

STUDIES ON LOCKE:  
SOURCES, CONTEMPORARIES, AND LEGACY

ARCHIVES INTERNATIONALES D'HISTOIRE DES IDÉES

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197

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In Honour of G.A.J. Rogers

*Edited by*

Sarah Hutton • Paul Schuurman

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# Studies on Locke: Sources, Contemporaries, and Legacy

In Honour of G.A.J. Rogers

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# Foreword

**John Cottingham**

In the anglophone philosophical world, there has, for some time, been a curious relationship between the history of philosophy and contemporary philosophical inquiry. Many philosophers working today virtually ignore the history of their subject, apparently regarding it as an antiquarian pursuit with little relevance to their “cutting-edge” research. Conversely, there are historians of philosophy who seldom if ever concern themselves with the intricate technical debates that fill the journals devoted to modern analytic philosophy. Both sides are surely the poorer for this strange bifurcation. For philosophy, like all parts of our intellectual culture, did not come into existence out of nowhere, but was shaped and nurtured by a long tradition; in uncovering the roots of that tradition we begin see current philosophical problems in a broader context and thereby enrich our understanding of their significance. This is surely part of the justification for the practice, in almost every university, of including elements from the history of philosophy as a basic part of the undergraduate curriculum. But understanding is enriched by looking forwards as well as backwards, which is why a good historian of philosophy will not just be concerned with uncovering ancient ideas, but will be constantly alert to how those ideas prefigure and anticipate later developments. By engaging in a dynamic dialogue with the past, we gain a fuller sense of who we now are, and in this sense the history of philosophy has a vital role to play in the “examined life”, by helping to develop that critical self-awareness which Socrates identified as the goal of all philosophical inquiry.

For these, and many other reasons, the vigorous growth of scholarship in the history of philosophy in recent years is greatly to be welcomed, and, in Britain, G.A.J. Rogers has played a very significant part in fostering a climate favourable to such growth. It is therefore a pleasure and a privilege for me to have been asked to write a short foreword to this volume honouring his work. As Chairman of the British Society for the History of Philosophy from 1991-5, I was able to see at first hand what a vital role John Rogers played in the work of the Society; its annual conferences and other activities not only kept the history of philosophy strongly alive in the UK, but strengthened a host of valuable links between British scholars and those working in Continental Europe, North America and the rest of the world. One great joy of working in the history of philosophy is its genuinely international dimension. The radical disparities of methodology and style, which still to a considerable extent

divide contemporary “analytic” and “continental” practitioners seem to melt away once one goes back a century or more, so that when philosophers from diverse backgrounds leave behind Quine and Derrida, and sit down to hear papers on Kant or Descartes, they are able to tread common ground. The several different nationalities of the contributors to this volume testify to that catholicity in the study of history of philosophy, which is such a welcome contrast to the cliquishness found in some other areas of philosophical research.

To expatiate on John Rogers’ own particular contribution to the history of ideas would greatly exceed the space allowed for a brief forward of this kind. He has, of course, made the early-modern period especially his own, and, within that period, the philosophy of Locke has been his abiding interest; all the papers in this collection reflect the first focus of interest, and many of them the second. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are periods of particular richness for our philosophical culture, not just because the ideas developed then laid the foundations for modernity, but because of the striking continuities that linked the ideas of the early-modern writers with those of their classical forebears. The period that followed the Renaissance had a peculiar intellectual richness, since its philosophers broke strikingly new ground while at the same time being steeped in the newly revived ideas of antiquity. With an ease and familiarity that has long since ceased to be possible for us moderns, they were able to work out their new ideas while drawing on the philosophical frameworks of Stoicism, Epicureanism, Platonism and Aristotelianism. That extraordinary fertility of early-modern thought, in its reference back in time as well as its prefiguring of the future, is, again, captured in many of the essays printed here. Another feature of the collection, which also reflects John Rogers’ own work, is the range of philosophical areas covered—political, religious, ethical, scientific, epistemological; in our own more fragmented philosophical culture, it is not without nostalgia that we look back on a period when philosophers like Locke could write seriously and systematically in so many branches of inquiry that have now become the preserve of specialists.

A final feature of this volume which deserves mention, and which is also a fitting tribute to its honorand, is the meticulous precision and detail with which the various texts and sources are treated. Our modern academic environment is one of complex Byzantine struggles for the allocation of funding and resources, and in-fighting its professional corner the history of philosophy has strong ammunition in the high standards of scholarship for which its practitioners are rightly known. Of crucial importance in this connection has been the establishment of the *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* as a major international quarterly; this has been an invaluable scholarly vehicle for those working in the subject during the past two decades, and the role of John Rogers has of course been absolutely central here. Not only has his vision and administrative efficiency been vital from the early days of the launch of the journal, but also (as noted by Michael Ayers in his essay in this volume) many scholars have cause to thank John Rogers for the help and guidance they have received as a result of his editorial labours. Though the *BJHP* constitutes a continuing visible sign of John’s service to the history of philosophy, the present volume is a more special and particular tribute to his work, and I am sure that the



reader will find, in the richness and variety of the papers gathered here, ample evidence of the flourishing current state of the subject, to which he has himself so signally contributed.

University of Reading, England  
November 2007

John Cottingham

# Editors' Introduction

**Sarah Hutton and Paul Schuurman**

This collection of new essays on John Locke (1632-1704) reflects the fact that he was very much a responsive philosopher. His groundbreaking work in epistemology, philosophy of science, political philosophy, theory of education and theology was produced in response to his predecessors and in friendly or polemical dialogue with contemporary thinkers. Locke, however, is a figure who is often studied in isolation from his contemporaries and in terms of his contribution to particular thematic developments in the history of philosophy and political thought. His legacy is fragmented by the separate disciplinary categories by which work is classified nowadays (epistemology, political thought, religious toleration and history of education) and his legacy is also divided by the chronological boundaries which separate seventeenth from eighteenth-century history. The present collection of essays views Locke not in isolation from his times, but alongside those thinkers to whom he responded, or who were engaged either directly with him or with the same sets of problems. Abandoning the traditional compartmentalization of his writings, we emphasise Locke's links to his contemporaries and near contemporaries. A major emphasis of the collection is the relationship between Locke and seventeenth-century philosophers, Descartes, Hobbes, Cudworth, Bayle, Malebranche and Leibniz. Also represented here are members of his circle, like Pierre Coste and William Popple. And coverage is given to some of the early reactions to his philosophy, from the negative assessment of one of his earliest critics, Thomas Beconsall and the reception of aspects of his thought by two very different eighteenth-century thinkers, Rousseau and Kant.

As Victor Nuovo reminds us, Locke was educated in the classics. Among classical philosophies, Stoicism is the one which appears to have strongest affinities with Locke's philosophy. Nuovo's opening essay examines the evidence for the impact of Stoicism on Locke's thought. He identifies a number of characteristically Stoic themes in Locke's philosophy (the relationship of God to nature, the origin of knowledge and, above all, moral rationalism). But he also shows areas where Locke differs fundamentally from the Stoics, such his theory of the law of nature, and his subordination of reason to revelation. He argues that although Stoic metaphysical and moral rationalism can be viewed as an instrument of modernization, Locke's use of Stoicism was constrained by its Christian premises, and that this had the effect of reducing his foundational role in enlightenment thought.

The philosopher who dominated the English philosophical landscape throughout his life was Thomas Hobbes. In the first of two essays on Locke's political thought, Tom Sorell challenges the received view that Hobbes and Locke differ deeply and systematically, and, indeed that Locke formulated his concept of the State of Nature in opposition to Hobbes. With an acknowledgement to Peter Laslett he suggests that the likely target for Locke in *Two Treatises*, was Robert Filmer. He goes on to discuss difficulties in Hobbes and Locke's divergent conceptions of the state of nature, arguing that Locke's conception of the state of nature as the state of perfect freedom is contradictory, and that there is something utopian about of Locke's view that reasonableness is natural.

Stuart Brown discusses the development of the consent theory of government (the commonplace "that governments derive their rightful powers from the people") as a European constitutional idea, by examining the specific seventeenth-century contribution to its history. As background to Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*, he uses the examples of the Jesuit, Juan de Mariana and the Levellers, to illustrate how "the myth of the people's consent" developed into political theory of contract theory of government. Richard Overton, who argued that "power is a property of individuals," was one of the first to try to formulate a philosophical basis for the theory. Locke's development of contract theory of government in *Two Treatises* makes a further distinction between the consent every individual must give in order to join political society and "the majority consent of the people as a corporate body." His emphasis on the distributive character of the sovereign power of the people is democratic a modern sense.

Michael Ayers focuses on a specific element of Locke's epistemology: abstract ideas. His essay is a reply to two critical articles by Jonathan Walmsley in which Ayers crisply defends his original view about Lockean abstraction as partial consideration against Walmsley's rival interpretation of abstraction as mental separation. Ayers argues that to have the abstract idea of a triangle actually before the mind, is to perceive or imagine a *particular* or determinate triangle, while considering it simply as triangle. Ayers extends his discussion to the earlier drafts of Locke's *Essay*, and considers possible sources for Locke's account of abstract ideas, most notably the *Port-Royal Logic* by Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole.

Alongside Hobbes, the other shaping influence on seventeenth-century philosophy in Locke's youth, was René Descartes. Shigeyuki Aoki's essay deals with an aspect of the relationship of Locke's philosophy to Descartes', Locke's rejection of the Cartesian conception of matter. Aoki focuses on a particular aspect of Locke's case against Descartes that has been overlooked, namely Descartes' identification of extension with *the* essence of matter. He shows how Locke used a combination of *a priori* and *a posteriori* arguments to reject Descartes' identification of matter with extension, and argues that Locke's persistent attack on various aspects of the Cartesian system amounted to an alternative empiricist philosophy that provided an epistemological basis for the development of natural science.

Although Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's attempt to engage Locke in philosophical dialogue was ultimately frustrated, his *Nouveaux Essais sur l'Entendement Humain*, with its titular echo of Locke's *Essay* could be viewed as the dialogue he would like

to have had with Locke. In the first of two essays on Locke and Leibniz, Martha Brandt Bolton compares Locke and Leibniz's conceptions of powers and potentialities in substances. In a detailed analysis she argues that they agreed that "causality, action, and power cannot exist without a more complex structure that constitutes thinking." But, insofar as Locke admits the possibility of the spirit existing without thinking, for example during sleep, there is the problem of how, and by what power, it can be brought back into thinking, since the state of thoughtless sleep seems to deny the presence of the very power that is supposed to end the state of non-thinking. Against Locke, Leibniz's argues "(a) activity is essential to a substance; a substance is never without perceptions, although it is often unaware of them; (b) everything that occurs in a substance comes to it from its own depths; that is, a substance has no "passive" powers, if this means that it has modifications caused by another (created) substance; (c) in nature, there are not even bare inactive faculties, let alone inactive substances." Although she appreciates Locke's stand on the structure of substance as "sober, well-considered," she concludes that Leibniz's account can do something that Locke cannot: it can "explain how a substance underwrites and unites several powers, and specifically active powers."

Luc Foisneau discusses the theory of personal identity in Locke and Leibniz, demonstrating that Hobbes is an important *point de repère* for both. He credits Locke with presenting the modern problem of personal identity through his conjunction of the theory of the person and the theory of identity. For his part, it was in response to Locke that Leibniz developed his ideas on the principle of individuation and on the basis of the identity of the human person. Foisneau discusses ways in which Hobbes may be said to provide some of the basis for Locke's theory. Locke's definition of the person as a juridical term is, he argues, indebted to Hobbes's definition of the natural person. Leibniz, on the other hand, made self-conscious use of Hobbes when, in *Nouveaux Essais sur l'entendement humain*, he called into question Locke's radical distinction between personal identity founded on unity of consciousness, and physical identity founded on the unity of substance. Notwithstanding their difference on the identity of the moral person, Hobbes's concept of a natural person with its close coupling of the natural and the moral dimensions of human personality, may be said to anticipate the objections which Leibniz made against Locke.

Mark Goldie introduces the first published critique of Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*. Hitherto overlooked, this was published in 1698 in *The Grounds and Foundation of Natural Religion* by the sometime Oxford fellow and Anglican clergyman, Thomas Beconsall. The critique is remarkable, first for its early date (as critiques of *Two Treatises* go) and because, notwithstanding the anonymity of Locke's book, Beconsall recognised the link with Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Beconsall focuses on law of nature. Although he convicts Locke of irreligiousness, his critique does not register the theological concerns raised by Stillingfleet. In defence of patriarchalism, Beconsall charged Locke with subverting the authority of fathers over sons and took Locke to be an advocate of uncontrolled emigration which, he claimed would have economically debilitating consequences.

Differences in epistemology and philosophical style have resulted in Cambridge Platonists and Locke being treated as mutually antithetical. Taking as her starting point Locke's highly positive evaluation of Ralph Cudworth in *Some Thoughts concerning Education*, Sarah Hutton argues that Cudworth's philosophical horizons were more modern than might first appear from the space he devotes to ancient philosophy in his work. The essay focuses on Cudworth's interpretation of Protagoras, and argues that, beneath its classical exterior, there is more affinity between Locke and Cudworth than is normally acknowledged.

Locke was a sociable philosopher. As Luisa Simonutti reminds us, he enjoyed participating in discussion groups or intellectual *salons* (such as the "Lantern" group at the house of his friend, Benjamin Furly). He was also responsible for founding some of his own, such as the so-called "Dry Club", taking care to set out rules for their governance. The purpose of such regulation was to ensure the free exchange of ideas, so that, they might serve as *fora* for exploring topical issues. She argues that religious issues, especially Socinianism, were a major subject of discussion in the with William Popple and members of the "Dry Club". Since Locke's views can be shown to anticipate his late writings on the same issues, it is likely that these discussions were an important stimulus for developing his ideas. The discussions continued even after Locke moved to live at the home of Lady Masham during his final years. As the hub of correspondence and calling point for friends and acquaintances, her home constituted a "virtual salon" of Lockeanism.

In his paper on Locke and Malebranche, Paul Schuurman shows how Locke's epistemological agnosticism about God, mind and matter drove both his attack on Malebranche's Vision in God and his defence of the possibility of thinking matter against Stillingfleet. Focusing on the Locke's *argumentative strategies* he argues that there are similarities between these debates. In addition, there may be a direct connection between the *content* of Locke's arguments in favour of the possibility of thinking matter and of his arguments against the Vision in God. For Malebranche there was a clear connection between these two issues: denial of the Vision in God opens the door to agnosticism about the essence of matter, which in its turn leads to the error about thinking matter. Locke denied the Vision in God *and* he was agnostic about the essence of matter *and* he refused to deny the possibility of thinking matter.

As the French translator of Locke's *Essay* Pierre Coste was a key transmitter of Locke's philosophy to a European audience. John Milton's essay examines the uneasy relationship between Locke and his translator which is revealed in Coste's correspondence after Locke's death. Coste's closeness to Locke (they did after all live in the same household during Locke's final years), did not, it seems amount to friendship. Although Coste wrote a very flattering "Eloge" immediately after Locke's death, John Milton demonstrates that his private view of Locke was far from amicable, which may explain why he never honoured the deathbed request by Locke that he translate one of his other works after his death. This work is not named in Coste's account, but Milton advances a plausible hypothesis that the book in question was Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*.

The subject of Ian Harris's paper is, Pierre Bayle the protestant champion of religious toleration who is often compared to Locke. Focusing chiefly on Bayle's

*Commentaire philosophique* Harris argues that Bayle's the view of liberty of conscience was shaped by his metaphysical beliefs. Among these, he draws attention to the importance of epistemological certainty as the ground of toleration, thereby reversing the usual emphasis on Bayle's scepticism. He also highlights the positive role Bayle accords the state as protector of religion and morality. He argues that this *difference* from Locke may be accounted for in terms of Bayle's different personal experience of the institutions of church and state as a Huguenot in France and in exile.

Jean Jacques Rousseau aspired to be a thorough Lockean, and his early educational writings clearly show a debt to Locke, in spite of his criticisms of him. Nevertheless, Rousseau dismissive of Locke's *Some Thoughts on Education*. Refuses to take him at his word, Sylvana Tomaselli demonstrates the influence of Locke on Rousseau's philosophy of education in less obvious ways. By focusing on the moral and political purpose of *Some Thoughts* she shows similarities between them, in spite of differences. Notwithstanding his denials, she argues that "Rousseau wrote with Locke in hand."

A less obvious dimension of Locke's European legacy was his impact on Kant, explored here by Yasuhiko Tomida who examines the parallels and differences between "things themselves", "affections", and sensible "ideas" in Locke and Kant's "things in themselves", "affections" and sensible "representations". For Locke, sensible ideas are the product of affections that are *caused* by corpuscular "things in themselves". Similarly, in Kant's framework sensible representations are given to us by things in themselves that affect our senses; but it makes no sense to talk about these unknown things in themselves as being in space, hence there can be no causal relation between things in themselves and our representations. Yet Tomida makes a convincing case for the profundity of Kant's debt to Locke by focusing on Kant's admission of similarities between Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities and his own distinction between space and all other modifications of body (the former being the subjective condition for the latter), including both primary and secondary qualities.

Broadly speaking, by setting Locke's thought in the context within which it was produced, the essays presented in this volume seek to give a rounded picture of his contribution to the intellectual culture of his time. However, the collection as a whole aspires to be neither comprehensive in its coverage of Locke and his immediate context, nor uniform in its treatment of the various topics discussed. Rather, the particular topics have been selected as representative of Locke's philosophy and its context. Different approaches highlight different features of his thought and intellectual milieu, which, when taken together will, we hope, serve to complement one another. Furthermore, in their central focus on Locke and their diversity of style and content, these essays are designed to be a fitting tribute to John Rogers, to whose work Locke is central, and who has done so much to promote the cause of the history of philosophy in its widest sense.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The editors wish to thank Ferdinand Delcker (Erasmus University, Rotterdam) for his assistance in preparing this volume.

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**Sylvana Tomaselli** is a Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge. She has written on Montesquieu, Adam Smith and Mary Wollstonecraft. With John Rogers, she co-edited *The Philosophical Canon in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, Essays in Honour of John W. Yolton* (1996).

**Yasuhiko Tomida** is Professor of Philosophy at Kyoto University. He has publishing extensively on Locke and his two most recent books are *The Lost Paradigm of the Theory of Ideas* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2007) and *Quine, Rorty, Locke* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2007).



## Abbreviations: Writings of Locke

<i>Correspondence</i>	<i>The Correspondence of John Locke</i> , 9 vols., ed. E.S. de Beer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976—)
<i>Drafts</i>	<i>Drafts for the Essay concerning Human Understanding</i> , vol. I, ed. Peter Nidditch and G.A.J. Rogers (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990)
<i>ELN</i>	<i>Essay on the Law of Nature</i> , ed. W. von Leiden (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974)
<i>Essay</i>	<i>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i> , ed. P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975)
<i>LL</i>	<i>The Library of John Locke</i> , compiled by J. Harrison and Peter Laslett (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971)
<i>Paraphrase and Notes</i>	<i>A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St Paul</i> , ed. Arthur W. Wainwright (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987)
<i>Reasonableness</i>	<i>The Reasonableness of Christianity</i> , ed. J.C. Higgins-Biddle (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999)
<i>STCE</i>	<i>Some Thoughts concerning Education</i> , eds John W. and Jean S. Yolton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).
<i>TOL</i>	<i>Epistola de Tolerantia</i> , ed. Raymond Klibansky (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968)
<i>Two Treatises</i>	<i>Two Treatises of Government</i> , ed. Peter Laslett (second edition corrected (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970)
<i>Works</i>	<i>The Works of John Locke</i> (London: Thomas Tegg, 1823; repr. Aalen: Scientia, 1963)
<i>WR</i>	<i>Writings on Religion</i> , ed. Victor Nuovo (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002)