

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-29084-5 - The Locke Reader: Selections from the Works of John Locke with a
General Introduction and Commentary

John W. Yolton

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

THE LOCKE READER

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-29084-5 - The Locke Reader: Selections from the Works of John Locke with a General Introduction and Commentary

John W. Yolton

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

*Translation of epitaph reproduced overleaf
by permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford*

Stay, wayfarer,
Near here lies John Locke. If you ask what sort of man
he was, his answer is that he lived content with his modest
lot. Educated in letters, he accomplished as much as satisfied
the demands solely of truth. This you may learn from his
writings; which will also tell you whatever else there is
to be said of him, more truly than the doubtful praises
of an epitaph. Any virtues he had were more slight than
should encourage you, in praise of him, to follow his
example; may his faults be interred with him. If a model
of conduct you seek, you have it in the Gospels; if only
of vices, look for it in no place: if of mortality (of what
benefit it may be) assuredly you have it here
and everywhere.

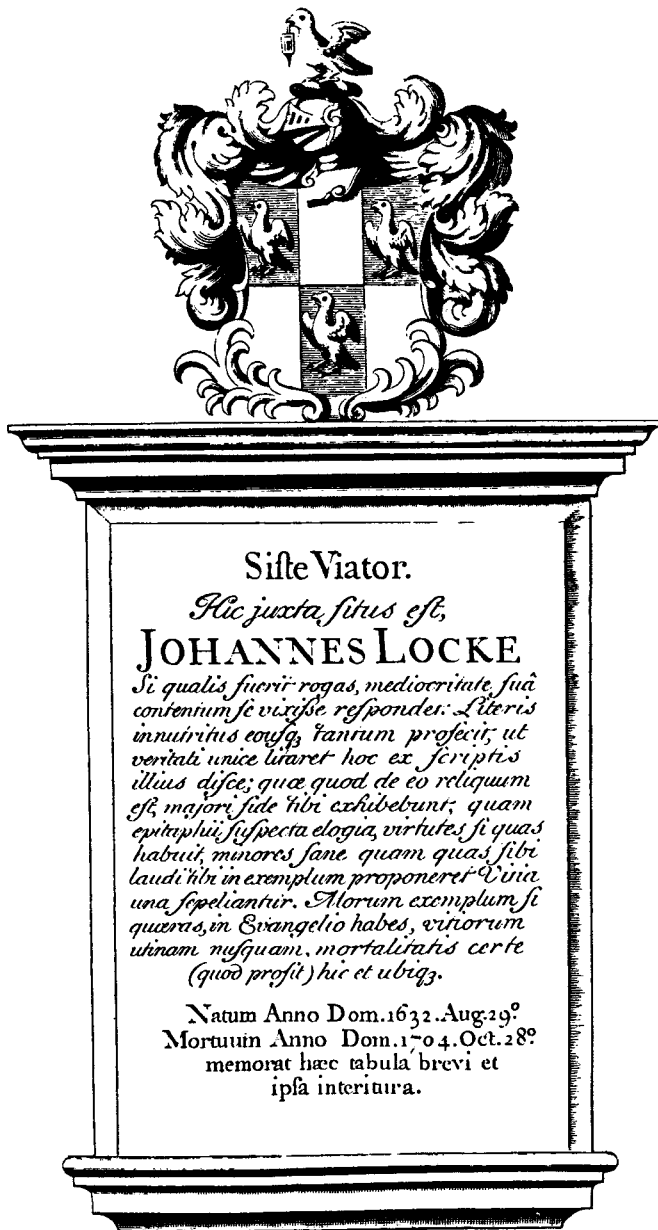
That he was born in the year of Our Lord 1632 August 29th,
Died in the year of Our Lord 1704 October 28th,
This tablet, that may itself soon perish, is a record.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-29084-5 - The Locke Reader: Selections from the Works of John Locke with a General Introduction and Commentary

John W. Yolton

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-29084-5 - The Locke Reader: Selections from the Works of John Locke with a
General Introduction and Commentary

John W. Yolton

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

THE LOCKE READER

Selections from the works of John Locke
with a general introduction
and commentary

JOHN W. YOLTON

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge

London : New York : Melbourne

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-29084-5 - The Locke Reader: Selections from the Works of John Locke with a General Introduction and Commentary

John W. Yolton

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521290845

© Cambridge University Press 1977

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1977

Re-issued 2010

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Locke, John, 1632–1704.

The Locke reader.

Bibliography: p.

Includes index.

I. Philosophy – Collected works. I. Yolton, John W.

II. Title.

B1255.Y64 192 76-9181

ISBN 978-0-521-21282-3 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-29084-5 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-29084-5 - The Locke Reader: Selections from the Works of John Locke with a
General Introduction and Commentary

John W. Yolton

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS

Preface	xi
References to Locke's Books	xiii
Significant Dates	xiv
Introduction	1
Preliminary: Locke on Hermeneutics	10
1 <i>Essay</i> , 3.9.3	11
2 <i>Essay</i> , 3.9.8	11
3 <i>Essay</i> , 3.9.15	12
4 <i>Essay</i> , 3.9.22–3	12
5 <i>Works</i> , VIII, pp. 3–21	13
6 <i>Essay</i> , 4.21.1–5	28
Part I. The Science of Nature	31
The Definition of Knowledge	31
7 <i>Essay</i> , 4.1	32
8 <i>Essay</i> , 4.2	36
9 <i>Essay</i> , 4.3.6–9	43
10 <i>Essay</i> , 4.4	44
Deductive Knowledge and Real Essence	54
11 <i>Essay</i> , 2.31.6	54
12 <i>Essay</i> , 3.6.1–9, 14–21, 28–9	56
13 <i>Essay</i> , 4.3.10–29	65
14 <i>Essay</i> , 4.6.9–16	78
Observational Knowledge of Nature	85
15 <i>Essay</i> , 3.11.19–21	86
16 <i>Essay</i> , 3.11.25	87
17 <i>Essay</i> , 4.12.9	89
18 <i>Essay</i> , 4.12.12	90
19 <i>Essay</i> , 4.12.2	91

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-29084-5 - The Locke Reader: Selections from the Works of John Locke with a General Introduction and Commentary

John W. Yolton

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

<i>Contents</i>	viii
Hypotheses in Science	92
20 <i>Essay</i> , 4.12.10	92
21 <i>Essay</i> , 4.12.13	92
22 <i>Conduct</i> , section 13	93
23 <i>Conduct</i> , section 25	94
24 <i>Conduct</i> , sections 43–4	95
25 <i>Conduct</i> , sections 34–5	96
26 <i>Essay</i> , 4.16.12	98
27 Letter to Molyneux, <i>Works</i> , IX, pp. 463–5	100
28 <i>Essay</i> , 2.8.1–2, 7–23	102
Part II. The Doctrine of Signs	109
Two Concepts of Ideas	109
29 <i>Examination</i> , sections 3–5, 17–18, 42	111
30 <i>Examination</i> , section 20	116
The Origin of Ideas	116
(a) Rejection of Innate Ideas	116
31 <i>Essay</i> , 1.2.1–9	116
32 <i>Essay</i> , 1.3.1–4, 10–11	120
33 <i>Essay</i> , 1.4.1–7	123
(b) Genetic Account of Ideas in Children	126
34 <i>Essay</i> , 1.2.15	126
35 <i>Essay</i> , 1.2.25	126
36 <i>Essay</i> , 1.4.13	126
37 <i>Essay</i> , 2.1.6, 21–2	127
38 <i>Essay</i> , 2.9.5, 7	128
(c) Experience as the Source	129
39 <i>Essay</i> , 1.4.25	129
40 <i>Essay</i> , 2.1.1–5, 24	130
(d) Physiology	132
41 <i>Examination</i> , sections 9–16	132
42 <i>Essay</i> , 2.8.4	136
43 <i>Essay</i> , 2.10.5	136
44 <i>Essay</i> , 2.33.6	137
(e) Specific Ideas	138
45 <i>Essay</i> , 2.4.1–3	138
46 <i>Essay</i> , 2.7.7	140
47 <i>Essay</i> , 2.13.7	140
48 <i>Essay</i> , 2.14.3–6	140
49 <i>Essay</i> , 2.16.1–2	142

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-29084-5 - The Locke Reader: Selections from the Works of John Locke with a General Introduction and Commentary

John W. Yolton

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

<i>Contents</i>	ix
50 <i>Essay</i> , 2.21.1	143
51 <i>Essay</i> , 2.23.1	143
52 <i>Letter to the Bishop of Worcester, Works</i> , IV, p. 11	144
Word Signs	145
(a) The Relation of Words to Ideas	145
53 <i>Essay</i> , 3.2.1–5, 8	145
54 <i>Essay</i> , 3.3.6, 11	148
55 <i>Essay</i> , 4.5.4	149
56 <i>Essay</i> , 4.6.1	150
(b) The Distinction Between Words as Signs and Words as Sounds	150
57 <i>Essay</i> , 3.1.1–2	150
58 <i>Essay</i> , 3.4.11	150
59 <i>Essay</i> , 3.10.26	151
60 <i>Essay</i> , 3.11.5–6	152
61 <i>Essay</i> , 4.8.7, 13	153
62 <i>Essay</i> , 4.18.3	153
(c) Defects of Language and Their Remedies	154
63 <i>Essay</i> , 3.9.1, 2, 4, 5	154
64 <i>Essay</i> , 3.10.1–6, 9, 12, 23–5	156
65 <i>Essay</i> , 3.11.1–6, 11–12	160
66 <i>Conduct</i> , section 29	163
Moral Words	164
67 <i>Essay</i> , 3.10.33	165
68 <i>Essay</i> , 3.11.15–18	165
69 <i>Conduct</i> , section 9	167
Part III. The Science of Action	169
Character Traits and Natural Tendencies	170
70 <i>Essay</i> , 1.3.3	170
71 <i>Two Treatises</i> , I, section 86	170
72 <i>Education</i> , sections 66, 101–2	171
73 <i>Conduct</i> , sections 2, 4	173
Action and the Person	176
74 <i>Essay</i> , 2.22.4, 6	176
75 <i>Essay</i> , 3.5.10–11	177
76 <i>Essay</i> , 3.9.7	178
77 <i>Essay</i> , 2.27.3–6	180
78 <i>Essay</i> , 2.27.9, 16–17, 26	182
79 <i>Essay</i> , 2.27.15	185

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-29084-5 - The Locke Reader: Selections from the Works of John Locke with a General Introduction and Commentary

John W. Yolton

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

<i>Contents</i>	x
80 <i>Second Reply to the Bishop of Worcester, Works, IV,</i> pp. 303–8	185
Virtue and Law	190
81 <i>Essay, 1.3.5–8, 12–13, 18</i>	190
82 <i>Essay, 2.28.4–16</i>	195
83 <i>Essay, 2.21.60</i>	201
84 <i>Reasonableness, Works, VII, pp. 10–15</i>	202
85 <i>Reasonableness, Works, VII, pp. 111–23</i>	206
86 <i>Reasonableness, Works, VII, pp. 138–44</i>	216
Education as Training for Virtue	220
87 <i>Education, sections 45, 70, 94, 99–100, 135, 159</i>	221
88 <i>Two Treatises, II, sections 58–61, 63–9</i>	231
Social Groups and the Origin of Civil Society	237
89 <i>Two Treatises, II, sections 77–89</i>	240
90 <i>Toleration, Works, VI, pp. 9–45</i>	245
91 <i>Two Treatises, II, sections 1–15</i>	276
92 <i>Two Treatises, II, sections 100–4</i>	283
93 <i>Two Treatises, II, sections 124–31</i>	285
94 <i>Two Treatises, II, sections 25–39</i>	288
Political Obligation and Consent	296
95 <i>Two Treatises, II, sections 95–9, 119–23</i>	296
96 <i>Two Treatises, II, sections 134–8</i>	300
97 <i>Two Treatises, II, sections 159–64</i>	304
98 <i>Two Treatises, II, sections 212–30</i>	308
99 <i>Two Treatises, II, sections 241–3</i>	317
Conclusion	319
100 <i>Conduct, sections 3, 24</i>	319
Bibliography	330
Index	332

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-29084-5 - The Locke Reader: Selections from the Works of John Locke with a General Introduction and Commentary

John W. Yolton

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE

Readers of Locke tend to approach his thought through single books, not from a knowledge of the range of his writing. Those who know the *Two Treatises* may have some general acquaintance with the *Essay* but hardly a detailed understanding of the doctrines of that work. Those with a specialist knowledge of the *Essay* may never have looked at the *Reasonableness of Christianity* or *A Letter concerning Toleration*. The *Education* is, I suspect, read by a very restricted audience and then with only a cursory glance at the other works. The *Conduct* may be read by some as a supplement to the *Essay*; but do the readers of the *Education* consult those passages in the *Conduct* relevant to teaching and learning? I think it is probably true that the time given to the study of Locke by these different groups of readers does not allow for more than a selection from one or two of his writings. This *Locke Reader* seeks to allow readers of Locke to have accessible, in one volume, selections from a wide range of Locke's books, structured in such a fashion that some of the interconnections of his thought can be seen and traced.

There are, for example, passages in the *Essay* that talk of the acquisition of ideas by children. Those passages are relevant to what Locke has to say in the *Education* about learning. Similarly, Locke's views on morality and virtue expressed in the *Essay* are echoed and assumed in what he has to say about the family and civil government in *Two Treatises*. One of the major aims and purposes of education for Locke is the formation of a virtuous character. To appreciate the fundamental importance of virtue is to understand the fabric of Locke's views on toleration and education, as well as one of the guiding threads in the formation of civil society. Reading those passages in the *Essay* that identify the true ground and measure of morality as God's law leads us to see the basic role of religious beliefs in his thought.

These are just some examples of the way in which concepts and

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-29084-5 - The Locke Reader: Selections from the Works of John Locke with a General Introduction and Commentary

John W. Yolton

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Preface*

xii

doctrines Locke elaborated in one work reappear or are supported in other areas of his writing. One needs some organizing principle for reading in such a range of themes. Chance, or simply picking out a few common themes, does not give us any systematic guidance. Locke did not write from a *system* of philosophy, but he did have in mind an overall division of human knowledge, presented at the end of the *Essay*. By following this simple division, we can provide ourselves with a structure that enables us to see systematic connections in his thought.

The selections in this *Locke Reader* are grouped around his classification of knowledge into the science of nature (natural science); ethics, or the science of human conduct; and semiotics, or the science of signs. Within these divisions, topics have been chosen that present the basic doctrines and concepts used or discussed by Locke in that division. The selections are taken from a wide range of his writings. A major portion of the selections are from the *Essay*, the basic conceptual foundation for Locke's thought in all three divisions of knowledge. A glance at the Contents will reveal that works used also include *Two Treatises*, *Some Thoughts concerning Education*, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, the *Conduct of the Understanding*, *A Letter concerning Toleration*, *An Examination of Malebranche*, some of his replies to Stillingfleet, a letter to William Molyneux, and an important but usually overlooked preface to his *Paraphrase on St. Paul's Epistles*. The selections are numbered in the order of their appearance: the reference to the work from which they are taken is given at the beginning of each selection. My commentary provides continuity throughout the selections and, it is hoped, some explication and guidance for understanding.

John W. Yolton
York University, Toronto
September 1976

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-29084-5 - The Locke Reader: Selections from the Works of John Locke with a General Introduction and Commentary

John W. Yolton

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

REFERENCES TO LOCKE'S BOOKS

The text used in this reader is that of the Works of 1823, checked against more recent editions of some of the individual titles. References to individual books are given by the following abbreviated code words:

The Conduct of the Understanding, as *Conduct*, followed by section numbers.

Some Thoughts concerning Education, as *Education*, followed by section numbers.

An Essay concerning Human Understanding, as *Essay*, followed by book, chapter, and section number (e.g., 2.21.3).

An Examination of P. Malebranche's Opinion of Seeing All Things in God, as *Examination*, followed by section numbers.

The Reasonableness of Christianity, as *Reasonableness*, followed by page references to the *Works*.

A Letter concerning Toleration, as *Toleration*, followed by page references to the *Works*.

Two Treatises of Government, as *Two Treatises*, followed by number indicating first or second treatise and section numbers.

Selections from other writings of Locke are indicated by the proper title.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-29084-5 - The Locke Reader: Selections from the Works of John Locke with a General Introduction and Commentary

John W. Yolton

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

SIGNIFICANT DATES

Born in Wrington, Somerset, 1632
Attended Westminster School, 1647–52
Charles I beheaded, 1649
Cromwell and Parliament ruled, 1649–60
Entered Christ Church, Oxford, 1652
Awarded B.A. degree, 1655
Received degree of M.A., 1658
Met Robert Boyle, 1660
Charles II restored to the throne, 1660
Wrote essays on the Civil Magistrate, 1660–1
Lecturer in Greek, 1660
Lecturer in Rhetoric, 1662
Wrote *Essays on the Law of Nature*, 1663–4
Censor of Moral Philosophy, 1664
Secretary to the Mission to Brandenburg, 1665
Physician and Secretary to Anthony Ashley Cooper (later, Earl of Shaftesbury), 1667–81
Elected Fellow of the Royal Society, 1668
Secretary to the Lords Proprietors of Carolina, 1668–75
Secretary to the Council of Trade and Plantations, 1673–75
Started writing *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, 1671
Received degree of Bachelor of Medicine, 1674
Appointed to Medical Studentship at Oxford, 1674
Traveled in France, 1675–9
Deprived of appointment to Christ Church by Royal Decree, 1684
Voluntary exile in Holland, 1683–9
Returned to England in entourage of William and Mary, 1689

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-29084-5 - The Locke Reader: Selections from the Works of John Locke with a
General Introduction and Commentary

John W. Yolton

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Significant Dates

xv

Published *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, 1690

Published anonymously *Two Treatises*, 1690

Commissioner on the Board of Trade, 1696–1700

Died at Oates, High Laver, Essex, 1704