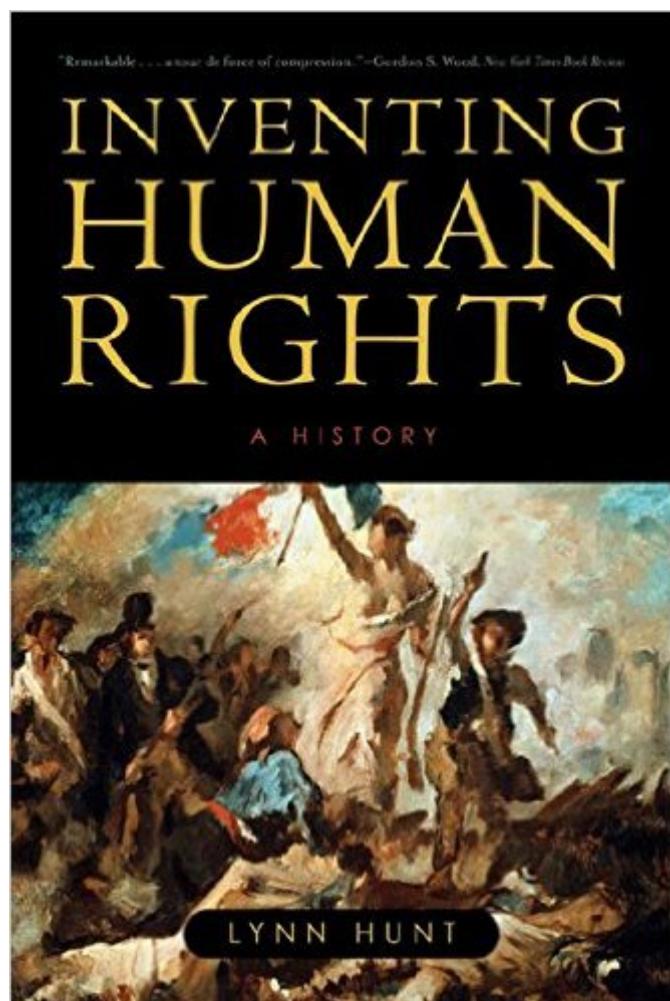


The book was found

# Inventing Human Rights: A History



## Synopsis

âœA tour de force.â• Gordon S. Wood, New York Times Book Review How were human rights invented, and how does their tumultuous history influence their perception and our ability to protect them today? From Professor Lynn Hunt comes this extraordinary cultural and intellectual history, which traces the roots of human rights to the rejection of torture as a means for finding the truth. She demonstrates how ideas of human relationships portrayed in novels and art helped spread these new ideals and how human rights continue to be contested today.

## Book Information

Paperback: 272 pages

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company; Presumed to be 1st as edition is unstated edition (April 17, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0393331997

ISBN-13: 978-0393331998

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.5 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (28 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #37,492 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #18 inÂ Books > Textbooks > Social Sciences > Political Science > Civil Rights #26 inÂ Books > Law > Constitutional Law > Human Rights #43 inÂ Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Specific Topics > Human Rights

## Customer Reviews

"Inventing Human Rights" is a short, jargon-free book that would be appropriate for an undergraduate class or general readership. The introduction and first chapter is an examination of the cultural origins of the human rights ideology. The second chapter is a history of torture. Chapters 3-5 are a "conventional" history of human rights as traced through laws, constitutions, political philosophy, etc. from roughly 1750 to the present. There is a refreshing emphasis on the French Enlightenment (which is too often neglected in works in English). Regarding research methods, Professor Hunt is good at tracing the circulation of ideas via the circulation of books. Careful attention is paid to when certain phrases (e.g. "rights of man", "human rights") were first used, how many times important books were reprinted, what percentage of 18th century homes and libraries they could be found in, and literacy rates. The introduction poses the question "How is it that rights

came to seem self-evident in the late 18th century?" Prof. Hunt proposes an explanation in terms of the diffusion of the cultural practices of "autonomy" and "empathy", where autonomy supplies the substance of the new ethic and empathy, the motive (pp. 29-30). When Hunt writes of autonomy as a "cultural practice" she is referring primarily to the increasing sense of delicacy regarding the human body described in the work of Norbert Elias. She thinks, for instance, that here one can find the origin of the new repugnance at judicial torture (pp 82-83).

Three hundred years ago, the idea that people in the world should regard themselves as equals or that all had important rights just because they were humans would have largely been regarded as laughable. Now human rights are taken for granted, and even are regarded as more important than that old standard, property rights. How did such a change happen? Lynn Hunt, a professor of modern European history, has some ideas, and has related them in *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (Norton). There was a Bill of Rights in England in 1689, but it merely referred to "ancient rights and liberties" that derived from the tradition of English law. It did not have what Hunt describes as three interlocking qualities that are essential to human rights: "... rights must be natural (inherent in human beings), equal (the same for everyone) and universal (applicable everywhere)." The acceptance of such rights was a revolution in human thought and in the understanding of how governments were to prioritize their functions. It is a great story, one we can be proud of, and though progress toward acknowledgement of human rights has stumbled and halted at times, it has proved unstoppable. The boom in concepts of human rights during the eighteenth century can never be fully explained, but Hunt thinks she has a clue. People began to read novels, especially epistolary ones in which characters themselves wrote out their feelings onto the page. Reading such a novel made people view the characters on the pages with empathy because the "narrative form facilitated the development of a 'character,' that is, a person with an inner self." The more lurid of the novels included scenes of torture, producing a revulsion in readers that would eventually help end the long tradition of judicial torture.

[Download to continue reading...](#)

Inventing Human Rights: A History  
Child Migration and Human Rights in a Global Age (Human Rights and Crimes against Humanity)  
Women's Human Rights: The International and Comparative Law Casebook (Pennsylvania Studies in Human Rights)  
Selected International Human Rights Instruments and Bibliography for Research on International Human Rights  
Law Freedom from Poverty: NGOs and Human Rights Praxis (Pennsylvania Studies in Human Rights)  
Creative Child Support Strategies A Fathers Rights Approach: A Fathers Rights Approach (The Pro-Active Fathers

Rights Series Book 2) History: Human History in 50 Events: From Ancient Civilizations to Modern Times (World History, History Books, People History) (History in 50 Events Series Book 1) The Environmental Rights Revolution: A Global Study of Constitutions, Human Rights, and the Environment (Law and Society (Paperback)) BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING - HOW TO RECLAIM PRIVACY & SECURITY TO PROTECT LIFE, FAMILY, HOME AND ASSETS 2016 EDITION (Natural law, Human Rights, Civil Rights) (HOW TO BOOK & GUIDE FOR SMART DUMMIES 12) The Development of Disability Rights Under International Law: From Charity to Human Rights In the Light of Justice: The Rise of Human Rights in Native America and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Inventing American Broadcasting, 1899-1922 (Johns Hopkins Studies in the History of Technology) Inventing a Better Mousetrap: 200 Years of American History in the Amazing World of Patent Models (Make) Human Rights in World History (Themes in World History) The Human Rights Revolution: An International History (Reinterpreting History: How Historical Assessments Change over Time) Wollstonecraft: A Vindication of the Rights of Men and a Vindication of the Rights of Woman and Hints (Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought) The Guardian of Every Other Right: A Constitutional History of Property Rights (Bicentennial Essays on the Bill of Rights) The Craft of Baking: Cakes, Cookies, and Other Sweets with Ideas for Inventing Your Own Electronics from the Ground Up: Learn by Hacking, Designing, and Inventing Inventing the AIDS Virus

[Dmca](#)