

What's Wrong With Homesteading?

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Mr. Brian Holtz, head of the Reform Caucus of the Libertarian Party, recently attacked, among other things, the principle of homesteading. For those that don't know, homesteading is a means of appropriating from the state of nature certain scarce resources. The term is most often used to describe the appropriation of dirt, plants, and natural resources through the Lockean means of mixing one's labour with these scarce resources.

I find it odd that the aforementioned gentleman would attack such a basic concept.

I, for one, find myself appropriating stuff from the state of nature all the time. Most often, these are books. At the end of every semester, professors often set books that they no longer want in a box or on a table outside of their respective departments with the sign, "Free Books." Essentially, these professors have released ownership of these books into the state of nature, from which any passing person is free to appropriate them.

And I, being the bibliophile that I am, find myself appropriating many each year, to the point where my family

gets quite annoyed whenever they see me bringing more books into the house.

(After I graduate, I'll be taking these books with me wherever I move. Hopefully my family can deal with them for the time being.)

Each time I appropriate these books from the state of nature, I have in some way mixed my labour therewith. Not only do I search through the box of books for interesting titles and subjects, but upon choosing which books to take, it is my responsibility to transport them. As long as they remain my property, I am fat with the responsibility of making sure that they do not cause harm to other persons or their property.

Today, I appropriated something a bit larger than normal. Today, I appropriated a shelf. Since I work in the campus post office, I often walk back and forth through a certain hallway in the University Union that is available for employees only. This hallway is often filled with various items that people wish to dispose of, ranging from tables to chairs to boxes to cabinets to racks, and many other knickknacks that I am sure I'm currently forgetting.

Today, I saw what could be easily used as a bookshelf with a piece of paper taped to it. The paper read, "For Disposal," indicating that it has been yielded to the state of nature. It is from this state of nature that I appropriated the bookshelf. It did not take much labour; I took a marker, placed a large "X" across "Disposal," and wrote on the piece of paper, "Property of Alex Peak. Do Not Remove." After I get off work, I'll transport this item to my truck.

Homesteading comes in handy quite often.

