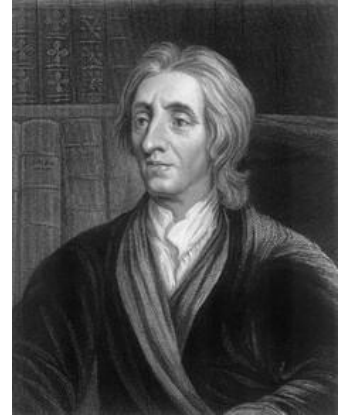


Secondary Source: John Locke (1632-1704)

Born in Wrington, Somerset, England Locke was very much influenced by the revolutions already happening around him, as opposed his later counter-parts in France who could only dream of such things. In his time Locke was especially known for his liberal, anti-authoritarian theory of the state, his empirical theory of knowledge, his advocacy of religious toleration, and his theory of personal identity.



Locke was famous for arguing that the divine right of kings is supported neither by scripture nor by the use of reason. In developing his theory of our duty to obey the state, he attacked the idea that might makes right: Starting from an initial state of nature with no government, police or private property, we humans could discover by careful reasoning that there are natural laws which suggest that we have natural rights to our own persons and to our own labor. It was through this understanding of human nature that Locke was able to come up with the principle that men are naturally good, and naturally entitled to life, liberty, and property.

Locke's *Two Treatises of Civil Government* were published after the Glorious Revolution of 1688 which brought William of Orange and Mary to the throne, but they were written in the throes of the Whig revolutionary plots against Charles II in the early 1680s. In this work Locke gives us a theory of natural law and natural rights which he uses to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate civil governments, and to argue for the legitimacy of revolt against tyrannical governments. In his political treatises he argues in favor of a social contract by which governments get their power from the people, and it is a governments' responsibility to protect the natural rights of the people. At any point in the government fails to uphold these natural rights then the people have the capability to remove the government and install a government that will.

Locke wrote on a variety of other topics among the most important of these is religious toleration. Henry VIII had created a Church of England when he broke with Rome. This Church was the official religion of England. Catholics and dissenting Protestants, e.g Quakers, Unitarians and so forth, were subject to legal prosecution. During much of the Restoration period there was debate, negotiation and maneuvering to include dissenting Protestants within the Church of England. In a "Letter Concerning Toleration" and several defenses of that letter Locke argues for a separation between church and state. His reasoning behind this separation is that governments and religions control separate spheres, as since religion is an individual's personal choice it should not be up to a government to decide or otherwise influence, a persons' decisions on religion.

"Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy." *Locke, John* . Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, n.d. Web. 03 Mar. 2014.