

5504642090

Weena Sricharoenchai

John Locke

Word count

1145 words

Have you ever wondered why the rule of the society that we live in, known as ‘Laws’, rules us the way it does? Or who is the one who judges what is right or wrong and what are their reasons? The truth is that in the ancient age, people believed in God, nature and whatever they saw or had been told without proving. They evaluated things based on what they believe in. But then people’s views had changed in the enlightenment era where people became more rational because of education in scientific method. John Locke was one of the most influential of Enlightenment thinkers in that age whose theory and works bring about a significant change in our life today, especially on equity in human. John Locke has shaped the new perspective on equity of human as it is today through his philosophy.

John Locke was one of the most well-known English philosophers and the most influential enlightenment thinker. He is one of the founders of liberal and political philosophy. He was born on August 29, 1632 near Bristol, England.¹ He was educated at Westminster School in London. After he completed his study there, he went to Christ Church College, Oxford.² He did not enjoy studying in class because he

¹ "John Locke - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia." *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Feb. 2013. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Locke>.

² "John Locke - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia." *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Feb. 2013. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Locke>.

thought that the lesson that he learned in class was not interesting at all. He found the work of modern philosophers more interesting. Therefore, he decided to study medicine and philosophy at the other university. In 1666, He met Anthony Ashley Cooper, the first earl of Shaftesbury³ Cooper was impressed with Locke, so he persuaded Locke to become his entourage. Later on, Locke became his friend, physician and advisor. While Locke worked in Shaftesbury, he had learned more about philosophy and became involved in politics when Shaftesbury became Lord Chancellor in 1672.⁴ This is an important starting point for Locke which influenced him to start working more on philosophy and politics. Locke wrote several books such as *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* which is about the nature of human mind.⁵ Locke believed that the human mind is blank since birth. He said that people learned from experience and that all knowledge the human mind possess is a result of observation made thorough five senses. Another famous one was *Second Treatises of Government* which is about the nature of human.⁶ Locke is not only a great writer but he is also a good thinker in science, philosophy, and political philosophy.

The most interesting aspect in Locke's political philosophy was his theory of natural law and natural rights. According to the *Second Treatise of Government*, his philosophy is mostly based on natural laws.⁷ But there are many different interpretations of the natural law. So, have you ever wonder what is Locke's

³ " John Locke Biography - Facts, Birthday, Life Story - Biography.com ." *Famous Biographies & TV Shows - Biography.com* . N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Feb. 2013. <<http://www.biography.com/people/john-locke-9384544>>.

⁴ "John Locke (1632-1704), The Philosopher of Freedom.." *Blupete*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Feb. 2013. <<http://www.blupete.com/Literature/Biographies/Philosophy/Locke2.htm>>.

⁵ "John Locke (1632-1704), The Philosopher of Freedom.." *Blupete*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Feb. 2013. <<http://www.blupete.com/Literature/Biographies/Philosophy/Locke2.htm>>.

⁶ "Two Treatises of Government - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia." *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Feb. 2013. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two_Treatises>

⁷ "John Locke | Natural Law, Natural Rights, and American Constitutionalism." *Natural Law, Natural Rights and American Constitutionalism*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Feb. 2013. <<http://www.nlnrac.org/earlymodern/locke>>.

interpretation? Locke said that there are two main things of human rights in the state of nature. First, human in the state of nature are free and equal and they also have their own liberty to do whatever they wish. The only limitation is human need to be in the bound of the law of nature. Locke believed that before having the government laws, all human live in the law of nature which has their own nature rules and individuals have the duty to respect the right of others. Therefore, in this state there will be no war. But the state of nature had an obligation to comply with the rules of punishing the one who violated the law. Second, Locke said that in the state of nature, individuals have the right to property because everything was made up of human labor so all of those properties were made up from human not from the government and this idea later led to private property right in which its purpose is to protect human private property and to prevent human from taking advantage of each other.

It can be seen that in the natural state, human had rights to liberty and property since they were born, not from the government. So, have you wondered why human abandon law of nature and establish political society? Locke has three reasons to explain this. He said that in the natural state, human lack completeness. First, Locke said that human might have different view from the natural law. Basically human always think of themselves and maybe do things only in favor of their interest. Second, Locke said that when human has a conflict, if there was no third party to be judge, human needs to judge by themselves and it might have no equity. Thus, it might lead people to conflict which may lead to a war. Last, Locke believed that the victim sometimes could not afford to stand up for them self and against injustice. From these reasons, human abandon law of nature and establish political society in which human must comply to the laws. Otherwise, politics cannot work in the society. But, this does not mean people have to give up all of the power to the government.

The law of nature is still in use in this state. The power that is exercised by the government was not their own power, but it is still the power of people which is given to the government to make people benefit. The laws are created to support and extend human freedom, not to destroy human freedom. In addition, if the government is not under the law of nature, people have the right to overthrow the government by revolution.

In summary, the theories of Locke state that the duty of government was to protect the nature of human right for people including life, liberty and property. Also, government should only intervene when it is necessary. He assumed that all people are rational and have their own responsibility, so they should have their own right of liberty and property. In conclusion, it can be inferred that Locke is one of the most important democratic philosophers. His theory has been used as the basis to change to democracy in the West especially in Britain and the United States.