

Is the Formation of Western Democratic Governments an Unrepeatable Historical Singularity?

A Critical Reading of Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* in Light of Contemporary Developing Countries

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This paper is a critical reading of Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* to determine if and whether democracies of his kind can solve poverty and welfare issues in developing countries of the Global South. Our hypothesis is that if Locke's theory was born at a specific moment in Western history with its underlying religious, metaphysical and ethical doctrines, then one may be hard-pressed to show that an exact carbon copy of his theory of democracy is transferrable to other cultural, social, economic and political contexts of developing countries in today's Global South. Beneath his theory of human nature and mind (*Essay Concerning Human Understanding*), the state of nature, the idea of the social contract, the theory of property and ownership, and the defense of market society capitalism are critical assumptions that support a Lockean idea of democratic government originating from the consent of the people, the notion of sovereignty and inalienable rights of the people to revolt, and the functions of government to promote the common good precisely through the maximization of human liberties, freedoms and pursuits while mitigating the possibility of harm to others' life, liberty and property. We will explore philosophical dimensions of the *Second Treatise* on issues of rationality and consent while testing them against the background of current realities in developing countries.

Is there a fundamental relationship between self-limiting democracy, peaceful electoral transitions of executive power, market society and the promotion of the common good by way of the idea of 'the people' as sovereign?

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Can this be justified as a universal goal for all cultures and nations or is that unrealistic—both as an ideal concept and a practical reality? From the legacy of colonization, the pain of decolonization and effects of continued neo-colonial interests through Global North corporations and economic institutions, a vexing and perplexing question emerges for the philosopher of history: how is the timeline of development for contemporary developing countries impacted by current Global Northern activities even if the *temporality of the genesis* of the idea of democracy in the West several centuries ago is fundamentally distinct from the conditions for democracy to emerge in today's Global Southern contexts? If Locke's idea of democracy is not feasible in some conflict and poverty-trapped nations, then what other ideas of democracy, human nature, natural law and sovereignty can we furnish in contrast to Locke's theory—ideas that are more appropriate for the contemporary Global Southern context in its immense diversity and complexity?

Locke opens his preface to argue that the consent of the people is the only form of 'lawful government' and that it is intrinsic to the English character to love 'just and natural rights.'² To make these assertions nearly a century before the American and French democratic revolutions is quite astonishing. From the divine emperors of antiquity (Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Rome) to the divine monarchs of the post-Reformation period in Europe to the Hobbesian notion of the absolute power of the state, power was centralized in a single entity. But with Locke, we have the breakthrough in the consent of the people and that innate in every individual is a love for natural rights. The individual is the origin of itself as a natural rights-holder. How this crosses the threshold of legality from pure metaphysical doctrine is not easy to measure given the sociological variations of many developing world country contexts. How does one measure this 'love' for justice and when does a society determine that it has a 'lawful' government? How do we move from a generalized notion of freedom to a notion of *individual freedom* as the paramount determinant of human nature and history? Who and what is the 'individual?'

If love for justice and the natural rights of individuals as 'free and equal'—in which no individual takes precedent over another—is a relatively new idea in the history of world civilizations, and if it was born in a specific historical context, then the reproduction of the conditions for the birth of this idea in other contexts is no simple matter. It is not merely a definition of a socio-political theory, which is then codified in a declaration of independence, bill of rights, a treaty, covenant or a formal constitution for that matter.

² John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1980), pg. 5.

Rather, the very notion of a 'people' has to be born and then equated with the idea of sovereignty. One can ask why to this day this has not been manifest in every culture and that alternative models for political societies and civilizational values exist (Russia, China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, many developing countries).³

But a people as sovereign is rather uncanny and no straightforward thing: it assumes that people have a responsibility to govern themselves, balance their own self-interests as atomized individuals, carry the innate stamina and strength to subject themselves and their government to incessant criticism, believe that each individual has the equal worth and dignity of another regardless of class, caste, tribe, etc. and to internalize a basic sense of power and justice at all times and in every single case. By 'every single case,' we mean that the individual has to transcend himself and his relation to everyone else (the whole of society) in each case as a distinct and unique act. The individual has to first emerge as a responsible being itself, which overcomes any simple, rigid dichotomy between a government as a 'duty-bearer' and individual citizen as a 'rights-holder.' And yet is this something that comes 'naturally' to everyone everywhere?⁴

Perhaps, this desire was born once and therefore can also vanish sometime in the future: but this is a scary thought for those who hypothesize an end-state of history culminating in limited democratic governments, people as sovereign and as free and equal citizens, unquestionable moral superiority of market society capitalism and therefore the endless of acquisition of property and wealth.⁵ However, freedom and equality are abstract concepts, and from a linguistic standpoint are not easily translatable in other tongues (Chinese for example).

³ An analysis of Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* would be important in this context. Having said that, one does not have to assume a priori that his model—as an 'ideal paradigm' to explain post-Cold War global reality—is the only model. It is important to note that new entrants (Mexico, Brazil) are joining the top 20 GDP countries, which used to be dominated by Anglo-American, European and East Asian 'miracle' economies. A real issue for the philosophy of political-economy is how growth economies are being created in non-democratic societies.

⁴ Rawls for one would argue that it is not realistic to expect everyone to have a liberal, democratic, non-hierarchic system of government and that we must be tolerant of other 'decent yet non-liberal and hierarchic peoples' while trying to imagine just and fair relationships within an international 'Society of Peoples' to which every nation can aspire to belong if they meet certain criteria for entrance. This goes back to his basic ideas on tolerance, mutual respect and reciprocity. See Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999)

⁵ This would be the position of Francis Fukuyama in his *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free Press, 1992).

This poses a synchronic limit as to how consciousnesses of different cultures are shaped by the linguistic restraints of their traditions: this in turn shapes the national imagination that informs a specific culture's 'development policy.' Diachronically speaking, if a slow labor of negation is required in a philosophy of historical development, a moving synthesis of distinctions towards an ideal or principle, then the diachrony of one civilization's development may not be similar to others.⁶

It is not that people want to be free from any specific type of oppression at any given moment; but, rather, more than that, they have to come to understand that they are by *nature*, freedom-leaning to a maximum tilt and would want to realize that in a visible and measurable historical progression of self-consciousness. Freedom grows internally (consciousness of the self) and externally (realization of that consciousness) as two distinct movements, which are not identical or simultaneous, but somehow strive towards synthesis in a real and concrete act. Moreover, this progression may be unique and singular in every case because one culture's present is another's past and still another's future. The idea of a single historical time line in which all cultures move becomes problematic: calendar time (as fixed by the Gregorian system) as an unchanging framework within which historical time passes (years, decades, centuries, millennia) may not be adequate to understand the fundamental uncertainty between the unique emergence of a democracy in relation to a country's development—a development which takes place both within the country's historical tradition and within the larger global political-economy whose forces it cannot control.

Consciousness of the self as free is a process that is concrete and not the product of a magical descent, or a mysterious arrival of an abstract conception from some ethereal realm.⁷

Beyond the critique of diachrony and synchrony as a trans-historical progression towards a democracy of free and equal citizens are radical critics of Western liberal, democratic societies.

⁶ Hegel makes this point about other cultures and religions in his lectures on the *Philosophy of History* and *Philosophy of Religion*.

⁷ Many liberation theologies of Latin America struggled with the issue of balancing the historical reality of dependency and under-development with the issue of a creating a true spiritual consciousness that recognizes liberation from poverty as the eschatological goal of religion and history. See Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (1971).

For example, Foucault's thesis on governmentality strikes at the heart of all liberal, Enlightenment theories of free and equal citizens under a democracy. It is not that governments are either more or less repressive of their citizens along a spectrum of less democracy to more. Power is not a physical asset controlled by individuals with free-will. Knowledge is not the product of a subjective imagination. And sovereignty can never be localized in a single ruler, a governing body, or a people en masse: it is always decentralized, dispersed and invisible and yet, positivistically speaking, a real entity nevertheless. Our world is not an illusion. Rather, the subject is created through arbitrary epistemological norms for different types of knowledge production that conceal their effects of power; hence any natural ideas about government, representation and legislation are not morally superior in any innate sense in contrast to other forms of self-governance, individual rights and population management in the public sphere.⁸

In other words, we just happen to have inherited the world we have—neither by choice or evasion of choice—and we may not be able to control the disappearance of our world and the emergence of a new one. Leaving aside these immanent critiques of Western democracy and its social norms, we can turn back to Locke's seventeenth century context to plumb the basic philosophical elements that comprise all the major ideas in the *Second Treatise of Government*. Our basis thesis is that a modification of these concepts will have to be ventured if we are to understand new possibilities for freedom, sovereignty and democracy that meet development goals of different countries in the Global South. A consciousness of poverty alleviation must be inscribed in the very genesis of a 'people as sovereign' prior to the creation of any democratic institutions.

This is irrespective of what forms of democratic government and public participation relate to different models for organizing a nation's society and economy.⁹ By taking a step back from concrete issues in the study of political-economy, we can address the deeper philosophical-historical mechanisms from which development issues arise.

⁸ See Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish, The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, and his essays on *Knowledge and Power*.

⁹ That falls under the traditional discipline of 'political-economy.' For that endeavor, we turn to the admiral work of DaniRodrik, *The Globalization Paradox*

And in each and every case, the singularity of this freedom-loving consciousness and its self-fashioning is part of the redemptive surprise, or the logical breakthrough in the history of a 'people' emerging where the notion of the sacrosanct is transferred from one realm (say the idea of a monarch) to another, i.e. the people as sovereign. A truly liberating consciousness from poverty means that the uplifting from material despair is synthesized with a higher order of ownership—when a people truly come to take rational ownership of their own fate in political society and truly understand the stakes of consent and self-limiting government that is accountable for the promotion of the common good. This is when justice becomes a concrete driver of historical mechanisms and not simply an ideal or utopian goal.

In Chapter 1 of Book II on Civil Government before proceeding to a discussion of the state of nature, Locke says that he wishes to distinguish the relation between a magistrate and subject (or ruler and the commonwealth) from that of a father to a child, master to servant or lord to a slave.¹⁰ Not only does Locke redefine sovereignty in his treatise by transferring it from the ruler to the people, he redefines the relation between the 'state' and its people. Locke first delimits what he means by political power: "I take to be a *right* of making laws with penalties of death, and consequently all less penalties, for the regulating and preserving of property, and of employing the force of the community, in the execution of such laws, and in the defense of the common-wealth from foreign injury; and all this only for the public good."¹¹ Before turning to the genesis of this right and its location within a certain sphere—the people, the rule, the representative government—Locke sets out some basic premises regarding the scope of what he calls 'political power.' Unlike moral power or religious power or power by divine right, Locke's idea of the right has very specific circumscriptions. Ultimately the right exists to protect and preserve property and therefore concerns the production of laws with penalties (the most severe being death) so that harm can be compensated for when one's property is violated.

The idea of preserving property acquired by individuals requires 'employing the force of the community' so that laws are executed. We will have to inquire into what exactly generates the 'force of the community' and integrates its unconscious so to speak into the inner-workings of a functioning democratic society. As for the state, it is common to assume that the defense from foreign attack is one of its paramount responsibilities, i.e. a military force and armament. All of this exists for the promotion of the 'public good.'

¹⁰ Locke, pg. 7.

¹¹Ibid., pg. 8.

For the moment, we can leave aside the issue of national defense from foreign assault. Instead, we can turn to the issue of the 'force of the community, regulation and preservation of property, the production of laws with concomitant penalties and the promotion of the common good.' Then only, can we begin to follow Locke's reasoning to support an idea of the 'social contract,' government arising from the consent of the people while tracing both of these back to his fundamental assumptions of human nature and autochthonous relations between individuals qua themselves *and* the public good. This is where we can begin to see the historical specificity of these assumptions and why they must be reconfigured to offer another sense of 'sovereignty' and people's self-determination in the context of poverty and government's self-formation in developing world countries. In order for a *relation* to emerge for the sovereign right for people to make laws to protect themselves and their property *and* the self-conscious promotion of the public good, *a relation based on force and execution*, certain *elements* of the self-consciousness of human beings with regard to their own nature and in relation to one another have to congeal. This is where Locke takes us into the primordial realm of the state of nature and state of equality within nature.

The state of nature is not a religious concept, an a-historic moment before the birth of human history and human consciousness, a 'garden before a fall.' Nor is it a pre-historic phase that can be captured within an evolutionary time line or a physical anthropological linear frame. It is an ideal concept to approximate a series of basic assumptions of what Locke thinks constitutes human nature in its fundamental ambiguity and complexity. One can say that if man—given his intrinsic nature—were to be in a natural state of some kind just as a species of fish is in a certain natural habitat, then one can examine certain processes and behaviors by which man would operate *if* he were in that natural state. For Locke, the state of nature relates to a state of equality and a state of liberty of which he will enumerate all three.¹²

The state of nature says something about human nature and humans in their natural state. All externalities removed, Locke assumes that human beings would behave in a certain way if hypothetically we did not live in a society under some form of rule or government, i.e. today's U.S government.

¹² All of this Locke contrasts with Hooker's view of equality in nature in which there is an "obligation to mutual love amongst men" which derives the "maxims of justice and charity." Ibid.

For Locke, the states of nature, equality and liberty are related to each other just as the terms associated with each state mutually reinforce the other—*nature* in relation to equality and liberty, *equality* in relation to nature and liberty, and *liberty* in relation to nature and equality. How these interrelations seep into one another is what makes Locke's fundamental assumptions so critical for the entire undertaking of the *Second Treatise*, which follows in all its major chapters. This is also the place where we must begin our comparison and contrast of Locke's assumptions with the epistemological substrate that underlies any knowledge of democratic forms of government within development realities in the contemporary Global South. Perhaps consciousness of poverty alleviation has to replace 'preservation of property' as something more fundamental for real democratic actualization to occur in some developing countries.

From the outset of the discussion on the state of nature, Locke immediately brings up the issue of freedom. He states: "To understand the political power right, and derive it from its original, we must consider first, what state all men are naturally in, and that is, a *state of perfect freedom* to order their actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons, as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of nature without asking leave, or depending upon the will of any other man."¹³ Before one can connote any sense of 'nature' as something animal-like, pure passion driven by instinct or irrational drives, something genetic and anterior to historical and social forms of organization based on complex structures of language, rite, performance and technical-tool making, 'nature' (for humans) is not at all natural as in the natural habitat of animals or proto-homo sapiens. Nature is a state that man (say the particular human being called John Locke) finds himself in naturally, and it is within this state that Locke will eventually derive his notion of the right of political power to perform the necessary functions assigned to it, i.e. the responsibility to regulate and preserve property and to pass and execute laws. Inscribed in the natural state of man and thus somehow linked to human nature itself is the 'perfect state of freedom.' Something occurs naturally when it occurs without restriction or counter-force.

Rather, than thinking of a biological entity in nature of which natural science can describe, we must consider the state as a condition of being itself, which links ontologically the human's most basic intensities to behave as a human with the least resistance to those intensities.

¹³ Ibid.

Every individual would like to do whatever they want, solely on the basis of their will and not dependent upon a will or consent or restriction of another, to create and dispense, to save or use, to acquire and to expunge, to expand or to withdraw their 'persons and possessions'—all behaviors, actions, dispositions, propensities adhere in this 'state of perfect freedom' delimited only by the laws of nature itself; that is a man may will to fly by flapping his arms but this is not permitted given the physical laws of nature and hence the intent to fly is not materialized in the state of perfect freedom. It seems entirely plausible that the base-line notion of human essence and existence is this unbridled will to do or become anything one wants: this includes being as one is, which in the case of man is a non-flying being.

Or at least this is Locke's seventeenth century European (British) assumption of the basic value that adheres in human existence—to be in a state or condition of perfect freedom. Apparently there is nothing controversial about this assumption. The analogy is that I would like to do whatever I want in my own house without interference or permission from any outsider, particularly if they cannot see what I do in my house. However, this is based on the spatial boundary of a body that is contained within a space in relation to an external outside that is shut off from that space. This is not an accurate way to capture the innate, state of perfect freedom because Locke really is talking about something fundamental and intrinsic to human nature as a perfect quality of being and not a conditional state of literally being physically free to do what one wants without concern for someone else's observation. The point is to act as freely as possible without need to consult anybody else's will. The question for our investigation is from where does this will to be in a state of perfect freedom first arise? Why is this valuable at some fundamental level and according to whom? What is the origin of this state or condition that Locke assumes as natural and universal for all humankind? These questions become pertinent when we think of the historical possibilities and impossibilities for the replication of this will in development contexts so we can properly foreground any discussion about a relation between 'freedom' and 'development.'¹⁴

¹⁴ We say this in contrast to Sen, for example, who argues for an intrinsic link between freedom and development based on his appropriation of a few philosophical and economic thinkers in the West and the East. He says "Freedom is the means and end of development." See his *Development as Freedom* (1999). Sen of course does not attempt to deconstruct the assumptions of the thinkers he uses but appropriates them and amalgamates them in to his own theoretical framework, which has gained widespread attention.

From here, Locke moves on to the state of equality: “wherein all the power and jurisdiction is reciprocal, no one having more than another; there being nothing more evident, than that creatures of the same species and rank, promiscuously born to all the same advantages of nature, and the use of the same faculties, should also be equal one amongst another without subordination or subjection, unless the lord and master of them all should, by an manifest declaration of his will, set one above another, and confer on him, by an evident and clear appointment, an undoubted right to dominion and sovereignty.”¹⁵ We should be careful to distinguish at this point that Locke is talking about the state of equality: with all things being equal no one has more than the other—namely the status as an equal with regard to another. Paradoxically because of reciprocity, power and jurisdiction does not diminish the equality of another *prior* to the establishment of dominion and sovereignty executed by a ‘manifest declaration of will.’ We have yet to enter the social contract and concede our ‘perfect state of freedom’ to someone sovereign over us, i.e. an elected government. All human beings have the same rank since they are part of the same species and it is this underlying foundational equality in which no degree of arbitrary interpretation of varying levels of equality between persons is permissible. But from whence does this natural camaraderie arise, this transcendent feeling of sameness as a ‘species?’

Freedom paradoxically has to do with delimitation of relations of perception of equality and not an amount accorded to individuals as isolated units. To make sure someone does not have more means that at some fundamental yet imperceptible level all things are equal in value. Obviously he is not talking about what one owns or acquires because eventually he will generate a rational defense of limitless property acquisition based on the self-generating consent of the people and the democratic installation of the right to political power, which seeks protections and compensation for individuals. And the (Western) world that Locke gave birth to has tremendous variation in income, assets, property and wealth. But we are not there yet. In the state of nature is the state of equality: everyone has the ‘same rank’, ‘same faculties’ and are equal beneficiaries of the ‘advantages of nature.’ The state of nature is perfectly correlated to a state of perfect freedom.

No one can pull rank over another or be subjected to another. There is no intrinsic difference in human nature in its twofold quest in the state of perfect freedom and the assignment of equal status to all individuals.

¹⁵ Locke, pg. 8.

From this, eventually, Locke will derive how it is that some entity is appointed the right to rule as sovereign, namely the democratic government based on the consent of the people as sovereign. But as such in the state of nature there is no establishment of dominion. What is entirely natural to human beings and thus a constitutive part of their nature is this notion of equality. Equality is coterminous with a state of nature called perfect freedom to exercise the individual will—and if one person can execute their will, then so can everyone else. It sounds too good to be true. The question is whether the ‘naturalness’ of this notion of equality is informed by a historic singularity—the Lockean moment—that passes itself off as universal and timeless. Has this notion of equality always been a part of human nature—as if the state of nature was concealed within history—but only came to the surface at Locke’s moment?

If so, then what are the underlying values of the state of equality, which go unquestioned? What obstacles had to be overcome, which prevented this notion from arising much earlier in Western history? Answers to these questions will help us pre-frame a discussion of Lockean principles in a transmuted form within current Global South development contexts where either the ‘state of perfect freedom’ and ‘state of equality’ cannot be taken for granted. The problem becomes more acute if in fact poverty in the Global South is due in part to the colonial encounter between the Global North and the South: that would mean that many parts of the colonized South came into being one can say in a perfect state of un-freedom and categorical inequality. The movement from un-freedom to freedom lies in decolonization, which says nothing about the Lockean abstraction of moving from the ‘state of nature’ into the ‘social contract’ whereby a democratic government is created based on the consent of a naturally freedom-loving people.¹⁶

¹⁶ Let us state up front that we do not intend a study of colonization, decolonization and post-colonialism and neo-colonialism in relation to development. That has a separate body of literature that cuts across disciplines that intersect in the field of development studies, the humanities and the social sciences. We are trying to perform a careful philosophical transmutation of the original principles of Locke to give new explanatory force to a specific analysis: if the original Western idea for democracy (from Locke to the American Declaration of Independence) is unrepeatable, then what other form can the idea take to advance a radical shift in thinking regarding a concept of government in *relation* to the task of total poverty eradication in developing countries? How do we move, hypothetically speaking, from a pure state of poverty into a social contract of non-poverty for developing countries?

So far the individual questing for as much freedom as possible is within the bounds of the laws of nature without any need, obligation or insistence to consult another to carry forth one's actions, and all individuals in this state are innately equal. Equality maximizes the innate drive to be free and does not level everyone for the purpose of pure delimitation by physical nature. So far, we do not have anything like this in the state of nature for animals. They don't go around justifying their equality as members of a species and quite frankly only a few animals can act alone without consideration for others (lions, great white sharks). But here Locke attempts to get at something so fundamentally real about the essence of human nature when it is in its natural state.¹⁷ Equality is the will to defeat any will to subordinate or differentiate according to value; equality is the foundation of man's being in the state of nature. However, the next phrase that Locke pursues is the 'state of liberty' which he contrasts from that of 'licence':

But though this be a *state of liberty*, yet *it is not a state of licence*: though man in that state have an uncontrollable liberty to dispose of his person or possessions, yet he has not liberty to destroy himself, or so much as any creature in his possession, but where some nobler use that its bare preservation calls for it. The *state of nature* has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one: and reason, which is that law, teaches mankind, who will but consult it, that being all *equal and independent*, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions...and being furnished with like faculties, sharing all in one community of nature, there cannot be supposed any such *subordination* among us, that may authorize us to destroy one another as if we were made for one another's use, as the inferior ranks of creatures are for our's.

¹⁷ Locke contrasts his minimal notion of equality—that no one can subordinate another- with Hooker's notion of the obligation to mutual love so that equality can be preserved. For Hooker, the only way an individual can know that they are equal to another and moreover that this equality be truly respected and realized is the obligation to love another as oneself. The biblical resonance is obvious enough, but for Hooker, the only way I can have my equality maintained is if I engage in the charity towards another as myself and vice-versa. Reciprocity means an equal transmission of love in both directions; if I loved myself more than others, then inequality would creep in. Locke takes issue with this grandiose edification of equality as mutual love. For now, he is content with the idea of equality in which 'power and jurisdiction are reciprocal' and that no one is or has more equality than another. By that we mean the following: you cannot view the equality between me and you in degrees that exceed my view of that same equality. Just because you are the son of a rich person and I am not does not mean that our equality as human beings is open to perturbation generated from your side. For the Hooker quote, see Locke, pg. 8.

Everyone, as he is *bound to preserve himself*, and not to quit his station willfully, so by the like reason, when his own preservation comes not in competition, ought he, as much as he can, *to preserve the rest of mankind*, and may not, unless it be to do justice to an offender, take away, or impair the life, or what tends to the preservation of life, liberty, health, limb or goods of another.¹⁸

We seem to come full circle with the ambiguous idea of equality (not the obligation of mutual love) as a mediating term between two apparent contrary forces: the 'state of perfect freedom' in the state of nature could lead to total destruction of others, a licence to kill, but this in fact is counter-balanced by Locke's ingenious reasoning regarding preservation of others (or the whole of mankind) in the 'state of liberty.' But this is not some simple, material-biological sense of natural instinct for self-preservation like a bug scrambling for itself trying to avoid a predator: rather, man has a 'nobler use' for himself, even in his self-dispossession, and therefore in his relation with others that transcend mere 'preservation.'

The question before us is how to imagine the historical singularity of Locke's thought of how the states of nature, equality and liberty intertwine, a natural yet secular communicatio idiomata, where each relates to the other two in their own singular ways. Locke's keen move is the notion that one does not will their own destruction for the sake of destruction itself- and this will is not reduced to basic biological survival instincts or culturally ingrained in the Western tradition from the ten commandments as having a mysterious Divine source. Therefore, if one cannot destroy themselves even though they have the absolutely perfect freedom to dispense with themselves and their possessions in any manner they see fit, they do so without harming another. By not destroying oneself as a member of the species, one is forbidden to destroy the other and the whole is preserved. Each is the converse of the other: the state of freedom does not necessitate relying on another's will to carry out one's action but the state of liberty necessitates that we do not harm another in carrying out our will to freedom and action.

¹⁸Ibid., pg. 9.

The individual individualizes their freedom to the point of singularity and because of the state of equality, no subordination or change in the status of one individual in relation to another creates a permanent guarantee: that the maximum absurdity of dominion is avoided—that is the ability to take another's life, limb, property.¹⁹ The state of liberty to be free from harm substantiates the commitment to equality and the state of perfect freedom enshrines the notion of the individual to act independently of all others. All of this is distinct from a state of licence or irrational, wanton destruction of oneself and others, and yet how nature, equality and liberty move in to each other's domains is what makes the entire section on the state of nature in the *Second Treatise* so appealing. There is some allure to understanding a non-dialectical relation between the will to freedom to act without any other's consent even if this involves dispossession of oneself, the laws governing the state of nature which would constrain an infinite expression of such freedom, such as the binding nature to preserve oneself—be it biological or moral—the evacuation of any need or temptation at self-destruction or that of another, and the absolute avoidance of subjecting another to one's use. The nucleus of a principle that underlies how all these relate is not easy to discern. However, Locke does name the law of nature as 'reason.' In fact the state of nature, has a 'law to govern it' which is called 'reason'; it is perfectly reasonable to think that innate to this faculty in man is the ability to reason that no one harms themselves or another less they destroy the primordial knot of equality, liberty and freedom in the state of nature; destruction entails a reduction or loss of one or all three attributes of equality, liberty and freedom and so destruction is the completely opposite of the state of nature.

With or without Marxism, many would argue that contrary to this Lockean ideal state of nature, everything in actual human history seems to point to the opposite: total subjection of others, self-destruction and destruction of others, widening inequality based on the disposal of others based on one's self-interest and the utilitarian illusion of 'equality' in which pleasure is for the greatest number because it ignore the intrinsic diversity involved in converted wealth and resources in to the actual well-being of others.

¹⁹ This of course can be contrasted in fascinating ways of the double-reciprocal movement of the master-slave dialectic in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*—where the 'slave becomes the master of the master' and the master the 'slave of the slave.' See Jean Hyppolite's *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* (1946)

To avoid a for/ or against stance on Locke's assumptions, we must continue our investigation into its deeper roots to test its viability for adaption in today's Global South developing contexts. We seek a principle of the consciousness of poverty and how it can logically fit the chain of deductions that can approximate the complexity and ambiguity of human nature just as Locke did in his seventeenth century European (British) context.

The question is how we understand the mutual reinforcement of the terms nature, equality and liberty in anticipation of how these facets of human nature in its actual existence will provide the conditions for 'consent' and rationality to emerge; the emergence is crucial for the limited self-governing democracy, the right to political power, the people as sovereign and the moral justification of market society capitalism. It is in the emergence that we can begin to trace not in a series of historical cause and effect relations but a genetical picture of how different relations form in the *transition* from the state of nature to the social contract. This requires an event-based theory of transition and birth. Then only can we seek to adjust some of the assumptions of these ideas to evaluate the veracity of whether Locke's theory of government is unrepeatable and totally singular or whether variations of it are possible in developing world contexts, which face abject poverty. Locke assumes that everyone is 'bound to preserve himself'—this obligation comes from the 'whole community of nature' to which all must share and if all are 'equal and independent,' a subordination of another to the point of death is absolutely forbidden.²⁰

One cannot help but see the 'state of nature' as something idyllic, if not paradise-like, in which preservation and sustenance absolutely trump destruction and deterioration. The individual strives for preservation, but because of equality (no subordination of another), liberty is not just the negative freedom to be free from harm but the positive freedom and obligation to preserve the other. From this basic position, the notion of 'consent' to form a sovereign government and have that government arise on the basis of the consent and be absolutely accountable to the people becomes the key issue—unless the government suffers from a people's revolt and faces imminent dissolution.

²⁰ Unless of course one must exact justice for a previous, gross violation committed against one's life, liberty or property. This will be developed much later when the social contract emerges as does the right to political power. See the full quote offered earlier in which Locke discusses the general will for everyone to preserve humankind... 'and may not, unless it be to do justice to an offender, take away, or impair the life... of another.' Locke, pg. 9.

How and why limitless property and asset acquisition, accumulation and protection occurs through the mechanism of the market society based on capitalism and how this inalienable valuation of private property relates to this state of nature in terms of its distance from nature is the other question—in so far as the state of nature is left behind for the social contract. Equality, liberty and freedom obviously are attributes of an a priori view of nature, which itself presupposes what those attributes actually mean. Thus there is no simple transplant of the social contract for the state of nature but a *movement* from the latter to the former. We can ask whether this really takes place in today's development contexts based on the necessity for democracy to emerge or something else in its place, i.e. other than Western forms of peaceful and stable democracies with consistent electoral processes. The right to political power to preserve and regulate that which is required to promote the common good is a major assumption in Locke's political philosophy and one that we must carefully examine for today's developing world contexts. The theory of democratic transfer of power within a political-economy that favors local concentrations of wealth and a globalizing market society capitalism has been the object of theories of justice in the cotemporary Anglo-American moral and political philosophical tradition.²¹ No doubt, moral notions of justice, good-will, charity are derivative of something far more basic, which is buried in the *Second Treatise*.

Before we do that, let us conclude our critical analysis of "Chapter II: The State of Nature" in the *Second Treatise* where Locke continues to pursue the philosophical justification for entwining freedom, equality and liberty in the state of nature while advancing a moral justification of punishment when harm is committed to oneself or one's property. The discussion on punishment and equality is fascinating because Locke reveals an asymmetry within his 'perfect' state of nature, which is prior to the actual birth of a democratic legal system: that is a pecuniary apparatus with a legislature that makes laws, a judiciary that interprets them and an executive branch that enforces them while offering protection precisely when *individuals* cede their *individual freedoms* to live in an unrestrained state of nature. In other words, the discussion on the will to punish and therefore holding people accountable for their actions is itself inscribed in the complex entwinement of relations between freedom, equality and liberty.

²¹ We do not have the space here to canvass the extraordinary efforts since John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* to tackle this question from highly original points of view—namely Nozick, Dworkin, G.A. Cohen, Sandel and Sen.

How this asymmetry occurs in the genesis of a sovereign that does eventually emerge, namely a democratic government, is what we will try to isolate in our analysis. Ultimately, we have to think beyond stark distinctions such as anarchy vs. state control/repression, negative vs. positive freedom (freedom *from* harm vs. freedom *to* assemble), individual's self-autonomy vs. social constructivism, etc. It is interesting to note the paradoxical relation between self-interest and the preservation of the whole, which requires a *commitment to punish* and exact *justice* against what is Other to a natural set of values about human beings in a perfect condition of freedom and mutually beneficial self-actualization.