

# John locke short paper assignment

[History](#)



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The right to accelerations implies the right to the means of slipstream's n and since God gave us all the Earth we have a claim to an equal portion of it. Locke maintains that the Earth in its natural state does not offer much value to humans. To justify how one may appropriate a share of the Earth, Locke argues that one must mix their labor (which is their property) with nature in order to increase its value and rightfully exclude others from ownership so long as enough and as good for others is left (Woodlot 293).

Locke provides a solid justification for private property in a state of nature, but lacks a universally applicable social foundation. Private property is arguably possible by Locke's labor theory of property. This is not to be confused with the labor theory of value which suggests that the more work put into something, the more valuable it becomes. Rather, the labor theory of property claims that a person comes to own something found in nature by mixing one's labor with it.

The body of a person is undoubtedly that person's property and so whatever labor is performed is the property of the laborer. In today's society we may come to own things by either laboring on our property, someone else's property through consent, or by trading private goods (or money) for foreign goods. The only time when property may come to be owned without the consent of others is when no one else has a claim to some natural resource and labor is mixed with it.

Other than that, property and its distribution must be done through consent, typically in the form of exchange, contractual agreements, and employment (Woodlot 293-295). The problem with Locke's theory is that his

deontological approach is limited by his use of religion. In order to accept his justification one must believe in creation and the divine purpose of humans. Locke believes that we can claim the Earth because God has given it to us, but how can this logic be applied to communities which have different beliefs or none at all?

Locke would need to adapt his theory to a secular audience. Without God, how can we come to own things? Well, we might imagine in the absence of God, a natural rights framework cannot include such things as a right to property, we can only assume, as Hum did, that humans are motivated psychologically by certain virtues and so these might provide a natural inclination towards good behavior. However, there are no divine laws that clearly distinguish right from wrong (Woodlot 281).

So without a good deontological approach for how we can come to own things, Locke's theory lacks a basis to explain why we can appropriate things from the state of nature. So if we cannot determine right from wrong and people are simply free to do as they like, how can Locke persuade everyone that private property and civil life in general is more favorable to a Hobbesian state of nature? We can take a consequential approach and say that life is better when we follow certain rules.

If morality and ethical behavior then become not about what ought to be done but rather what is properly better, then we can analyze which situation fosters the most favorable results. Using Hobbes's idea of human nature and our constant fear of violent death, we can imagine that voluntary interaction is a far safer way to behave than complete hostility. If we come to accept

this, people would need to form civil society so that private property rights and contracts are upheld. So long as a society has robust institutions that protect private individuals, people can cooperate and live peacefully.

Property, then, might not be the product of divine right and maybe there is no absolute justification for taking property from nature, however, it is possible to see the benefits of private property and the kind of artificial justice that Hum discusses. Government, property, and promises are a human creation and the best way to maintain peace and justice is by grounding these things in voluntarism so that no person is ever made better off at the expense of another. Morality may have no natural or universal basis, but it is useful enough that we can reasonably accept it and use it to prosper as a species.