

## 4 John Locke: The True End of Civil Government

*John Locke was born in a quiet Somerset village into a Puritan trading family, and into a rather less quiet period of civil war between Parliament and Royalists. His political theory starts, like Plato's, with a search for moral authority. And, like Plato, he makes human conscience beholden only to God for judgement on all matters, placing individual judgement firmly above that of both church and state, and limiting the latter's role to protecting property. 'All being equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions', he proclaims.*

John Locke is a kind of 'lowest common denominator' of political philosophy, the intellectual forebear of much of today's political orthodoxy, a role that befits a thinker of a naturally orthodox turn of mind. In actual fact, as with Thomas Hobbes, the upheaval of the English Civil War is the background to his writings and it no doubt had its influence. But, notwithstanding this, Locke seemed to enjoy a placid enough childhood undisturbed by the activities of the rebellious parliamentarians, including amongst their number his father. Even the execution of King Charles in 1649, whilst he was a schoolboy, failed to radicalise him. Instead Locke rose steadily up through English society until well into middle age, particularly after rather fortuitously saving the Earl of Shaftesbury's life by performing a hazardous but successful operation on him. (At this time, of course, any successful operation had the nature of something of a miracle, requiring lavish rewards.)

Earl Shaftesbury went on to three notable political achievements: he led the opposition to Charles II, he founded the Whig Party, the forerunner of the Liberals, and he pushed Locke into politics. Unexpectedly, it was Locke who would eventually become one of the most acclaimed figures of his century, and one of the most influential political philosophers of all time.

The significance of the Civil War itself for Locke was that it represented a flare-up in the perennial dispute between the king and

his parliament of aristocrats (and bishops), who were always seeking a greater role, particularly in the setting of tariffs and the levying of taxes as well as in the conduct of religious affairs. Matters, at this time, hinged on the relative influence of two factions in the country, the Independents who were politically moderate, but who sought a State Church and wished to abolish bishops, and the Presbyterians who insisted, on the contrary, that every congregation should be free to choose its own theology. Eventually the dispute was resolved on the battlefield by Cromwell's New Model Army in favour of the Independents. After this, the hopes of 'moderates' for a compromise with the king were dashed. Cromwell happily assumed the role of Napoleon the pig in *Animal Farm*, Orwell's classic allegorical novel (of a much later, communistic revolution), who having led the farmyard animals in revolution against their human master, ends up walking on two legs, eating and sleeping in the farmer's old house.

So, after a period of increasingly less democratic parliaments, England witnessed the rule of the 'Lord Protector', and with it her first and only republic, rapidly descend into a personal dictatorship. By the time of Cromwell's death, most English were relieved to have Charles' son return as, effectively, their first constitutional monarch, bound to Parliament by the principles of *habeas corpus* and the need to seek its approval for new taxes. And perhaps there was another, more subtle, legacy of the Civil War – a fear and dislike of over-powerful individuals, such as Oliver Cromwell.

John Locke fitted the times very well (Bertrand Russell even described him as the 'apostle of the Revolution of 1688'). His philosophy was actively adopted by contemporary politicians and thinkers; his influence was transmitted to eighteenth-century France through the medium of Voltaire's writings, and inspired the principles of the French revolution. And his views would spread still more widely, through the writings of Thomas Paine, eventually shaping the American revolution too.

Locke's political life begins around the time of the Black Death, when London was burning in the Great Fire, as the son of a Puritan trading family at last abandons the life of polite debate within academia or the church that had been beckoning. Apparently undergoing something of a 'Damaskan' conversion, Locke decided to write what amounted to a work of sedition – which was a very dangerous thing to do in the seventeenth century. Of Locke's immediate circle, Earl Shaftesbury would flee for his life in 1682 to Holland, whilst poor Algernon Sidney, Lord William Russell and the

Earl of Essex would all be imprisoned for spreading the wrong sort of (politically controversial) views. Sidney and Russell eventually met their deaths on the scaffold, to the end insisting unheeded on their right to resist tyrants, whilst Essex cheated the hangman – but only by taking his own life whilst languishing in the Tower of London.

## Work

Fortunately for John Locke, such grim choices were never necessary. At the time of the crackdown that netted his friends, he himself was of such trifling political importance that he was allowed to slip away abroad largely unnoticed and completely unheeded. Not that his views were particularly radical even when noticed. Locke's political writing is mainly presented in academic style as a response to issues raised before him by writers such as Hugo Grotius, the Dutch lawyer and statesman with a special interest in ethics and international law, or by the English political theorist (pundit, we might say today), Sir Robert Filmer. Filmer's royalist tract, *Patriarcha* (published 1680) earned the author a knighthood from Charles I. It also earned him a particular notoriety in the eyes of the parliamentarians who later vented their pent-up frustration during the war by ransacking his house not just once but ten times.

It is with an eye to Sir Robert's comfortable, traditionalist thesis that people are *naturally* born unfree and unequal, and rulers are equally naturally over them – directly descended from the First Man, Adam (who had been given dominion over all creation by God himself) – that John Locke begins his political writings. The *Essay Concerning the True, Original Extent and End of Civil Government* starts by declaring that:

... it is impossible that the rulers now on earth should make any benefit, or derive any the least shadow of authority, from that which is held to be the fountain of all power, Adam's private dominion and paternal jurisdiction, so that he that will not give just occasion to think that all government in the world is the product only of force and violence, and that men live together by no other rules but that of the beasts, where the strongest carries it, and so lay a foundation for perpetual disorder and mischief, tumult, sedition and rebellion...

At this time, the prevailing view, exemplified by Sir Robert, was that the state, through its officers, had the same sort of authority over the citizen as a father (in a patriarchal society) had over his children, or a squire over his servant, a lord over his slave – or a man over his wife. Locke takes them all on. He is always most outspoken and unusual in his firm advocacy of women's rights. Quoting in his support the Christian commandments of Exodus to honour both 'thy father and thy mother', Locke suggests that 'it might perhaps have kept men from running into those gross mistakes they have made' if they had remembered that there was another equal authority in the world. Even a monarchy should properly be understood as that of more than one person, for where there is a king, there needs must be a queen. And Locke points out that the hereditary principle itself is dubious and flawed as it would appear to allow only one true heir to Adam, with all the other supposed kings exposed as frauds. On the other hand, any weakening of the literal hereditary system, say one that simply allows power, like property, to be handed down from father to son, cannot provide the stability that the 'descent from God' principle does. Unlikely though this political debate may seem to modern eyes, the notion of 'direct descent' does hang on even now, for example in the Japanese royal family, in the 'political families' such as the Kennedys and the Bushes in America, and (at least until the end of the last century) in the British House of Lords. In the seventeenth century, it was widely accepted as the uncontroversial and literal truth.

To justify his position, Locke, like Hobbes (who published the *Leviathan* whilst Locke was preparing to study at Oxford), goes back to consideration of the 'state of nature'. Again like Hobbes, he imagines this as a situation of lawlessness, where all may do as they will, without 'asking leave, or depending on the will of any other man'. It is a state of equality, yet not total anarchy, for there is one rule – the 'sacred and unalterable law of self-preservation'. Thus far, then, thus unremarkable. But now Locke extracts a palatable dish from Hobbes' bitter brew.

The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges everyone: 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 another in his life, health, liberty or possessions.

The reason is that as we are all the work of the 'one omnipotent Maker', and 'furnished with like faculties, sharing all in one community of nature', there 'cannot be supposed any such subordination among us, that may authorise us to destroy one another, as if we were made for one another's uses, as the inferior ranks of creatures are for ours'. This 'State of Nature', as Locke notes, still existed then, and continues to do so today, in international relations, between states.

It follows that, in the state of nature, no one may interfere with another's liberties – 'we are born free, as we are born rational' – but if once one transgresses another's rights or property, then, be warned, everybody has a right to 'punish the transgressors of that law to such a degree, as may hinder its violation'. But this punishment must still be 'proportionate', only just in as much as it serves to undo the original harm, or to prevent future occurrences. For Locke's state of nature has two faces. It is a benign, cooperative existence originally, until an individual or group (like Cromwell and the Independents) seeks power over others. Then it becomes a state of war, with the individual entitled – nay obliged – to use any means to regain their freedom.

This freedom is the kernel of Locke's philosophy: 'The freedom ... of man and liberty of acting according to his own will, is grounded on his having reason which is able to instruct him in that law he is to govern himself by...'

It is freedom from 'absolute, arbitrary power', not necessarily freedom to do anything, but liberty to follow one's own will and volition, except where a rule, 'common to everyone of that society, and made by the legislative power erected in it', prohibits such action. To which extent his doctrine is an early kind of utilitarianism, the engine of a machine with the aim of increasing the sum of human happiness. Locke has in mind only the enlightened self-interest of individuals. But in the priority he gives to individual rights, Locke appeals to a moral conception which is beyond self-interest, and which lies at the heart of political liberalism.

This new morality starts with the institution of property. The earth, and 'all inferior creatures', belong to everyone in common – with one important exception. Each individual does own one thing, they have property in their own person. 'This nobody has any right to but himself', Locke adds, neglecting, it would seem, the issue of slavery and indeed his own investments in the Royal Africa slaving company, doing a profitable trade for him at the time. Consequently,

'the labour of his body, and the work of his hands', are rightly considered to belong to each individual. 'Whatever people produce through their own effort, using the commonly owned raw materials of nature, are also (properly) theirs.' This apparently socialist principle, anticipating Marx's Labour Theory of Value by some centuries, Locke amplifies further:

... for 'tis labour indeed that puts the difference of value on everything; and let anyone consider, what the difference is between an acre of land planted with tobacco, or sugar, sown with wheat or barley; and an acre of the same land lying in common, without any husbandry upon it.

But this, Locke appreciates, is jumping ahead in time from the true state of nature to agrarian society. In the beginning there was only hunting and gathering. Yet, even there, labour is the key.

He that is nourished by acorns he picked up under an oak or the apples he gathered from the trees in the wood, has certainly appropriated them to himself. Nobody can deny but the nourishment is his. I ask then, when did they begin to be his? When he eat? Or when he boiled them? Or when he brought them home? Or when he picked them up? And 'tis plain, if the first gathering made them not his, nothing else could.

The labour of picking up the acorns makes them the gatherer's, as 'of private right'. Nor is it necessary to seek the approval of the whole of mankind for it.

Locke sails close to the wind here, as on other occasions, for the rights of 'non-landowners' to 'commons' in seventeenth-century England was a sensitive matter. Common ownership had already been taken rather further by the Diggers, active during the first part of Locke's life, with their 'alternative' communities. Commons, perhaps underused but, by definition, unenclosed areas available for grazing or, indeed, collecting acorns, were always being threatened by the aristocracy, who wished to appropriate the common land to themselves. But the English common lands gave rural labourers the ability to produce food for themselves directly, which they would otherwise have only been able to achieve as payment for their labour on their lord's estates. In the rest of Europe, where there was no equivalent tradition of common land, the suggestion that people

had a 'right' to the products of their labour would have been even more scurrilous and revolutionary. Even so, all Locke has in mind is a limit on appropriation. No one should take 'more than they are able to make use of' before it spoils. Whatever is beyond this 'is more than his share, and belongs to others'. Of course, Locke hastens to add, gold and silver do not 'spoil', and therefore there is no harm in their accumulation.

Locke also assumes an effectively unlimited supply of property (as with the gold and silver), thereby avoiding the more problematic issues his theory raises.

Nobody could think himself injured by the drinking of another man, though he took a good draught, who had a whole river of the same water left him to quench his thirst. And the case of the land and water, where there is enough of both, is perfectly the same.

Locke likes to advance, as an example of this, the unlimited acres of America, ignorant or uncaring of the effects of European 'property rights' on the native Americans with their long-established communal use and management of the land. Indeed, through most of the medieval period, settlements in the Americas were larger and more sophisticated than the European equivalents. But, most likely, Locke would have followed the prejudices of his time, even if he had considered there to be a conflict in ownership. Locke says that God gave the world to 'the industrious and rational', and the native Americans might well have been found wanting in his eyes – seen as lazy and neglectful of their natural inheritance, and consequently living in poverty.

Locke, of course, means well. He writes:

I ask whether in the wild woods and uncultivated waste of America left to nature, without any improvement, tillage or husbandry, a thousand acres [will] yield the needy and wretched inhabitants as many conveniences of life as ten acres of equally fertile land do in Devonshire.

In the beginning the whole world was America, explains Locke, meaning that the world was an unexploited wilderness, before, through the efforts of people, there came farms and manufactures and buildings and cities. With these come trade, and money. But although property is the foundation of political society, Locke traces

its origin back not to commerce, but to 'the conjugal union'. The first society was between man and wife, and later their children.

Conjugal society is made by a voluntary compact between man and woman: and though it consists of right in one another's bodies, as is necessary to its chief end, procreation; yet it draws with it mutual support, and assistance, and a community of interest too, as necessary not only to unite their care, and affection, but also necessary to their common offspring, who have a right to be nourished and maintained by them, till they are able to... shift and provide for themselves.

This rule which, Locke notes, the infinitely wise Maker has set, is obeyed by all the 'inferior creatures' too, even though many of their offspring can fend for themselves almost as soon they are born. In the *Two Treatises*, Locke argues that where a person is unable to provide the basic means of sustenance for themselves, they have a right to the surplus goods of others, and, indeed, people have an obligation 'by charity' to offer them this. And the handover must be done without exacting an undue toll, for

... a man can no more make of another's necessity, to force him to become his vassal, by withholding that relief God requires him to afford to his brother, than he that has more strength can seize upon a weaker, master him to his obedience, and with a dagger at his throat offer him death or slavery.

Like Hobbes, Locke assumes a kind of 'social contract' between ruler and ruled, with an even weaker attempt at explanation than Hobbes made. He imagines that people join voluntarily together as one society, giving up their natural rights in the area of law-making or what he terms the 'executive power of the law of nature'. In the *Two Treatises*, as in other earlier writings, he is content to take these issues as fairly self-evident, and leave the details of 'natural law' unexplored, the better to press on with drawing his conclusions.

Men being, as has been said, by nature, all free and equal and independent, no one can be put out of this estate, and subjected to the political power of another, without his own consent... when any number of men have, by the consent of every individual, made a community, they have thereby made that community one



body, with a power to act as one body, which is only by the will and determination of the majority... to move... whither the greater force carries it...

The American constitution is founded on the comforting declaration that certain truths are 'self-evident': it is Locke who provides much of the philosophical impetus for this dubious, if happy, notion.

Society is thus authorised by each individual to 'make laws for him as the public good of the society shall require'. The 'inconveniences' of anarchy ensure that this is a free decision quickly taken. The state of nature now gives way to the laws made for the common weal. This, Locke adds, demonstrates that absolute power, as for instance recommended by Hobbes, and generally present in the principle of monarchical rule, is not actually part of civil society, indeed not part of civil government at all. Where there exists no independent judge to ensure that justice is done, rulers and the ruled remain in a state of nature. Indeed slightly worse. 'For he that thinks absolute power purifies men's blood, and corrects the baseness of human nature, need read but the history of this, or any other age to be assured of the contrary.'

And so,

whoever has the legislative or supreme power of any commonwealth, is bound to govern by established standing laws, promulgated and made known to the people, and not by extemporary decrees; by indifferent and upright judges, who are to decide controversies by these laws; and to employ the force of community at home, only in the execution of such laws, or abroad to prevent or redress foreign injuries, and secure the community from inroads or invasion. And all this to be directed to no other end, but the peace, safety, and public good of the people.

## **Influence**

Locke has no particular view about the form government should take, as long as it is based on popular consent. It may be a republic, but it could be an oligarchy and there might still be a monarch. But whatever form the government takes, Locke says it does need to include some 'separation of powers', and sets out fairly precisely the

distinction to be made between the law-making part of government – the legislature – and the action-taking part – the executive. The executive must have the power to appoint and dismiss the legislature, but it does not make the one superior to the other, rather there exists a ‘fiduciary trust’.

Despite the fact that ‘rigged justice’ was very much a central issue of the ‘Glorious Revolution’, and after all Locke himself lived through the ‘Cavalier Parliament’ of 1661 to 1679 – which did little other than pass increasingly totalitarian and repressive laws (mainly against religious freedom) – it was left to Montesquieu (in his *Spirit of the Laws* some half a century later, 1748) to argue the need for the additional separation of judicial power characteristic of the American constitution. Before the Civil War, judges could be dismissed at will by the King. Afterwards, they were removable only with the consent of both houses of Parliament.

Locke argues too that because self-defence is the foundation of the law of nature, people must always be allowed to protect themselves from an unjust or tyrannical government. (Observers of the changes of 1989 and later in Eastern Europe have claimed that these were ‘Lockean’ revolutions, in that the people – a political community not just a class – withdrew their assent from their governments after years of waiting and biding their time.) Locke himself considers various objections to this final and most desperate liberty – the right to resist an unjust government – but finds them unconvincing. He quotes Barclay, ‘the great champion of absolute monarchy’:

‘But if anyone should ask, must the people then always lay themselves open to the cruelty and rage of tyranny? Must they see their cities pillaged, and lain in ashes, their wives and children exposed to the tyrant’s lust and fury, and themselves and families reduced by their king to ruin and all the miseries of want and oppression, and yet sit still? Must men alone be debarred the common privilege of opposing force with force, which nature allows so freely to all other creatures...?’

Apparently not. Locke’s social contract is different from Hobbes’ in being not a once-and-for-all act, but an ongoing bargain between people and sovereign. If a king ‘sets himself against the body of the commonwealth, whereof he is head, and shall, with intolerable ill-usage, cruelly tyrannise over the whole, or a considerable part of the people; in this case the people have a right to resist and defend

themselves...' But not to go any further. For example, not to revenge themselves, or to lose their sense of respect for the royal authority.

And as to the great question of who shall be judge of whether the government or the prince or legislature is acting contrary to the trust bestowed in them by the people? 'To this I reply, the people shall be judge...' The only further appeal lies in Heaven.

In Locke's times, taxation had proved just such a cause. 'Tis true,' Locke ruefully acknowledges, 'that governments cannot be supported without great charge', so taxes may be levied, as long as it is with the consent of the people, or their representatives. But Locke sets himself firmly against the practice advanced so catastrophically by Charles I in precipitating the Civil War, and sought still by his son, that the royal prerogative allows the monarch to tax without seeking this consent. For the 'great and chief end therefore, of men's uniting into commonwealths, and putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their property'.

The relevance and appeal of Locke's philosophy to the revolutions of the seventeenth century was his own achievement. But little more of Locke might have been heard, had it not been for one of his fellow countrymen, Thomas Paine (1737–1809), some years after his death. Through Paine, Locke's liberal individualism became something much more potent, contributing the ideals as well as the language of the two events that heralded the modern world – the French and American Revolutions.

### **The Rights of Man?**

Paine himself was from a rather more parochial mould than Locke, primarily concerned with practical matters, such as bridges. Born in Norfolk, the young Paine worked variously as a 'staymaker', a civil servant, a journalist and a school teacher. It was whilst working for the Excise Board in Lewes in Sussex that he became interested in politics, serving on the town council, and holding heated political discussions of Locke's ideas in the White Hart Inn. Actually, Paine once remarked rather dismissively of his debt to his political forbear, that he had 'never read any Locke, nor ever had the work in my hand', but it was certainly Locke's ideas that made the running in those political debates in the *White Hart*.

Paine soon left quiet, half-timbered Lewes for the New World, on the recommendation of Benjamin Franklin himself, whom he had

met in London, and at the same time moved from talk to action. On settling in Philadelphia, Paine immediately began to set out his ideas on paper: Lockean ideas of equal rights for men and women, for African and European – and even on the fair treatment for animals. Paine was thus one of the first in America to press for the abolition of slavery. His book *The Rights of Man* is rightly considered a political classic, even overshadowing Locke's ponderous prose, whose ideas in it he so largely borrowed. But it would be the novel issue of national self-determination that made the name of Thomas Paine historically significant – the issue that John Adams, second President of the United States, once described as a dreadful 'hobgoblin', 'so frightful... that it would throw a delicate person into fits to look it in the face'.

In the seventeenth century, uprisings such as the revolt of the Netherlands against the Holy Roman Emperor in Spain, had been driven by religious differences, not by nationalism as such. Even the discontent of the American colonists was directed against unjust treatment by the English king, not against royal authority in itself. Paine's nationalistic pamphlet *Common Sense* was a spark in a tinderbox which started a fire that would eventually sweep away far more than the English claim to America.

Locke's influence again is apparent in the writings of one of Paine's contemporaries and one of the first of the feminist philosophers, Mary Wollstonecraft. Writing, as it were, in parallel with Paine, producing an anonymous *Vindication of the Rights of Man* days before Paine's work (later, in 1798, even entitling one of her books: *The Wrongs of Women*) Wollstonecraft offered a radical personal narrative, endorsing the aims of the French Revolution even as many of her immediate circle were being led to the scaffold. Another work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), pushed forward Locke's liberal hypothesis on women's political importance, with a wide-ranging denunciation of 'male' rationality and power, criticising Rousseau in particular. For this, Wollstonecraft earned the dislike of many prominent male intellectuals of the time, and the particular soubriquet of 'hyena in petticoats' from Horace Walpole. But it was only a journalist like Paine, not a novelist, even a radical one like Wollstonecraft, far less an academic like Locke, who would write:

Why is it that scarcely any are executed but the poor? The fact is a proof, amongst other things, of a wretchedness in their condition. Bred without morals, and cast upon the world without a prospect, they are the exposed sacrifice of vice and legal

barbarity. The millions that are superfluously wasted by governments, are more than sufficient to reform these evils, and to benefit the condition of every man in a nation... It is time that nations should be rational, and not be governed like animals, for the pleasure of their riders. To read the history of kings, a man would be almost inclined to suppose that government consisted in stag-hunting, and that every nation paid a million a year to a huntsman... It has cost England almost seventy millions sterling, to maintain a family imported from abroad, of very inferior capacity to thousands in the nation... (*The Rights of Man*, 1791)

Paine had a better idea for the management of the new societies:

In the first place, three hundred representatives, fairly elected, are sufficient for all the purposes to which legislation can apply, and preferable to a larger number. They may be divided into a number of houses, or meet in one, as in France, or in any manner a constitution shall direct.

And, as representation is always considered, in free countries, 'the most honourable of all stations', the 'allowance made to it is merely to defray the expense which the representatives incur by that service, and not to it as an office' – a principle sadly lost somewhere along the line.

Paine even worked out neatly, in double entry bookkeeping form, exactly how much the government would cost, which was not to be very much. In fact, when finances are done his way, there is, happily, enough money to pay all the poor people of the country some money. This money, Paine pointed out, is no more than remission of their own taxes, from hidden taxation imposed by duties on imports and so on. Furthermore, those who cannot work deserve state support, Paine calculates, as the benefits of relieving parents of the twin burdens of paying for the very young and the very old (and the sick – all right, three burdens) enable them to cease being dependent on others, and society is restored to its natural state of being an engine for the production of prosperity.

## Key Ideas

Locke creates a picture of the world in which 'rationality' is the ultimate authority, not God, and certainly not, as Hobbes had insisted, brute force. He insists that people all have certain fundamental 'rights' and also attempts to return the other half of the human race, the female part, to their proper, equal, place in history, the family and in government.

Locke's legacy is the first, essentially practical, even legalistic, framework and analysis of the workings of society. That is his own particular contribution to its evolution.

- Property is the key to 'civil' society, and the key to property is labour. The more you work, the more you own.
- The powers of government must be strictly limited, in particular by separating the ability to make laws from the ability to make policy.

## Key Text

Locke's *Essay Concerning the True, Original Extent and End of Civil Government* (1690)

## 4 John Locke (1632–1704)

Locke was born the son of a moderately prosperous family of Puritan and Parliamentary sympathies. His father was a Captain in the Parliamentary armies who had recently risen to gentle rank, largely by the exertion of Locke's grandfather, Nicholas. In his later life Locke had sufficient income from the family estates to live the life of a gentleman.

After schooling at Westminster, Locke went on to Christchurch, Oxford, in 1652, and he remained as a lecturer there until removed – by Royal order – in 1684. Part of the reason for this act of enmity on the part of Charles II was Locke's association with Anthony Ashley Cooper (later to become first Earl of Shaftesbury) which began in 1667. Shaftesbury was a Whig grandee opposed to the policies of Charles II and active in the attempts to prevent the accession of Charles' Roman Catholic brother James. As an intimate of Shaftesbury, Locke was at the heart of English politics of the time and a target for the suspicion and resentment of the Stuart monarchy. He was suspected of being the author of a pamphlet *A Letter from a Person of Quality to his Friend in the Country*, which infuriated the government, and it may be that this suspicion drove him into exile in France in 1675. On returning to England in 1679 he also returned to Shaftesbury's household. It is probable that the *Two Treatises of Government* were written between Locke's return from his first period of exile and the time he fled again – this time to Holland – because of his relationship with those involved in the Rye House plot on the life of Charles II in 1683. By this time Shaftesbury was dead, and Locke did not return to England until the success of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the deposition of James II. Locke spent the remainder of his life in the Masham household, north of London and, because his side had won, was employed by the government as Commissioner of Appeals and Commissioner for Trade. These political appointments and his intellectual eminence ensured a busy life until his death in 1704.

Establishing a historical and political context for Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* is one of the problems of Locke scholarship. The work was published anonymously and in an incomplete form in 1689, and Locke did not own it during his lifetime. It used to be assumed that the work was a justification, after the fact, for the Revolution of 1688, and that the main focus of the Second Treatise was the work of Thomas Hobbes. Recently, however, this view has been overturned (see

introductory matter to Locke [1689] 1960; Laslett 1988), and it is now thought that the *Two Treatises* were written between 1679 and 1682. However, the order of their writing is still unclear (see Laslett 1988: addendum to Introduction). *The First Treatise* is a sustained attack upon the argument for the divine rights of kings as put forward by Filmer in his *Patriarcha* (written in 1630s but not published until 1680), but whether this was written before or after *The Second Treatise* is still a matter of dispute (see Laslett 1988, *loc. cit.*). The second, and more important, treatise contains sections and sentences which seem to be directed at Hobbes (see especially II, 93, and its last part):

As if when Men quitting a State of Nature entered into Society, they agreed that all of them but one, should be under the restrains of laws, but that he should still retain all the Liberty of the State of Nature, increased with Power, and made licentious with Impunity. This is to think Men are so foolish that they take care to avoid what Mischiefs may be done to them by Pole Cats, or Foxes, but are content, nay think it safety, to be devoured by Lions.

However, it may be that even here Locke is dealing with the implications of Filmer's doctrines. Because of Locke's caution and habitual secrecy – traits which were necessary in a country in which one of Locke's circle, Algernon Sydney, was executed in 1683 for broadcasting views not far removed from Locke's – it is likely that we will never be able to place his major political work definitively. And it is probable that we will not be able to discover the wider influences on that work. There is evidence that he was familiar with Milton's political arguments, and it has been suggested that he was influenced by Leveller theories (but see Aylmer 1998), but such things remain the stuff of speculation. What is clear, however, is that Locke's works, both the *Two Treatises* and *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, were not the efforts of an intellectual spectator of political events, but rather attempts by a political insider to alter the practical politics of his day.

John Locke's ideas, especially as put forward in *The Second Treatise*, are some of the most important contributions to thought about liberal democracy. This is not necessarily because Locke's analysis and arguments are always compelling in detail – they are often far from this – but because Locke saw clearly what the problems were and provided lines of enquiry for addressing them. Whilst there continues to be argument about Locke's precise influence upon such events as the American War of Independence and the French Revolution of 1789 (see Lloyd Thomas 1995) it is clearly the case that participants in these events did see Locke's general position as nourishing their radical, liberal, democratic republicanism.

Locke, like Hobbes, begins his *Second Treatise*, with a consideration of 'the state of nature' – and thus continues a political tradition that goes back, at least, to the Roman writer Seneca. But Locke's conception of a state of nature is very different from that of Hobbes. Life in such a state is not of necessity 'nasty, brutish and short', although it is likely to be, at least upon occasion, inconvenient. In such a state people are equal and free, but such equality and freedom has to be managed



within a Law of Nature which, mediated by Reason, comes from God. So, for example, no one in such a state may destroy themselves, nor may they legitimately harm another in 'his Life, Health, Liberty, or Possessions', because this would offend against the fact that they are God's equally created creatures. And, just as people in such a state have a right to preserve their own lives, liberty and possessions, they also have the right to defend those of others, if these are threatened.

However, although this provides a moral framework which gives people, even those without government, the right to restrain and punish aggressors, it still is not enough to circumvent the inconveniences of the natural state. Such inconveniences result from the fact that, even under God's law, there will be well-intentioned conflicts of interest – where individuals or groups think they have rights which are disputed by other individuals or groups – and there can be no neutral judge to decide between the disputants. And, although people in such a state are deemed to be rational, human nature is such that they are unlikely to be impartial where there own interests are concerned. So we get in Locke the extremely influential thought that one of the roles of government is exactly to fill the place of a neutral referee between disputing interest groups.

But Locke is not merely interested in providing an account of the movement from state of nature to political society. He is also concerned to use that account as a criticism of the perversions of civil society that he saw as typical of the Stuart monarchy. Thus, if people wish to move from a state of nature to a civil society they will not agree to such a move if it leaves them worse off than they were in the previous state. (It may be that Locke thought that, in some ways, they could not make such a move, because this would involve the negation of the Law of Nature, and such a negation is morally impossible.) But arbitrary government, which tries, for instance, to raise money from the people without their consent, or which tries to prevent the meetings of the legislature (i.e. Parliament) which lie at the heart of civil society, must in fact make the people worse off.

Locke extends this treatment when he deals, in Chapter XIV, with that favourite instrument of the last Stuart kings, Royal Prerogative. Here he argues that, whereas acts outside the law (e.g. pulling down someone's house to prevent fire spreading from the house next door) may occasionally be justified by reference to the public good, it is precisely such a reference that must inform all proper acts of prerogative; without this reference, prerogative becomes arbitrary absolutism, which no reasonable people could possibly sanction. (At the end of this chapter Locke attaches a very pointed reference to a failure to call Parliament, and argues that such a failure might lead to legitimate rebellion.)

Locke has been accused, rather unconvincingly, of being simply a mouthpiece for the seventeenth-century ruling classes (see MacPherson 1962, but also Tully 1980 and Dunn 1984). However, whatever the justice of this claim, it is possible that the modern-day student of politics reading Locke might question his radicalism. However one interprets his notion of property, Locke does seem intent on providing a defence of secure possession of material goods, and he seems unmoved by the fact that the few might amass money or its substitutes. He seems untroubled

by the fact of slavery, even though his notion of natural law might be interpreted to make it immoral, and, with the vast majority of his contemporaries, he seems to look at acquisition of lands in the Americas with equanimity. However, even though all this may be true, it ignores Locke's purposes and the context of the time. Locke is concerned to address specific political evils in an immediate situation. It is certain that between 1679 and 1683 he was actively involved in matters to do with the exclusion of James II from the succession that were almost certainly treasonable. In the year before his removal from Oxford, the University ordered the last burning of books in the history of England, and many of the doctrines that were declared anathema were already included in *the Two Treatises*. Lastly, Sydney whose views were similar to Locke's, was executed both for these views and for his participation in the activities of Locke's circle. To put oneself in the way of losing one's head is usually a fair mark of the radical.

Locke is one of the mainstream writers of liberal democratic thought. As was said above, we do not precisely know whether he studied the works of Milton and the Levellers, but he must have been aware of the burden of their thought, at least in general. He certainly knew the work of Hobbes and, although he rejected both Hobbes's psychology and his pretension to turn political thought into the mode of geometry or mathematics, Locke's debt to Hobbes is enormous. However, Locke added to Hobbes's thought something which is almost entirely lacking in the original, and that is the dimension of practical policy. Partly because of their association with the successful revolution of 1688, and partly because of Locke's fame as a philosopher and the author of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke's political ideas continued to be studied. We know that they had a direct influence on Madison in his drafting of the Federalist Papers and the Constitution, and we can reasonably suspect that, at least in outline, his ideas were familiar to those who brought about the French Revolution. Paine's ideas concerning natural rights and civil society may also be traced back to Locke. When we come to the nineteenth century and the Utilitarians, we come not only to thinkers who have internalised some of Locke's doctrines but also to theorists who have adopted his methods. With Bentham and John Stuart Mill, as with Locke, one can hear their appeal to common sense.

Just as Locke's philosophical relevance has been kept alive by books, such as, Mackie's *Problems from Locke*; his political relevance has been highlighted by contemporary political theorising. John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*, which rekindled modern political philosophy, makes use of a version of both state-of-nature and contract theory that might have been recognisable to Locke and tries to argue for a liberal society which might have been congenial to him. On the other hand, one of Rawls's most powerful critics, Nozick in *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, presents a very different picture of a liberal, political reality but, again, both implicitly and explicitly – in his account of justly owned property – appeals to Lockean thought and insights. Both the power of Locke's thought and the frustration of trying to untangle its intricacies are long likely to remain with us.

Locke begins his explanation of how we move from a state of nature to civil society in Chapter VIII (which follows). But before that, in Chapter V (which also

follows), he puts forward his famous views on 'property'. Whilst these are influential and much discussed (see Nozick 1974), what is not usually discussed is the reason why Locke, in an essay primarily concerned with the bases of legitimate government and the right of rebellion, raises issues concerned with property at all. Again, the answer to this is probably found in the political context of the time – especially if, following the scholarship of the moment, we think the *Two Treatises* were produced in 1679–82. Charles II attempted to raise taxes without calling Parliament. Such an attempt embodies a view of the sovereign's right to the property of the nation, and Locke's chapter on property is best seen as an attempt to deny this right (see Lloyd Thomas 1995). (This, and other chapters, explain why Locke thought it wise to go into exile on the demise of his protector, Shaftesbury).

The last part of *The Second Treatise* is an extended defence of the right of rebellion against a ruler who acts in a non-legitimate manner. Practically, for the next century, it was probably the most influential part of Locke's political writings. In theoretical terms, however, it has received little attention. Locke's arguments here are as incomplete as elsewhere. So, for instance, it is unclear whether he thinks that minorities within a nation have the right of rebellion or whether he believes that, even if they do have such a right, it is liable to be ineffectual. Locke essentially gives four grounds for legitimate rebellion: firstly, if a government is failing to enforce the law of nature; secondly, if a government fails to further the common good; thirdly, if a government loses the trust of its people; fourthly, if a government fails to act within the limits of positive law (Locke's further reasons seem to derive from this last reason). Whether they are well argued or not, there is little reason to doubt the appeal of such ideas to those involved in the American and French Revolutions.

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## EXTRACT FROM JOHN LOCKE, *TWO TREATISES OF GOVERNMENT*

### Chapter V: Of Property

Whether we consider natural *Reason*, which tells us, that Men, being once born, have a right to their Preservation, and consequently to Meat and Drink, and such other things, as Nature affords for their Subsistence: Or *Revelation*, which gives us an account of those Grants God made of the World to *Adam*, and to Noah, and his Sons, 'tis very clear, that God, as *King David* says, *Psal. CXV. xvj. has, given the Earth to the Children of Men* given it to Mankind in common. But this being supposed, it seems to some a very great difficulty, how any one should ever come to have a *Property* in any thing: I will not content my self to answer, That if it be difficult to make out *Property*, upon a supposition, that God gave the World to *Adam* and his Posterity in common; it is impossible that any Man, but one universal Monarch, should have any *Property*; upon a supposition, that God gave the World to Adam, and his Heirs in Succession, exclusive of all the rest of his Posterity. But I shall endeavour to shew, how Men might come to have a *property* in several parts of that which God gave to Mankind in common, and that without any express Compact of all the Commoners.

God, who hath given the World to Men in common, hath 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 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 no body 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 Inclosure, and is still a Tenant in common, must he 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.

Though the Earth, and all inferior Creatures be common to all Men, yet every Man has a *Property* in his own *Person*. This no Body has any Right to but himself. The *Labour* 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 hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his *Labour* with, and joyned to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his *Property*. It being by him removed from the common state Nature placed it in, it hath by this *labour* something annexed to it, that excludes the common right of other Men. For this *Labour* being the unquestionable Property of the Labourer, no Man but he can have a right to what that is once joyned to, at least where there is enough, and as good left in common for others.

He that is nourished by the Acorns he pickt up under an Oak, or the Apples he gathered from the Trees in the Wood, has certainly appropriated them to himself. No Body can deny but the nourishment is his. I ask then, When did they begin to be his? When he digested? Or when he eat? Or when he boiled? Or when he brought them home? Or when he pickt them up? And 'tis plain, if the first gathering made them not his, nothing else could. That *labour* put a distinction between them and the common. That added something to them more than Nature, the common Mother of all, had done; and so they became his private right. And will any one say he had no right to those Acorns or Apples he thus appropriated, because he had not the consent of all Mankind to make them his? Was it a Robbery thus to assume to himself what belonged to all in Common? If such a consent as that was necessary, Man had starved, notwithstanding the Plenty God had given him. We see in *Commons*, which remain so by Compact, that 'tis the taking any part of what is common, and removing it out of the state Nature leaves it in, which *begins the Property*; without which the Common is of no use. And the taking of this or that part, does not depend on the express consent of all the Commoners. Thus the Grass my Horse has bit; the Turfs my Servant has cut; and the Ore I have digg'd in any place where I have a right to them in common with others, become my *Property*, without the assignation or consent of any body. The *labour* that was mine, removing them out of that common state they were in, hath *fixed my Property* in them.

By making an explicit consent of every Commoner necessary to any ones appropriating to himself any part of what is given in common, Children or Servants could not cut the Meat which their Father or Master had provided for them in common, without assigning to every one his peculiar part. Though the Water running in the Fountain be every ones, yet who can doubt, but that in the Pitcher is his only who drew it out? His *labour* hath taken it out of the hands of Nature, where it was common, and belong'd equally to all her Children, and *hath* thereby *appropriated* it to himself.

Thus this Law of reason makes the Deer, that *Indian's* who hath killed it; 'tis allowed to be his goods who hath bestowed his labour upon it, though before, it was the common right of everyone. And amongst those who are counted the Civiliz'd part of Mankind, who have made and multiplied positive laws to determine Property, this original Law of Nature for the *beginning of Property*; in what was before common, still takes place; and by vertue thereof, what Fish any one catches in the Ocean, that great and still remaining Common of Mankind; or what Ambergriese any one takes up here, is by the *Labour* that removes it out of that common state Nature left it in, *made his Property* who takes that pains about it. And even

amongst us the Hare that any one is Hunting, is thought his who pursues her during the Chase. For being a Beast that is still looked upon as common, and no Man's private Possession; whoever has employ'd so much *labour* about any of that kind, as to find and pursue her, has thereby removed her from the state of Nature, wherein she was common, and hath *begun a Property*.

It will perhaps be objected to this, That if gathering the Acorns, or other Fruits of the Earth, etc. makes a right to them, then any one may *ingross* as much as he will. To which I Answer, Not so. The same Law of Nature that does by this means give us Property does also *bound* that Property too. *God has given us all things richly*, i Tim. vi. I 7. is the Voice of Reason confirmed by Inspiration. But how far has he given it us? *To enjoy*. As much as any one can make use of to any advantage of life before it spoils; so much he may by his labour fix a Property in. Whatever is beyond this, is more than his share, and belongs to others. Nothing was made by God for Man to spoil or destroy. And thus considering the plenty of natural Provisions there was a longtime in the World, and the few spenders, and to how small a part of that provision the industry of one Man could extend itself, and ingross it to the prejudice of others; especially keeping within the *bounds*, set by reason of what might serve for his *use*; there could be then little room for Quarrels or Contentions about Property establish'd.

But the *chief matter of Property* being now not the Fruits the Earth, and the Beasts that subsist on it, but the *Earth itself*; as that which takes in and carries with it all the rest: I think it is plain that *Property* in that too is acquired as the former. *As much* Land as a Man Tills, Plants, Improves. Cultivates, and can use the Product of, so much is his *Property*. He by his Labour does, as it were, inclose it from the Common. Nor will it invalidate his right to say, Every body else has an equal Title to it; and therefore he cannot appropriate, he cannot inclose, without the Consent of all his Fellow-Commoners, all Mankind. God, when he gave the World in common to all Mankind, commanded Man also to labour, and the penury of his Condition required it of him. God and his Reason commanded him to subdue the Earth i.e. improve it for the benefit of Life, and therein lay out something upon it that was his own, his labour. He that in Obedience to this Command of God subdued, tilled and sowed any part of it, thereby annexed to it something that was his *Property*, which another had no Title to, nor could without injury take from him.

Nor was this *appropriation* of any parcel of *Land*, by improving it, any prejudice to any other Man, since there was still enough, and as good left; and more than the yet unprovided could use. So that in effect, there was never the less left for others because of his inclosure for himself. For he that leaves as much as another can make use of does as good as take nothing at all. No Body could think himself injur'd by the drinking of another Man, though he took a good Draught, who had a whole River of the same Water left him to quench his thirst. And the Case of Land and Water, where there is enough of both, is perfectly the same.

God gave the World to Men in Common; but since he gave them for their benefit, and the greatest Conveniencies of Life they were capable to draw from it, it cannot be supposed he

meant it should always remain common and uncultivated. He gave it to the use of the Industrious and Rational (and *Labour* was to be *his Title* to it;) not to the Fancy or Covetousness of the Quarrelsome and Contentious. He that had as good left for his Improvement, as was already taken up, needed not complain, ought not to meddle with what was already improved by another's Labour. If he did, 'tis plain he desired the benefit of another's Pains, which he had no right to, and not the Ground which God had given him in common with others to labour on, and whereof there was as good left, as that already possessed, and more than he knew what to do with, or his Industry could reach to.

'Tis true, in *Land* that is *common* in *England*, or any other Country, where there is Plenty of People under Government, who have Money and Commerce, no one can inclose or appropriate any part, without the consent of all his Fellow-Commoners: Because this is left common by Compact i.e. by the Law of the Land, which is not to be violated. And though it be Common, in respect of some Men, it is not so to all Mankind; but is the joint property of this Country, or this Parish. Besides, the remainder, after such inclosure, would not be as good to the rest of the Commoners as the whole was, when they could all make use of the whole: whereas in the beginning and first peopling of the great Common of the World, it was quite otherwise. The Law Man was under, was rather for *appropriating*. God Commanded, and his Wants forced him to *labour*: That was his *Property* which could not be taken from him where-ever he had fixed it. And hence subduing or cultivating the Earth, and having Dominion, we see are joyned together. The one gave Title to the other. So that God, by commanding to subdue, gave Authority so far to *appropriate*. And the Condition of Humane Life, which requires Labour and Materials to work on, necessarily introduces *private Possessions*.

The measure of Property Nature has well set, by the Extent of *Mens Labour, and the Conveniency of Life*: No Mans Labour could subdue, or appropriate all nor could his Enjoyment consume more than a small part; so that it was impossible for any Man, this way, to intrench upon the right of another, or acquire, to himself, a Property, to the Prejudice of his Neighbour, who would still have room, for as good, and as large a Possession (after the other had taken out his) as before it was appropriated. This *measure* did confine every Man's *Possession*, to a very moderate Proportion, and such as he might appropriate to himself, without Injury to any Body in the first Ages of the World, when Men were more in danger to be lost, by wandering from their Company, in the then vast Wilderness of the Earth, than to be straitned for want of room to plant in. And the same *measure* may be allowed still, without prejudice to any Body, as full as the World seems. For supposing a Man, or Family, in the state they were, at first peopling of the World by the Children of *Adam*, or *Noah*; let him plant in some in-land, vacant places of *America*, we shall find that the *Possessions* he could make himself upon the *measures* we have given, would not be very large, nor, even to this day, prejudice the rest of Mankind, or give them reason to complain, or think themselves injured by this Man's Incroachment, though the Race of Men have now spread themselves to all the corners of the World, and do infinitely exceed the small number [which] was at the beginning. Nay, the extent of *Ground* is of so little value, *without labour*; that I have heard it affirmed, that in

*Spain* itself, a Man may be permitted to plough, sow, and reap, without being disturbed, upon Land he has no other Title to, but only his making use of it. But, on the contrary, the Inhabitants think themselves beholden to him, who, by his Industry on neglected, and consequently waste Land, has increased the stock of Corn, which they wanted. But be this as it will, which I lay no stress on; This I dare boldly affirm, That the same *Rule of Property*, that every Man should have as much as he could make use of, would hold still in the World, without straitning any body, since there is Land enough in the World to suffice double the Inhabitants had not the *Invention of Money*, and the tacit Agreement of Men to put a value on it, introduced (by Consent) larger Possessions, and a Right to them; which, how it has done, I shall, by and by, shew more at large.

This is certain, That in the beginning, before the desire of having more than Men needed, had altered the intrinsic value of things, which depends only on their usefulness to the Life of Man; or [Men] *had agreed, that a little piece of yellow, Metal*, which would keep without wasting or decay, should be worth a great piece of Flesh, or a whole heap of Corn; though Men had a Right to appropriate, by their Labour, each one to himself, as much of the things of Nature, as he could use: Yet this could not be much, nor to the Prejudice of others, where the same plenty was left, to those who would use the same Industry. To which let me add, that he who appropriates land to himself by his labour, does not lessen but increase the common stock of mankind. For the provisions serving to the support of humane life, produced by one acre of inclosed and cultivated land, are (to speak much within compasse) ten times more, than those, which are yielded by an acre of Land, of an equal richness, lying wast in common. And therefor he, that incloses Land and has a greater plenty of the conveniencys of life from ten acres, than he could have from an hundred left to Nature, may truly be said, to give ninety acres to Mankind. For his labour now supplys him with provisions out of ten acres, which were but the product of an hundred lying in common. I have here rated the improved land very low in making its product but as ten to one, when it is much nearer an hundred to one. For I aske whether in the wild woods and uncultivated wast of America left to Nature, without any improvement, tillage or husbandry, a thousand acres will Yield the needy and wretched inhabitants as many conveniencies of life as ten acres of equally fertile land doe in Devonshire where they are well cultivated?

Before the Appropriation of Land, he who gathered as much of the wild Fruit, killed, caught, or tamed, as many of the Beasts he could; he that so employed his Pains about any of the spontaneous Products of Nature, as any way to alter them, from the state which Nature put them in, *by placing any of his Labour on them, did thereby acquire a Propriety* in them: But if they perished in his Possession without their due use; if the Fruits rotted, or the Venison putrified before he could spend it he offended against the common Law of Nature,



and was liable to be punished; he invaded his Neighbour's share, for he had *no Right, farther than his Use* called for any of them and they might serve to afford him Conveniencies of Life.

The same *measures* governed the *Possession of land* too: Whatsoever he tilled and reaped, laid up and made use of, before it spoiled, that was his peculiar Right; whatsoever he enclosed, and could feed, and make use of, the Cattle and Product was also his. But if either the Grass of his Enclosure rotted on the Ground, or the Fruit of his planting perished without gathering, and laying up, this part of the Earth, notwithstanding his Inclosure, was still to be looked on as Waste, and might be the Possession of any other. Thus, at the beginning, *Cain* might take as much Ground as he could till, and make it his own Land, and yet leave enough to *Abel's* Sheep to feed on; a few Acres would serve for both their Possessions. But as Families increased, and Industry enlarged their Stocks, their *Possessions enlarged* with the need of them; but yet it was commonly *without any fixed property in the ground* they, made use of, till they incorporated, settled themselves together, and built Cities, and then, by consent, they came in time, to set out the *bounds of their distinct Territories*, and agree on limits between them and their Neighbours, and by Laws within themselves, settled the *Properties* of those of the same Society. For we see, that in that part of the World which was first inhabited, and therefore like to be best peopled, even as low down as *Abraham's* time, they wandred with their Flocks, and their Herds, which was their substance, freely up and down, and this *Abraham* did, in a Country where he was a Stranger. Whence it is plain, that at least, a great part of the *Land lay in common*; that the Inhabitants valued it not, nor claimed Property in any more than they made use of. But when there was not room enough in the same place, for their Herds to feed together, they, by consent, as *Abraham* and *Lot* did, Gen. xi. 5. separated and enlarged their pasture, where it best liked them. And for the same Reason *Esau* went from his Father, and his Brother, and planted in *Mount Seir*, Gen. xxxvi. 6.

And thus, without supposing any private Dominion, and property in *Adam*, over all the *World*, exclusive of all other Men, which can no way be proved, nor any ones Property be made out from it; but supposing the World given as it was to the Children of Men *in common*, we see how *labour* could make Men distinct titles to several parcels of it, for their private uses; wherein there could be no doubt of Right, no room for quarrel.

Nor is it so strange, as perhaps before consideration it may appear, that the *Property of labour* should be able to over-balance the Community of Land. For 'tis *Labour* indeed that *puts the difference of value on every thing*; and let any one consider, what the difference is between an Acre of Land planted with Tobacco, or Sugar, sown with Wheat or Barley; and an Acre of the same Land lying in common, without any Husbandry upon it, and he will find, that the improvement of *labour makes* the far greater part of the value. I think it will be but a very modest Computation to say, that of the *Products* of the Earth useful to the Life of Man  $\frac{9}{10}$  are *the effects of labour*: nay, if we will rightly estimate things as they come to our use, and cast up the several Expences about them, what in them is purely owing to *Nature* and what to *labour*; we shall find, that in most of them  $\frac{99}{100}$  are wholly to be put on the account

of *labour*. There cannot be a clearer demonstration of any thing, than several Nations of the *Americans* are of this, who are rich in Land, and poor in all the Comforts of Life; whom Nature having furnished as liberally as any other people, with the materials of Plenty, i.e. a fruitful Soil, apt to produce in abundance, what might serve for food, rayment, and delight; yet for want of improving it by labour, have not one hundredth part of the Conveniencies we enjoy: And a King of a large and fruitful Territory there feeds, lodges and is clad worse than a day Labourer in *England*.

To make this a little clearer, let us but trace some of the ordinary provisions of Life, through their several progresses, before they come to our use, and see how much they receive of *their value from Humane Industry*. Bread, Wine and Cloth, are things of daily use, and great plenty, yet notwithstanding, Acorns, Water, and Leaves, or Skins, must be our Bread, Drink and Clothing, did not *labour* furnish us with these more useful Commodities. For whatever *Bread* is more worth than Acorns, *Wine* than Water, and *Cloth* or *Silk* than Leaves, Skins, or Moss, that is wholly *owing to labour* and industry. The one of these being the Food and Rayment which unassisted Nature furnishes us with; the other provisions which our industry and pains prepare for us, which how much they exceed the other in value, when any one hath computed, he will then see, how much *labour makes the far greater part of the value* of things, we enjoy in this World: And the ground which produces the materials, is scarce to be reckon'd in, as any, or at most, but a very small, part of it; So little, that even amongst us, Land that is left wholly to Nature, that hath no improvement of Pasturage, Tillage, or Planting, is called as indeed it is, *wast*; and we shall find the benefit of it amount to little more than nothing. This shews, how much numbers of men are to be prefer'd to largeness of dominions, and that the increase of lands and the right employin of them is the great art of government. And that Prince who shall be so wise and godlike as by established laws of liberty to secure protection and encouragement to the honest industry of Mankind against the oppression of power and narrowness of Party will quickly be too hard for his neighbours. But this bye the bye. To return to the argument in hand.

An Acre of Land that bears here Twenty Bushels of Wheat, and another in *America*, which, with the same Husbandry, would do the like, are, without doubt, of the same natural, intrinsick Value. But yet the Benefit Mankind receives from the one, in a Year, is worth 5*L* and from the other possibly not worth a Penny, if all the Profit an Indian received from it were to be valued, and sold here; at least, I may truly say, not  $\frac{1}{1000}$ . 'Tis *Labour* then which *puts the greater part of Value upon, Land* without which it would scarcely be worth any thing: 'tis to that we owe the greatest part of all its useful Products: for all that the Straw, Bran, Bread, of that Acre of Wheat, is more worth than the Product of an Acre of as good Land, which lies wast, is all the Effect of Labour. For 'tis not barely the Plough-man's Pains, the Reaper's and Thresher's Toil, and the Bakers Sweat, is to be counted into the *Bread* we eat; the Labour of those who broke the Oxen, who digged and wrought the Iron and Stones, who felled and framed the Timber employed about the Plough, Mill, Oven, or any other Utensils, which are a vast Number, requisite to this Corn, from its being seed to be sown to its being made Bread,

must all be *charged on* the account of *Labour*; and received as an effect of that: Nature and the Earth furnished only the almost worthless Materials, as in themselves. 'Twould be a strange *Catalogue of things, that Industry provided and made use of, about every Loaf of Bread*, before it came to our use, if we could trace them; Iron, Wood, Leather, Bark, Timber, Stone, Bricks, Coals, Lime, Cloth, Dying-Drugs, Pitch, Tar, Masts, Ropes, and all the Materials made use of in the Ship, that brought any of the Commodities made use of by any of the Workmen, to any part of the Work, all which, 'twould be almost impossible, at least too long, to reckon up.

From all which it is evident, that though the things of Nature are given in common, yet Man (by being Master of himself, and *Proprietor of his own Person*, and the Actions or *Labour* of it) had still in himself *the great Foundation of Property*; and that which made up the great part Of what he applyed to the Support or Comfort of his being when Invention and Arts had improved the conveniencies of Life, was perfectly his own, and did not belong in common to others.

Thus *Labour*, in the Beginning, *gave a Right of Property*, where-ever any one was pleased to imploy it, upon what was common, which remained, a long while, the far greater part, and is Yet more than Mankind makes use of. Men, at first, for the most part, contented themselves with what un-assisted Nature offered to their Necessities: and though afterwards, in some parts of the World, (where the Increase of People and Stock, with the *Use of Money*) had made Land scarce, and so of some Value, the several *Communities* settled the Bounds of their distinct Territories, and by Laws within themselves, regulated the Properties of the private Men of their Society, and so by *Compact* and Agreement, *settled the Property* which Labour and Industry began; and the Leagues that have been made between several States and Kingdoms, either expressly or tacitly disowning all Claim and Right to the Land in the others Possession, have, by common Consent, given up their Pretences to their natural common Right, which originally they had to those Countries, and so have, *by positive Agreement, settled a Property*, amongst themselves, in distinct Parts and parcels of the Earth: yet there are still *great Tracts of Ground* to be found, which (the Inhabitants thereof not having joyned with the rest of Mankind, in the consent of the Use of their common Money) *lie waste*, and are more than the People, who dwell on it, do, or can make use of, and so still lie in common. Tho' this can scarce happen amongst that part of Mankind, that have consented to the Use of Money.

The greatest part of *things really useful* to the Life of Man, and such as the necessity of subsisting made the first Commoners of the World look after, as it doth the *Americans* now, are generally things of *short duration*; such as, if they are not consumed by use will decay and perish of themselves: Gold, Silver, and Diamonds are things, that Fancy or Agreement hath put the Value on, more then real Use, and the necessary Support of Life. Now of those good things which Nature hath provided in common, every one had a Right (as hath been said) to as much as he could use, and had a Property in all that he could affect with his Labour: all that his Industry could extend to, to alter from the State Nature had put it in, was his. He that gathered a Hundred Bushels of Acorns or Apples, had thereby a *Property* in them; they were

his Goods as soon as gathered. He was only to look that he used them before they spoiled; else he took more than his share, and robbed others. And indeed it was a foolish thing, as well as dishonest, to hoard up more than he could make use of. If he gave away a part to any body else, so that it perished not uselessly in his Possession, these he also made use of. And if he also bartered away Plumbs that would have rotted in a Week, for Nuts that would last good for his eating a whole Year, he did no injury; he wasted not the common Stock; destroyed no part of the portion of Goods that belonged to others so long as nothing perished uselessly in his hands. Again if he would give his Nuts for a piece of Metal, pleased with its colour; or exchange his Sheep for Shells, or Wool for a sparkling Pebble or a Diamond, and keep those by him all his Life, he invaded not the Right of others, he might heap up as much of these durable things as he pleased; *the exceeding of the bounds of his just Property* not lying in of his Possession, but the perishing of any thing uselessly in it.

And thus *came in the use of Money*, some lasting thing that Men might keep without spoiling, and that by mutual consent Men would take in exchange for the truly useful, but perishable Supports of Life.

And as different degrees of Industry were apt to give Men Possessions in different Proportions, so this *Invention of Money* gave them the opportunity to continue and enlarge them. For supposing an Island, separate from all possible Commerce with the rest of the World, wherein there were but a hundred Families, but there were Sheep, Horses and Cows, with other useful Animals, wholesome Fruits, and Land enough for Corn for a hundred thousand times as many, but nothing in the Island, either because of its Commonness, or Perishableness, fit to supply the place of *Money*: What reason could any one have there to enlarge his Possessions beyond the use of his Family, and a plentiful supply to its Consumption, either in what their own Industry produced, or they could barter for like perishable, useful Commodities, with others? Where there is not something both lasting and scarce, and so valuable to be hoarded up, there Men will not be apt to enlarge their *Possessions of Land*, were it never so rich, never so free for them to take. For I ask, what would a Man value Ten Thousand, or an Hundred Thousand Acres of excellent *Land*, ready cultivated, and well stocked too with Cattle, in the middle of the in-land Parts of *America*, where he had no hopes of Commerce with other Parts of the World, to draw *Money* to him by the Sale of the Product? It would not be worth the inclosing, and we should see him give up again to the wild Common of Nature, whatever was more than would supply the Conveniencies of Life to be had there for him and his Family.

Thus in the beginning all the World was *America*, and more so than that is now; for no such thing as *Money* was any where known. Find out something that hath the *Use and Value of Money* amongst his Neighbours, you shall see the same Man will begin presently to *enlarge his Possessions*.

But since Gold and Silver, being little useful to the Life of Man in proportion to Food, Rayment, and Carriage, has its *value* only from the consent of Men, whereof Labour yet makes, in great part, *the measure*, it is plain, that Men have agreed to disproportionate and unequal Possession of the Earth, they having by a tacit and voluntary consent found out a

way, how a man may fairly possess more land than he himself can use the product of, by receiving in exchange for the overplus, Gold and Silver, which may be hoarded up without injury to any one, these Metalls not spoiling or decaying in the hands of the possessor. This partage of things, in an inequality of private possessions, men have made practicable out of the bounds of Societie, and without compact, only by putting a value on gold and silver and tacitly agreeing in the use of Money. For in Governments the Laws regulate the right of property, and the possession of land is determined by positive constitutions.

And thus, I think, it is very easy to conceive without any difficulty, *how Labour could at first begin a title of Property* in the common things of Nature, and how the spending it upon our uses bounded it. So that there could then be no reason of quarrelling about Title, nor any doubt about the largeness of Possession it gave. Right and conveniency went together; for as a Man had a Right to all he could imploy his Labour upon, so he had no temptation to labour for more than he could make use of. This left no room for Controversie about the Title, nor for Incroachment on the Right of others; what Portion a Man carved to himself, was easily seen; and it was useless as well as dishonest to carve himself too much, or take more than he needed.

## Chapter VIII: Of the Beginning of Political Societies

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 joyn 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 Politick*, wherein the *Majority* have a Right to act and conclude the rest.

For when any number of Men have, by the consent of every individual, made a *Community*, they have thereby made that Community one Body, with a Power to Act as one Body, which is only by the will and determination of the *majority*. For that which acts any Community, being only the consent of the individuals of it, and it being necessary to that which is one body to move one way; it is necessary the Body should move that way whither the greater force carries it, which is the *consent of the majority*: or else it is impossible it should act or continue one Body, *one Community*, which the consent of every individual that united into it, agreed that it should; and so every one is bound by that consent to be concluded by the *majority*. And therefore we see that in Assemblies impowered to act by positive Laws where no number is set by that positive Law which impowers them, the *act of the Majority*