John Locke
***Two Treatises of Government*, 1690**

- •Competing interests
- •Family and State
- •The State of Nature
- •Property

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I. Transition from *King Lear*

- ● ► Competing Interests in politics and religion
  - ● ► Religious views were interwoven with political views, and there was a lot of disagreement about the basis for political structures.
- ● ► Political philosophy emerges from on-the-ground competing interests.

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II. Preliminaries

► Implicit and Explicit Arguments

1. Implicit: Consider our thesis for *King Lear*.

2. In *The Two Treatises,* Locke makes explicit arguments. For example, he supports the following claims:
- ● Paternal power is not the same as political power.
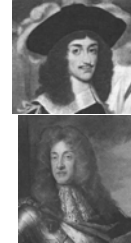- ● Political power is not derived from inheritance.

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L to R: Shaftesbury, Charles II, James II, Duke of Monmouth

III. Further Preliminaries: Returning to historical context

A. Exclusion Crisis

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B. Glorious Revolution

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C. Why historical context is important for the *Two Treatises* as a text

The *Two Treatises* was written as an Exclusion Crisis document but published as a Glorious Revolution document.

It is both <u>political tract</u> and <u>political philosophy</u>.

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IV. Overview: <u>Locke's main points</u> or what the *Two Treatises* does

- *A.* ► Relentlessly severs the connection between family and state as justification for political power.

- *B.* ► Locates the title to kingship in "the consent of the people."

- *C.* ► Delineates a model for the state that rests on a "compact" or on "trust" (a fiduciary model).

- D. ► Insists on a right of resistance to unjust authority.

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V. Locke's first move: Destroy Filmer.

A. Locke traps Filmer's words in his own (Locke's) rhetoric.
"domineering Phantom, called the *Fatherhood"* (I, II, §6, pp. 145)

B. What's in a name?
"Sir Robert Filmer" (I, I, §4, p. 143)
"Sir R.F." (I, I, §5, p. 143)
"our Author" (I, II, §7, p. 145)
"our A" (I, V, §44, p. 171)
"our A-----" (I, V, §45, p. 172)

C. Summary as a form of argument (II, I §1, p. 267)

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VI. Paternal power is not the same as political power: How does Locke sever the connection?

(See II, VI, § 50 ff, p. 176 ff.)

- **God, not the father, is the author and giver of life (178).**
- **In the act of begetting, very few fathers were thinking of anything beyond their own sexual pleasure (179).**
- **If begetting signifies anything, it points to a <u>joint dominion</u>. (180).**

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VII. What about the connection between property and political power?

- **Does the connection survive?**

- **What is the problem with making fatherhood and property the combined foundations of political power? (I, VII, §73, p. 195).**

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VIII. The State of Nature

A. In the background of Locke's work is Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651).

B. Locke defines the state of nature in a fundamentally different way. (Bk II, Ch. II, § pp. 269, ff.).

1. A "*[s]tate of perfect Freedom* to order [one's] Actions, and dispose of [one's] Possessions" (p. 269).

2. A state of equality (p. 269-70).

3. A state of liberty but not license (p. 270).

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IX. The state of nature (cont.)

► What makes the state of nature livable?

1. People in the state of nature are governed by the law of nature—which promotes the preservation of all.

2. The "*Execution* of the Law of Nature is . . . put into every Mans hands" (p. 271. See also pp. 272-6).

3. The state of nature is not a state of war. (p. 278 ff.)

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X. The state of nature (cont.)

A. Why would anyone want to leave the state of nature?

"*Civil government* **is the . . . Remedy for the Inconveniences of the State of Nature" (Bk. II, Ch. II, §13, p. 276).**

> **What <u>are</u> the inconveniences of living in the state of nature?**

B. Do we find "unaccommodated" man in the state of Nature?

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XI. Property: How does property move from "common" to "private"?

(See II, V, §25 ff, pp. 285 ff.)

- **"[E]very 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" (§26, p. 287).**

- **Mixture of his labor with object in the State of Nature makes that object his. Pick up an acorn or an apple and the effort you put into it makes it yours (§28, p. 288).**

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XII. Property (cont.)
Some questions.

- **What about the grass my horse bites? (II, V, §28, pp. 289).**
- **Why is property important to Locke's thinking and what difference does money make?**
- **What does Locke mean by slavery?**

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