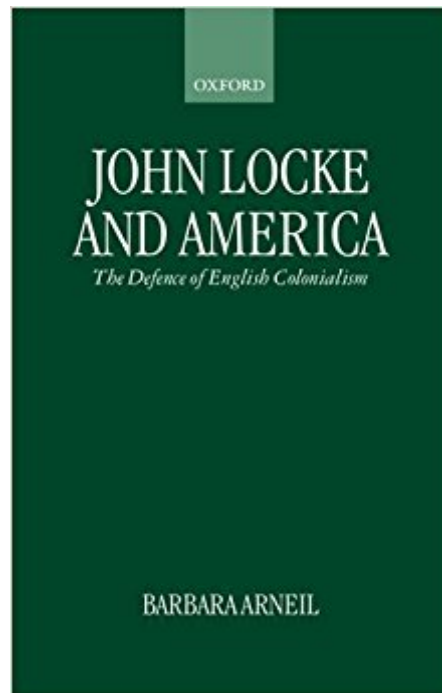




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John Locke And America: The Defence Of English Colonialism



Synopsis

This book considers the context of the colonial policies of Britain, Locke's contribution to them, and the importance of these ideas in his theory of property. It also reconsiders the debate about John Locke's influence in America, challenging a number of other interpretations. The author breaks new ground in her interpretation of Locke's writings about the Indians and English colonization of America--a subject largely overlooked in the past. The book argues that Locke's theory of property must be understood in connection with the philosopher's political concerns, as part of his endeavour to justify the colonialist policies of Lord Shaftesbury's cabinet, with which he was personally associated. The author maintains that traditional scholarship has failed to do justice to Locke by ignoring the implications of contemporary British imperial policy for the interpretation of his political thought. The book offers a new insight into Locke's theory of property, suggesting a solution to the problem of why Locke himself assigned such importance to property in the state of nature being based on labour while at the same time asserting that property in civil society is based on convention.

Book Information

Hardcover: 230 pages

Publisher: Clarendon Press; 1 edition (May 23, 1996)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0198279671

ISBN-13: 978-0198279679

Product Dimensions: 5.8 x 0.8 x 8.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.3 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #865,886 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #183 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > International & World Politics > Canadian](#) #293

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Customer Reviews

"...[Arneil] has given us an important and stimulating study, filled with information and analysis. John Locke and America merits close attention..."--William and Mary Quarterly

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the importance of these ideas to his theory of property. It also reconsiders the debate about John Locke's influence in America, challenging a number of other interpretations. The author breaks new ground in her interpretation of Locke's writings about the Indians and English colonization of America - a subject largely overlooked in the past. The book argues that Locke's theory of property must be understood in connection with the philosopher's political concerns, as part of his endeavour to justify the colonialist policies of Lord Shaftesbury's cabinet, with which he was personally associated. The author maintains that traditional scholarship has failed to do justice to Locke by ignoring the implications of contemporary British imperial policy for the interpretation of his political thought. The book offers a new insight into Locke's theory of property, suggesting a solution to the problem of why Locke himself assigned such importance to property in the state of nature being based on labour while at the same time asserting that property in civil society is based on convention.

Great book but way way overpriced. Should be about \$40. I expected a monster tomb or at least a thick textbook by the price - it's just a regular 8"x5" book about 3/4" thick. Doesn't even have artwork in it that would have increased production cost. Waste of money.

Arneil's monograph studies both the philosophy and politics in Locke's writings and their historical impact. Her work offers insight into different world views. Different from most of ours today. But also, in Locke's time, there were two broadly divergent world views, amongst the European colonists in the Americas. One, shared by Locke and the English, was that in the 1600s, their rightful claim to the American land was valid not by force of arms, but by the subsequent peaceful farming of the land. Granted, this imputed few rights to nomads previously using that land. But the attitude was quite different from that of the Spaniards, which was based on the right of conquest. Thus, a value of the book is not just in an understanding of Locke, though it certainly gives such. It also provides a perspective on historical developments in the Americas, of which he was an active participant.

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