is effectively dehumanised by authoritative medical knowledge. From a different, psychoanalytically informed, feminist point of view, Laura Mulvey (1975) posited women (in film) as constructed in and by the male gaze, particularly in the shot-reverse-shot formula of classical film. It seems we could add another gaze - the compassionate gaze. The compassionate gaze is particularly clever; it constructs the one who looks as 'noble', at the same time as it surveys all that is lacking in the one who is looked-at. Once one is the object of the compassionate gaze, there is no escape; to even attempt to do so would be to further display one's failings – ingratitude, the stupidity of not knowing what is good for one. The person who is looked-at, is pinned, specimen-like, by the powerful gaze of those on whom their survival depends.

Once identified (only) by their need for compassion (as they were by Hume, too), people with intellectual disability (and savages and monsters), are forever passive, able to be jettisoned if such abandonment is good for the survival of the ship (species) as a

whole. Once caring-for is introduced as a defining characteristic of the 'gazer', the passive recipient of care is placed in a paradigm which virtually guarantees their 'illness' is terminal. They are most certainly not perfectible.

Yet, there remained concerns. Darwin noted that he had "considered the advancement of man from a semi-human condition to that of the modern savage. But some remarks on the action of natural selection on civilised nations may be worth adding": these remarks, which concerned the problem of civilised men not propagating enough (and not allowing their weak members to die off), would be taken, Darwin informs the reader, mostly from the able discussions of "Mr. W. R. Greg, and ... Mr. Wallace and Mr. Galton" (*The Descent* 1882: 133). One of Mr Galton's major points was that evolution needed guidance: "The processes of evolution are in constant and spontaneous activity, some towards the bad, some towards the good. Our part is to watch for opportunities to intervene by checking the former and giving free play to the latter" (Galton 1892, quoted in Kevles 1985: 19). Which brings us to the question of eugenics.

The question of eugenics:

The Descent and *The Expression of Emotions* set a small, select, and civilised group of male citizens as the Men Darwin thinks will, and should, not only propagate the species in the immediate, but who should, and will, adapt their way into further perfection. Should he then be seen, perhaps vilified, as the progenitor of eugenics? Many don't want him to be. *The Descent*, according to one of Darwin's many biographers, was a "different kind of book altogether," from the "masterpiece" that was the *Origin*: "[m]ost of it was the work of the same acute scientific observer ... but some of it read as if it had been written by another Darwin altogether" (Aydon 2002: 249). This "rich white gentleman" who bore the same name as the author of the *Origin*, was confident, but had "lapses of intellectual rigour" (2002: 250-251). The result, however, appealed to "well-bred Englishmen" as it "assured them that ... they really were the topmost twigs on the evolutionary tree" (2002: 251). Aydon's is one of the more subtle denials of Darwin's direct involvement in the thinking behind, and support for, what was later called Social Darwinism, or for eugenics (which is not exactly the same as Social Darwinism. See Paul (2009), for discussion): two Darwins were writing, one overcome

by custom, the other properly scientific.

Tort (2001) elides the possibility of Darwin's involvement at all: Social Darwinism was a "distortion ... a crude application of the principle of selection and elimination to human social groups," developed and propagated by Herbert Spencer (2001: 78), while Galton "represents the second distortion inflicted on the theory of natural selection during its author's silence on the subject of mankind" (2001: 78). This, despite the fact that Darwin inserted lashings, not of disgust, but of praise, for Galton's *Hereditary Genius* in the second edition of *The Descent*. Zimmer (2001), too, avoids associating Darwin with Social Darwinism by admitting "evolution's role in some disturbing cultural changes both in the United States and Europe," but citing Ernst Haeckel, the German biologist, as the major influence behind it all, and then returning to Herbert Spencer - whom Darwin also quoted with approbation - as the main culprit (2001: 385-386).

A.N. Wilson (2002), an historian without any vested interest in Darwin, is less circumspect about admitting Darwin's involvement, while Lewens, in a recent book simply titled *Darwin*, admits that "Darwin is concerned that our refusal to allow the unhealthy (whether in body or mind) to perish is likely to lead to a degeneration of the species," and "[o]ne cannot sever all links between Darwin and the later eugenicists" (2007: 218-219). Lewens then asserts that Darwin was not in favour of "heavy-handed interventions to actively limit human reproduction," and produces a quote linking education and progress to support the notion that Darwin was anything but a fully committed eugenicist (2007: 219-220). On the other hand, Paul (2009), refuses to deny Darwin's relation with Social Darwinism and eugenics, and explores these at some length (Paul 2009: 219-245), Kevles (1985) implies the relation through an analysis of Galton's work, and Bowler (2003) says "[t]he Darwinian selection theory played a role in the emergence of the eugenic programs. Thus, eugenics may be counted as a form of social Darwinism" (2003: 308). Weikart (2004) quotes from a 1909 speech by Max von Gruber, professor of hygiene at Munich University, presented in honour of the hundredth anniversary of Darwin's birth:

> The never-ceasing struggle is, according to him [Darwin], not useless. It constantly clears away the malformed, the weak, the inferior among the generations and thus secures the future for the fit. Thus only through the inexorable extermination of the

> negative variants does it provide living space for the strong and its strong off-spring, and it keeps the species healthy, strong and able to live. (von Gruber 1909, quoted in Weikart 2004: 74)

"Darwinism," says Weikart (2004), "was a matter of life and death" (2004: 73).

My opinion is that, when *The Descent* and *The Expression of Emotions* are considered for what they say about women, people with intellectual disability, non-white peoples, indeed anyone except civilised men, it is hard to argue that Darwin's work on humans did not have a major impact on the development of eugenics. When we see how strongly Darwin promoted the notion that the weak would be eliminated in the not distant future, and should not propagate in the immediate, it is very difficult to say there is no direct line between Darwin and the creation of the category of the feebleminded, those who were not quite imbecile, not quite normal, and who were seen to be, on the whole, morally depraved and promiscuous (Gelb 1988; Manion and Bersani 1989; Trent 1994). A further connection can readily be allowed between Darwin's negative selection, and the thinking that led to the German 'Eugenic Sterilization Law' of 1933, in which all people who were considered to have heritable disabilities – "including feeblemindedness, schizophrenia, epilepsy, blindness, severe drug or alcohol addiction, and physical deformities" (Kevles 1985: 116) – were to be sterilised, without consent. The effect of eugenic thinking is most evident in Germany: German doctors had to report the 'unfit' to Hereditary Health Courts, and by the late 1930s, a quarter of a million people had been sterilised, around half of them people thought to be feebleminded. Also, in 1930s Germany specific laws were enacted to prohibit "persons with mental disorders, certain infectious diseases, or different 'racial' backgrounds" from marrying (Kevles 1985: 117), and Kevles describes a "river of blood [that] would eventually run from the sterilization law of 1933 to Auschwitz and Buchenwald" (1985: 118). On the other hand, people with intellectual disability were also sterilised across the United States (Stubblefield 2007), prevented from entering countries including Australia as immigrants (Bashford 2003; 2006), incarcerated in institutions across the Western world: there is nowhere that was immune from such thinking.

My reading of *The Descent* and *The Expression* has suggested, too, that negative selection presented a more viable way of explaining 'descent by modification' than did the natural selection of small variations. The key mechanism that had, in that theory,

dragged humans up and away from the lower animals was heritability, and that became the cornerstone of eugenic thinking.

This thick web of interconnections should be acknowledged, and the information contained in this thesis can be read as contributing to the demonstration of Darwin's own eugenic thinking. However, concentrating on eugenics can take our eye off the ball.

Firstly, we can get caught up with blaming Darwin, the person, and thus not attending to what was written, and remains said, in *The Descent* and *The Expression*. After all, Darwin was not in any way alone in instigating what became eugenics. Indeed, it is most unlikely Darwin could have written about idiots, or any other group, in the way he did if there was not already a discourse or discourses pushing in those directions. As Leakey and Lewin (2003), writing "in search of what makes us human," say:

> Trends, real or imagined, have a powerful and seductive sense of inevitability about them. They give the impression that the anatomical feature in question is being driven in a particular direction. ...The social context ... the high point of Victorian and Edwardian expansionism, was indeed success through effort. There were great rewards to be had in the newly emerging industrial age, but not for the indolent ... The same social ethic insinuated itself into scientific thinking, especially into views of evolution. (Leakey & Lewin 2003: 71)

This is not to say that Darwin, or his theory, can be excused: while social physics, statistics, the Victorian passion for improvement, were all part and parcel of the same hierarchy of human value that informed the eugenics that flourished, firstly in Britain, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, none of these was biological, and apparently essential, in the way evolution by natural selection was. Phrenology, craniometry and physiognomy were embodied, but none of them claimed to explain our origins in the way Darwin's grand theory did.

Secondly, in the concentration on revealing the horrors perpetrated on people with intellectual disability, mental illness and, to a lesser extent physical anomaly, it is easy to occlude the fact it is still the case, as biologist Steven Rose pointed out toward the end of the last century, that "present enthusiasms for biologically determinist accounts of the human condition" cannot be attributed to "any specific advance in biological science or powerful new theory," but to a return, from the 1960s, to "an earlier tradition of eugenic thinking which ... had been eclipsed and driven into intellectual and political disrepute in the aftermath of the war against Nazi Germany" (Rose 1995: ix). It is even more so

the case that millions of research dollars have been, and continue to be, poured into the ways and means of 'improving' human genetics; it is not simply a matter of biologically determinist accounts, but of genetically determinist practice. It is still the case, too, that idiocy is a pathology, relegated to being an object of care, an issue for medical and allied professionals, teachers, families, but not a way of being that might be considered in questions that attend to humanness.

The more important question then, is not that of whether Darwin himself should be accused of being a eugenicist, but whether we have stopped ourselves being eugenically-minded. This is not to enter into a conservative (or not) 'right to life' argument; but rather to raise the question of whether the very narrow notion of Man that Darwin's articulation of natural selection is both premised on, and produces as the 'winner' in the struggle for survival, is still the human that informs us. If it is, there is still a problem, or many problems, intellectual, theoretical, practical.

Darwin's legacy: eugenic Man:

One hundred and fifty years after the publication of the *Origin of Species*, the library shelves of my university, at least, are crammed with books bearing some mention of Darwin, or of Darwinian thought. These are putatively authoritative texts, chosen to educate the undergraduate, to engage with the inquiries of the post-graduate, to provide material for the academic to teach or question. As a psychologist, I am aware of some of the theories, and some of the better known, and respected, names among the authors: I take a selection of those pertaining to human nature, and human cognition down.

In the preface to *Biology, Evolution, and Human Nature* (2000), Goldsmith tells the reader that "[t]he study of evolution reveals a hierarchy of increasing complexity, reaching from the molecular structure of genes to human cognition and the diversity of human cultures" (2000: x). Mandler (1997), in *Human Nature Explored*, cautions against "simple-minded invocation of genetic mechanisms to explain human behaviour," but remains "committed to understanding the basic evolutionary processes that have shaped human behaviour" (1997: viii). This means searching for "some few basic components on human mental life that can account for more complex phenomena" (1997: viii). David M. Buss dedicates *Evolutionary Psychology and the New Science of*

the Mind (2004), to a list of people, beginning with Darwin and Galton; and inserting into his long, well-organised text, the notion that one of the "special challenges for human behavioural ecology (predicated as it is on measuring real fitness gains through offspring numbers) is the explanation of demographic transition" (2004: 72). He tells the reader what this latter means: "[h]ow can humans still be regarded as fitness maximisers by choosing to have fewer children?" (2004: 72).

In this brief selection, already there are significant concerns; Goldsmith does not question, indeed reinforces, the hierarchy which assumes humans to be the (at least current) apotheosis of evolutionary selection; Mandler demonstrates a reductionism, which may work in chemistry, but which, particularly in the human sciences, cannot discover, or describe anything but the most general findings (Dupre 2001); Buss, apart from raising what might well be thought a peculiar issue in a text on the science of the mind, negates the very basis of the evolutionary paradigm he seeks to support – the behaviour or a single generation is, or should be, irrelevant in the very gradual process of evolutionary change. He, in his discussion of 'fitness maximisers', as does Darwin himself from the opening moments of the *Origin* and his study of domestic breeding, confuses the social with the biological.

This confusion of social and biological is seen throughout Darwin's work, and to fully understand the legacy of the theory of natural selection, we have to keep it in mind. Early in the *Origin*, for example, Darwin made an analogy between the invasion of a new plant species, and the conquering of a 'native' country by 'foreigners':

> We may conclude, from what we have seen of the intimate and complex manner in which the inhabitants of each country are bound together, that any change in the numerical proportions of the inhabitants, independently of the change of climate itself, would seriously affect the others. If the country were open on its borders, new forms would certainly immigrate, and this would likewise seriously disturb the relations of some of the former inhabitants. ... No country can be named in which all the native inhabitants are now so perfectly adapted to each other and to the physical conditions under which they live, that none of them could be still better adapted or improved; for in all countries, the natives have been so far conquered by naturalised productions, that they have allowed some foreigners to take firm possession of the land. And as foreigners have thus in every country beaten some of the natives, we may safely conclude that the natives might have been modified with advantage, so as to have better resisted the intruders. (*Origin* 1876: 64-65)

Foreigners, of course, generally overcome natives by the power of gun or spear,

and their triumph may well be short lived – a month, a year, or a generation or two. But this analogy is also presented to the reader in the chapter on 'Survival of the Fittest' and just following the argument that "Struggle for Life [is] most severe between Individuals and Varieties of the same Species" (1876: 59). Hence, it appears that social, political, expansionist struggle is essential for the survival of the species.

We need to remember, too, that in this there is a very significant difference between Darwin's theory, and almost all non-theological theories that had gone before. Darwin wasn't investigating an aspect of human behaviour, as Locke was, he was not abstracting a concept of human nature as his Enlightenment forebears were; he was uncovering human *origins*. And he was asserting, unequivocally, not only that these origins were not super- or preter-natural, that there was no designer, but that they were earthy (as well as earthly), they were organic, biological, of the body. Thus, his theory matched well with the Enlightenment-to-Victorian project of humans taking control of their own destiny, promising, as we have seen, sometimes by implication, other-times by clear statement, that, once we recognised these origins, and the processes involved to 'attain' us, we might well be able to nudge, shift, even control, these processes for the betterment of humans. Darwin's biological progression was a radical notion, and a step further than Kant's perfectibility, for example, because it was addressing humans *before they were even born*. Biology, not education, or cultural change was the core concern, and the key explanatory mechanism of the natural selection. Biology inherently promises an essentialism that no social analysis can match.

However, as we have seen, the human that Darwin set up as the one to survive was the civilised man. In convincing people that there was a process, a means that had lifted us from what later became know as the primordial soup, and made us into complex creatures who had power in, and over, the rest of the organic world, Darwin, as I demonstrated above, excised certain sections of the 'arising' population, effectively before they could get out of the soup. It was, to requote from *The Descent*, "the elimination of the slightly less well-endowed individuals, and not the preservation of strongly-marked and rare anomalies, that leads to the advancement of a species" (1882: 136). Today we do not need to consider the characteristics, let alone the lives, of people with intellectual disability (and others), when we consider humanness, because such

people are possibly now, or will soon be, *not* part of 'us'.

To return to my selection of recent texts on human nature. Outlining the background to, and influences on *Darwinian Natural Right; The Biological Ethics of Human Nature*, Arnhart (1998) tells the reader that "[Philosopher, Roger] Masters [1978; 1987] argued that Aristotle's political thought rested on a biological understanding of human nature that was essentially compatible with modern Darwinian theories of social behaviour" (1998: 3). Arnhart tracks a "tradition of ethical naturalism that included Aristotle's idea of natural right, Hume's idea of the natural moral sense, and Darwin's idea of the moral sense as shaped by natural selection" (1998: 5). He finds confirmation, he says, for that view in the sociobiological work of E.O. Wilson. The extended quotation he gives from Wilson's (1994) work, *Naturalist*, to show the links between Aristotle's and Darwin's biologies, and "a Darwinian science of social behaviour [that] might support Aristotle's ethical naturalism" (1998: 6), is convincing enough on the face of it, including, as it does, "the propensity to acquire behaviour and social structure ... bonding between parents and children, heightened altruism toward closest kin, incest avoidance, other forms of ethical behaviour" (E.O. Wilson, 1994, quoted in Arnhart 1998: 5). There are, however, very wide and open concepts here – "behaviour and social structure" can mean many different things, to many different people, at different historical moments, in differently-demanding geographic and economic situations. Invoking such concepts in the context of Aristotle, and then Darwin, should bring up the very significant issue that for each of those men the meanings of behaviour and social structure were circumscribed by highly historically and culturally determined points of view. It doesn't, in part presumably because Arnhart wants to challenge cultural relativism, and thus, from the outset of his project, has to neglect the culturally dictated specificities of the two men he is linking (he also includes Hume, but as a lesser figure). Moreover, I have, for the sake of developing argument, omitted a line from the Wilson (1994) quote presented above. Arnhart actually includes the assertion from Wilson that we need to take "the defining traits [of human right and nature to] include division of labor between the sexes," and that the "defining traits include ... dominance within groups, male dominance over all" (1998: 5). This leads Arnhart to some imaginative arguments that muddle social and (possibly) intrinsic

properties, including the notion that "most parents are not inclined to kill their children except in extreme circumstances" (1998: 119), where extreme circumstances include a child "born in poor heath ... parents lack[ing] the material resources to care for the infant. Or if there is some doubt about the paternity of the infant" (1998: 119). It seems that eugenics may not be far behind.

Is there anything revealing, or even satisfactory as scientific theory, then, that can be found in texts of evolutionary psychology and allied fields? Dupre (2001) thinks not. He argues that evolutionary psychology, in particular, is part of a "scientism" that has come to seem explanatory for almost all human behaviours and problems, and that such ideas "imply a narrow and homogenous set of answers to the most diverse imaginable set of questions" (2001: 2). He argues, quite persuasively, that such ideas "emphasise the intrinsic over the contextual" (2001: 12); that is, they ignore or seek to minimise, in the context of examinations of the human mind, any effect of environment, either before or after birth, on the individual, at the same time as they purport to explain all aspects of behaviour. I suspect Dupre is right, but what he has failed to notice is that, even if we were to insist on the effect of environment, and the contextual, even if we were to broaden our range of both questions and answers, none of that would not go nearly far enough. Arnhart's is just one, more obvious than usual, example of the pervasive power of Darwin's effectively eugenic man.

That is, what we see in evolutionary psychology is what we saw in eugenics, and what we find again in feverish amount of genetic research and testing that continues today: an underlying standard of humanness that is confined to, and by, a civilised, middle (to upper) on the Gaussian graph, male, who, since Darwin, has the added advantage of being biologically better adapted than any other human. This is the sad legacy of evolutionary theory: that Darwin, perhaps unconsciously, and perhaps with no malicious intent at all, eliminated, or 'demonstrated' that it would be better if such an elimination occurred, all humans who were not intelligent-enough, white-enough civilised-enough, in his measure. He discarded savages, natives, some women, reduced the deaf and the blind to pejorative illustration, set up monsters and idiots as clear cases of reversion to an ancestral type. He thus insisted that it is only the civilised man was the 'real' human. And he made it all natural. Thus the hierarchy of man at top, woman

inferior, children disposable, because not yet truly human, seems, to Arnhart, and the other authors quoted above who support a strong biological determinism, to be the (unquestioned) best thing, the way of survival of the species.

Idiots show that Darwin was wrong:

Perhaps Darwin was not wrong to leave us with such a narrow notion of the human? Should we ask the hard questions: could it not be that idiots, all black people, blind people, women with unusual internal anatomy, will, naturally, die away? Again, idiots provide us with some answers. Idiots will not disappear, not statistically; the distribution curve relies on there necessarily being aboves and belows. The definition of average, the measurements that determine the mean, might change, you and I might be idiots not only as we feel on certain mornings, but in the measurements of generations to come. But, far more importantly, idiots – again as the best counter-example to Darwinian-eugenic thinking - have not gone away, and will not go away, because idiocy is not a reversion to a less intelligent ancestral type. It is not always inherited.

Idiocy is only sometimes genetic: after all the many years of enthusiastic research into the genetic causes of intellectual disability, only a relatively small number of people with such disability can be slated as having a genetic, heritable 'problem'. One cause of disability is Fragile X, in which an area of an X chromosome does not produce the protein required for neural development; this in inherited, although not all family members will instance it.[6] On the other hand, many chromosomal abnormalities, such as Trimony 21, in which there is an extra copy of chromosome 21, resulting in the characteristics called Down Syndrome, are not inherited, but the result of mutations to the sperm or ovum which may occur under a variety of circumstances. Furthermore, infectious diseases, either contracted in-utero, or in early childhood, can result in intellectual disability; foetal alchohol syndrome is a well-known cause, and there are numerous other aetiologies, from anoxia in pregnancy, to the many accidents that can

[6] More male than female children will have the phenotype of Fragile X; the made Y chromosome have less genetic information than the female X. In boys this means that the Y cannot over-ride or make up for difficulties in the X chromosome, but in girl children, who have two X chromosomes, the healthy X takes over.

happen in childhood.[7]

Thus, even if all the cases of 'unknown aetiology' are solved in favour of genetic explanation, intellectual disability will still never be wiped out; there will always be accidents, individual mutations, trauma. Indeed, even if the extremes of eugenics were to be enacted – sterilisation of people with identified disability, prohibition or prevention of pregnancy for those women, and for those men, known to carry genes that produce intellectual disability in reproductive partnership with another carrier, infanticide of those 'marked' at birth – even then, it would not be possible to 'eradicate' intellectual disability. Epigenetic, disease, and other post-birth causes would remain. Intellectual disability is a permanent feature of the human population; it must be considered.

Properly considered, the persistence of people with intellectual disability challenges Darwin's demonstration of natural selection applied to humans. It does not disavow it, or dismiss the theory, but as idiocy is not (always) genetic, then the behaviours associated with it are not (always) genetic. As the behaviours are not genetic, then Darwin's 'proofs' of several aspects of his theories – the missing links, the common progenitor, the poorly adapted - don't really have legs to stand on (given they were determined, in the first place, largely by observed behaviour such as the smelling of food, or climbing stairs on all fours).

So, Darwin was indeed very wrong to leave us with such a restricted view of humankind. Firstly, simply because he was inaccurate in his representation. He employed poor research standards, relying so often on the second hand reports of others, little analysis, and much opinion, thus leaving us very faulty foundations for thinking about evolution now, and in the future.

Secondly, Darwin was wrong in not having the intellectual honesty (or perhaps analytical skill) to recognise the terrible muddle of biological and social that he encouraged. Quinn (2007) has noted Darwin's description of idiots in the context of uncovering those Darwinian descriptions and references (to non-Europeans races,

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[7] Older children, adolescents and adults who acquired intellectual disability are usually 'categorised' as having 'brain injury'. This, of course, reflects the natural/non-natural distinction of Locke's – and earlier – time. The advantage for people with brain injury in such categorising is that the categorisation recognises those who become impaired once their neurology and cognition has been established have different processing, and different needs, from those whose impairment pre-dates significant neurological and psychological maturation.

women, people with disability), that Darwinians don't want to admit to the existence of. Quinn's point is that it is absurd to pretend, as he suggests Steve Jay Gould does, that Darwin didn't really mean the rather nasty things he said about various groups of people. We should admit, according to Quinn, that "Darwin played a prime role in bringing about a fateful confusion between cultural and racial differences, conferring new scientific authority and intellectual legitimacy on theories of human inferiority" (2007: 10).

This is not to say that Darwin's muddle, as it might be called, goes entirely unnoticed. That Darwin employed non-white people as examples of ape-like progenitors is admitted in the less defensive readings of his work (Bowler 2003, for example), while one of the best known philosophers of Darwin's work, Michael Ruse, has said that "Darwin's major work on our own species, *The Descent of Man*, is an unbroken hymn to male dominance and success - except, that is, when it is belittling the blacks, or running down the Irish, or extolling the virtues of capitalism" (Ruse 1985: 531). In this, Ruse was agreeing, at least in part, with Ruth Hubbard's 1983 analysis of Darwin's positioning of women: a positioning she found to have significant negative implications. As I have shown, however, it was idiocy, and not racial or gender difference, that was key to Darwin being able to demonstrate that we, humans, had a common origin with apes (among others). People with intellectual disability were made to appear more ape-like, and far less human-like, than non-white people. This is not to make the level of oppression of the groups a competition; it is to recognise that the examples taken from idiots, in particular microcephalic idiots, were made to be very useful. Admitting the function of idiots enables not only a better understanding of why idiots no longer count in theories applicable to wider humanness; it also leads us to an understanding of why it is only the average white male who does.

Once we see that one group of people was *made* to appear not only undeveloped, but disposable, we can see that not only Darwin's readers, but ensuing generations have been deceived. If one group can, and should, be dispensed with, what is left behind is an implied standard – in this case, a man (male) with the right brain size, the correct convolutions, the appropriate, civilised behaviours – as the one against whom all others should be measured. This is, I suggest, Darwin's eugenic Man – an abstract human, but

one whom Darwin assures us is biological, and essential. It is this eugenic Man that the analysis, starting from the point of intellectual disability reveals, and that is the most frightening legacy of Darwinian reductionism.

My suggestion is that it is only by recognising this very reduced, and perfectible 'he', that we can understand why exposure of, and to, the atrocities that are the result eugenic thinking has not resulted in a rejection of the notion of improving fitness, has instead been ignored, for example, by those promoting, or researching, genetic selections to perceived imperfections, and even promoted by some of those 'researching' human behaviour. Until we replace this 'he', this abstract and highly specialised Man, with a pluralistic concept, such as Locke's humankind, we will never escape the push to make sure non-(eugenic)Man – does not go forward into the future.

Chapter conclusion: Darwin's depleted humankind.

The concept of Man, as human, or humankind, was seriously depleted by the end of the Enlightenment period. The apparently scientific search for an assumed universal human nature had taken hold; this was sometimes confused with human understanding, and therefore with an assumed reason, and always abstract. At the same time, mankind was centre stage, the wonder of wonders. This was particularly so in the newly industrialised Britain, where traditional class and social structures made the unadorned, natural, and apparently classless (but never labouring or poor) man, someone to promote. Hence the average man, the statistical man, the measured man, the norm(ed) man took over where the moral Everyman left off. Darwin's theory of human evolution took that man, and did something no other theory did, made him biological, essential, the explanation for our origins, *and* our future.

In articulating natural selection, and in smoothing over his lack of clear explanation for the process, Darwin excised any troublesome diversity, and some difference that should have been less threatening; he positioned people with intellectual disability, mental illness, and people of non-European backgrounds as examples of reversion to a previous, primitive type. He suggested that women, too, although essential for reproduction, had vestigial traits. These groups thus showed us what the fossil record could not, that they were links between civilised men and other animals, particularly, of

course, apes. They also showed us that selection was operating; the less well adapted would be made naturally extinct.

Recently, Radick (2009) has argued that "[m]aking up our minds over the independence or inseparability of Darwin's theory from its history thus requires us at the same time to make up our minds about Darwin's intellectual legacies" (Radick 2009: 166). Following along these lines, this chapter has suggested that what Darwin – in concert with statistics and phrenology – left us with, was a return to the single, male, adult, representative, human, with essential characteristics. This human, who was only a man, was destined to adapt, and by somewhat incorrect implication, progress. He was perfectible. He was also, as eugenics has shown us, the only man.

Again, it is reasonable to ask, did Darwin do something differently from Locke? He did. He deployed example and analogy as if it were fact. He employed it as if it were biological, and therefore essential, fact. He made inference from these facts about the future. Weikart (2004) has claimed that "Darwinism proclaimed the ultimate doom of the 'unfit' ... who would inevitably perish in the struggle for existence" (2004: 145). This chapter has suggested that the effect of Darwin's particular theory is more subtle, and far reaching, than the extinction, consciously or unconsciously assisted, of people who are not average. As Roger Pearson, son of Galton's protégé, Karl Pearson, put it in the introduction to a reissue of Galton's *Essays in Eugenics*, what Darwin left us with was the problem of the survival of the species, so that we now have a "duty to transmit a sound biological heritage to posterity" (Pearson, undated, republished 1994: 9).

The final question for this thesis, then, is can we stop ourselves being eugenically-minded? Can Locke's humankind help us here? Ruminations on answers to these questions form the Conclusion below.

Conclusion

The very human idiot

About half way through the process of writing this thesis, I dropped my youngest child at school, and was listening to ABC (Australian Broadcasting Commission) radio on the way home. The show was "The Sport's Factor," and the topic of discussion was intellectual property in sport. In discussing whether or not he should be allowed to have a photograph of Australian cricket captain, Ricky Ponting, on his own book (which was not about Ricky Ponting as such), interviewee, Gideon Haigh, made a remark that, had it been voiced about any other 'minority group', would have produced an instant response. He said that, "anyone who couldn't tell the difference between a book of [his] and a Ricky Ponting tour diary was intellectually subnormal and really undeserving of legislative protection."[1]

So, in 2007, if a person with intellectual disability wanted to buy their sister or father a copy of Ricky Ponting's diary for Christmas, and ended up instead with a book of Haigh's (with Ponting as the cover picture), then this person would have no redress as, having intellectual disability, they were not deserving of legal protection. This was an astounding claim. Yet, the interviewer showed less than sporting finesse and let the remark pass, the interview was repeated unedited that evening, and the following week Ponting's manager was accorded time to answer the implication of selfishness, on Ponting's part.

Haigh, author of an award-winning book supporting the 'working man', and commentator on subjects such as nationalism in left-leaning forums and magazines,[2] is in good company in his easy dismissal of the rights of people who live with intellectual disability. Western nations, perhaps all nations, have largely forgotten that the Nazi euthanasia programs, and the gas chambers themselves were trialled on children with

[1] www.abc.net.au/rn/sportsfactor/stories/2007/1999344.htm:10/08/2007

[2] Gideon Haigh is the author of numerous books on cricket, business, and the working man. His 2006 book, *Asbestos House: the Secret History of James Hardie*, won a variety of prizes. A few weeks after the above interview he delivered a talk, on Prejudice, for Sydney PEN (collected in Tsiolkas 2008).

intellectual disabilities (Mostert 2002); ethicist and animal rights advocate, Peter Singer, and colleague Helga Kuhse, were hardly more aware of the complexities of human life when, in 1985, they advocated euthanasia in *Should this Baby Live? The problem of Handicapped Infants*. Kuhse (2009) and Singer (1990; 1994a; 1994b) have gone on to discuss euthanasia and other ethical questions, in relation to people with disabilities. James Watson, co-discoverer of the DNA double-helix, only three years ago, resigned from the chancellorship of Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory after asserting that black people are biologically inferior to white (*New York Times* 25/10/2007). Watson is also well known for supporting the elimination of 'defective babies', and people with intellectual disability (*New Scientist News Service*: 28/02/2003). Another Nobel Prize laureate, J.M Coetzee, has his Australian character, Elizabeth Costello, consider a comparison of animals with disabled humans an insult – to the animals (Coetzee 2003).

In the specifically Australian context, Haigh's comment, and the lack of reaction to it, demonstrate, I have argued elsewhere (Penhallurick 2008), that intelligence, or perceived and feared lack of it, is so embedded in the Australian identity that it is secreted as one of what Miriam Dixson has called "the imaginary areas of identity downstream of consciousness," areas which "are far too prone to return unbidden and shape our thinking" (Dixson 1999: 2). I return to Haigh's comment here because it is such an open revelation of our usually covert (even from ourselves) beliefs of who is to be allowed to be properly human.

Is it the case, then, that Locke's idiots, and their disruptive power were a 'one-off', an idiosyncratic invention of a single mind at a certain point in time? Is it possible that idiots could only be considered *before* we understood evolution, the mechanisms of adaptation and inheritance? I don't think this is the case, for two very simple reasons. Firstly, as shown above, Darwin's effective exclusion of idiots from considerations of humanness was quite simply wrong. Secondly, as already shown, but reiterated below, Locke's references to idiots, among all other others who made up 'all Mankind' made sense in every way: it was common sense, philosophically and psychologically sensible, metaphysically or ontologically unavoidable. A legitimate, useful, humanness must recognise and encompass variation.

The advantages of Locke's humankind:

The questions of this thesis were, firstly, whether or not people with intellectual disability appeared in Locke's *Essay*, Darwin's *The Descent* and *The Expression of Emotion* simply as illustrative examples, or whether they had an active role or function in these texts. Secondly, this thesis asked, if they were more than casual examples, could the role or roles of idiots (and changelings, and monsters) have been performed by any other example or group? Thirdly, how did the presence, and function, of people with intellectual disability effect and affect the human status of idiots themselves, and the broader concepts of humanness that were produced in, and from, the *Essay*, *The Descent* and *The Expression*?

Clearly, people with intellectual disability (as ideots and changelings) made comment, in the *Essay*, over and above clarifying the characteristics of idiocy itself. My conclusion was, and is, that they had a significant set of *functions* in the development of the secular theory of understanding. The evidence that innate ideas were not universal was effectively dependent on idiocy, and the function of idiots in this argument could not have been performed by any other group of people: while children or the uneducated might develop them, ideots showed, across the life cycle, and in various environments, a clear absence of innate ideas. Similarly, changelings, or those with severe or profound intellectual disability, alongside people with physical anomaly, functioned to challenge another strongly held belief; in this instance, the belief that there were pre-given, identifiable, natural kinds with set qualities or essences, particularly in the category human. Changelings, and monsters, were able to do this in part because they were embedded within a web of human relations. Their role in the upsetting of fixed species boundaries was an irreplaceable one (what other evidence could mount that challenge?), although the outcome for changelings themselves was equivocal.

The synthesis of documented history in Chapter 2 of this thesis shows that Locke inherited an understanding of people with idiocy as part of many levels of the community, even if not necessarily a powerful part. Perhaps on the basis of this acceptance, certainly on the basis of their perceived naturalness, Locke did not separate out people with intellectual disability, but instead combated, and replaced, the theories

of human knowledge that their presence, and ways of faltering, undercut, even disproved. This effectively put people with intellectual disability in an equal position with all other humans, not necessarily in the day to day world of well-being and economy, but in the development of theory: they, like all others, had to be considered. It did not make them social equals or intellectual equals. It did not make them normal: apart from the fact that the concept, normal, did not exist at the time, (and since its inception has applied only to the limited number of people who can occupy the graphic space of the average), Locke clearly thought at least some people with severe intellectual disability were unusual. But their inclusion, and disruptive power, made the concept of human implied by the *Essay* a much less restricted grouping than the popular paradigms of the time, the *animal rationale*, or the potentially perfectible Adamic Man.

In the *Essay* Locke assumed that 'universal' meant 'all': all specimens of a species – in this case humans - had to instance a characteristic for it to be essential to, or an essential marker of, the species. If only some, or even if only almost all, demonstrated the characteristic, there was a chance that it was essential, but there remained a significant chance that it was not. Locke pounded each theory – his own and those of others - with empirical evidence, and concluded that the theory of inscribed knowledge was wanting, while the theory of process learning could be validated, if not proven conclusively on this evidentiary basis. Thus, could only have nominal species, and probable knowledge, but we could learn more over time.

What Darwin did differently from Locke was to take a general theory – evolution by means of natural selection - that he, along with Alfred Wallace, had developed on the basis of empirical evidence, and extend it to another area – evolution of a specific species, humans – for which he had little empirical evidence. His theory may well be correct, but the lack of evidence posed not only a problem for Darwin, it, as aforenoted, convinced Wallace that evolution could not account for the detail of human organs and skills. The lack of evidence, or at least Darwin's determination to paper over it, has also left us with a significant problem today. Faced with no intermediate (humanoid) forms in the fossil record, Darwin turned to the least powerful members of society, carefully gathering second-hand reports of their behaviour, and selecting the description and information that would seem to support his contention that humans had descended from

a progenitor they had in common with other species. Darwin worked at making non-Europeans, women, the mentally ill, and above all, idiots into examples of anything but well-adapted humans. In the climate of social physics, of medical categorisation, of the growth of the asylums that contained and isolated specific groups, with a burgeoning middle class that had little time for those who did not work, idiots could be made to show that some people – already marked and degenerate - would die out, and those of us that were left could, therefore, count on our survival. Darwin emphatically placed idiots on a margin that had hitherto hardly existed, and he made the very existence of a marginal position a biological imperative. Idiots were his best example that species were not discrete, but, in presenting them, along with some of the other aforementioned groups, as examples of reversion to a previous, ancestral type, he very effectively limited who it was that could be properly human. This was underlined by the power of negative selection as an explanatory stand-in for the passing on – or not – of adaptations. The resultant concept of the human is one that has excised all but the most civilised of males.

Yet, Darwin, as Chapter 7 demonstrated, was wrong about idiots, incorrect in both the use and detail of his analogies, blinkered to think that intellectual disability could, let alone should, go away. While modern Darwinism is not (as) dependent on such problematic inclusions and exclusions of evidence - we have, for example, much more of a fossil record today - I have not been concerned in this thesis whether or not natural selection, or any other element of Darwin's theory, was correct. I am aware that modern biology, and other sciences, have amended Darwin's initial formulation. I am also aware that many authors have gone to great pains to emphasise what are the more objective, less eugenic parts of Darwin's theory: Dawkins (1975), for example, plays up the random geographic influences discussed early in the *Origin*, while Gould (1996b) promotes variation. The point to be made is that, even with better evidence and a more sophisticated understanding of evolution, or the mechanisms thereof, what has not been amended is the assumed human that inhabits the theory. The eugenics that arose from the formulations of Darwin, Galton and colleagues has been questioned, analysed, vilified, but Darwin's Man is left to simmer away quietly in the background, as if, as Gould (1996b) has noted, the average-to-above man were the only truly natural human.

This Man, the one whose "corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection" (*Origin* 1876: 428), is male, civilised, white, with no physical or mental deviance from the average, (unless it is toward genius). He is that way because Darwin's theory made it clear that it was essential for the survival (and improvement) of the species as a whole, that people with intellectual disability, savages, and the mentally ill did not survive.

Clearly my argument is that there are significant advantages to Locke's grandly inclusive human. Firstly, Locke implicitly recognises what Darwin should have realised, but didn't, that "[a]rchetypes [specimens such as the bear in a zoo, or the abstract ideal man] engender misperceptions. They feed the illusion that, from the moment of conception, nature had a goal in mind" (Blumberg 2009: 4). It was perhaps the simplicity of archetype that, despite the logically non-linear, non-progressive implications of a theory of change that relies on gradual adaptation to environment and the even more gradual modification of heritable characteristics, seduced Darwin into making the claim at the end of the *Origin* that "Natural Selection, entail[s] Divergence of Character and the Extinction of less-improved forms," and "Thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows" (1872: 429). Such a claim appealed to his audience, reinforcing what the Victorians wanted to think, that the competitive nature of the industrial period was a good thing, that humans, and specifically the new middle-class were at the top of the pack, and had a great future ahead. It also led, eventually, to eugenics.

On the other hand, what Locke's view picks up is that idiocy-as-human is vitally important for the extension of knowledge: for how can we truly know more about humanness, or anything that affects it, or is affected by it, if we begin with assuming the 'truth' of a pre-formed Man, a mature, civilised *animal rationale*, without defect or degeneration, a man who can only represent approximately 10 percent of the population? Acknowledging ideots, and people with physical anomaly, as human – in a non-fixed, non-essentialist, species - challenges preconceptions, as the *Essay* clearly and repeatedly demonstrates. Such challenge is fruitful. As we have seen, it can disrupt beliefs or theories, and force us to examine the possibilities of new ones: if God did not inscribe

knowledge in us, for example, then how come we by it? If there is no divine source of knowledge, how can it be absolute? Conversely, if Darwin had included idiots as properly human, the questions he asked, and his own knowledge, too, may have been broader: he might have been much less reliant on negative selection, he might have properly recognised the implications of his own theory, in particular that "[l]ocal adaptation may as well lead to anatomical simplification as to greater complexity" (Gould 1996b: 139), he might have better understood his own emphasis on variation.

In this thesis, I have shown that Locke did not elide the humans who bore difference at the end of the *Essay*. In fact, he refused to do so, only including the much more uni-dimensional Person in the *Essay* when under critical pressure, and describing that Person in terms of a political Man – as it was realised at the time, an effectively abstract, sub-category of humankind. Clearly there are advantages, too, to understanding that the forensic Person of Book 2, Chapter 27, the Person who also appears in the *Two Treatises* is, as John Yolton (2004) has said, not born, but made. Such a recognition is the beginning of realising that socio-cultural, and political differences, are neither essential, nor demonstrations of the inherent superiority of one group over the other. Such a recognition can be seen in Locke's suggestion that Amerindian King Apochancana might well become a divine or a mathematician, if he had the education for these occupations (1.4.12). Darwin's limited view of human, on the other hand, set savages as biologically-marked reminders of a distant, less well-adapted past. Savages, like idiots, had, as we have seen, vestigial biological and anatomical characteristics; they are also presented as "utterly indifferent to the sufferings of strangers, or even delight in witnessing them;" savages also "take a horrid pleasure in cruelty to animals;" they are also "utter[ly] licentious" (*The Descent* 1882: 117-119). Darwin's information on so-called savages was second-hand, skewed, and often misinterpreted. His faith in civilisation made him thoroughly myopic about cultural difference. With a less near-sighted notion of success, as well as with the acknowledgement of the continued existence of anomalies and impairments, Darwin may have well been able to articulate clearly that one group is not simply better than another, that, as his own theory demanded, adaptation is geographic and environmental, that there is no sensible comparison between people of different backgrounds, that, as Locke noted, an

Amerindian could become a mathematician. Or perhaps, more radically, a civilsed white man might learn something from that same Amerindian.

Above all, if Darwin had counted idiots – among others - as human, his legacy may well have been different. We may not have had the extremes of eugenics that we saw, and many experienced, in World War 2 in Europe, and more recently in Africa, among other places and times. We would most certainly not have been left with the legacy of eugenic theory, and the insidious eugenic yardstick of the biologically adapting, perfectible, male as the background of our consideration of the human. Or as our sole hope for the future.

This is the greatest advantage of Locke's humankind, that it could not have supported eugenics in the first place, and challenges eugenic thinking in the second. Locke himself pointed this out in the discussion of the abbot of St Martin, a babe who would have been "murdered," as Locke himself names what occurs if a strict, anatomically based categorisation of humanness is followed (3.6.26). As he says,

> [s]o uncertain are the Boundaries of *Species* of Animals to us, who have no other Measures, than the complex *Ideas* of our own collecting: And so far are we from certainly knowing what a *Man* is ... I imagine, none of the Definitions of the word *Man*, which we yet have, nor Descriptions of that sort of Animal, are so perfect and exact, as to satisfie a considerate inquisitive Person; much less to obtain a general Consent, and to be that which Men would every where stick by, in the Decision of Cases, and determining of Life and Death ... in Productions that might happen. (3.6.27)

I conclude that it is Darwinian thinking, not Lockean, that leads to, and supports as natural, remarks such as that made by Gideon Haigh, quoted above, that relegate people with intellectual disability to a sub-species, not even worthy of legislative protection. It is Darwinian thinking that enables Khuse and Singer (1988) to argue that euthanasia of a child with Down Syndrome is consistent with (ultilitarian) ethics. They are not 'bad' people: it is the undercurrent of Darwin's legacy that makes it apparently go without saying that the species is better off without people with disability. It is Darwinian thinking that encourages their, and our, acceptance that some humans are perfectible and others disposable, that enables one group to be confident that they have more rights, not only politically, but biologically, to life, than another.

Locke's humankind has the great advantage of being broad, inclusive, sometimes

messy, but filled with possibilities and potentials. What is perhaps more important, if we take on Locke's thinking, we cannot exclude, because definitions change, needs change, we might well be wrong: we can never be sure, with such a nominal, but (almost) all-encompassing human, and humanness, what might happen next, who might be included. We cannot be certain, in part, because biology or anatomy is not a good-enough determiner, any more than is behaviour. Surely this is the 'perfect' understanding of species for an evolutionary perspective to make sense, and to be useful in understanding both our origins and out future.

Where to from here?

I also asked, at the opening of this thesis, if idiots are thought of as human, or not, what does this matter to people with intellectual disability, what does it matter to Locke and Darwin's theses, what does it mean for humankind in general? I conclude that it is self-evident that in a world that treats humans better than any other living creatures, it matters for people with intellectual disability, and their families, that they are included in the group, human. Education, health, social resources are all dependent on the person with idiocy being human. Attitudes, human interaction, are even more so. We have seen the effects of designating one or more groups as less than (properly or fully) human, in the T-4 euthanasia program with which the German hierarchy aimed to eradicate mental defectives of all kinds, prior to, and during the Second World War (Kevles 1985). As Trigg notes: "[i]deas of human nature are not merely of importance to the individual, but radically affect the kind of society we live in and the kind we would want to live in" (1999: 2). The spectre of eugenics, and the constraints of resources and their allocation, means it does, indeed, matter to people with intellectual disability if they are counted human, or not.

I have been more interested, however, to ask whether matters to *every* human whether or not people with idiocy are human. I conclude that positions for or against idiots-as-human would not matter to everyone (although would still matter to people with intellectual disability), if there were simply a fixed species 'human' that people with idiocy could come along and join. 'Including' idiots as human in such a group would be at best an agreement to be kind and compassionate to people whom 'we' did

not think were really part of 'us' - but which, for various reasons we thought it would be better to tag along with us, in the way Darwin suggests we should do for the sake of 'our' noble nature. If we are not a fixed species – something both Locke and Darwin would agreed on – then it matters to all of us if people with intellectual disability are included (or not).

Steve Gould wanted the readers of *Full House*, his book on trends and variation in evolution, (subtitled *The Spread of Excellence from Plato to Darwin)*, to "truly cash out the deepest meaning of the Darwinian revolution," and to "view natural reality as composed of varying individuals in populations – that is, to understand variation itself as irreducible, as 'real' in the sense of 'what the world is made of' " (1996b: 3). He suggested that major path to recognising inherent variability lies in abandoning the "central fallacy" of depicting populations by average or typical values, and thus as abstract essences (1996b: 3-4). Molecular geneticist, Gabriel Dover (2000), agrees with Gould, criticises evolutionary psychology, and the search for universals of human nature. He, too, rejects the average person, quoting Richard Lewontin's example that "if we constructed the average genotype containing the most common alleles at the dozen blood-group genes, only one person in five hundred would possess this 'abstraction' of a gentoype" (Dover 2000: 237). "Not only," he says, "is there a serious difficulty with 'universals' and 'averages' from a genetic perspective, but there is the additional problem of equating the 'average' with the 'normal' "(Dover 2000: 238).

If Gould and Dover are correct, then there is much to be gained for all of us if we abandon the reliance on the average, or better than average, man, and, instead, include variations. If we stop insisting on normalised biology and behaviour, and stop assuming attributes of the body (such as small heads or lowered brows), are indicators of the status, and extent, of our humanness, we can avoid the reductionism of the "naïve ... naturalistic fallacy" of socio-biology or evolutionary psychology (Dupre 2001: 92). We can also prevent ourselves being trapped by "one of the legacies of a century of gene-focused thinking ... a narrowed vision of how development actually happens" (Blumberg 2009: 38). We can recall that much disability is acquired during gestation or, more commonly, at or after birth, and can acknowledge the fact that many ways of being which have a traceable gene (some skin colour, some addictions, some aspects of

intelligence, some mental illness, for example) are only realised when environment and genetic factors interact, sometimes in almost imperceptibly subtle ways. Thus we open up, and value, the study of epigenetics, of environmental interaction, and of social aspects of development (education, family and economic circumstances, aspects of well-being), not as adjuncts to, but as integral parts of our understanding of how we come to be who we are (and will be).

As Locke's *Essay* shows us, inadvertently perhaps, when it is acknowledged we can never know the extent, limits, and indeed limitations, of the species, then humanness is something – or a moveable feast of characteristics - that can only be extracted from an almost infinite collection of individuals, with all the messy relativity this entails. In this kind of species, it is the case that

> [a]nomalies are difficult to ignore; they matter for development and they matter for evolution; they reveal hidden capabilities and processes in individuals and groups, and in bodies and behaviours; and they are indispensable weapons in the battle to break the spell of 'designer thinking.' Thus, despite their characterization as errors of nature, the anomalous – when properly considered – force us to confront and correct those errors in our thinking that often impede scientific insight and progress. (Blumberg 2009: 13)

Thus, we may be able to think outside the square of competitive male behaviour as the essential evolutionary mechanism, and therefore as the singularly most driving human characteristic. We might acknowledge, more than in just passing, that Darwin was a man of his times, and his times were ones that favoured the individual who was prepared to ignore the containment of social and family hierachies and make his way to the top in an increasingly competitive world; Darwin's was a time of winners and loser, not a time to acknowledge co-operation. Understanding Darwin's focus on competition as quite possibly socially pre-determined, rather than scientific, we might, for example, begin to think differently about altruism - an human behaviour Darwinians have recognised, but have struggled to explain (Ridley 1997). We might begin to think, in a more nuanced fashion, of the importance and efficacy of co-operation. We might, too, think of humans as emotional animals, not simply rational ones. Neurologist Antony Damasio (1994, 2000, 2004) certainly thinks this is latter is important. Damasio studies people with neurological trauma, and has found, through attending to the impaired, that reason neither exists or acts alone. Emotions and feelings are involved in thinking an

reasoning. Damasio does not deny that "emotions and feelings can cause havoc in the processes of reasoning under certain circumstances," but has found "[i]t is thus even more surprising and novel that the *absence* of emotion and feeling is no less damaging, no less capable of compromising the rationality that makes us distinctively human" (Damasio 1994: xiv). Reason alone does not make us human; a specific *quantity* of reason does not make us human. Without the hegemony of the rational Man, apparently enshrined not only by history, but also by biology: with, instead, a broad, diverse group of humans as our starting point, we might more readily, and deeply, explore imagination, random thinking, the desire to climb mountains, and make clothing, as being all characteristic of human. After all,

> [t]he world is messy, and nature is unwieldy, unpredictable, and vastly more imaginative than we can ever truly capture – or ward off – with our blemish-free archetypes. Left to its own devices, nature always takes exceptions to the rule, undermines the archetype, and reminds us that our ideas about what is natural and what we should do to correct nature's 'imperfections' are as sound as a sandcastle battered by a rising tide. (Blumberg 2009: 4).

Perhaps, then, it is time to stand up and not so much be counted, as acknowledge that counting is, more often than not, a means of confinement. Integers are, of themselves, single categories that demand specific qualities and boundaries. Acknowledging people with intellectual disability, born, as Locke notes, of other humans, as fully human, and as people to be as considered in what makes us human just as any other person should be considered, is a fruitful way of exploring the fuzzy spaces between the integers. Such spaces can be, as the work of the *Essay* shows, as both theoretically and practically valuable as any space dominated by a single, purportedly solid number. Thus, although coming to the conclusion from a very different perspective and analysis, and having significant quibbles with some of his work, this thesis is in agreement with Steve Gould (1996b) who suggested,

> Darwin's revolution will be completed when we smash the pedestal of arrogance and own the plain implications of evolution for life's nonpredictable nondirectionality ... We grasp at the straw of progress (a desiccated ideological twig) ... We crave progress as our best hope for retaining human arrogance in an evolutionary world. (Gould 1996b: 29)

The analysis, in this thesis, of idiocy in the *Essay,* and in *The Descent* and *The Expression of Emotions*, concludes, then, that there is much to be gained by overcoming

this arrogance, in questioning the current "genocentric attitude," fuelled "by an intolerance for ambiguity," and in breaking apart and challenging the "dichotomies to help us divide the world into neat, unambiguous categories" (Blumberg 2009: 191-192). I conclude that, in the *Essay*, Locke 'was on to something'; it is extraordinarily important to recognise our knowledge of the essence of humanness is nominal, variable, culturally constructed, transitory, and that humanness must therefore be as inclusive as possible. Eugenics cannot readily thrive when there no One Human, and, in particular, when there is no ideal. Knowledge, on the other hand, as the *Essay* shows us, can flourish when there are many humans. It is far better to recognise and enjoy the fact that "[a]mbiguity unsettles us" (Blumberg 2009: 191), than to set a standard of humanness to which very few can conform. A mature woman or man is perhaps adequate for the purposes of discussing specifics, if this presupposed and preformed Person is acknowledged, and generalisations and inferences on the basis of her/him are avoided. A broad, diverse, flexible, bundle of youthful, aging, and imperfect people is essential for any consideration of humanness, whether it be human understanding, origins, or, most particularly, future.

Appendix

Who are people with intellectual disability?

Below are descriptions of five people, all of whom have diagnoses of intellectual disability. Each of those descriptions is based on a person or persons with whom I have worked (that is, some are composite, all have identifying features removed). I have either 'diagnosed' each of these people, or am very familiar with their formal diagnosis, made by another professional. These descriptions are intended to aid the reader, unfamiliar with people with intellectual disability, have some idea of whom it was both Locke and Darwin were referring to.

Anton Zagler.

Anton became a Christian at sixteen years of age. His mother disapproved of the choice of religion; she would have preferred Buddhism, but was pleased he had found a purpose. Anton particularly enjoyed the youth fellowship meetings. Trouble brewed fairly quickly, though. The other young people in the church group, were confused by Anton: he has cerebral palsy, which affects his speech, as well as twists his body and make his gait and hand movements unusual. He was also very eager to make friends and attached himself to people who were older, or with whom he had little in common. He took out his frustration on his mother and his four siblings, and the chickens, chasing them so hard some died. Once he was accused of stalking at a camp and it took some time to sort out what was going on. It seems that he did follow a couple of girls and could not explain himself when challenged. Anton has significant learning disabilities. He can read a little, but not unfamiliar words. His language comprehension is fine for the day to day – he follows clear instructions, comprehends the notion of God, but the concept of 'stalking' was hard for him to understand. He was shocked when he got the idea. Anton is now in his late twenties, has wanted a close companion for years but has never had a girlfriend, and has no close male friends. Anton is now an uncle several times over. There are no other kids with disabilities in the family.

Diagnosis: Spastic quadraplegia. Mild to moderate severity. Oral dyspraxia. Aetiology unknown (anoxia of pregnancy?) Ambulatory. Lower mild range intellectual disability (Assessed IQ range 55-65).

John and Mark Mitchell.

There are two Mitchell boys, the first conceived when their parents were not really old enough to commit themselves for life. When the pregnancy became apparent, they married because that was the honourable thing to do. Less than two years later the second boy was born. Both were full term unproblematic pregnancies, good birth weight, good-looking babies. They were both reasonably active infants, but by the time the second boy arrived the neighbours were starting to notice that John, the first, was a fey child, withdrawn, not talking. His parents put it down to the arrival of Mark. Both John and Mark were slow on developmental milestones, but eventually sat, crawled and walked near enough to 'within normal limits'. Their babbling and first words were more noticeably delayed and presented problems with intelligibility. The doctor told Mrs Mitchell that the boys were fine, they'd catch up. Everyone agreed they were handsome children.

By the time the older boy was at school it was clear there'd been too much optimism, and not enough support for the family which was beginning to struggle. Both the boys were a 'handful,' and the parents were still only in their mid-twenties. Hard working, aspirational people, determined to do well. Fast forward a few years, and the father has worked hard, and some services are now available in the mid-sized town they live in. The boys attend a 'special' unit in the local school, the parents have done reasonably well financially, and are putting money aside to buy a flat for John and Mark to live in when they leave home. They are aiming for a 'normal' life for all. John, and then Mark, go to work in a facility that supports people with disabilities. In their early 20s they are handsome young men, remarkably alike to look at, although the older brother is taller, and broader across the shoulders. They are good workers when they have clear supervision, and a single task to do. However, they rub each other the wrong way, and have to be placed in different areas (difficult in the small place). Living together is

proving problematic, even though their parents drop in twice a day with shopping, meals and other support.

I met John when he was in his late 20s, so all the above was reported by the parents, bits by John, or taken from file notes. By then John was living in private, supported accommodation. Not long after meeting John, I saw Mark in the street outside a boarding house in the same area. I was confused; he was John, but not-quite. He laughed when I asked, "John?", obviously, as it turned out, used to people mixing him up with his brother. But he didn't explain. In fact, Mark has a significant difficulty with knowing what information people need. He doesn't easily understand that not everyone knows he has a brother, for example, and his stutter impedes communication of this fact when he is encouraged to explain. John is a better talker but is quite shy and hesitant, Mark is forthcoming but even once his stutter is overcome, only the first few words of what he says are generally intelligible. Both brothers have language comprehension problems – they don't comprehend 'wh' questions, for example, and so will answer are "where do you want to go?" question with the name of the person they want to go with, or a "how much do you want?" with a 'no' or a 'yes' because they comprehend the 'want' with its question inflection but not the 'how much'. Whenever either of the brothers goes into a shop, they are faced with the rapid rise in tension when they try to get their message across: their external appearance is 'ordinary,' but their speech is peculiar, their responses to questions odd and erratic, and thus they can seem wilfully rude. Often they don't get what they want. Often people stare. Some people laugh. With Mark this can lead to combatative behaviour, while John can wear people's patience down by trying really hard to please.

Now approaching middle age, both these men can only travel independently on very limited routes, neither can write their own name, despite more than thirty years of people trying to teach them how, neither have a concept of how to manage their own finances (neither can add up more than single digits), John holds down 'supported employment,' while Mark is now living in a large 'group home' and attends recreational day programs. His various stints in employment don't last. He is easily aggravated and tends to hit out, and then become rather insistently apologetic. John was in a homosexual relationship,

but his family intervened, as they did not approve. Mark has a girlfriend who also lives in the group home, but sex is a problem for reasons outside our concerns here.
Mr and Mrs Mitchell have had genetic testing, although this was some time ago and perhaps there are newer tests that might find some genetic anomaly. There are plenty of cousins and other generations of family around, with no other similar kids. Neither parent drinks. The father was once a smoker. Both parents were almost age 20 when the older child was born, a healthy age to have children. They are now in their early sixties, and while not without health issues, have no degenerative conditions. Although the marriage may not be ideal, the parents remain committed to each other and very committed to their two children: there is no hint of abuse or neglect, although it is known the father was very strict. Fortunately the parents seem long ago to have stopped asking 'why' and get on with loving their kids, as their kids.

Diagnosis:
John: lower mild to upper moderate level intellectual disability. Speech and language delay/impairment. Mild behaviour disorders.
Mark: Moderate intellectual disability, with challenging behaviours. Significant speech impairment. Significant language comprehension disabilities.

Sharon Clarke.

Sharon stands in the middle of the room, smiling. She pirouettes as Heather enters.
"See," she says. "New shorts".

"You can't wear those," Heather says, cheerful but adamant.

Sharon still smiles.

"Sharon, it's the middle of winter."

It's true, Sharon's choice of clothing – very short, very tight, very brightly coloured, swirl-patterned shorts, teamed with a striped t-shirt half covered by an oversized red cardigan which hitches itself up on her bottom - defies a certain logic, at least in relation to the weather. Clearly however, in Sharon's eyes neither the individual garments, nor the combination thereof, deny aesthetic.

Heather continues trying to convince Sharon that her clothes are 'not appropriate'. She's getting somewhere until she says: "They're too short, everyone will look at you."

At this, Sharon emits a supremely satisfied sigh, crosses her arms over her breasts and grins from ear to ear. "Yeah".

This is the fact of the matter, as say the politicians and bureaucrats, many of whom will make decisions on Sharon's behalf, few of whom will ever do more than shake the hand of someone whom they judge to be like her, and then probably only when a photo-opportunity presents itself. The fact of the matter is that Sharon wants to be, desires to be, thrives on being, looked-at. Despite scare campaigns around sexual assault, and despite being at an age when many women talk of 'acceptance' for 'becoming invisible,' Sharon wants to be the object of the gaze. Years of feminism make me curious about this behaviour. Is it, after all, instinctive? Or is it a learned behaviour that has the reinforcement of making her feel more attractive? After several years of knowing Sharon I suspect that it is learned, but that it is much deeper and more important than feeling attractive in any sexualised sense. Sharon has moderate intellectual disability and it shows. Her smile is gorgeous, engaging, but her teeth are buck, she loves to dance but her muscle tone is low so she tends to shuffle, she likes stylish 'specs' (her word) but her glasses always dirty and always askew. She also has some degree of schizophrenia which responds well to medication but at other times can make her paranoid, easy to startle, and aggressive. When she is happy and goes out dressed up in the vibrant colours she prefers, eyes turn to her *before* they register her disability. She grins, before the eyes turn away, (embarrassed, confused), and Sharon gains a sense of being-in-the-world. When she is looked at for her clothing, Sharon, my guess is, feels more *real* than much of the rest of the time.

There are times when Sharon won't go out at all, that she is sure there is a man just outside her window or her door. Intermittently, she reports she has been attacked. The (graphic) details of the attack are always the same. For many years, this resulted in a high level of interaction with police, intervention by community service staff, and Sharon being regularly removed from one residence to another. Few, if any, staff consulted either Laura's files, or her previous caregivers; with all the best intentions, she

continued to be moved away from apparently dangerous situations, became increasingly disorientated, lost friendships, and continuity of care. Recently, she has been treated for schizophrenia and her quality of life appears to have significantly improved.

Sharon, I admit, is one of my favourite clients of all time. She is quick-witted in a funny kind of way. She can't read or write (many have tried to teach her), add up, remember days of the week, but she's got a great sense of humour. We have a lot in common. From working class backgrounds, with strong family connections, we both like to bargain-hunt, hang around in coffee shops, chatting with friends or just watching the world. We both dream of living in a house with a deep verandah by the beach (I admit to being amazed when Sharon described this fantasy to me), like to dress up, like nail polish and bright colours. The differences are, however, enormous. To begin with no one stops me wearing what I want; more importantly I wasn't taken from my parents and put in an institution when I was six or seven. I can earn a good living, have children, drive a car, and so on. Sharon is one of 12 or 13 children, no one seems to be sure exactly how many. At least eight of the children were institutionalised. The removal was based in the family's economic difficulties, more than anything. It seems the parents probably had mild intellectual disability, and found it hard to deal with the large number of fairly unruly young children they had. A close friend and advocate for the family does not know if there was ever any contraceptive or genetic counselling. The family – although not Sharon herself – identifies as Aboriginal Australian, although it should be noted that there are many more genetic traces other than the indigenous. At least 75% of their genes are from various 'whitefella' gene pools.

Diagnosis:
Moderate intellectual disability, paranoid schizophrenia.

Charlie Campion:

There are a lot of records on Charlie, in thick brown files. Charlie has been a 'behaviour problem' for much of his life. His mother was killed in a car accident when he was in

early adolescence, which increased his interaction with government departments. All the records agree that Charlie was 'normal' until about two years of age. He was walking and beginning to talk. By three years of age he was crawling around on all fours. By four he was either stoically refusing to move, or suddenly standing and jumping up and down, up and down, up and down. This was accompanied by a loud hooting sound.

When I first met Charlie he was doing exactly that. He was also 22 and very, very big. He had broken the arm of another person some months before, and had been placed in a locked ward in one of the large old, hospital style institutions. While there his behaviour was exemplary; he was soon moved to a smaller unit on the same premises. While there he was consistently 'compliant.' according to the nurses records. Once back in the small, suburban home he shares with four other people, and far more staff, Charlie became less 'compliant' than he had been in the stricter institution. His group home manager did not like what he called 'rules' or 'routines'. Charlie's autistic characteristics found the lack of structure very confusing. He didn't hurt anyone but the house manager insisted he was too dangerous to have in such a small environment. I was called in to help deal with this situation.

Charlie recognises his name and the names of some familiar objects, although he does not always respond when spoken to. He usually follows very familiar directions such as "come and have tea, Charlie." Charlie has no speech, but vocalises much of the time. Often it is difficult to work out if this vocalisation is communication. He uses very little body language, rarely makes eye contact and rarely changes what he is doing when spoken to. However, he shows pleasure when going out for a walk – he smiles to himself, moves quickly, will sometimes take the arm of the person walking with him, and generally gives off an aura of being pleased. He is quite charming at these times. When distressed Charlie goes back to jumping up and down, with great speed, and with a very high-pitched sound. He will sometimes hit out at people who approach him too closely at these times.

His mother's sister is Charlie's guardian, and she and her husband take an active interest in his well-being. His cousins see little of him. He also had a friend, a previous caregiver who takes him to her home for weekends, and the occasional longer stay. He seems to

recognise his aunt, who lives some distance away, and clearly knows the friend. He becomes excited when she arrived. However, he clearly did not like the people he was sharing a house with, and the staff were just as clearly frightened of Charlie.

Eventually the house manager prevailed and Charlie was moved. Fortunately also the family were strong advocates and he was able to find a place nearer to them. The last I heard was that he was settled and apparently happy.

Diagnosis: Severe-profound intellectual disability. Severe autistic spectrum disorder. Severe challenging behaviours. No known aetiology (onset at approximately two years of age consistent with developmental autism). Note: no details of father's family history available.

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