

History of Modern Philosophy: Locke Reading List

Locke's Works

Undergraduates writing weekly essays and preparing for examination questions are unlikely to need to look at anything other than the *Essay concerning Human Understanding*. There are many editions of this, some abridged, which can be used, Perhaps the cheapest and most easily available being the Everyman edition edited by John Yolton and the Penguin edited by Roger Woolhouse. For more advanced study the only satisfactory version is the one edited by Peter Nidditch (OUP); this contains both a very accurate text and full details of all the changes that Locke made after the first (1690) edition.

Graduates taking the MA or the MPhil and undergraduates presubmitting essays or writing dissertations may find it useful to look at other material. There is a mass of interesting and still often unexploited material in the three very long letters that Locke wrote to Edward Stillingfleet in 1697–9. There is no modern edition of these, but they are included in all the old collected editions of Locke's works, of which the 1823 edition is probably the most widely available. These editions also contain two works originally planned as part of the *Essay*, the *Conduct of the Understanding* and the *Examination of Malebranche*.

Books on Locke

There are so many books on Locke that no-one other than a specialist can be expected to read more than a small proportion of them. E. J. Lowe, *Locke on Human Understanding* (Routledge) is an elementary introduction. J. L. Mackie, *Problems from Locke* (OUP) is a little more advanced; it is often interesting but deeply unhistorical in approach. Roger Woolhouse, *Locke* (Harvester) pays more attention to the context in which Locke wrote, but perhaps the best introduction is Nicholas Jolley, *Locke: his Philosophical Thought* (OUP). Jonathan Bennett, *Locke, Berkeley, Hume* (OUP) is lively but sometimes brutal in its interpretative approach; the same characteristics are present in his more recent *Learning from Six Philosophers* (OUP). The most elaborate and demanding recent book on Locke's philosophy is Michael Ayers, *Locke* (Routledge); it is densely written and often difficult, but is always intelligent and frequently rewarding. Vere Chappell (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Locke* (CUP) contains chapters by a number of specialists, with a very full bibliography.

More specialised books on particular aspects of Locke's philosophy include Nicholas Jolley, *Leibniz and Locke* (OUP), a study of Leibniz's *New Essays on Human Understanding*. (*Leibniz's New Essays* are available in a translation by Jonathan Bennett and Peter Remnant (CUP); they are particularly valuable for the debate on innate ideas). Peter Alexander, *Ideas, Qualities and Corpuscles* (CUP) has an extremely thorough discussion of the primary–secondary quality distinction.

Collections of Articles

The most recent collection (with a very good up-to-date bibliography) is Vere Chappell (ed.), *Locke in the Oxford Readings in Philosophy series* (OUP); an earlier but still valuable volume in the same series is Ian Tipton (ed.), *Locke on Human Understanding*. Both are aimed at the student market, as was another

still older collection, D. M. Armstrong and C. B. Martin (eds), *Locke and Berkeley* (Macmillan). A much more extensive collection of reprinted journal articles is the four volumes of Richard Ashcraft, (ed.), *John Locke: Critical Assessments*, (Routledge).

There are a number of volumes of published essays on Locke, which tend to vary considerably in both level and quality. They include, John Yolton. (ed.), *John Locke, Problems and Perspectives* (CUP), Reinhard Brandt (ed.), *John Locke: Symposium Wolfenbüttel* (De Gruyter), G. A. J. Rogers (ed.), *Locke's Philosophy: Content and Context* (OUP) and M. A. Stewart (ed.), *English Philosophy in the Age of Locke* (OUP).

Reading on Individual Topics

In the reading listed below no reference to the general books on Locke already cited, though many of these will contain material relevant to each topic: for example on personal identity there are chapters in Jolley, Mackie, Woolhouse etc.

1. The Essay concerning Human Understanding and Locke's philosophical project

Essay concerning Human Understanding, Book I ch. 1.

Gilbert Ryle, 'John Locke on the Human Understanding', in Ryle's *Collected Papers*, vol. I pp. 126–46; also in Armstrong and Martin, *Locke and Berkeley*.

2. The attack on innate principles and its consequences

Essay concerning Human Understanding, Book I, ch. 2–4.

Robert M. Adams, 'The Locke–Leibniz debate' in Stephen Stich (ed.), *Innate Ideas*, pp. 37–67.

Robert M. Adams, 'Where do our ideas come from?–Descartes vs. Locke' in Stephen Stich (ed.), *Innate Ideas*, pp. 71–87.

Margaret Atherton, 'Locke and the Issue over Innateness', in Vere Chappell (ed.), *Locke*, pp. 48–59.

3. Ideas and empiricism

Essay concerning Human Understanding, Book II chs. 1–3.

Peter Alexander, *Ideas, Qualities and Corpuscles*, ch. 4.

Gregory McCulloch, *The Mind and its World*, ch. 2 ('Locke and the theory of ideas')

4. The corpuscularian philosophy and the distinction between primary and secondary qualities

Essay concerning Human Understanding, Book II, chs. 4, 8.

E. M. Curley, 'Locke, Boyle and the Distinction between Primary and Secondary Qualities'

Philosophical Review 81 (1972), pp. 438–64.; reply by Peter Alexander, *Philosophical Review* 93 (1974), pp. 229–37.

A. D. Smith, 'Of Primary and Secondary Qualities', *Philosophical Review* 99 (1991), pp. 221–54.

5. Substance

Essay concerning Human Understanding, Book II, ch. 13, §§17–20; ch. 23, esp. §§ 1–14.

M. R. Ayers, 'The Ideas of Power and Substance in Locke's Philosophy', *Philosophical Quarterly* 25 (1975), pp. 1–27; reprinted in Tipton.

M. R. Ayers, 'The Foundations of Knowledge and the Logic of Substance: The Structure of Locke's General Philosophy', in G. A. J. Rogers (ed.), *Locke's Philosophy: Content and Context*, pp. 49–74.

Peter Alexander, *Ideas, Qualities and Corpuscles*, ch. 11.

6. Personal identity, and identity in general

Essay concerning Human Understanding, Book II, ch. 28.

William Alston, 'Locke on People and Substances' *Philosophical Review* 97 (1988), pp. 25–46.

Margaret Atherton, 'Locke's Theory of Personal Identity', *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 14 (1984), pp. 273–93.

Edwin McCann, 'Locke on Identity: Matter, Life and Consciousness', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 69 (1987), pp. 54–77. Reprinted in M. Atherton, *The Empiricists: Critical Essays*

Harold Noonan, 'Locke on Personal Identity', *Philosophy* 53 (1978), pp. 343–52.

Kenneth Winkler, 'Locke on Personal Identity' *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 29 (1991), pp. 201–26.

7. Universals, particulars and abstract general ideas; real and nominal essences

Essay concerning Human Understanding, Book III. Almost the whole book is relevant, but chs. 3 and 6 are of particular importance.

E. J. Ashworth, 'Locke on Language', *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 14 (1984), pp. 45–73. Reprinted in Chappell, *Locke*.

Margaret Atherton, 'the Inessentiality of Lockean Essences' *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 14 (1984), pp. 277–93. Reprinted in Chappell, *Locke*.

Michael Losonsky, 'Locke on Meaning and Signification', in G. A. J. Rogers (ed.), *Locke's Philosophy: Content and Context*, pp. 123–42.

J. R. Milton, 'Locke and the Nominalist Tradition', in *John Locke: Symposium Wolfenbüttel 1979* ed. Reinhardt Brandt, pp. 128–45. Reprinted in Chappell, *Locke*.

8. The limits of human knowledge

Essay concerning Human Understanding, Book IV, chs. 1–3, 6, 11–12.

Margaret Atherton, 'Knowledge of Substance and Knowledge of Essence in Locke's Essay', *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 1 (1984), pp. 413–28.

Nicholas Wolterstorff, *John Locke and the Ethics of Belief*, pp. 1–59.

John W. Yolton, John Locke and the Way of Ideas, ch. 3.