

Introduction to Western Political Thought
Professor Mithilesh Kumar Jha
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati
Lecture No. 17
Locke - III: Right to Dissent & Critical Assessment of His Thought

Hello, and welcome friends. This is the third and concluding lecture on Locke. And today, we are going to focus on his notion or his argument about an individual's right to dissent against their government. And in the second part, we will conclude Locke's contribution to political thought by looking at some of the criticisms against Locke's political philosophy. In the previous two lectures, if you remember we have discussed Locke's argument on 'state of nature', his views on natural rights, and his arguments about limited government.

The government is necessary for political stability, prosperity, or protection of certain inalienable rights of the individual. But the power of the government or authority of the government should be limited. These things we have discussed in the previous two lectures. Today, we are going to focus on how and in which condition Locke gives the individual right to dissent against their government. Then, we will conclude by looking at some of the critical arguments against Locke's political philosophy.

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➤ Locke, as a liberal political theorist, propounded a theory of state that is based on natural laws. In this sense, the state is an artificial construct. Its legitimacy is based on the consent of the people or the governed. This theory has now become the basis of legitimacy for the governments in modern liberal democracies.

➤ The primary functions of the modern state, according to Locke, is to legislate, adjudicate, and execute in a manner that protects the natural or inalienable rights of the individuals. These rights are the right to life, liberty, and property. If the government fails to protect these rights, the individuals have the legitimate right to dissent and even replace the existing government.

➤ Locke's political theory, as discussed in the previous two lectures, has a theological basis. It was reflected in his idea of men, their rights, and the role of government. His philosophy revolves around the notions of property, constitutional or limited government, and people's right to overthrow the existing government when it becomes tyrannical.

So, if you recall Locke as a liberal political theorist provided us with a theory of a state which is based on natural laws. That is in Locke if you look at the argument that he provided there

was a kind of natural progression, evolution from the 'state of nature' to the formation of the government. And there was a kind of constant churning or through discussion or contract by reasoning for the defense of certain inalienable rights or god-given rights. There was the justification for a limited government or a theory of the state.

Locke, therefore, is also regarded as the natural law theorist. Many of the arguments that he provided on natural rights or state or property were based on this conception of certain natural laws that were there in the 'state of nature' and society, state or government existed to protect those rights. Locke as a liberal political theorist provided us with a theory of state based on natural laws. In this sense, a state was not something natural or a kind of permanent body. It was an artificial construct in the sense that the very formation of the state is to achieve a certain purpose.

And that purpose provided the state with its legitimacy for existence. So, the state exists not because of certain natural requirement or some kind of given thing. But for the attainment of a certain purpose. In that sense, the state was an artificial construct. But some rights which a state was supposed to protect and for which a state was formed is natural. So, like the right to property, life, and liberty. A state is therefore in this sense was an artificial construct. Its legitimacy was based on the consent of people and this idea we have discussed how the consent became the basis of legitimacy of a state.

All modern states or modern liberal democracy require this consent and without that one cannot justify the state and its authority such as in monarchy or medieval times. The legitimacy of a state was based on the consent of people or governed, and this idea or theory of government was based on the consent of people that had been the basis of legitimacy for the government in modern liberal democracies.

So, you can think of our modern democratic state or government and periodic election through which the electorate gives a mandate to a party or to form a government. This mandate is using Lockean vocabulary, the consent of people and without that mandate, no party can form the government. That government without the mandate of the people will be regarded as an illegitimate government.

The consent becomes the necessary legitimizing force of a modern democratic state. Now, what is the primary function of a state? So, Locke gives the primary function of the modern

state is to legislate, adjudicate, and execute in a manner that protects the natural and inalienable rights of the individual. We have discussed in the previous lectures that the very formation of a state out of the 'state of nature'. Because there was no clear sense of laws. There was no division of power or separation of power between the legislative, executive, or adjudicative or judiciary or judicial organ of the state.

Therefore, the primary responsibility of the state, according to Locke was to legislate, to ensure that laws were well established and all the inhabitants in the state or its territory were familiar with those established laws. The executive and judiciary to implement or adjudicate accordingly. Now, all these functions of the state were to maintain some of the inalienable rights of the individual or what he called the natural rights of the individual. These rights were right to life, liberty, and property.

Thus, the existence of the state was to protect those rights and if the government failed to protect those rights, then the individual had a legitimate right to dissent or even replace the existing government. So, in a modern democracy, we go through periodic elections. If we do not like the performance of a government, in the next election through our voting power, we vote that government out of power and bring the new party or form a new government.

Locke provided that kind of right to the individual. We will discuss when we discuss his ideas on dissent that is more different from our modern understanding of dissent. Also, its correlation with the periodic election. Locke's political theory as discussed in the previous two lectures had its theological basis. This theological basis of his argument was reflected in his ideas of man, their rights, and the rule of government. His philosophy if you look at revolves around this notion of property, constitutional, or limited government, and people's right to overthrow the existing government when it becomes tyrannical.

So, mainly, to look at the political philosophy of Locke, there is a kind of continuation from the 'state of nature' to the formation of the government and the individual or people's right to dissent against their government. He considered the individual life as his property and everything that he owns. Therefore, his property must be protected. So, the very formation of society or political society was for the protection of life, liberty, and property.

The government should have limited power. It must operate within the constitutional limits or what we call the rule of Locke. Now, when the government transcends that boundary of

Locke or the constitutional limits then, according to Locke, the individual or people together had the legitimate right to dissent and overthrow the existing state, when it becomes tyrannical when it breaks the law or betrays the trust of the people.

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Right to Dissent

- Locke's justifications for the individual's right to dissent are in the last two chapters of his *magnum opus*, the *Second Treatise*. These two chapters are entitled as 'Tyranny' and 'Of the Dissolution of Government'. He was against all forms of tyranny – religious or political. According to Locke, Individual possess certain natural and hence inalienable rights and government exists to protect those rights.
- According to Locke, people have the natural right to dissent against their government when it fails to protect their right to life, liberty, and property. The protection of these rights was the reason why people agreed to live in a society and form the government. They consent to pay the tax to the government because it would work for the common good.
- When the government begins to promote private interests and betray the common trust, people have the right to dissent. However, this theory of the right to dissent is somewhat ambiguous. Locke was aware that its excessive and unnecessary use would endanger the political stability and could create chaos and anarchy. Therefore, he gives a detailed account of how and when people are justified in dissenting against their government.

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So, if we look at this idea of dissent, we need to understand that it is a very complex argument in Locke and often we use it, I mean the idea of dissent that we use it for every trivial issue. We think dissent is the way forward. But the Lockean concept of dissent was somewhat different from our modern-day understanding of dissent. That is to say, Locke is not a kind of theorists like some Marxist who believed in a permanent revolution or a kind of constant change.

Locke wanted political stability and for political stability, he put forward the arguments about the limited government, and government based on the consent of people for the promotion of common good or protection of certain inalienable natural rights. However, Locke gave the people or individual the right to dissent only in a certain condition or circumstances, when the government became tyrannical when it failed to protect certain inalienable natural rights.

When we use dissent in a Lockean sense, we have to be very cautious from our modern-day understanding of this term dissent. Locke's justification for individuals' right to dissent, one can find in the last two chapters of this book, The Second Treatise. And these two chapters are entitled as 'Tyranny' and 'Of the Dissolution of Government' and if you recall in the

previous two lecture, we have discussed that how Locke argue against old forms of absolute power whether it is political or religious.

So, any exercise of power and authority must be based on the consent of the governed or the ruled. He was against all forms of tyranny whether it is religious or political and according to Locke, individuals possessed certain natural and inalienable rights, and government existed to protect those rights. According to Locke, people had a natural right to dissent against their government when it failed to protect their rights such as the right to life, liberty, and property.

The justification for dissent was based on grounds of governments or the existing government's failure to protect certain natural inalienable rights of the individuals. The protection of these rights was the reason why people agreed to live in a society and form the government. If you recall the difference between the Lockean 'state of nature' and Hobbesian 'state of nature', there was a kind of difference. Life was much more peaceful. It was not like a nasty or brutish or short kind of life that Hobbes put forward in his conception of a 'state of nature'.

Lockean 'state of nature' was much more peaceful based on certain moral laws and people willing to mutually acknowledge the existence of those laws and certain rights of the individual. However, people realized the necessity of the formation of political society, and subsequently, the formation of the state was to ensure the protection of their rights to life, liberty, and property. But when the government failed to protect them, then Locke argued that individual had the natural right to dissent against the government.

They consented to pay tax to the government. Because it would work for the common good. So, the very existence of a state-required expenditure and to meet that expenditure all government levy certain taxes. Now, what kinds of taxes are justified? Taxes meant the part of the property paid to the government. Does the government have the limitless power to levy any kind of taxes? There is the role of the legislative organ of the state and in the Lockean conception of the state as we have discussed, the legislative power is the sovereign power of the state, not the executive or judiciary.

The tax that we pay to the government that infringes or interfere with our property right. So, if you recall Lockean conception of private property is when we mix our labor to the natural resources, the outcome of that mixing of our labor with the resources that is available

becomes our private property. Now, how can we give a part of that property to the government to meet its expenditure? So, taxation becomes the basis of that relationship between individuals' right to private property and the government's right to legitimately demand certain taxes from the people.

Now, when that levying of taxes was justified or legitimated, the citizen gave the government consent to do so through their representative in the legislation. So, this taxation became then was the very basis of modern liberal representative government in the American Revolution. We term that no taxation without representation and represent meaning the people's representatives collectively decide what proportion of their property should be paid as tax to the government.

So, the representation and the taxation, therefore, becomes legitimate when the individual has given their consent for such taxation directly or through their representation. Locke's argued that the consent to pay the tax to the government. Because it would work for the common good. So, people were willing to pay the tax to the government. Because the government was supposed to protect their rights and functions for the promotion of the common good of the community.

However, when the government began to promote not the common good of the people. But the private interest of the few individuals or particular sections of the society or community or when it betrays the common trust. So, we pay tax to the government. Because we feel that it functions for and promotes the common good. But when it betrays the trust that we have in government. Then people have a legitimate right to dissent against the government.

This theory of the right to dissent is somewhat ambiguous. It should not be taken as a kind of limitless right of individuals to dissent against the government for every wrongdoing. Locke had a very cautious approach to this individual right to dissent. So, considering the methodological issue while interpreting political thought or a text that we have done in the first two lectures in this course, the Cambridge School talks about the historical context.

When we think about the Lockean context of political instability, the difference between the monarchy or emerging parliamentarians or mercantile capitalism, the religious violence between the Church and state or between the Catholic or Protestant. So, Locke was developing his political arguments about the state and its legitimacy when the individual had

the right to dissent against the government in that historical context. Where there was a kind of epoch-making events taking place. So, the glorious revolution was one such event in English political history.

If you take that into account, Locke was not giving us this theory of dissent as a license to question every act of omissions or commissions by the government and its agency. He had a very cautious approach to this right to dissent. He gave a kind of very detailed account of when and how this right to dissent could be legitimately exercised by the people. So, this theory of the right to dissent was somewhat ambiguous. Locke was aware that its excessive and unnecessary use would endanger political stability and could create chaos and anarchy in society.

So, if people were constantly using this right to dissent as a license then it could lead to political instability, leading to chaos and anarchy. So, when and how this right of dissent could be legitimately exercised by the people against their government, Locke gave a very detailed account of that.

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➤ His defense of the right to dissent is based on the idea that it is the rulers or governments which create confusion or chaos when they abuse their power and authority and betray people's trust. This leads to civil unrest and even wars. Locke holds the government or rulers accountable for such acts. He writes that 'whenever, the legislators endeavours 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'.

➤ Thus, according to Locke, people could only resist when the government betrays their trust and acts illegally, or breaks the laws, or fails to protect their natural, inalienable rights. However, he argues that people should first try to get their grievances redressed through legal means. It is only when such options are exhausted, people have the right to dissent or resist.

➤ Locke also makes a crucial distinction between the dissolution of the government and that of society. He argues that the dissolution of the government does not automatically lead to the dissolution of society. Instead, when a society loses its trust in the government, it has every right to replace it and elect a new government.

His defense of the right to dissent was based on the idea that the rulers and not the people or government or the rule which create confusion or chaos. Locke held the government or state accountable for the chaos and anarchy in the society, not the other way round, people, not the society. The government created confusion or chaos when they abused their power and

authority and betrays people's trust in them. When the government abused its power and authority, it betrays the trust that leads to chaos anarchy in society.

So, this leads to civil unrest and often civil wars in society. Locke held the government or rulers accountable for such acts of anarchy or chaos or even civil war in society. That is why there was in Locke's Political philosophy, the idea of limited government. The government must exercise its power and authority within the constitutional limits or rule of Locke.

He wrote the legislator was the main function of the state to legislate. The legislator endeavored to take away and destroy the property of people or to reduce the theme to slavery under arbitrary power. They put themselves into a state of war with the people. So, when the state exercises this enormous power and betrays the trust of the people, violate their property right or reduce them to the slavery, they put themselves in a state of war with the people.

That led to a kind of antagonism between the people and the government. When the government exercised its arbitrary power, it violated individuals' right to property and reduced them to slavery that led to a state of war between the government and people. It was responsible for such a war or antagonism between the people and government that is the government and its abuse of power.

So, into a state of war with the people who have thereupon absolved any further obedience. The obligation, why we obey the state because we have consented to it, we have given our consent for its formation and therefore we must obey it and in Locke, we have a kind of difference from the Hobbesian conception of political obligation where the sovereign is not part of the contract.

In Lockean conception, a sovereign that states particularly its legislative power is also a party to contract. Therefore, must act within the terms of that contract. The terms of the contract applied to the government when it violated that terms, the rule of law, or constitutional limits. It set itself against its people and in that condition, people have the right to dissent against the government. So, if there was a kind of abuse of power or violation of inalienable rights, people had no obligation to obey the government or to pay tax.

People were left to the common refuge which god had provided for all men against force and violence. The justification for the individual right to resist all forms of violence or force

which people had not given consented to that same force gave individuals the right to dissent against such force or violence whether it was political or religious.

So, on the religious tolerance or innocence that kind of the theological basis of political argument in Locke continuous when he talked about even dissent. The god-given right to all men, to fight or resist against the forces and violence that was arbitrary or its authority without the consent of individuals.

According to Locke, people could only resist when the government betrays their trust and acts illegally or breaks the laws, or fails to protect their natural inalienable rights. These were the conditions where an individual had the legitimate right to resist against the government, not against all forms of its omissions and commissions. One could criticize the government and make its functions more transparent, accountable, and responsible. But that did not give the people the right to resist.

People could resist the government when it betrays their trust and acts illegally, involve breaking the laws, or fails to protect their natural or inalienable rights. However, he argued that people should first try to get their grievances redressed through legal means. It was only when such options were exhausted, people had their right to dissent or resist. In this context, when the government failed to protect their right or betrays their trust; people according to Locke, should first explore the available legal options. Only when the legal options were exhausted, then the community or the people had the right to resist.

Locke had given a very clear description of when people had the right to resist and what were the steps that should be taken. So, even when there was a kind of situation, where people had a legitimate right to resist, they should refrain from going immediately for direct violence or rebellion against the government. They should first explore the legal options that were available and when the legal option failed to address their grievance. They had their right to resistance.

So, how and when the individual or community has the right to resist is clearly explained by Locke. Locke made a kind of crucial distinction between the dissolution of government and that of society. If you recall, there is a kind of two-step contract in Locke. First, individuals come together to form a political society, civil society, or a society and then the next step was the formation of a state or government.

When the individual exercise their right to resist or dissent which lead to the dissolution of the government is not something that leads to the dissolution of society itself. Even after the dissolution of the government, society continued to function. Locke argued that the dissolution of the government did not lead to the dissolution of society.

In the two-step of contract, first the formation of society and then the formation of state or government. The individual had the right to resist or replace government and such replacement did not lead to the dissolution of society. The society continued even after the dissolution of the government. In this way, a society when it lost its trust in the government, it had every right to replace it and elect a new government.

So, society continued to function even after the dissolution of government, when it became tyrannical or betray the common trust. And the same society replaced the existing government with the new one.

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➤ Locke writes that – ‘Whensoever...the legislative shall transgress...fundamental rules of society, and either by ambition, fear, folly, or corruption, endeavour 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 in into their hands...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’.

Critical Assessment of His Thought

➤ Locke was a theorist of natural laws who argued about the limited government that is based on the consent of the governed. And this consent of the people has become the legitimizing force of modern liberal democratic states.

➤ He also argued about the natural rights of individuals, such as the right to life, liberty, and property. The primary functions of the state or the government, according to Locke, is to protect these rights and maintain order in society. Once they fail to protect these rights, Locke gives the individual right to dissent and remove the existing sovereign with the new one.

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Locke wrote, ‘whensoever the legislative shall transgress fundamental rules of the society’. So, the very formation of the society was the protection of individual rights to life, liberty, and property. That is the fundamental rule in the society and when the legislative transgressed that rules either by ambition, fear, folly, or corruption. For the transgression of such foundational rules of society could be the ambition of the ruler or government, its fear or folly or corruption, and endeavour to grasp themselves or put into the hands of any other.

That means it delegates that power to any other. What are absolute power over the lives, liberties, and estates of the people; by the breach of trust, they forfeit the power, the people had put into their hands. So, when the legislator transgresses their power and violates the foundational rules of the society by acquiring more power to itself or delegating to some other bodies. The absolute power of the individual lives, liberties, and property by breaching their trust, they forfeit the power that people had put into themselves.

The government was formed based on the consent of the people. But when the same government exercised its power due to its ambition to acquire more power or its folly, fear, or corruption. Then it loses its forfeit, the power that people had given to it. So, the people had no obligation to obey their laws and order. And it devolves to the people.

When the legislator transgresses its bond raise or violates the foundational rules of the society then the power goes back to the people and society. It devolves to the people who have a right to resume their original liberty and by the establishment of new legislation. So, the

legislative they form earlier which violated their rules or limits that is set by the foundational rules of the society, they forfeit. That is the government or state forfeit their expectation or their power from the people or power of people.

So, the power that enables the state or legislator to form laws goes back to the people again and people resume the original liberty they had before the formation of the government. And exercising that liberty they could establish a new legislative such as they should think fit. They could protect their rights and provide their safety, and security which is the end of which they are in society.

People come into society for certain ends and if the government and state fail to achieve that ends, then the individual has the right to question or resist or dissent the government or state and replace it with a new government or legislator. That is all in Locke's concept of dissent. Now, we move on to the assessment of his political thought. Locke was a theorist of natural laws who argued about the limited government based on the consent of the government.

And this consent of the people had become the legitimizing force of modern liberal democratic states. This we had discussed at the beginning of this lecture. Locke argued about the natural rights of individuals such as the right to life, liberty, and property. And the primary function of the state or government, according to Locke was to protect these rights and maintain order in society. Thus, the minimal or limited government that was what Locke argued about the state or government.

However, when they failed to protect these rights, Locke gave the individual, the right to dissent and remove the existing sovereign with the new one.

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➤ His defense of private property and non-interference by the state in the matters of faith or religion has also shaped the political discourse in modern democracies. Much of his arguments about the limited government and natural rights of the individuals has a theological basis.

➤ C B Macpherson criticized Locke for his defense of private property. Locke's emphasis on private property as natural rights and its protection as one of the primary responsibilities of the government, led Macpherson and many other scholars to criticize him as a bourgeois political thinker. Locke refused to justify the government's interferences in private property and its redistributions. In other words, Locke did not want the government to address the existing inequalities in society by violating the private property of the citizens. Thus, Locke appears to many scholars as a thinker of the ensuing post-industrial bourgeois society.

➤ However, such criticism of Locke's political philosophy was somewhat misplaced and anachronistic as he was writing in the seventeenth century, and much of the industrial revolutions took place in the eighteenth century. John Dunn, P Laslett, and James Tully disagree with Macpherson's characterization of Locke as a bourgeois thinker and supporter of the capitalist economy or industrial society.

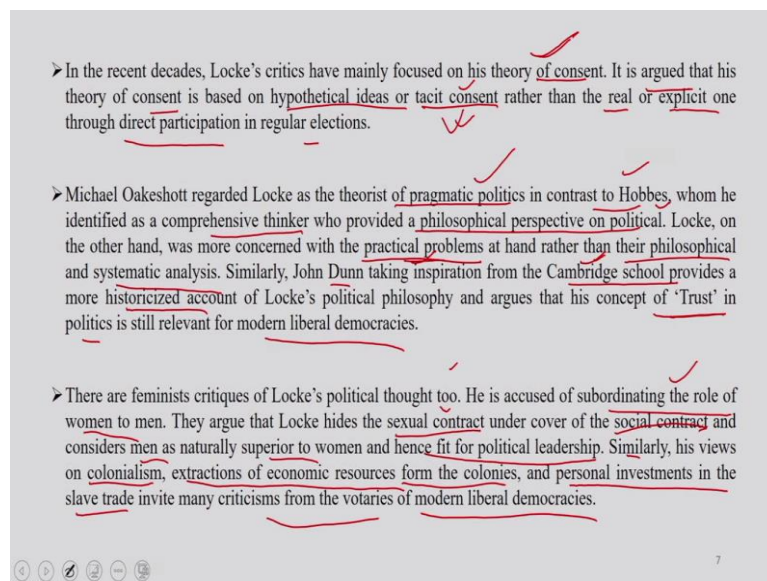
His defense of the private property and non-interference by state in matters of faith or religion, the idea of religious toleration shaped the political discourse in a modern democracy. When you think about modern democracy and through laws protection of an individual's private property, non-interference of state or government in the religious matters. The tenets of these thoughts were there in Locke's political philosophy. So, much of his arguments about the limited government and natural rights of the individual had a theological basis that we discussed.

C B Macpherson criticized Locke for his defense of private property. One of the major critics against Locke was his defense of private property. Locke's emphasis on private property as natural rights and its protection was one of the primary responsibilities of the government that led Macpherson and many other scholars, including Marxists to criticize as a bourgeois political thinker or someone who defended the capitalist economy.

Locke refused to justify government interference in private property and its redistribution. In other words, Locke did not want the government to address the existing inequalities that are economic inequalities in society by violating the private property of citizens. Thus, Locke appeared to many scholars as to the thinkers of ensuing post-industrial bourgeois society. The first criticism against Locke was his defense of private property that led scholars like C B Macpherson to characterize Locke as the bourgeois thinker who wanted the state to protect the private property of citizens and not judicious or equal redistribution of wealth.

However, this criticism of Locke and his political philosophy was somewhat misplaced and anachronistic as he was writing in the seventeenth century. And much of the industrial revolution took place in the eighteenth century. John Dunn, P Laslett, and James Tully disagreed with Macpherson's characterization of Locke as a bourgeois thinker and supporter of the capitalist economy or industrial society. So, many scholars disagreed with Macpherson's crude characterization of Locke as a bourgeois thinker.

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In the recent decade, the criticism of Locke and his philosophy had shifted from his defense of private property to his theory of consent. As I have discussed, consent was the basis of legitimate rule or limited government. But this consent was not like the modern liberal democratic participation of voters in the periodic election. It is argued that Locke's theory of consent was based on hypothetical ideas or tested consents.

Sometimes, even when you inherit certain property by that inheritance, you have obligation to follow the rules and regulations of that particular society prescribed by its government or the legislative organ. This idea of consent in Locke was based on hypothetical ideas or a kind of tacit consent rather than real or explicit one that we witness through direct participation of voters in periodic or regular elections.

Michael Oakeshott regarded Locke as the theorist of pragmatic politics in contrast to Hobbes, whom he identified as a comprehensive thinker who provided a philosophical perspective on political. In Hobbes, we have a much more grandeur or comprehensive argument on the

political or philosophical analysis of politics. In contrast, Locke was a much more practical or pragmatic thinker addressing the historical or political concerns of his time or age.

Locke, on the other hand in comparison to Hobbes was more concerned with the practical problems or challenges that England was facing during those years. Rather than providing a kind of philosophical or systematic analysis of political problems. Similarly, John Dunn was taking inspiration from the Cambridge school that is ideas in context, provided a historicized account of Locke's political philosophy, and argued that his concept of 'trust' in politics was still relevant for modern liberal democracies.

The very legitimacy of the government was based on people's trust that the government functions for the larger good of society and the protection of certain inalienable rights. In John Dunn, there is a historicized account of Locke's political philosophy where he argued that some of the arguments particularly his theological arguments might not be as relevant in a modern secular liberal democracy.

But some of the concepts like trust in politics was still relevant in a modern liberal democracy where the legitimacy of a government was seen based on the trust that people had in the government. And this you can think about the perception, why the government was worried or anxious about the perception of people about its function. That perception could be translated as trust, whether the government was doing good or bad or operating within the limits of the law or violating the law.

These help in the formation of perception or people having trust or less trust in the government. This idea of trust in politics was still relevant in a modern democracy, according to John Dunn from the Lockean political philosophy. There were then feminist critiques of Locke's political thought and he was accused of subordinating the role of women to men. And they argued, Locke hides the sexual contract that was the original contract before the social contract.

Feminists have argued that Locke hides the sexual contract under the cover of the social contract and considered men as naturally superior to women. Hence, it fit for political leadership. In Locke, we have seen that he was making a kind of distinction between the way a household was managed and the way a state should be managed. And this was his difference from Filmer's argument of the absolutist monarchy that was to operate as the head

of household operates by exercising its absolute power. Locke gave a very different account of the state and its power.

However, that account of state and power did not address this relationship between men and women. And like many other political philosophers, he also believed in the superiority of men by subordinating the rule of women. So, there was a kind of feminist critique to Locke's argument and similarly, his views on colonialism, extractions of economic resources from the colonies, and personal investment in the slave trade invited many criticisms from the votaries of modern liberal democracies.

On the one hand, not only there was a defense of private property or inalienable rights of the citizens. But also, a kind of democratic argument of the rule of law, constitutional government, limited government, and government based on the consent of people. However, in Locke, there was the defense of colonialism or the extraction of resources from colonialism. His involvement in the slave trade also led to many criticisms by the votaries of modern liberal democracy against Locke.

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Concluding Remarks

- Locke's political philosophy became the basis of the modern liberal political system. In many ways, his treatises were the forerunner of American and French revolutions. His ideas like inalienable rights of the individuals – right to life, liberty, and property, limited government based on the consent of the people, and so on became the guiding spirit of modern democracies.
- Although the defense of individual rights to property was central to his political philosophy, Locke was a theorist of limited government or a government under the rule of law. He considered the legislative organ of the government to be sovereign than the executive and judiciary. Many ideas that we associate with modern democracies such as government by consent, the rule of law, religious toleration, and commitment to the market and private property are Lockean positions.
- He was the most influential modern political thinker. He wrote on many subjects such as – knowledge or human understanding, on education, on economics, on religion, on toleration, and on government and politics. He has influenced a great many political thinkers. There is a natural progression in his arguments, and hence for many, there may appear many obvious weaknesses and contradictions in his writings. Yet, his works become the basis for many tenets of modern liberal political philosophy.

Now, if we conclude Locke's political philosophy, we need to acknowledge that his political philosophy became the basis of the modern liberal political system. So, when we think about the artefacts of the modern liberal democratic system, much of those artefacts were based on Locke's political philosophy. And in many ways, his treatises were the forerunner of the

American and French revolution. That is what, the liberty and representation or freedom and equality.

So, his ideals like inalienable rights of the individual that is right to life, liberty, property, and limited government were based on the consent of people. It became the guiding spirit of modern democracies. All the societies in modern liberal democracy tried to achieve this ideal that was there in Locke's political philosophy. Although the defense of the individual right to property was central to his political philosophy, Locke was a theorist of limited government or a government under the rule of law.

The modern government and state were not legitimate. Because it had the consent of the people. But it also must function and operates within the limit set by the rule of law or constitution in a given society. He considered the legislative organ of the government or state to be sovereign. The sovereign force or sovereign agent of the state was its legislative power. And not the executive or judiciary.

Many ideas that we associate with modern democracies such as government by consent, rule of law, religious toleration, and commitment to the market and private property were Lockean position. That is the significant influence of Locke's political philosophy in understanding the modern democratic state and its functioning even today. He was the most influential modern political thinker who wrote on many subjects and not just on politics or democracy or limited government. But also on knowledge or human understanding, education, economics, religion, toleration, government, and politics.

Locke contributed in different areas of human life and how to provide a decent education, to create a society which would enable the individual to flourish, to ensure the plurality of religion or different faiths live together without violence or acrimonious relationship. In Locke's political philosophy, there was a range of subjects on which he was developing his arguments, and thereby, you often come across many contradictions or weaknesses in the arguments.

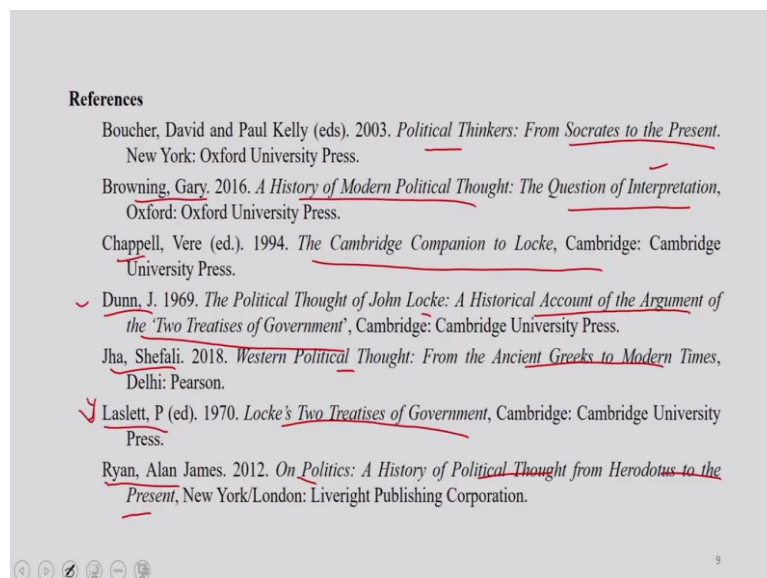
There was a kind of evolution in his thought and in that evolution, he did not refine say like Hobbes in terms of his language. When you read, *Second Treatise*, or any other works of Locke, you will come across his pragmatic approach like Aristotle. He wrote on many subjects including human understanding or knowledge, education, economics, religion, or

toleration and all these writings were very famous or had been very influential for many political thinkers. There was a kind of natural progression or a pragmatic approach in his argument.

And hence, there may appear many obvious weaknesses or contradictions in his writings as we have seen that as a theorist of liberal democratic limited government based on the consent of the people. Locke justifies the slave trade or invest in the slave trade or justify colonial rule or extraction of resources from colonial rule. Since, contradictory and yet what you have in his work is the basis for many tenets of modern liberal political philosophy.

So, much of the ideas and discourses on state and its functions or how it should function when the citizens have the right to resist, what are the rights that must be respected. We may call it fundamental or human rights. But the ideas of those rights and the basis of those rights as the natural, god-given, or permanent rights. The state as an artificial construct like a corporate body was there in Locke's political philosophy.

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So, that is all in this lecture, today, on Locke. For this, you can refer to some of these texts like David Boucher and Paul Kelly's, *Political Thinkers: From Socrates to the Present*. Gary Browning's you can also refer to *A History of Modern Political Thought: The Question of Interpretation*. From Chappell, you can refer to understand more about Locke's in this *Cambridge Companion to Locke*. John Dunn gives you a very historicized account of Locke's

Political Thought. So, you can refer to the political thought of *John Locke: A Historical Account of the Argument of the 'Two treatises of Government'*.

You can also refer to Shefali Jha's, *Western Political Thought: From the Ancient Greeks to Modern Times* and P Laslett is again a very significant interpretation of *Locke's Two Treatises of Government*. And you can also refer to James Alan Ryan's, *On Politics: A History of Political Thought from Herodotus to the Present*. So, these are some of the texts which you should refer to understand this particular lecture and the overall contribution of Locke in the history of western political thought. That is all in today's lecture. Thanks for listening. Thank you all.