

THE SECOND TREATISE OF GOVERNMENT

JOHN LOCKE

John Locke (1632–1704) came from a middle-class English family that sided with Parliament against King Charles I (1625–1649) in the Puritan Revolution (1642–1649). Locke continued that orientation in his own life, being associated for many years with one of the most prominent advocates of limited monarchy, Anthony Ashley Cooper, first earl of Shaftesbury. Sharing the earl's opposition to King Charles II (1660–1685) and King James II (1685–1688), Locke also shared his exile in the Netherlands during the 1680s. During his studies at Oxford, Locke had become interested in the new science and eventually developed original theories of education and of knowledge. His political theory was equally original, translating the English experience of opposition to royal absolutism into general terms of natural law. Locke's ideas on politics received their vindication with the Glorious Revolution (1688–1689); in the following year, 1690, he published his two treatises on government.

4. To understand political power right and derive it from its original, we must consider what state all men are naturally in, and that is a state of perfect freedom to order their actions and dispose of their possessions and

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persons as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of nature, without asking leave or depending upon the will of any other man.

6. But though this be a state of liberty, yet it is not a state of license; though man in that state have [sic] an uncontrollable liberty to dispose of his person or possessions, yet he has not liberty to destroy himself, or so much as any creature in his possession, but where some nobler use than its bare preservation calls for it. The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one; and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind who will but consult it that, being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm one another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions; for men being all the workmanship of one omnipotent and infinitely wise Maker—all the servants of one sovereign master, sent into the world by his order, and about his business—they are his property whose workmanship they are, made to last during his, not one another's, pleasure; and being furnished with like faculties, sharing all in one community of nature, there cannot be supposed any such subordination among us that may authorize us to destroy another, as if we were made for one another's uses as the inferior ranks of creatures are for ours. Every one, as he is bound to preserve himself and not to quit his station wilfully, so by the like reason, when his own preservation comes not in competition, ought he, as much as he can, to preserve the rest of mankind, and may not, unless it be to do justice to an offender, take away or impair the life, or what tends to the preservation of the life, the liberty, health, limb, or goods of another.

26. God, who has given the world to men in common, has also given them reason to make use of it to the best advantage of life and convenience. The earth and all that is therein is given to men for the support and comfort of their being. And though all the fruits it naturally produces and beasts it feeds belong to mankind in common, as they are produced by the spontaneous hand of nature; and nobody has originally a private dominion exclusive of the rest of mankind in any of them, as they are thus in their natural state; yet, being given for the use of men, there must of necessity

be a means to appropriate them some way or other before they can be of any use or at all beneficial to any particular man. The fruit or venison which nourishes the wild Indian, who knows no enclosure and is still a tenant in common, must be his, and so his, i.e., a part of him, that another can no longer have any right to it before it can do him any good for the support of his life.

27. Though the earth and all inferior creatures be common to all men, yet every man has a property in his own person; this nobody has any right to but himself. The labor of his body and the work of his hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the state that nature has provided and left it in, he has mixed his labor with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property. It being by him removed from the common state nature has placed it in, it has by this labor something annexed to it that excludes the common right of other men. For this labor being the unquestionable property of the laborer, no man but he can have a right to what that is once joined to, at least where there is enough and as good left in common for others.

95. Men being, as has been said, by nature all free, equal, and independent, no one can be put out of this estate and subjected to the political power of another without his own consent. The only way whereby any one divests himself of his natural liberty and puts on the bonds of civil society is by agreeing with other men to join and unite into a community for their comfortable, safe, and peaceable living one amongst another, in a secure enjoyment of their properties and a greater security against any that are not of it. This any number of men may do, because it injures not the freedom of the rest; they are left as they were in the liberty of the state of nature. When any number of men have so consented to make one community or government, they are thereby presently incorporated and make one body politic wherein the majority have a right to act and conclude the rest.

123. If man in the state of nature be so free, as has been said, if he be absolute lord of his own person and possessions, equal to the greatest, and

subject to nobody, why will he part with his freedom, why will he give up his empire and subject himself to the dominion and control of any other power? To which it is obvious to answer that though in the state of nature he has such a right, yet the enjoyment of it is very uncertain and constantly exposed to the invasion of others; for all being kings as much as he, every man his equal, and the greater part no strict observers of equity and justice, the enjoyment of the property he has in this state is very unsafe, very insecure. This makes him willing to quit a condition which, however free, is full of fears and continual dangers; and it is not without reason that he seeks out and is willing to join in society with others who are already united, or have a mind to unite, for the mutual preservation of their lives, liberties, and estates, which I call by the general name 'property.'

124. The great and chief end, therefore, of men's uniting into commonwealths and putting themselves under government is the preservation of their property. . . .

199. As usurpation is the exercise of power which another has a right to, so tyranny is the exercise of power beyond right, which nobody can have a right to. And this is making use of the power any one has in his hands, not for the good of those who are under it, but for his own private separate advantage—when the governor, however entitled, makes not the law, but his will, the rule, and his commands and actions are not directed to the preservation of the properties of his people, but the satisfaction of his own ambition, revenge, covetousness, or any other irregular passion.

202. Wherever law ends, tyranny begins if the law be transgressed to another's harm. And whosoever in authority exceeds the power given him by the law, and makes use of the force he has under his command to compass that upon the subject which the law allows not, ceases in that to be a magistrate and, acting without authority, may be opposed as any other man who by force invades the right of another. This is acknowledged in subordinate magistrates. He that has authority to seize my person in the street may be opposed as a thief and a robber if he endeavors to break into my

What about power?

house to execute a writ, notwithstanding that I know he has such a warrant and such a legal authority as will empower him to arrest me abroad. And why this should not hold in the highest as well as in the most inferior magistrate, I would gladly be informed. Is it reasonable that the eldest brother, because he has the greatest part of his father's estate, should thereby have a right to take away any of his younger brother's portions? Or that a rich man who possessed a whole country should from thence have a right to seize, when he pleased, the cottage and garden of his poor neighbor? The being rightfully possessed of great power and riches, exceedingly beyond the greatest part of the sons of Adam, is so far from being an excuse, much less a reason, for rapine and oppression, which the endamaging another without authority is, that it is a great aggravation of it; for the exceeding the bounds of authority is no more a right in a great than in a petty officer, no more justifiable in a king than a constable; but is so much the worse in him in that he has more trust put in him, has already a much greater share than the rest of his brethren, and is supposed, from the advantages of his education, employment, and counselors, to be more knowing in the measures of right and wrong.

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222. The reason why men enter into society is the preservation of their property; and the end why they choose and authorize a legislative is that there may be laws made and rules set as guards and fences to the properties of all the members of the society to limit the power and moderate the dominion of every part and member of the society; for since it can never be supposed to be the will of the society that the legislative should have a power to destroy that which every one designs to secure by entering into society, and for which the people submitted themselves to legislators of their own making. Whenever the legislators endeavor to take away and destroy the property of the people, or to reduce them to slavery under arbitrary power, they put themselves into a state of war with the people who are thereupon absolved from any further obedience, and are left to the common refuge which God has provided for all men against force and violence. Whensoever, therefore, the legislative shall transgress this fundamental rule of society, and either by ambition, fear, folly, or corruption, endeavor to

grasp themselves, or put into the hands of any other, an absolute power over the lives, liberties, and estates of the people, by this breach of trust they forfeit the power the people had put into their hands for quite contrary ends, and it devolves to the people, who have a right to resume their original liberty and, by the establishment of a new legislative, such as they shall think fit, provide for their own safety and security, which is the end for which they are in society.

Midterm Exam: TWO Short Take-Home Essays

(12 pt font, double spaced, 1 inch margins, single-spaced heading of name and date)

Everyone must do **BOTH** questions:

1. What is the significance of John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* (SMW, pp.34-39) for the historical development of the world from 1690 to 1830?

In your **2 page typed response**, be sure to (1) include at least **two quotes from Locke** that encapsulate his argument; (2) mention at least **three other primary sources** in the SMW Reader that were inspired by Locke, and (3) **quote at least one of those three** authors; and (4) demonstrate how at least **two historical events** from the textbook were directly inspired by the ideas in Locke's treatise.

2. What were the principle concerns, major themes, and largest forces of change in the early modern world? Explain what major themes make the early modern world (from 1450 to 1804) *different* from the medieval world and a period with *distinct, new* concerns. In your answer, address themes and changes in the economic, political, religious, scientific, and social life of the early modern world. (Note that "Locke" is not a major theme; 'natural rights' would be. However, because I just mentioned it, you cannot use 'natural rights' as a theme—express it in a different way.) **DO NOT duplicate the argument you made in essay #1. Only a maximum of 1/8 of a page of Essay #2's argument can be replicated from Essay #1.**

In a **2 page typed response**, build on examples from the **textbook, class notes**, and at least **5 primary sources** (of which you only need to quote **two**; the others you can just summarize).

Type your TWO responses in ONE document (4 pages total), and submit them to me:

- (1) **in hard copy in class on Wednesday, 10/28 and**
- (2) **in ONE electronic file, via SafeAssignments, on Blackboard.**

For the purposes of *this* exam, only use sources that are part of our class's required texts (do **NOT use outside sources). Be sure to cite any sources used:**

1. If you take information from the textbook, cite the textbook parenthetically as (WT/WA, 2). **DO NOT QUOTE** from the textbook; only summarize (in your own words) what you have learned from this source. Note that Blackburn is also a secondary source. You may cite him as (Blackburn, 673).
2. If you take information from a primary source (SMW reader), cite the source parenthetically as (Locke, p. 53). If you quote a source directly, make sure the quote *is shorter than a single sentence*. You may use ellipses (...) if you'd like. If you summarize a source, you should also cite the source at the page where the concept you are summarizing can be found.
3. If you take information from a class discussion, cite the class parenthetically as (Mancia, Class, 9/15/15).