Second Treatise of Government Book Summary, by John Locke and C. B. Macpherson

by Allen Cheng

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1-Page Summary of Second Treatise of Government

Overall Summary

Locke starts by addressing the reader directly and saying that he hopes his discourse will affirm King William's right to rule as England's ruler. He then goes on to refute Sir Robert Filmer's arguments, which are full of "doubtful expressions" and "glib nonsense." Locke says that wrong ideas about government can be dangerous, so he offers a discussion in which reasonable arguments won't give into complaining or fighting.

Locke disagrees with Filmer's argument that Adam had dominion over the world and his descendants have inherited this right. Locke also refutes Filmer's claim that one can derive power from such a source. He explains what he means by "political power," which is the right to make and enforce laws to regulate and preserve property, protect commonwealths, and work for the common good of society. This power is different from any other kind of power because it must be understood in relation to its state of nature—a state outside civilized society where everyone has complete freedom but not license. As there is no government or authority in a state of nature, people are equal; thus they all have the right to punish transgressors who harm others' lives, liberties or possessions. Although humans are prone to partiality and violence, they seek restraint through civil government structures like courts of law where justice is served fairly without bias or partiality.
A state of war is a state where there is enmity and destruction, as opposed to a state of peace. This means that you have the right to kill anyone who attacks you in nature. Since everyone has the right to self-preservation, they have the right to kill any attacker. Locke says that anyone who exerts absolute power over another enters into a state of war with them. The difference between this and nature is that in nature, we are all equal and at peace, but not under someone's control or rule. In addition, since there's no common judge in nature, people created society so they could establish a common judge through which they can appeal perceived wrongs; otherwise it would be like killing animals for food without knowing if what you're doing isn't harming others' survival as well.

Locke believes that everyone is born with a right to self-preservation, and they have a right to all the things nature has provided for them. As people are allowed to take from nature what they need, Locke also allows for the ownership of private property. This means that if one gathers something from nature, such as acorns or land, it becomes their property and they can do whatever they want with it. However, this does not mean that one should take more than what is needed because then there would be nothing left in nature for others.

Locke then explains paternal power. This is the authority parents have over their children, and it lasts until the child reaches adulthood. The most ardent supporters of monarchy believe kings rule by right of fatherhood, but Locke argues that to invest absolute power in a monarch is to never be free. Parents cannot hold complete control over their children's lives or property; therefore, they do not have total political control either. If political power is paternal, and all the power belongs to the king, then his subjects can have no part of it at all.

Locke asserts that every person is born with the right to be free and equal. Therefore, no one can rule over another without their consent. In a society, there must be laws established by the people who have power to enforce them. Anyone who leaves nature and joins a commonwealth (a state or country) gives up their right of self-preservation but gains protection from the government. The fundamental law of all governments is to establish a legislative body—the supreme authority in the country; this body makes laws for everyone's benefit, but it may not use arbitrary force against its citizens. The executive branch enforces these laws made by the legislature; it protects everyone in society through upholding justice and executing punishments as decided by judges appointed by this branch of government. The federative power deals with matters outside of societies such as war and peace with other countries or nations.

A government can dissolve due to external factors, such as conquest and the overthrow of tyrannical rulers. However, it can also dissolve due to internal factors, such as a change in the legislative or if the king abandons his rule. If a government does not work for the good of its people or ignores their wishes, they have every right to resist it and create new leaders who will fulfill their needs.

**Full Summary of Second Treatise of Government**

**Overview**

John Locke discusses how governments are formed and why people move from a state of nature to a civil government. His ideas include popular sovereignty, the consent of the governed, protection and limitations on property, problems with absolute monarchy, and the ability for people to dissolve their
government if they do not follow their bond of trust.

The book begins with a discussion of the state of nature. Men are born equal and have freedom to maintain their lives and property. They use reason to live in peace, but when someone breaks the law, society has authority to punish him as an example for others not to do so. The state of nature is free but men find that they can't protect themselves from other people's interference.

A state of war exists when one man uses force against another. It can only be lifted when the aggressor is killed or reparations are made. In terms of slavery, Locke states that it is just for a man to be enslaved if he forfeits his life due to his usage of force against his conqueror. Absolute monarchs who do so are guilty of creating a state of war between themselves and their subjects.

In order to form a civil government, people need to protect their property. Property includes your life, liberty (freedom), and possessions (land). In the state of nature, land is measured by how much work you put into it. You can claim any piece of land that you cultivate or harvest from its fruits. As populations grow and societies start using money as currency, a government is needed to regulate property.

Civil government is established when the people give up their rights for perfect freedom, judgment and punishment. They invest these powers in a legislative and executive power. This authority has limitations on its power so that it can act with the public good always in mind. Any breach of this bond of trust between the people and their authority can justify dissolving the government.

Civil society has a legislative and executive branch. The legislative branch makes the laws, while the executive enforces them and uses its power of prerogative to enforce good for the people even if it means going against or ignoring existing laws. If either of these branches act without regard for their duties, they are breaching their trust with citizens and forsaking their claim to obedience from them.

If a government has continually oppressed its people and ignored their appeals, the people can overthrow that government. They have the right to start over with new leadership, change it or create an entirely new system of government. A government only exists when it has the consent of the people, so if it fails them they can dissolve it.

Chapter I

John Locke begins the Second Treatise by referring to his first treatise, where he refuted Sir Robert Filmer's arguments. He noted that it was impossible to find the actual heirs of Adam who had, according to Filmer, this right of succession to the throne.

The line of descendants from Adam is lost in history and cannot be traced. No one can prove that they are entitled to authority because they are Adam's legitimate heirs.

Locke's First Treatise and its rebuttals of Filmer’s propositions are clear. He reaffirms that Adam’s “private dominion and paternal jurisdiction” are not the basis of political power, because his theory may lead some to view government as merely derived from violence and force. Since he cannot accurately explain the rise of government or who should be in charge, Locke will spend the rest of the Second
Treatise addressing these questions.

Locke makes it clear that political power is different from the powers of a father, husband or master. Although one person may have many kinds of power at once, they're still different. Locke defines political power as having the right to make laws and define punishments for crimes, regulate property rights and defend the country from foreign threats. These powers are exercised for the public good only.

The Second Treatise of Government is a political treatise written by the English philosopher John Locke. It follows his First Treatise, which outlines an abstract theory of civil society based on natural law and contractarianism. At the time it was considered one of the most influential works of liberal thought in Enlightenment Europe, despite later influence being limited to certain circles such as anarchists and libertarians. The work extended the argument put forward in Locke's earlier Two Tracts on Government (1660), but also developed it to some extent, particularly in relation to property rights and their application within society.

Sir Robert Filmer was an English political theorist whose Patriarcha, or Natural Rights of Kings was probably written in the 1640s and published posthumously in 1680. Its main argument was that God gave Adam dominion over all things, including all other human beings. This dominion was also found within the family structure, thus the absolute rule of a monarch over his people was mirrored in the father’s absolute rule over his family. A divinely ordained absolute monarchy was therefore established as legitimate source for political power.

Locke's preface to the First Treatise clearly states his opinion of Filmer's work, that it was nonsense. His arguments did not follow logically from one point to another and there were inconsistencies as well as a lack of biblical evidence. The first problem with Filmer's theory is that he claimed Adam’s heirs received their authority from him, when in fact God created life and therefore this aspect of Filmer’s work was invalid. Furthermore, fathers do not rule over families alone but jointly with mothers; they don't have absolute power over them either. Finally, even if we accepted Filmer’s idea about who should be ruling us now—Adam or his descendants—it would be impossible to trace these people today because history has lost its genealogical basis for political power.

Locke's first chapter establishes the foundation for his theory of political power. He argues that patriarchalism is not a sound concept, because it relies on an unbalanced relationship between a superior and inferior. It also provides the components of political power as well as its end goal.

Locke's rejection of patriarchy means that there is no Scriptural support for absolute rule by a father over his wife or children, and he explicitly states this in the sixth chapter. Although it might sound strange to contemporary feminist theorists, Locke also discusses women and power dynamics within families.

According to Locke, political power is limited by the scope of making laws and carrying them out. It also includes devising punishments for transgressions, protecting property, and defending the commonwealth from foreign threats. Absolute monarchs have more power than this definition allows for; therefore they violate their subjects' natural rights. The ultimate goal of political power is to do what's best for society as a whole. Absolute monarchs are selfish and capricious in exercising their powers; hence they don't act in accordance with that goal.
Locke's first chapter to the Second Treatise is significant because it introduces some of his major themes and concerns in the rest of the book.

Chapter II: Of the State of Nature

Locke begins his second chapter by explaining that all men are born equal and free. They have no restrictions on what they can do, and nothing another man does should limit them in any way. Men are only able to be limited by God, who is the only one with power over other men. Locke quotes Anglican theologian Richard Hooker's Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie, which states that equality is crucial for a society to function properly; if people want their own needs met, they must also meet those of others; if people desire affection from others, then they must give affection back out to others as well.

Ideas are indeed the currency of today's world. People who can present their ideas well are more influential and successful. Therefore, wouldn't it be great to figure out exactly how they do that? We can do that by dissecting a number of TED (Technology, Education, Design) presentations as well as interviews with those speakers and the author's insights from business leaders.

A punishment for a crime should not be arbitrary and out of proportion to the crime. The justification for punishment is that the transgressor has chosen to break a law, which is an agreement between himself and God. He no longer sees fit to live by laws that govern men in the state of nature, so he's dangerous to mankind; it's only reasonable that men may punish him. Locke states this may seem strange or controversial, but continues his argument by discussing whether a sovereign can execute an alien (noncitizen) who broke a law made by the legislature. If they have no power over the alien, then they cannot execute him since he was punished with death for breaking their law in the first place.

Locke also addresses the issue of reparations. If a man has been wronged, he is entitled to seek reparation for his losses. In a government where there's a magistrate, it is understood that this magistrate will have the power to punish and proclaim what the injured party should receive in terms of reparation. In actuality, only the injured party has the right to set these terms. As far as murder goes, since there are no magistrates in a state of nature or when one person kills another (as with Cain killing Abel), anyone can kill any murderer because they cannot be punished by law if they're not caught; therefore, every man may kill him to prevent further bloodshed and set an example for others who might commit similar crimes.

Minor crimes may also be punished by anyone in the commonwealth to deter future offenses. The law of nature exists, and its foundation is easier to understand than those confusing laws made by men.

Locke believes that people are naturally biased and cannot be impartial. He says we need a government with the power to arbitrate between citizens, but there can still be problems with this state of affairs. Absolute monarchs are only human and subject to the same biases as everyone else; they may rely on whim rather than reason. Locke thinks it is better to live in a state of nature than under an absolute monarchy because liberty is more important than anything else.

Locke concludes his second chapter by stating that there are men who exist in a state of nature, and he gives examples. He says that two men can make an agreement to keep faith with each other without becoming members of a society. All people are in this state until they consent to be governed.
"On the State of Nature" is an important chapter in Locke's Second Treatise. It lays out his political philosophy, which emphasizes personal liberty and self-preservation before consenting to be governed by others. Before that time, men exist in a state of perfect freedom and equality governed only by reason. He says they may punish those who operate outside the law of nature, including those who would destroy their lives or property.

While John Locke was the first to discuss the concept of a state of nature, Thomas Hobbes also discussed it in his book Leviathan (1651). While scholars dispute whether Locke was responding directly to Hobbes' work, it's clear that this idea was prominent among 17th century political theorists. Both men believed that people existed in an anarchic state without government or law. However, life would be solitary and poor for everyone if this were true; therefore, human beings should be guided by reason and respect others so they will do likewise.

Thomas Hobbes believed that men were often carried away by their passions. This caused them to act selfishly and create chaos in the world. The solution was a strong government, such as a monarchy, which would rule absolutely and be able to keep order in society. However, John Locke did not believe this; he thought that there should be checks on power so no one person could abuse it.

Locke believed that God created man and gave him the right to life, liberty, and property. He also believed in an individual's moral duty to treat others as they would like to be treated. Locke thought that if you are good then you will have a more harmonious society because everyone is working towards the same thing—justice. Hobbes did not believe this at all; he thought that it was necessary for the king or government to control religion so there wouldn't be any conflicts in society.

Locke believed that God created men and divine law existed, but he did not believe they were the same thing. Natural law could be discovered by reason alone, although Locke was unclear on what it entailed. It included a duty to preserve oneself; a duty to preserve others when self-preservation does not conflict with the preservation of others; a duty not to take away another's life; and a duty not to act in ways that tend towards destroying others. In his unpublished work Essays on the Law of Nature, Locke also emphasized an obligation for men to obey their creator.

**Chapter III: Of the State of War**

Summarize

The law of nature dictates that self-preservation is the most important thing. So, if anyone feels threatened by another person or a wild animal, he has the right to kill him. This is similar to being threatened by a dangerous wolf; it's only logical that one may kill the wolf or lion threatening them. A state of war exists when someone tries to enslave another human being and take away their freedom.

Locke says that it is okay to kill a thief, even if he didn't initially threaten your life. If the thief already violated one's property by taking something belonging to someone else, then we can assume that he will continue doing so and may even take our lives. In this case, Locke believes there is a state of war between you and the thief.
Locke states that there is a difference between a state of nature and a state of war. In the former, men live without government or earthly authority to judge them. Because there are no reparations for an aggressor who kills another man in a state of nature, it's acceptable to defend one's own life against an aggressor. Similarly, if time does not allow appealing to the law in a situation where someone has killed you or your possessions, then it's acceptable to kill him in order to defend yourself.

When a state of war has ended, the law is appealed to. However, in a society without laws or judges, the war ends when one person destroys his opponent or his opponent calls for peace and makes reparations.

Even in a society with laws and judges, if the law is perverted or fails to protect the innocent, there exists a state of war. The only option left is to appeal to the ultimate Judge in Heaven.

Locke argues that when a man has no other appeal left but to God, then he is justified in appealing to an earthly authority for help. He uses the biblical example of Jephthah and the Ammonites to show that although Jephthah had no earthly authority, he appealed to God for judgment.

Analyze

Locke's chapter on war is important because he wrote it in the 1680s, when England was experiencing political turmoil. Though scholars now agree that Locke wasn't necessarily writing his Treatises to address the Glorious Revolution, his text was a commentary on problems with absolute monarchies. Absolute monarchs who act arbitrarily and restrict liberties create a state of war with their subjects. King James II, for example, created such a situation by acting arbitrarily and restricting liberties during his reign as king of England.

John Locke and Thomas Hobbes had different views on the state of war. For Locke, the state of nature was peaceful and orderly. It could only be disrupted by outside forces or violations against others' rights to property. When that happened, it created a state of war until reparations were made or punishment was given. However, for Hobbes, the two states are one in the same: life is solitary because people have no regard for others; they live in poverty because there's nothing to steal from each other; their lives are nasty when they're always worried about being attacked; their lives are brutish when they have to fight all the time; and finally, their lives are short since people die early due to violence.

There are also differences between Locke and Hobbes, as well as between Locke and Filmer. Both Hobbes and Filmer believed that subjects had no right to rebel against an absolute sovereign who violated the law of nature. However, Locke believed that a sovereign who violated the law of nature could be overthrown by his subjects.

Another interesting discussion point is the issue of punishment. Punishment can be used to give relief to victims, as well as prevent future crimes. It should not be too severe and must fit the crime that was committed. Punishment should also reflect how much a person has been harmed by another's actions (i.e., "an eye for an eye").

Locke also suggests that if a man is wronged, he should appeal to God. If the government does not provide justice and the conquerors reign, then there is no obligation for the conquered to be submissive or obedient. However, they should not continue with force because peace seems preferable than continual
chaos and violence. God is the only being who can deliver justice at this point. The example of Jephthah in Judges 1:16-28 illustrates Locke's argument well, as it shows how Jephthah was driven out of Israel by his half-brothers and took refuge in Tob (Judg. 10:6). When the Ammonites made war upon Israel, Gilead asked Jephthah to return from Tob (Judg 11:1) and make war upon them. When Jephthah tried to negotiate with them but found them hostile, he said "The Lord shall be judge between us" (11:27), which means that God will decide whether we are right or wrong. In other words, an appeal to divine judgment may lead men back into a state of nature where each person has power over another.

**Chapter IV: Of Slavery**

In Summary

Locke believes that people are naturally free and independent. However, they will give up their freedom to be governed by the government only if they trust it enough to do so. Locke also disagrees with Filmer's argument that men should be able to do whatever they want without any laws or rules governing them. It is actually through a common law that men can retain their autonomy and independence while still being subject to those laws.

When someone has no control over his own life, he is in danger. Therefore, if a person can't give himself away to another person or group, then it follows that he should not be under the control of any other person or group either.

If a man commits a crime that deserves death, he owes his life to the one he wronged. This person can choose to spare him and place him under his service as long as he doesn't harm him. If the criminal finds that this is too hard for him, he may commit suicide instead of staying enslaved.

Slavery is just a state of war between the conqueror and the conquered where one party has absolute power. The two parties can make an agreement to form a compact, which means that the conqueror will have limited rule over his or her subjects.

Locke points out that the ancient Jews were not in a state of war, but rather they had sold themselves to their masters. They could leave at any time and their master was not allowed to kill or maim them. This is different from Locke's previous description of the state of war.

In this chapter, Locke is interested in differentiating between legitimate and illegitimate forms of slavery. The only way that a person can be enslaved legitimately is if he was unjustly attacked by another person and lost the war against him. This is allowable because the aggressor violated natural laws when he committed some transgression. If one party to a labor contract violates it, then the other party has an obligation to force him or her back into compliance with those terms.

Legitimate slavery is when a person gives up their freedom to serve another. This occurs in an absolute monarchy because the individual has no rights and must submit to the will of the monarch. Forced slavery, on the other hand, never occurs with a contract and is illegitimate if it's accomplished by force or conquest.
Some scholars believe that Locke supported the Afro-American slave trade of the 17th century. They point to biographical information and his work as a secretary for several organizations in England. He worked for the Proprietors of Carolina from 1669 to 1670, he was Secretary and Treasurer to the English Council for Trade and Foreign Plantations from October 1673 to December 1674, and he was Secretary to the Board of Trade from 1696–1700. In addition, he is attributed author of The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolinas (1669), which provided for serfs and slaves in colonies (this document was never ratified by inhabitants). Based on this knowledge about how slavery operated in America at that time, it's easy to see why Locke had sympathy with those who were involved with trading Africans into slavery; it also explains why people think that he supported slavery himself.

Locke's Second Treatise seems to support the slave system, but a closer analysis of his distinction between legitimate and illegitimate forms of slavery negates that theory. Africans taken from their homeland were not legitimate slaves because they did not violate any laws of nature and did not deserve to be enslaved. Furthermore, Locke details the limits on powers of a conqueror in "Of Conquest." This definition does not suggest that Locke condoned the slave trade.

Locke's work seems to allude to a specific time period in England, but it is actually very relevant on a more universal scale. His writings about slavery seem not only be applicable to the African slave trade, but also King James II of England who enslaved his own people. Alternatively, they may have been written simply to illustrate the problems with absolute monarchs as a whole. Locke probably had multiple intentions for writing The Second Treatise, and we will never know exactly what those intentions were, but that doesn't lessen its importance or influence.

Chapter V: Of Property

Locke starts by mentioning Filmer's theory of patriarchalism, which states that only an absolute monarch descended from Adam has any right to property. However, Locke disagrees and says he will spend the rest of this chapter showing how God provided for mankind in common to have property even if they do not form a compact.

Locke argues that the fruits of the Earth, including animals and land, should be enjoyed by all men because no one is born with dominion over another. In order for these things to benefit people, they must be appropriated somehow.

Locke starts off by saying that every man has the right to do with his own body whatever he wants. When a man works hard for something, it is his and no one else's. For example, if a person gathers acorns under a tree and puts them in his pocket, they are now his possessions because of the labor of gathering. This rule applies to all natural resources- animals, fish, plants or land can be owned as long as there is some sort of work involved in obtaining them. If someone sees an animal that belongs to someone else (like deer) and kills it without permission from its owner then he will not be allowed to keep the animal just like if he saw another person's car on the street but decided not to ask for permission before taking it home with him.

Locke then addresses the question of how much property men are entitled to. He points out that God gave man land to enjoy, and when Adam first walked upon it, he was so scarce and nature so vast that there
was never any problem with rapaciousness or conflict. Now, however, the issue is not food or animals but land. Any piece of land a man labors upon is his because God commanded man to labor as part of his punishment for sin. Initially this wasn't problematic because there was plenty of land for everyone; however, anyone who desired another's land probably wanted to benefit from another's hard work.

In a place where there is government, the people must agree that they can take land. The land belongs to an individual or group of people. They are given permission by God to do this. When humans were created, God told them to work and cultivate the land; this was their job. This means they could claim ownership over it because of their hard work and labor on it.

In Locke's days, people were only able to cultivate as much land as they could and still have time for other activities. They did not need to take more than the amount of land that was available or encroach on their neighbors' property because there were vast areas of unclaimed lands in America and Spain.

Locke argues that when a man works on the land, he is actually working for everyone because his labor benefits mankind. He believes that it's wasteful and unjust to have large amounts of land lying idle simply because someone holds the title to it. Locke also contends that if a person gathers too much fruit and lets it rot, then this is not only wasteful but goes against nature's law as well because no one can benefit from rotting fruit.

Locke argues that most of the products of the earth that people use are not entirely natural, but rather derive from labor. The Americans have a lot of uncultivated land, which they do not improve by working on it. They merely eke out an existence because they don't work on their land. Bread, wine and cloth serve the same purposes as acorns, water and leaves (or skins), but are vastly superior thanks to human labor in growing them into food or clothing. Things like bread and wine only exist because people worked hard to produce them; for example, ploughmen had to plough fields before reapers could harvest crops from those fields; then threshers had to break stalks of grain so that bakers could make flour—and so on through many stages until we eventually get our bread or wine.

In the beginning of human history, men used only what they needed from nature. As communities began to form states and kingdoms and created laws to regulate their land, they also had to negotiate boundaries with other communities. There were still open tracts of land where no community existed. However, that was impossible in a society that adopted money because it would not spoil like fruit or nuts do over time. At first when there was little commerce in the world, there was no system of money; however as trade increased between people and nations, so did the need for some sort of currency. Men's voluntary consent to this system began inequality among them by creating private possessions which could be regulated by governments through property rights (Locke).

The Second Treatise of Government is a book that has been written on the subject of individual liberty. It contains many ideas about how to live freely and peacefully in society. In “Of Property,” John Locke explains that an individual’s labor belongs to him or her, and he or she can do whatever they want with it. If someone picks an apple from a tree for personal use, they have every right to eat it because they picked it themselves. However, if someone tries to take more than what he needs, there will be conflict between people. People need reason in order to understand this law of nature and avoid conflict.

Robert Novick found John Locke's theory of mixing property with something that isn't yours to be
problematic. He used the example of mixing tomato juice he owns with the ocean—does he now own the ocean? Or did he simply lose his tomato juice? It is a provocative question, and scholars have criticized Novick's assertion in turn. They said men were created in God's image and can therefore shape nature to a lesser degree than him.

Scholars have different definitions of labor. One definition is that it's an activity with the goal to turn something useless into something useful. This definition supports the idea that men work to preserve themselves and then help others in society, too. In Chapter III, Locke said that one of our basic laws is "to preserve ourselves." He was talking about war, but he also addressed this issue in Chapter V. When a man takes more than he needs and wastes it, he's violating another man's need to live well for himself.

Before the creation of money, people were equal because they had no way to hoard wealth. They could only produce what their labor yielded and so there was little excess. It made no sense to own a lot of land since it would just rot if you couldn't use it for anything. Now that we have currency, though, men can amass large amounts of land because they don't have to worry about its expiration. The existence of money has led to more conflict over resources due to an increase in population and decrease in resources available per person. This necessitates the creation of government.

Locke is a significant figure in political and economic thought. Scholars debate whether or not he was supportive of the amassing of unlimited property, as well as how Locke viewed the money system and its differences in equality. The term "capitalism" did not exist at the time of his writing, but it has become an important argument in discussions surrounding Locke's work. It reveals just how influential Locke continues to be on political and economic theory today.

Chapter VI: Of Paternal Power

Locke objects to the notion that all parental power is invested in the father. He cites scripture, which says that both parents have authority over their children and requires them to obey both. This belief comes from those who support absolute monarchy, where there's a single individual with total control of government.

Locke proposes that all men are created equal, but some situations elevate one man above another. You can see this in the laws of nature, which state that all men are free to do whatever they want unless it causes harm to others. Children aren't born with freedom because they're not old enough to take care of themselves and support themselves. But once a child becomes an adult, he or she is able to support himself or herself and be free from his or her parents' care.

The law of reason governs all men, but children are not equipped to understand this law. They are not free either because they cannot consent to the law of reason. Locke defines the law as something that guides a man who is intelligent and free, and does not restrict him more than what is good for mankind in general. If a law is too restrictive, it should be abolished because freedom means being able to make decisions about one's person, actions, possessions, etc., without another man's interference or being subject to his absolute power.

Since children don't have the capacity to reason, their parents are responsible for raising them. God gave
men free will, but since children can't use that free will well, their parents must act in their best interest until they reach maturity. By then, a man should understand what the law is and how he's bound by it; only then can he be said to be mature enough to live in a state of nature or under an organized government. If a child is insane or mentally deficient, they don't have reason or the ability to understand the law; therefore they remain under their parent's care even if they're adults.

As we grow older, we become more rational and independent. We should not see this as a loss of freedom but rather as an opportunity to be free from our parents' control. Even if you believe that the king has absolute power over his subjects, there is still a period of time where others must rule in his place until he grows up. Only when one reaches maturity can they be held responsible for their actions or decisions. To send someone out into society without being able to guide them with reason is no different than abandoning them to misery.

Locke claims that the father does not have absolute power over his offspring. Simply begetting a child is not enough to make him or her subject to the father's rules. For example, if a woman has multiple husbands, or they separate, or he dies, then the mother can make and enforce rules just as well as the father could have done. Furthermore, this control only exists until such time when the child reaches maturity; after that point in life, the father no longer has any control over their life or property.

Even though a child is old enough to make his own decisions, he still needs to honor and respect his parents. The reason for this is that the parent has provided nourishment and education, which comes naturally from them. This duty of parents to provide these things is mirrored in the duty of children to honor their parents. Even if a father sends his son away for an apprenticeship, he still deserves respect from him because it was the father who raised him when he was young regardless of whether or not they are living under one roof at that time.

Locke then distinguishes between political and parental power. If all political power were parental, a child would have no obligation to his ruler, but only to his parents. However, since children must honor their own parents as much as they honor their rulers, it follows that all rulers still are obligated to honor their parents just like their subjects do.

The only way a father can have more power than the mother is if he gives his land to someone else. If that person inherits it, then they are subject to the laws and conditions of that government. This isn't special to fathers but applies to anyone who gives away land (like an Englishman leaving Frenchman).

Locke concludes that a father's power over his children does not extend beyond their youth and he cannot exercise any sort of executive or judicial power over them. Locke states that the earliest families were all governed by the laws of nature and when fathers died, they left their executive power to their natural heirs. Therefore, those who would accept this argument must also concede that princes should be priests as well because in early families, fathers were also priests of their household.

Analyzing

Locke does not use the phrase "blank slate" in the Second Treatise on government, but he alludes to it. He believes that children are born without any knowledge or understanding and rely on their parents to teach them how to reason. This is opposed by other philosophers like Augustine who believe men are born with
original sin, and Descartes who believes they are born with innate ability to reason. Locke's theory of tabula rasa reinforces his belief that children must be taught until they reach maturity because they do not have basic reasoning skills at birth.

Locke's view in this chapter is similar to his views in other chapters. He believes that people are basically good and will treat others as they would want to be treated. In this chapter, he uses the example of parents caring for their children to show how even imperfect people can do good things. However, not all parents behave well or care for their children appropriately, so Locke's statement about human nature doesn't always hold true.

The chapter has received a lot of scholarly attention for its content on the role of women in marriage and family life. It's clear that Locke believed men and women were equal partners, as well as parents to their children. He also denounced patriarchy, or having one man rule over others. In addition, he found no basis for paternal power in scripture but rather saw it only as an established practice. If historical practices aren't rational, they can't be upheld by people today.

John Locke did not believe that women should be completely subordinate to their husbands. He does acknowledge the possibility of divorce, but he also believed that there is a natural law which states that the husband has final judgment in areas of dispute. This is similar to how society grants political power to the majority or those with authority. Both require a contract and both are unnatural and illegitimate if they're not done through a contract. When you consent to marriage, your husband doesn't gain full control over you; it's only when you make an agreement with him for this relationship.

Furthermore despite the fact that Locke was a father, he did not believe that this entitled him to absolute power over his children. If one of his children chose to leave or if they were taken away from him by their mother, then he could no longer control them. Therefore, Locke's theory does not justify absolute monarchs and shows some proto-feminist qualities. However, it is debatable whether or not Locke actually believed in women's rights. He certainly didn't think that they should be treated as inferior beings and even though he didn't advocate for women having political participation in society like men do, there are no alternatives given either so we can assume that he simply thought it wasn't necessary at the time.

Chapter VII: Of Political or Civil Society

God created man to live in a society. The first type of relationship is between husband and wife, which was established by Adam and Eve. This union not only serves reproduction but also provides mutual assistance, affection, the ability to better nourish and educate children, as well as keep parents company for longer than other species. A woman can become pregnant while she's already raising her older children, so men must continue providing for their family after conception occurs. Since this bond lasts longer than other relationships God wanted it to be stronger because through it people could better themselves more effectively.

Locke states that it is natural for the husband to be the head of a household and make decisions on behalf of his wife. However, if she wants to leave him, then she has every right to do so. In societies where there is government intervention in marriage disputes between spouses, only husbands are allowed to have absolute authority over their wives.
Locke then discusses the relationship between master and servant. Similarities exist between a family and an absolute monarchy, but they are different in some ways. In terms of power, their powers differ from each other to a certain extent because the father's power is not as strong as that of a monarch or king.

Locke explains that a family is different from a political society. Men are born free and equal to other men, but they each have the right to manage their own property as they see fit. A political society can only exist when people agree to give up some of their rights and allow an authority figure or institution to govern them instead. Those who live in a civil society with established laws and agreed-upon authorities are living together on common ground; those who do not are still in the state of nature.

When people join a society, they give up their ability to make judgments and punish others. They agree to let the government take over those roles. The government's job is to decide how and when crimes are punished, as well as what compensation should be paid for any damages that occur due to illegal activity. When there is no one else on earth who can judge or punish someone, the state of nature persists.

Locke argues that an absolute monarchy is not really a government, but rather it's just one person ruling over everyone else. It doesn't matter if there are other people involved in the system, because they don't have any power or authority to make decisions. In fact, when there's only one ruler who has no checks and balances on his power, he is still in a state of nature with all those around him. He can do whatever he wants without anyone being able to stop him because there aren't any laws for him to follow.

In absolute monarchies, as well as other governments, the citizens have the right to appeal to the law. However, in absolute monarchies this is not due to love and affection from their leader but because he needs them for labor and profit. He can judge disputes between two subjects but there's no way that a subject could ever dispute with him. Locke compares it to men choosing a society where one man is like a lion who would devour everyone else.

Locke says that when a ruler is no longer in control of his subjects, the people are in a state of nature. It's possible that at first he was good and deserved to have absolute power over his subjects, but as time went on he or his successors lost their right to rule and were not doing any favors for those who remained under them. Only an elected body would be able to fix this problem. No one would be above another because everyone has equal rights and must follow the law if they want to stay out of a state of nature.

John Locke believes that marriage is a union between two people who love each other. This type of relationship contrasts with the political society, which involves shared power and liberty between husband and wife. In his view, there is no need to give up one's natural liberty for the sake of another person.

In the previous chapter and this one, Locke discusses how a family structure differs from a political one. A familial relationship is not an absolute form of government. In this chapter, Locke talks about consent more in depth. Men give up their natural rights to create a social compact with other men. This allows them to appeal to common authority figures for protection as well as have laws that will protect them and their property.

Locke continues to explain how an absolute monarchy cannot be considered a legitimate form of government. He says that there needs to be an agreement between all people on what the laws are and that
everyone must follow those same laws, but in an absolutist state, no one has any say in what the law is or whether it's followed. The monarch is completely above the law and can do whatever he wants without being punished for it. Locke also points out that even though some people may have rights to appeal to their ruler (because they bring him profit), he does not actually care about them; he only cares about himself.

This chapter describes a more detailed view of the alternative to an absolute monarchy. First, those who are governed must consent to their dominion. Second, there must be limitations on the rule of the authority figure; he can't act outside of law. Third, a way to accomplish these ends is through collective governing bodies such as parliaments and senates that consist of multiple people whose job it is to make laws by compromising with one another. This is the first time in the text where Locke specifically refers to these kinds of governing bodies.

Locke was a citizen of England and lived in the seventeenth century. He knew about Parliament, which existed alongside the monarchy at that time. Locke's patron, Lord Shaftesbury, was a Whig who wanted to keep power away from absolute rulers like James II (Locke's King). The Exclusion Bill would have stripped James II of his powers because he had been advocating for an absolute monarchy. However, this bill never passed through Parliament due to other suspicions and rebellions against the ruling party. This historical context is significant in understanding how Locke developed his philosophical ideas during this period.

Chapter VIII: Of the Beginning of Political Societies

Political societies cannot exist without the consent of their citizens. Men must give up their natural liberty and enter into a civil society with other men if they wish to form a political society. No man who does not want to join can be compelled to do so, because he has no obligation to obey laws that he did not agree upon. Once a civil society is formed, majority rule is necessary because it would be impossible for every single citizen in the community to individually consent or dissent from each law passed by its government. When citizens enter into such an agreement, they must submit themselves to majority rule since they agreed beforehand that this was part of living in a commonwealth; otherwise, men could just live in a state of nature where there are no laws at all and everyone makes his own decisions—which would mean the compact between them was invalidated. Majority rule is also logical since some people might have health issues or business obligations which prevent them from being able to participate in voting on certain matters, while others may hold opinions contrary those held by most other members of the community when it comes time for voting on proposed legislation.

Locke believes that the only legitimate government is one where people form a political society and give up their natural liberty. The first objection to this claim would be that there has never been a time in history when men have given up their freedom to start a new government, but Locke responds by saying that although it's true that no such historical examples exist, we cannot say with certainty whether or not they existed because records of those times are either nonexistent or yet undiscovered. Additionally, he says it's possible for free and independent men to come together and create a government without any written evidence of its formation. Ancient Rome and Venice serve as two examples of governments formed by free individuals who united together. In America, Native Americans were born under control from their fathers but retained their freedom to choose if they wanted to join the rest of the nation in
forming a new government; many chose not too because they had grown accustomed to being ruled over by someone else (their father).

Locke does understand that most commonwealths have been ruled by one man, but this was not always the case. For example, in America and Mexico there were many monarchies who were elective. Therefore, it is often assumed that government is a monarchy because of history's past examples where men inherited their position as ruler from their fathers. However, this has nothing to do with paternal authority and most times those rulers had originally been elected into office.

Locke says that men are used to having one person rule them, because they were raised by a father. He also believes that the reason people would be willing to give up power and share it with others is if they had never experienced any other type of government or encountered absolute power in a negative way. America is an example of this kind of place where there are no major problems except for protection from enemies. In addition, Locke gives examples from the Bible about rulers who only have military power but not kingly authority.

Thus, many governments were formed that placed power in the hands of one man who had no limitations on his rule. However, this was done to preserve the public good and safety. A young society would have collapsed without a ruler. Locke deems this a "golden age", an age where men lived in harmony with their rulers. At this point men find it necessary to look into the nature and formation of governments and find a way to prevent abuses of absolute power through various laws such as those found in Magna Carta. These men never dreamed that monarchy existed because of divine right; rather, they saw monarchies rooted in consent from the governed.

Locke responds to the criticism that men cannot form new governments by pointing out that there are many monarchies in the world. He also argues that although a man is born into his father's kingdom, he does not necessarily have to be subject to it. Men have left their kingdoms and formed new ones throughout history, so paternal authority alone cannot legitimize government. Locke concludes by stating that while a son may inherit his father's land, he can still choose not to do so if he wishes.

Governments understand that a child is not born with any allegiance to a country or government. His parents raise him until he's old enough to decide where he wants to live and work.

Locke moves on to how a person can consent, and what that means. A person must own property in a political society, but even those who travel or stay there also have to consent. When someone consents to the government, he has given up his rights as well as ownership of all his possessions; it would be illogical for them not to be part of the government's laws and conditions. Everyone's life belongs to the government while they are under its control; likewise their property does too.

When a person decides to give up his land or possessions, he is free to move elsewhere if he wishes. However, there will always be some kind of government that governs any man who agrees to be governed.

Locke adds that foreigners who live in a country are not necessarily considered members of the society. They may be like guests in someone's home, abiding by its rules but not actually part of the family. A foreigner must declare his consent to become a member of the community by entering into an agreement.
with other citizens.

Analyse

Locke uses the word "leviathan" in Chapter 14 of his Second Treatise. This is an interesting fact because he doesn't use it in any other chapter. Many people believe that Locke was criticizing Hobbes by using this word, but there's no real evidence to support that claim. Most scholars believe that Locke's main target was Filmer and not Hobbes.

Chapter 15: Of Paternal Power

Locke develops his ideas from the previous chapter. He continues to explain that a political society can only exist if people consent to give up their natural liberty and submit themselves to majority rule. This is referred to as tacit consent, which means you own property under a government's laws, and even just staying or traveling through its roads requires obedience. Therefore, foreigners do not have to offer up their life or poverty but instead must obey the laws of the country they reside in.

Locke argues that a monarchy and a civil society are completely different, but both can be considered absolute. An absolute monarchy is one where the monarch has complete power over everyone in his or her country. However, Locke explains that some monarchies came into existence when the people willingly gave up their freedom to an individual for protection from outside forces.

Some scholars disagree with Locke's theory of tacit consent. They believe that people can't really agree to obey a government if they don't know about the agreement in the first place. In addition, Simmons doesn't think that just walking around or taking up lodging should count as consenting to being governed by a government. Locke is advocating philosophical anarchism by saying that an individual does not have a moral obligation to follow their government's laws.

Another scholar, Hannah Pitken, disagrees with Simmons and says that tacit consent is sufficient when the government is based on natural law. Walking the roads and taking up lodging in a tyrannical government does not require one to obey that government’s laws; however, if a man is within the boundaries of a natural civil society then he has given his tacit consent. John Dunn believes modern readers misunderstand Locke's use of 'consent'. In Locke's day it merely meant not being unwilling.

Chapter IX: Of the Ends of Political Society and Government

To Summarize

Locke asks why a man would leave the state of nature, where he is completely free and equal, to be governed by an authority. He says that men cannot expect other men in a society without government to respect their freedom and property. A man's life may be threatened, his property can be invaded, and self-interests preclude people from acting for the common good. The state of nature can be dangerous because it is full of vicissitudes (unpredictable events). Therefore, forming a government is necessary to preserve lives, liberties (freedom), and estates (property).
In the state of nature, there are three things that are lacking. The first is a commonly agreed upon law for all men to follow. Right and wrong can be subjective, so it's difficult to have a common standard in such an environment. Secondly, there isn't one person who can serve as judge and jury on disputes because everyone is biased by their own emotions or self-interests. Lastly, if someone does break the law, no one has the power to enforce it because people resist punishment even when they deserve it.

In his book, Hobbes also argues that it is rare to find people living in a state of nature. In fact, he spends much time explaining why this is so. It would be inconvenient and onerous for most people to live without the protection of a government. Therefore, they agree to form a society with laws and give up their power of punishing transgressors. This allows them to protect their property instead.

The state of nature is different from the way things are now, because people have lost some important powers. The first one is to do whatever they need to do in order to protect themselves and others. If there weren't any selfish or degenerate men, everyone would be able to live together peacefully and governments wouldn't exist at all. Another power that people lose when they join a society is the ability to punish those who commit crimes against natural law.

Being a part of society takes away your freedom to do what you want and makes you follow the rules. It also allows for people who break those rules to be punished by society.

Even though men must give up their freedom and equality when they join a political society, it does not mean that the government can do whatever it wants. The government is expected to protect people's liberty and property from harm. Therefore, the government should only use force at home to enforce laws; abroad, to protect its citizens; and in general for peace, safety, and public good.

Locke spends a lot of time talking about the inconveniences that come with being in a state of nature. He says, "Life would be solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short." In addition to this he talks about how much better life is when people can own property and have protection from others. Locke also details what kind of power an authority figure has and what they are not allowed to do.

Locke uses the term "public good" several times in this chapter. He is very clear that a government can only be legitimate if it doesn't overstep its bounds and acts for the benefit of everyone, not just itself. There should be no room for self-interest or arrogance and ambition. A compact means both parties have to follow certain rules; a society with an absolute monarch rarely has good intentions for anyone but himself.

Regarding the purpose of government, Locke's Second Treatise asserts that it should protect people from infringements of their rights. It is a classic libertarian thesis (libertarianism being a school of political thought that places a premium on personal liberty and individualism).

Alex Tuckness argues that Locke's theory is not meant to be a negative force in society. It is supposed to protect people from the government as much as possible, but it also gives the government power to do things for the public good.

Peter Laslett, a preeminent scholar on John Locke, agrees with Tuckness. He writes in his introduction to an edition of the Two Treatises that freedom is not just about being free from restraint. It's also about
having something positive and tangible—laws created by society and government that help define what freedom really means.

**Chapter X: Of the Forms of a Commonwealth, and Chapter XI: Of the Extent of Legislative Power**

A Summary

In chapter X, Locke discusses different forms of government. If the power is placed in the hands of a majority and officers are appointed by that majority, then it's a democracy. If the power is placed in the hands of few men, it's an oligarchy. If one person has all the power (a monarchy), then his or her heirs will continue to hold that position after he or she dies; if someone else succeeds him or her instead (being chosen by others), then it's an elective monarchy. A new form of government can be instituted when people get tired of their current system and want something better for themselves; this usually happens during times of civil unrest because they're dissatisfied with how things are going under their current leadership.

Locke defines a commonwealth in this chapter, even though he has used the word before. It is not a specific form of government but an independent community or society of men. He prefers to use the term "commonwealth" rather than city because it better describes what they are. In Chapter 11 Locke discusses the legislature and how it is important for creating laws that will govern the people within its realm. The members who make up this group are appointed by their constituents and have full authority over them until another body can be elected by those same constituents.

There are certain rules that a legislature must follow, regardless of the number of members or sessions. It is necessary to have laws in place so that people's property and lives are protected. If the power given to a legislature is not used for good purposes, people will lose faith in it and revolt. The law of nature must be upheld by all legislatures because it governs what they do.

The first is that laws should be clear and permanent. In a state of nature, it's not easy to hold people accountable for their misinterpretation or misapplication of the law. For instance, in a commonwealth where there are standing laws, disputes can easily be resolved because everyone is aware of them. Furthermore, when men give up their natural power to form civil society, they can expect to have obvious laws governing them.

If power is arbitrary or people don't have laws to protect their lives, liberty and property, then they're in a state of nature. This is worse than being ruled by one man who governs arbitrarily and capriciously. It's better for 100,000 men to be subject to another 100,000 men rather than be at the whim of one man who rules with impulse and caprice.

The third limitation on the legislature's power is that it cannot take a man's property without his consent. It is government's most important function, as well as why men consented to be governed in the first place. A man cannot be assumed to have any property at all when he can be taken from him so arbitrarily. Locke distinguishes between a democracy and an absolute monarchy; he writes that a government composed of multiple people who are subject to laws of their country is less likely to seize a citizen’s
property or do with it what they please without fear of repercussions. There is also distinction between absolute and arbitrary power; for example, soldiers need absolute obedience but not arbitrary orders such as putting them in front of cannons.

Locke believes that the commonwealth can take some of a man's property, but only if it is done with consent. If the citizens agree to give up their property, then no natural law has been violated.

The legislature has four limitations. The first is that it cannot take away the power of the people or their representatives, because they are the ones who gave them this power in the first place. Second, it also cannot transfer its own authority to another body or person. Third, it cannot give itself more powers than what was given to it by the people. Fourth and finally, since a government exists only with consent from its citizens, a legislature can't take away any of those rights either.

The limitations on the legislature are that laws must be established and unvaried for different citizens, they must serve only the public good, people must consent to taxes, and it may not transfer power to any other body.

Chapter 10 is important because it introduces the idea of democracy. Locke often gets a bad rap for advocating that democracy is the best form of government, but he never said this outright. He did not approve of absolute monarchy and felt that as long as people had some say in their government and were able to vote for its leaders, then they could have a legitimate system.

Locke's work has been highly influential in the American and French revolutions, which led to democracies being set up. The American Revolution began in 1775 with the battles of Lexington and Concord and officially ended with the Treaty of Paris in 1783. The Americans were unhappy with British restrictions on their liberty and economic hegemony that was exercised over them.

While Locke's ideas weren't common among the general public, intellectuals were extremely familiar with them. Thomas Jefferson was a big fan of his work and said that he was one of three greatest men who ever lived. In Jefferson's Declaration of Independence from 1776, you can see that he used Lockean ideas such as social contracts and natural laws; specifically, in section 225 where "long train" comes from.

Scholars disagree on the degree to which John Locke influenced the Declaration of Independence. Some argue that his work was most influential and others believe it had less influence than other works by Jean-Jacques Burlamaqui or Ray Forrest Harvey. No matter what scholars think, though, it's clear that Locke inspired America and France to rebel against their monarchies and establish democratic governments in their place.

In chapter XI, Locke examines the legislative power and its limitations. One important element is property, which is a man's most valuable possession. Whenever a government fails to protect his life and possessions, it loses its legitimacy. Another important concept in this chapter is the social contract theory, whereby men give up their natural liberty but gain many conveniences in return for giving up some of their property (i.e., taxes).
Chapter XII: Of the Legislative, Executive, and Federative Power of the Commonwealth, and Chapter XIII: Of the Subordination of the Powers of the Commonwealth

The legislature is the most important branch of government because it makes laws, but they should not be in session continuously. They need to separate their executive power from their legislative power so that when they make laws, those laws will be enforced fairly.

Locke sees a third power, federative, as significant in a political society. Federative deals with the community as a whole when dealing with other nations. It's involved with war and peace, alliances and treaties, and all other relationships between the commonwealth and other governments.

Even though executive and federative powers are different, they usually exist in the same body. Federative power is more flexible than executive power because it deals with foreign countries which can be difficult to understand. Locke believes that it's best to combine them because both use public force, and if they were separate, there would be uncertainty about what was happening.

Locke discusses the three powers in a commonwealth: legislative, executive, and federative. The legislature is always supreme but can be dissolved when it does not act according to its purpose of making laws for the good of the people. Men have an unalterable right to self-preservation; as such, they may rid themselves of any government that threatens their lives. This means that when the community dissolves a government, it becomes supreme power because only then has it dissolved what was no longer working properly.

Legislative power is also supreme because it has the ability to make laws that others have to follow. Sometimes there are governments with legislatures that aren't always in session and executives who only have one person; in this case, we can say that the executive branch isn't really supreme but only accountable to the legislature. The executive branch is definitely subordinate to legislative authority and can be changed at its will.

While the legislative power doesn't need to be in session all the time, it should convene when laws are being made. The executive branch needs to constantly enforce those laws and can do so at any time. The federative power also must always be present when needed.

If the legislative power is made up of representatives elected by the people, then there will be a time for new elections to take place. The executive's role in these elections can be one of two things: he may oversee the process or call for them himself (if it isn't addressed in the constitution).

Locke says that if the executive hinders the legislature from convening or acting, then he has created a state of war. The people have every right to overthrow him because they are trying to preserve themselves.

The executive has the power to convene and dismiss the legislature. However, they are not superior because they were created for different purposes. The framers of the government didn't know exactly what would fall upon them so an executive with a more elastic power was preferred over a legislature that
had inflexible powers. Moreover, if there is no strict schedule for meetings in place, then it is up to the executive to call one when necessary. Therefore, while the executive does have clear powers, it isn't actually superior.

Locke says that in a commonwealth, the population may change. The number of representatives elected by the people might not reflect their actual population. It will be difficult to change this system since it is built into the constitution itself. However, there is an answer: If the executive feels that these delegates are out of proportion with their true numbers, he can dissolve them and reconvene them according to how they were originally meant to be elected. This does not need to be considered as creating a new legislature but rather restoring an old one; and since it's for the public good, everyone will approve.

In Chapters 12 and 13, Locke introduces the idea of separation of powers. It's a concept that seems natural to us now because it is so prevalent in democracies around the world. However, this was not always the case. In fact, in Locke's day absolute monarchs ruled most countries with an executive branch that also made laws for its subjects—a conflict of interest that gave rise to abuses by those who held power. For Locke, it was crucial that these two branches be separate because if they were combined then lawmakers could write laws specifically tailored to their own benefit or gain exemption from them altogether since they wrote them! This situation is similar to what we see today: Congress writes the laws and enforces them while the president executes those laws with checks and balances ensuring one branch does not exceed its authority as written by Congress."

In the last few chapters, we have learned that the legislative power is responsible for making laws. It does not need to be in session continuously and it should comprise of multiple members because this would make it less likely to threaten men's property. Although it is supreme, as Peter Laslett wrote, it is still subject to the laws of nature.

In addition to the legislative and executive powers, Locke also included a federative power. This was not necessary because the legislature and executive can interpret laws as needed. A judicial branch is unnecessary in this system of government.

Locke believed that there were different institutions in society, and each had a power to govern. For example, the King and Parliament both have legislative power. However, Locke thought that citizens should be able to choose their representatives; they could not be appointed by someone else. He also thought that it was important for the people to keep control over their government because they agreed to give up some of their rights when forming a government. If the government prevents the people from assembling or threatens their property, acts arbitrarily or erratically, gives them away to another country's government or changes its constitution without permission from those governed then they are justified in overthrowing it.

Locke mentions the word "constitution" in this chapter, and readers will probably think of the U.S. Constitution when they see it. However, Locke did not have a specific structure for constitutions in mind; his views were similar to those of American Founding Fathers regarding separation of powers and different types of powers. It is interesting to keep this in mind while reading Locke's work- he had no idea that his ideas would influence history so much or that their interpretation would be slightly different from what he wrote about here (in The Second Treatise). Laslett writes: "It is one example of the extraordinary fashion in which the thinking of Locke and constitutional practice began to converge on Englishmen"
determined both to benefit from both…The result was a mingled understanding with historical consequences beyond anything either could have foreseen." In sum, Locke's work alluded to events and circumstances during his day but was more universal and theoretical in scope. Interpretations that favored liberal causes led people to dissolve a government that had drifted far from its purpose by becoming tyrannical over time.

Chapter XIV: Of Prerogative, and Chapter XV: Of Paternal, Political, and Despotical Power, Considered Together

A Summary

In a commonwealth, the legislative and executive branches are separate from each other. The executive branch is given several powers to protect society in the absence of the legislature or relevant laws. For example, they can make decisions for the good of society according to their discretion if need arises. Additionally, they can also circumvent laws if necessary. Locke's example is tearing down a house that is next to a burning one in order to prevent an entire city from burning down.

We need the power to act outside of laws because sometimes legislatures are slow and unable to address new problems. Sometimes they pass laws that cause more harm than good, so we have the discretion to act in the public's best interest.

Governors have the prerogative to make decisions for their people, but they must use this power wisely. The commonwealth is a new entity that resembles a family with the governor acting as its father. In this situation, governors can exercise their prerogative because there are few laws in place yet. But when governors begin using prerogative powers for personal gain instead of public good, then it's up to the people to change those rules into laws so that everyone benefits from them equally and fairly. It's not fair or logical for governors to view citizens as inferior and treat them accordingly just because they're in positions of power; thus, no one should be surprised if citizens correct them when necessary.

Locke's idea of prerogative is that it is a power to act outside the law. He writes that this can be done for public good, and in fact some rulers have used their power for good. The history of England has provided examples where princes have been able to use their prerogative without violating people's natural rights because they judged correctly.

When a wise ruler who uses prerogative power is succeeded by someone else, the new ruler should continue to use that power as it was used before. However, if they change the way they do things and use that prerogative in an unfair or harmful way, the people are justified in breaking laws made with prerogative and overthrowing those rulers. The new ruler shouldn't abuse their power of prerogative because doing so would be unfair to their subjects.

Locke ends this chapter with two more points about prerogative. First, the executive has a right to call for a session of parliament, but only if it's in the public interest. Second, since there is no earthly judge to determine whether or not prerogative powers are used correctly, men must appeal to heaven when their governments abuse them. God gave man life and he cannot take it away from him or allow another person to do so. If the government continually abuses its power, people can try and reform their government by
dissolving it and forming a new one; however they will be judged by God alone in extraordinary circumstances like these.

The last chapter of the Second Treatise is a summary of parental power, paternal authority, and absolute dominion. Parental power is the right to nurture and educate children until they reach adulthood. It does not extend to their property or lives after that time. Children are obligated to honor and respect their parents but are not under their complete control.

Chapter XV: Summary

Political power is the second type of power. It's only used to protect people from harm and punish lawbreakers. This power comes into existence when people form a government, but it must have consent from the governed to be legitimate.

The third type of power is despotic, which means absolute and arbitrary power exercised by one person over others. It cannot be conferred by a social contract; it can only exist when someone forfeits their freedom to another. This occurs in times of war, when people are captured and enslaved. When they're held captive as prisoners of war, the despotic power ends because they've been taken captive in a just and lawful conflict.

In conclusion, parental power is given by nature and political power is bestowed by voluntary agreement. Despotical power exceeds both of these forms of government because it takes away the people's property. Parental power only manages a child’s property until he becomes an adult while political power preserves men’s property from being taken away.

Locke's explanation of prerogative provides a lot to talk about. Prerogative is "the power of doing public good without a rule." While 17th century political philosophers advocated the divine right of kings, Locke claimed that a prince's ability to act outside the law was not something given by God but by the people and only for their benefit. A wise prince can actually use his prerogative in many ways while still respecting his subjects' rights. One who uses it in another way is creating war with his people.

Locke explained in Chapter III that men should turn to God if their government is no longer attempting to secure the public good. He reiterates this point here when discussing a ruler who exercises too much prerogative and is not securing the public good. Locke thoroughly takes up the idea of dissolving a tyrannical government in later chapters, but he mentions it here as well. This demonstrates another example of his Christian theology that infuses his political philosophy.

There is a lot of good writing on presidential prerogative power, which was used after 9/11 to protect the American people. One scholar, Ross J. Corbett, discusses whether or not it's constitutional to use this type of power in times of crisis. He begins his discussion by noting that there were many extraordinary steps taken by the Bush administration following 9/11 that seemed outside the bounds of established law at the time; he sees those actions as pure examples of presidential prerogative and thinks we should look back to Locke for more information about this issue today.

Locke's prerogative has been interpreted in different ways. Some argue that he meant for it to be a constitutionally provided power, and others say that the prince is not required to stop or start anything at
the command of another body. Both interpretations can be supported because Locke did not provide any
details about how prerogative should work.

Benjamin Kleinerman argues a point that Locke was actually quite pessimistic about the limitations of
legislative constitutionalism. He believes this pessimism comes from Locke's realization that people are
passive and will not be vigilant enough to prevent executive action outside the laws. The passivity may
also come from people being generally content with giving executives far-reaching powers as long as they
do not interfere with their immediate interests.

**Chapter XVI: Of Conquest, and Chapter XVII: Of Usurpation**

*Best Summary*

Man has participated in wars and conquest throughout history. However, not all conquerors were able to
establish a new government after they conquered their subjects. They could only do so if the people
consented to such a change. A conqueror who uses force to take control of a land without the consent of
its inhabitants is unjust and cannot claim ownership over that land or its people. Therefore, an unjust
conqueror does not have any right over his victims' property or bodies; they must seek help from heaven
for justice. Similarly, the conquered people cannot appeal to earthly authorities because there are none
who can judge between them and their conquerors; therefore, they must turn toward God for help

Locke now turns to lawful conquests. He says that the conqueror has no power over those who fought
with him. The agreement before the conquest was usually set out on how they would share spoils and
what happens if they win, so this is a normal course of action for them. If there is no government formed
after a conquest, then the conqueror only has submission from those who forfeited their lives in battle
against him, but not their property or other people's lives.

The second point is that the people are not responsible for what their governor does unless they give him
permission or help him. If they neither gave nor helped, then they're completely innocent.

The third point is that the conqueror has a right to the lives of those he conquers. The reason for this is
because they started the war and have forfeited their lives as well as any land or possessions. However, it
doesn't mean that he can just take anything from them. He may only take what is necessary to pay for his
expenses in starting the war or make restitution if there was some other crime committed against him by
these people.

Locke believes that the innocent family of a man who died in war should not be harmed. However, what
if a child has title to his father's estate but another wants it as reparation? The conqueror must leave
enough for them to live off of because harming future generations would violate the fundamental law of
nature. A conqueror can only harm their land for two seasons worth and money is not sufficient
compensation because it is completely arbitrary.

If the conqueror is victorious in war, he can force people to join his government. However, these
individuals are not obligated to obey him because it violates natural law.
Locke considers two situations. The first is when people are engaged in an actual war with a conqueror who has subdued them, and the second is when they have not been subjugated but rather live under the conqueror's rule without their consent. In both cases, people still maintain their right to freedom of person and property even if they're living under government control. They can leave as long as they don't give up those rights by moving into the new territory. If someone owns land before being conquered by another ruler, then that person can continue to own that land after losing ownership of it temporarily due to conquest. The conquering ruler cannot take away his subjects' rights unless he gives them something else in return for doing so or if he allows them free choice about whether or not to enter into his dominion voluntarily.

A prince must obey God's laws, as well as those of nature. If he conquers a kingdom or country, he has the right to take the lives of its people who fought against him. However, he does not gain their possessions and property. Locke gives historical examples of this in his writing.

In chapter seventeen, Locke turns to the subject of usurpation. He writes that a ruler's power is only legitimate if he has received consent from his people. A ruler who usurps power and does not have the consent of his people will never be considered a legitimate leader.

In chapter XVI, Locke discusses the subject of conquest. In this case, force is used to seize another's property without violating natural law. A conqueror can wage war on a commonwealth and gain the lives of those who fought against him without taking away their rights. He is not entitled to land or possessions except for reparations that cover his costs in waging war. It can be inferred that these people forfeit their right to life until they die but only because they waged war against the victorious conqueror first.

The unjustly defeated don't have many options. They are not required to submit, but sometimes the conqueror attains this tacit allegiance through threats and violence. In that case, the only recourse these men have is to remain patient and appeal to God for justice. However, as one scholar wrote, "The defeated are entitled to survive – outward obedience to the regime may certainly be coupled with an inward conscientious disobedience." If these people were forced into submission by their new ruler or if they submitted simply because of fear of death, then it wouldn't mean anything either way.

Locke uses historical and biblical examples to illustrate his theory of conquest. He first gives an example of William the Conqueror, who invaded England in 1066. Locke explains that none of the people who helped William secure the island were susceptible to his absolute rule over them. Anyone descended from those Norman conquerors could claim freedom as derived from them, and it will be very hard to prove otherwise.

Locke uses two historical examples in section 196. The first is Hinga and Hubba, who were Danes seeking to avenge their father Lodbrog's death. They laid siege to York and captured the whole country, but they did so unjustly because the English weren't their lawful subjects.

The last example is from 2 Kings and concerns the rebellion of Hezekiah against Assyria. He paid tribute to the conquerors, but then rebelled after he felt that they were wrongfully ruling over him. Locke uses this as an example of how a people has every right to rebel if their conquest was unjust, even if they had initially paid tribute or swore allegiance to them.
Chapter VIII: Of Tyranny

Summary: Usurpation is when someone uses the power that belongs to another person. Tyranny is using power beyond what it should be used for, or in other words, selfishly using one's own will to carry out a command or action.

Locke uses quotes from King James I to back up his point. In 1603, he said the difference between a tyrant and rightful king is that the tyrant believes everything exists for his own benefit and ends; a rightful king knows he's in power because of the people who invested him with it. He reiterated this idea later by saying that kings must bind themselves to the law or risk becoming noxious to their kingdom. The simple difference between what makes a tyrant versus what makes someone rightfully in charge is whether they follow laws or not.

Democracies and oligarchies are just as susceptible to tyranny. No matter how many people make up the authority, they're tyrannical if they use their power in a way that harms or harasses others. Whenever an authority goes beyond what is legal, he is no longer acting as a magistrate and becomes like any other man who uses force to harm another person. It's important for those with more wealth, power, and education than others to be aware of this advantage and know better than to steal from their brethren.

Locke poses the question- what happens when men erroneously believe that they are aggrieved and their state of commonwealth is in constant chaos? First, opposition to force can only be done against unlawful or unjust force by the government. In some countries, such as absolute monarchies, it's unlikely for a ruler to ever act unlawfully because his peace and security are important to him. He has also been limited by law so he is not likely to go beyond it.

Force should only be used when there is no other option. When force is used, the person against whom it is being used can defend himself. If a man was attacked on the road and threatened with his life, he could use force to stop the threat because there would be no time to appeal to authorities for help. The majority of people wouldn’t care about one or two men who had an issue with their government; therefore, it would take more than a few troublemakers to overthrow society as we know it.

A governor will be in danger if the majority of people are justly aggrieved. People will fear that their lives, liberty and possessions may also be in danger. A good ruler should not pity himself because he can avoid this situation by respecting the law.

It is impossible for citizens to not notice when their leader breaks the law, uses his power in an inappropriate way or promotes people who are complicit with his schemes. It would be unlikely that they wouldn't notice if their liberties were being threatened because passengers on a ship can tell where the captain is steering them.

Locke has used many biblical, literary, and historical examples throughout the Second Treatise. The example of James I is one of the only times in which he refers to a specific and contemporary figure. James I became king of Scotland when he was an infant upon his mother's death. In 1603, he succeeded Elizabeth I as King of England, Ireland, and Scotland. He died in 1625 and was succeeded by his second son Charles I who ruled until 1649 during the English Civil War. James wrote a book entitled The True
Law of Free Monarchies that identified a theological basis for kingship but also counseled them to heed God's word and tradition rather than acting rashly.

There were several plots and conspiracies during the reign of James I, but the most infamous one was the Gunpowder Plot. A group of Catholic soldiers wanted to blow up Parliament on November 5, 1605. They did this because they didn't like that there wasn't much tolerance for Catholics in England or that Elizabeth would be made a head of state. The plot was discovered before it could happen, so everyone breathed a sigh of relief. However, James's relationship with Parliament got worse after this event; he dismissed them twice and ruled without them at all for some time due to his financial troubles from spending too much money on his court (and more).

James I was a good example of an absolute monarch. Although Locke's text suggests that James I was a reasonable and intelligent ruler who observed the fundamental laws of the kingdom and avoided breaching the trust that existed between himself and his people, historical evidence tells us otherwise. He certainly wasn't as bad as Charles I (who was executed in 1649) but he did have some problems with Parliament regarding financial concerns partially attributable to his court's lavish spending.

This chapter explains the differences between legitimate and illegitimate power. A ruler who exercises legitimate power observes the fundamental laws of his country, understands that he has been given this power by his people, and seeks to protect them. Such a ruler is not tyrannical because he honors the bond of trust between himself and his people. However, if a ruler breaks the bonds of trust with his people or acts outside the law, he can be called a tyrant. This type of behavior is unacceptable in Locke's view because it damages both society as well as individual citizens' property rights. It is also unlikely for there to be frequent rebellions against tyrants since their subjects have intelligence and rationality that allows them to see when they're being mistreated.

The next chapter, "Of Dissolution of Government," talks about the right of the people to overthrow their government if it acts in an arbitrary and unjust manner. This chapter also lays out several ways that a government can become tyrannical, even in democracies or oligarchies. It's important because it makes you realize that tyranny doesn't just come from absolute monarchies but can also exist in other types of governments as well.

**Chapter XIX: Of the Dissolution of Government**

Locke discusses the dissolution of government. First, he distinguishes between the dissolution of society and that of government. Society is destroyed by foreign conquest; people are brought together in a commonwealth but when it's dissolved they return to their previous state (the state of nature). Government also dissolves along with society because without its foundation there would be no point for government to exist.

Locke discusses the ways in which government can be dissolved. The first way is when a legislature is altered, because it was created by society as a whole and represents all of its members. This legislature has the authority to make laws for everyone. Whenever this happens without permission or authorization from society, people don't need to obey these laws and they can form a new one.
Each country has a form of government, which is either an absolute monarchy or a representative democracy. In the first case, when the monarch goes outside his bounds and makes new laws or subverts old ones, it's clear that he's to blame for changing the government. Likewise, if he prevents meetings of representatives from taking place by closing down parliament or changes the election rules without people’s consent and against their common interest in order to give power to someone else who isn't from that country, then it's also his fault because only he has authority over these issues.

The government can also be dissolved if the executive branch is not carrying out its duties. This happens when there is no enforcement of justice and the laws cannot be carried out for the public good. When the executive uses force or bribery to corrupt representatives, he destroys them and their ability to carry out their responsibilities on behalf of the people.

Some people may fear that the new government would fail if it were to replace an existing one. Locke advises them not to worry about this, because the people are accustomed to their old forms and will rarely choose a new form of government that is vastly different from what they're used to.

Locke says that the people should not revolt every time a mistake is made by their government. There are times when it's okay for governments to make mistakes, but if a long series of actions all lead towards the violation of the people's liberty, then they have the right to replace their government with one that will protect their rights and freedoms. A poor ruler is worse than anarchy or even being in nature because at least in nature there are no rulers. The best way to prevent rebellions from happening is to show those who govern how dangerous it would be for them if they went against what was written down as law.

Therefore, when the government acts contrary to its established role, or takes away the power that is given to it by the people, then it is guilty of rebellion. In fact, when a government introduces a new type of power or takes away an old one from the people without their permission, then they are also guilty of introducing war into society. It would be absurd for a group of citizens to simply allow their government to take over their property or liberty. It's just as absurd for them to let someone else steal something important from them without doing anything about it.

If the purpose of government is to protect people, then it's logical that the people will oppose rulers who are not focused on protecting them. John Locke mentions in another chapter that a few dissatisfied or suffering men probably won't be able to stir up rebellion against their ruler. If most of the commonwealth, however, find themselves aggrieved, they have a right to rebel. It makes sense for anyone who causes destruction and violence by overthrowing authority figures (or even private citizens) to be guilty of the highest crime because it doesn't make sense for private citizens but not public officials to use force on other people's property. Greater privileges don't allow you to break laws.

Locke uses the writing of William Barclay to discuss his views on kings. In one passage, he quotes Barclay in Latin and then translates it into English. Locke quotes him saying that when a king harms his people, they have the right to defend themselves. Self-defense is part of natural law, so if a king attacks them or their property, they can fight back. They should not use this opportunity to get revenge for past wrongs though; resistance should only be used against current offenses and cannot be characterized by retribution or punishment. However, Locke doesn't agree with this because how will an attack succeed without swords? He also disagrees with Barclay's assertion that resistance must be done with reverence because it would never come about successfully anyway. Finally, Locke notes that once a tyrant has
attacked his people using force, all notions of inferior vs superior are irrelevant now and anyone who could punish another person would do so regardless of status differences between them.

Locke then quotes and translates John Barclay's view on kingship. He says that a king can lose his right to rule if he ruins the kingdom or makes himself dependent on another nation, as Nero did by burning Rome and Caligula did by making the Roman empire subject to foreign nations. Locke explains that both of these cases are similar to those described earlier in the chapter, but they have one main difference: In this case, no problem arises from violating trust; it is simply a matter of ruining the country or becoming dependent on other countries. Locke mentions several other writers who espouse similar ideas; these include Bilson, Bracton, Fortescue, and an author named Mirrour.

Locke believes that there will be dissension throughout the commonwealth if certain people are not happy. He thinks that the people as a whole will prevent this from happening because they want to live in peace. The ultimate judge is God, and he'll determine whether or not it's right for them to rebel against their sovereign. Locke says that the people should be the judges first, because they were initially trusting of their ruler when he was elected into office. If he refuses judgment and war persists between him and his subjects, then God will be left to make all judgments regarding tyranny on earth.

As you can see, the power that men had in a state of nature was relinquished once they joined a commonwealth. The power placed within the legislature cannot be regained by those who gave it up. However, if the rulers abuse their power or violate the laws of the commonwealth and betray its people's trust, then there is no reason for them to retain their powers.

Analyze

In this chapter, Locke summarizes his beliefs about the origins, ends and legitimacy of government. He discusses how a legislative or executive power can bring about destruction of society and/or government. Moreover, he explains why people have the right to dissolve their governments when they've been abused for too long.

The time period in which Locke was writing had many political upheavals. Charles I was the king of England when Locke was born in 1632. He believed he had divine right to rule and abused his power, raising taxes without Parliament's consent, ruling for eleven years without a parliament, and not doing much about economic problems that plagued the country. As you may know from history class or other sources, he eventually got tried for treason and beheaded in 1649. Following his execution, England declared itself a Commonwealth with Oliver Cromwell as its leader until his death (he actually called himself Lord Protector). His son briefly became Lord Protector after him but soon restored the monarchy with Charles II taking over as King of England again in 1660.

During Charles II's reign, Locke became friends with the first Earl of Shaftesbury. The earl was a shrewd politician who influenced many important people in politics and government. Because he had saved the earl's life using his medical training at Oxford, Locke impressed him with his intellect. This friendship helped shape Locke's political views on government and society. Peter Laslett wrote that "we owe Two Treatises to the wonderful knowledge of state affairs which Locke acquired from frequent discourse with the first earl of Shaftesbury; indeed, evidence suggests...that he actually wrote the book for Shaftesbury’s purposes..."
Charles II ruled until his death in 1685. His brother James, the Duke of York, took the throne. However, he was forced to abdicate during a revolution led by William III of Orange and Mary II.

More historical information on Locke's relationship with Shaftesbury and the ambiguity surrounding the date of Locke's writing can be found in other sections of this study guide. However, for now, it is important to observe that Locke had firsthand experience with tyranny and how people replaced their government with one that ultimately kept them safe. Other major components and themes from his text can be seen in these 17th century England political events: a state of war; tyranny; usurpation; arbitrary taking of property by rulers; destruction of legislative power by an executive ruler who has no trust from its citizens.

This chapter contains most of the political thought for which Locke is known. He explains that a commonwealth's purpose is to protect its citizens and ensure their rights, while outlining how government can be destroyed by foreign conquerors or legislative and executive powers. He also details why people have the right to rebel against an oppressive government.