



ODDĚLENÍ PRO STUDIUM NOVOVĚKÉ RACIONALITY / FILOSOFICKÝ ÚSTAV AV ČR  
DEPARTMENT FOR THE STUDY OF MODERN RATIONALITY / INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY CAS

# PŘEDNÁŠKOVÁ SÉRIE LECTURE SERIES



Prof. James Hill (Charles University, Prague)

## Locke's Person as 'Thinking Matter'

The concept of the person plays a central role in Locke's theoretical and practical philosophy, and his theory of personal identity remains influential in contemporary philosophy. Often we find Locke's person interpreted in a strongly mentalistic way to refer only to a thinking principle in abstraction from the living body. I shall argue that this is profoundly mistaken view of the intention and substance of Locke's theory. In fact, Locke is motivated to introduce the concept of a person in order to defend his claim that 'fitly disposed' matter might think. His concern is to show how this doctrine of 'thinking matter' is no threat to morality and, indeed, how the continuity of the moral subject in no way requires the metaphysical doctrine of an immaterial soul. However, this is not to say that Locke is a materialist. Rather his position, as expounded in letters to Leibniz by his close friend and colleague Lady Masham, amounts to a form of neutral monism.

**Wednesday 12/03/2025 | 16:00 CET**

Meeting room 124a, Institute of Philosophy CAS, Jilská 1, Prague 1