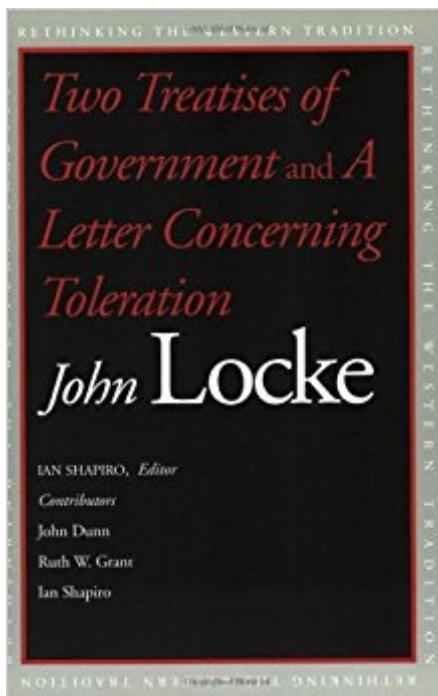


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# Two Treatises Of Government And A Letter Concerning Toleration



## Synopsis

Among the most influential writings in the history of Western political thought, John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* and *A Letter Concerning Toleration* remain vital to political debates today, more than three centuries after they were written. The complete texts appear in this volume, accompanied by interpretive essays by three prominent Locke scholars. Ian Shapiro's introduction places Locke's political writings in historical and biographical context. John Dunn explores both the intellectual context in which Locke wrote the *Two Treatises of Government* and *A Letter Concerning Toleration* and the major interpretive controversies surrounding their meaning. Ruth Grant offers a comprehensive discussion of Locke's views on women and the family, and Shapiro contributes an essay on the democratic elements of Locke's political theory. Taken together, the texts and essays in this volume offer invaluable insights into the history of ideas and the enduring influence of Locke's political thought.

## Book Information

Series: Rethinking the Western Tradition

Paperback: 384 pages

Publisher: Yale University Press; Edition Unstated edition (December 1, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 9780300100181

ISBN-13: 978-0300100181

ASIN: 0300100183

Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 5.3 x 1 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 199 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #56,579 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #131 in Books > Textbooks > Social Sciences > Political Science > Political History #174 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Political #449 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Political Science > History & Theory

## Customer Reviews

"The new standard edition of Locke for students of political theory. Dunn, Grant, and Shapiro combine authoritative historical scholarship and contemporary political theory to give us Locke for our time." —Elisabeth H. Ellis, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Texas A&M University  
"In criticisms of liberalism over the past two decades, the political philosophy of

John Locke has been denigrated as hopelessly old-fashioned, and even downright conservative. John Dunn, Ruth Grant, and especially, Ian Shapiro present Locke to us afresh. They recover precisely the progressively innovative, and even radically democratic quality of Lockean political thought."•John P. McCormick, University of Chicago "An elegant edition of three of Locke's works that have been too infrequently published together. The accompanying essays, with their additional secondary source references, and delightful index, make it all the more useful for both teaching and research."•Judith A. Swenson, Boston University

### Rethinking the Western Tradition Series

Great product. (This is a review of the recording by Knowledge Products, in its Giants of Political Thought series, part of its Audio Classics series, of John Locke's Two Treatises of Government.) This product explains in a very interesting manner the political context of 17th century Britain, in which Locke's two treatises were written. They were not written purely as a theoretical tract. They were actually written during revolutionary plots in which Locke was participating. He was no armchair political theorist. He was knee deep in revolutionary intrigue. This product also discusses the FIRST treatise of government -- on ecclesiastical government, which is rarely read or discussed. It's fascinating. George H. Smith did a great job in writing the script of this work on Locke and his two treatises. This product is recorded professionally by professional voice actors, with a full cast of actors. This makes it more interesting to listen to. I have listened to it probably a dozen times. Each time, I find something interesting.

It is well known, of course, that John Locke was a major inspiration behind the Founding Fathers. With this book, it is easy to understand why. In the "First Essay On Government", Locke takes the argument of the "divine right" of kings--and uses a brilliant, clever, and effective combination of Biblical theology and logical argument to completely obliterate that concept. With that out of the way, Locke turned to write his "Second Essay On Civil Government", where the question is asked: Now that we have disproved any "entitlement" to royalty...where do we go from here? What is the basis for governing a civil society? The major highlight of this treatise is Chapter 2, in which Locke formally establishes the doctrine of Natural Rights. He starts with the natural state of Man, leading up to the necessary elements of Man's existence--the philosophical necessities, of course, being "rights". There is an interesting moment where Locke questions whether a citizen of one society should ever be punished for breaking the laws of another society, even if said citizen is IN that other

society. It's worth noting that Locke was quick to note that it is a QUESTION, not a statement of belief. Perhaps it's his idea of a "modest proposal". Contrary to popular belief, Locke is not a "Poor Man's Hobbes" or a "Confused Man's Hobbes". Locke's views on rights and Liberty have quite a few differences from Hobbes's: while often subtle, they are very important, indeed. It becomes clear while reading Locke's prescriptions for government--including the people's rights to alter or abolish it--that Locke would not have recommended an authoritarian government of the likes of the Leviathan! Finally, there is "A Letter Concerning Toleration". Here, Locke tackles the issue of "separation of church and state". He discusses what it truly means...and how it does NOT mean the weakening of religion that secular progressives of the Left desire it to mean. To the contrary, abolishing a state religion, Locke argues, actually should STRENGTHEN the religious element of a free society. John Locke was, in short, a man years ahead of his time. It is a tragedy that few, if any, in government have seemed willing to listen to him.

To be honest, the only reason why I gave this so many stars was because it was a product that spurred wide spread enlightenment thinking. He has society challenging ideas on how a master ought to treat a servant, that women and men ought to divorce if they so choose after their children reach the age of reason, as well as the idea of the corruption of absolute/arbitrary power. On the other side, there is A LOT of repetition as well as a silly notion that only those who consented to unjust war are at risk of slavery/death, deciding who was consensual and who wasn't would require some mind reading.

Wow! Where has this book been hiding? Why isn't the 2nd Treatise required reading in every High School? As I read this book I kept running into familiar phrases and ideas from America's founding era. It completely destroys the credibility of a king (or any politician, even if elected) who claims authority to rule over other people. I especially liked Chapter 2 of the 2nd treatise, only 9 pages, which explains the concept of equality and natural law. We are all born into a state of nature, no one wants to submit his life to another's will, therefore no one should want to impose his will on another, because we are all of the same human nature. It really solidifies the "why" of respect and tolerance for our fellow man. It's a slow, hard read (for me), but well worth it to understand how America, using some simple truths, changed the course of human history. I was patriotic before, but now I know WHY I'm so lucky to be American, I can explain it. I see these ideas in the first 4 sentences of the Declaration of Independence. Please read Chapter 2 (9 pages) of the 2nd Treatise at a library, even if you don't read the whole book.

This is John Locke in the raw, without the mass of commentary, description and interpretation provided in many other copies.

Two Treatises of Government by John LockePublished Everyman Library... Best books ever written at lowest possible price that everyone should read. When Monarchs ruled the world they wanted God's approval and used the likes of Sir Robert Filmer to twist the Bible and justify tyranny. Two Treatises demolished the divine right of rulers. It is an exhaustive analysis that silences every possible argument by the Bible. The book shows we are designed by God to be free..... Topics: property rights, rights of women & children, the need for economic prosperity for society, need for separation of powers. America is free in part because of John Locke's courage. He was an inspiration for The Declaration of Independence, and other founding documents. John Locke shows the importance of not letting our freedom erode away bit by bit. Freedom is not free, it has to be safeguarded and defended. Reading this book is exercising your mind. He is brilliant. Everyone needs this knowledge to defend our God given freedom.

Good read

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