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# Anarchy, State, And Utopia: Second Edition

*NATIONAL BOOK AWARD WINNER*

"A major event in contemporary political philosophy."  
—PETER SINGER, *The New York Review of Books*

ANARCHY,  
STATE,  
AND  
UTOPIA

Robert Nozick

With a New Foreword by Thomas Nagel



## Synopsis

Translated into 100 languages, winner of the National Book Award, and named one of the 100 Most Influential Books since World War II by the Times Literary Supplement, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* remains one of the most theoretically trenchant and philosophically rich defenses of economic liberalism to date as well as a foundational text in classical libertarian thought. With a new introduction by the philosopher Thomas Nagel, this revised edition will introduce Nozick and his work to a new generation of listeners.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 14 hours 38 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Gildan Media, LLC

Audible.com Release Date: June 8, 2016

Language: English

ASIN: B01GQPU4Y4

Best Sellers Rank: #12 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Ideologies & Doctrines > Anarchism #61 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Politics & Current Events > Political History & Theory #78 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Specific Topics > Political Freedom

## Customer Reviews

Nozick explains in clear and insightful ways for a libertarian view that ennobles the individual, but at the same time maintaining an appropriate role for the state. He has many examples and unlike many philosophers, he is funny; there are examples and anecdotes that will make you laugh. Nozick is the best counter example to Rawls.

came in perfect condition! I love this book! has some great pieces in it! look to reading the entire thing!

Nozick's book is difficult to read, but it is worth the effort. One does not read AS&U from front to back. One must read, reread, reflect, and reread again to understand the ideas offered. People who have not read and understood the ideas of Nozick and his colleague John Rawls really should not

bother with writing about the political economy, for they have nothing useful or interesting to say.

Not quite what I expected, but it was a very good read.

A good philosophical approach to what happened in the 1960's and how it impacts current theories of government. A must read for anyone curious about the group dynamics and rules inside a society. Easy to read and follow.

You can get a wonderful overview of the book on Wikipedia. So, rather than try to provide such an overview here, let me offer a few comments on what reading along these lines has meant to me. Nozick's book is an outstanding logical development, building a philosophical framework upon a presuppositional base of preeminence of individual rights. I've read it cover-to-cover with interest and profit. This book provides an intellectual base to the school of Libertarianism that so attracts people in Ayn Rand's prose. Notably, I have read late-in-life interviews with Nozick in which he said that he became less libertarian as he got older. This book really should be read in conjunction with John Rawls' "A Theory of Justice," which I have not yet finished cover-to-cover due to its length and unavailability as an audiobook. After reading the most famous parts in Rawls book, I did finish a few good summaries and commentaries on the "Theory of Justice." Rawls and Nozick were contemporaries in the Philosophy Department at Harvard, and are leading minds on the left and right, respectively, of the American philosophical spectrum. The Nozick logic leads to a world of perfect individual rights. In this world, charity becomes dependent on the free will of individuals who choose to grant charity. In this world, the more harsh aspects of Social Darwinism become morally permissible. However, the economist's problem of Moral Hazard (the freeloader problem) is completely solved. One who holds individual rights to be preeminent sees this Nozick system as perfectly satisfying the Golden Rule (aka principle of reciprocity), because at the formation of the social contract, all agree to accept individual rights as preeminent, thus "doing unto others as we would have them do to us." The Rawls logic stems from applying the Golden Rule prior to developing the social contract behind a "veil of ignorance," in which founders/citizens do not yet know the circumstances and advantages of their birth. While complete individual rights may have been present while drawing up the social contract "behind the veil of ignorance," once out in society a measure of compassion and charity becomes almost obligatory, due to agreements made behind the veil of ignorance. In this world, the more harsh aspects of Social Darwinism will not be allowed by the social contract. However, this world is more susceptible to economist's problem of Moral

Hazard (the freeloader problem) than Nozick's world. Interestingly, both the Nozick and Rawls approach can be reconciled with both the Golden Rule and Kant's Categorical Imperative, as can Ayn Rand's thesis (and I've read papers by philosopher graduate students and Ph.D graduates doing so). My bottom line? If men and women were gods and goddesses, either of these systems could make a happy world. The problem is that we are not.

This book was suggested to me by 5 different sources, e.g. FEE.org, StudentsForLiberty.org, and LibertyFund.org, etc. It is a tough read, but filled with valuable information for Libertarians and people interested in the Philosophy of Liberty.

It's a great work of modern political philosophy in a nicely bound and print form.

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