

I suppose a person to have lent me a sum of money, on condition that it be restored in a few days ; and also suppose that after the expiration of the term agreed on, he demands the sum. I ask : *What reason or motive have I to restore the money ?* [...] If public benevolence, therefore, or a regard to the interests of mankind, cannot be the general motive to justice, much less *private benevolence, or a regard to the interests of the party concerned be this motive*. For what if he be my enemy, and have give me just cause to hate him ? What if he be a vicious man, and deserves the hatred of mankind ? What if he be a miser, and can make no use of what I would deprive him of ? What if he be a profligate debauchee, and would rather receive harm than benefit from larger possessions ? What if I be in necessity, and have urgent motives to acquire something for my family ? In all these cases, the original motive to justice would fail ; and consequently the justice itself, and along with it all property, right and obligation.

D. Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 3.2.1 "On the origin of justice and property."