

## Study Questions: John Locke, *Second Treatise*

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1. How does Locke define "political power"? [§3]
2. What is the "natural state" of all human beings? How does Locke characterize this state? [§4]
3. In §6, Locke distinguishes between **liberty** and **license**. What is the difference and why is it important to Locke?
4. What **justification** does Locke provide for the claim that it is wrong to do harm to one's life, liberty, health, or property? [§6]
5. **Who** has the right to punish others? Under what **conditions**? For what **purpose**? [§§7-8]
6. What justification does Locke offer for killing another in "a state of war"? [§18]
7. What is the difference between the state of nature and the state of war? [§19]
8. On what basis does Locke argue that slavery is wrong? Under what, if any, conditions is it acceptable? [§§22-4]
9. Locke argues that, although the earth was given by God to all human beings in common, private property can be justified. What is the argument Locke offers to support this claim? Note: The argument – premises and conclusions – that I want you to focus on is extended over several sections from §26 to §29. Try to extract the general structure of the argument contained in these sections and restate it in as clear and explicit a manner as possible.
10. What is Locke's view concerning the accumulation of wealth? What role does money play in Locke's theory? [§46-7]
11. How does Locke justify the emerging inequality among people? [§50]
12. In what sense does Locke claim that "all men by nature are equal"? Are there qualifications to this equality? Explain. [§54]
13. What is "reason", what are "laws", and how do they affect parental power? [§57-8]
14. What purpose does Locke's extended discussion of honor and respect for parents, and the duty of parents to care for and educate their children, have to do with the general aim of the *Second Treatise*? What is the difference between **paternal** and **political** power? [§71]
15. Under what conditions does a father exercise a power not shared with a mother? [§72]
16. What is "conjugal society" and how does it differ from political society? [§78]
17. What is the purpose of marriage, i.e. "conjunction between male and female"? To what extent does Locke argue for sexual equality? Explain. [§79, 82]
18. What distinction does Locke make between servants and slaves? [§85]
19. How does Locke characterize **political society**? How does it differ from the state of nature? What is the nature of legislative and executive power? [§87; cf. 95, 96, 99, 130]
20. What reasons does Locke have for claiming that absolute monarchy is inconsistent with civil society? [§90]
21. What dangers does Locke see in **absolute monarchy**? [Discussion question: Is this consistent with Locke's views about life in the state of nature?] [§92f]
22. What condition must be met in order for a civil society to be formed? [§95]
23. What is Locke's argument for majority rule? [§96]
24. Given that joining civil society depends on the consent of those who join, it is important to be clear on the nature of consent. How does Locke define "tacit consent"? Is tacit consent sufficient to make one a member of society? Explain. [§119, 122]
25. If people are free and equal, subject to no one in the state of nature, what reason is there to form a civil society and, thus, relinquish one's total freedom? [§123]
26. What are the things one *gains* in civil society that are lacking in the state of nature? [§124ff]
27. What do people give up when enter civil society? [§128]
28. What do people receive in exchange for those things they've given up? [§129-30]