



# John Locke and America: The Defence of English Colonialism

By Barbara Arneil



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**John Locke and America: The Defence of English Colonialism** By Barbara Arneil

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.



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#### Review

"...[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*

#### From the Back Cover

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#### About the Author

**Barbara Arneil** is an adviser to the Canadian Government.

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