

IDEAS IN CONTEXT 48

EARLY MODERN LIBERALISM

Early modern liberalism rediscovers an important phase in the development of liberal thought. Despite the fact that “liberalism” as a term was not applied to political thought or political parties in England until late in the eighteenth century, Annabel Patterson argues that its central ideas were formulated by seventeenth-century English writers in defiance of their society’s norms, and then transmitted to the American colonies. The author is particularly concerned with the means and agents of transmission, with those who ensured that the liberal canon would be preserved, expanded, republished and dispersed; for example, the eighteenth-century philanthropist Thomas Hollis, among whose heroes were Milton, Marvell, Locke and Algernon Sidney. Important recipients of this tradition were Thomas Jefferson and John Adams. Framed by chapters on Hollis and Adams, this book shows what early modern liberals had in common and thereby reopens, with a contemporary twist, the transatlantic conversation that began in the seventeenth century.

Cambridge University Press
0521592607 - Early Modern Liberalism
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IDEAS IN CONTEXT

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ANNABEL PATTERSON

Yale University



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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521592604

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First published 1997
This digitally printed first paperback version 2006

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Patterson, Annabel M.

Early modern liberalism / Annabel Patterson.

p. cm. – (Ideas in context 48)

Includes index.

ISBN 0 521 59260 7

1. Liberalism – History – 17th century. I. Title. II. Series.
JC574.P37 1997

320.51'2 – dc21 96–18733 CIP

ISBN-13 978-0-521-59260-4 hardback

ISBN-10 0-521-59260-7 hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-02631-4 paperback

ISBN-10 0-521-02631-8 paperback

Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> vi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	viii
Introduction	i
1 Deeds of peace: Thomas Hollis's republic of letters	27
2 "Prejudice . . . sways a world of people": Milton's sonnets	62
3 Unjust tribunals I: "Read this trial"	90
4 Unjust tribunals II: Algernon Sidney	129
5 Anecdotes	153
6 Secret history	183
7 Reading Locke	232
8 John Adams: reader extraordinary	279
<i>Index</i>	306

Illustrations

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1 The “Onslow” portrait of John Milton as a young man; engraved by I. B. Cipriani. From <i>The Memoirs of Thomas Hollis</i> (London, 1780), Vol. 2, frontispiece. Yale Center for British Art. | 30 |
| 2 Portrait of Francis Blackburne. From Blackburne, <i>Collected Works</i> (v.p., 1748), Vol. 1, frontispiece. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. | 35 |
| 3 Bust of John Milton, as engraved by I. B. Cipriani. From <i>The Memoirs of Thomas Hollis</i> , opposite p. 513. Yale Center for British Art. | 55 |
| 4 The “Faithorne” portrait of John Milton at 62; engraved by I. B. Cipriani. From <i>The Memoirs of Thomas Hollis</i> , opposite p. 529. Yale Center for British Art. | 56 |
| 5 Portrait of Algernon Sidney. Engraved by I. B. Cipriani for Sidney, <i>Discourses concerning Government</i> , ed. Thomas Hollis (London, 1763), frontispiece. Seeley G. Mudd Library, Yale University. | 180 |
| 6 The “Brounower” portrait of John Locke, c. 1693. Engraved by P. Vanderbanck, from a drawing by Sylvester Brounower, for the <i>Essay concerning Human Understanding</i> (2nd edition, 1694). Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. | 233 |
| 7 The “Kneller” portrait of Locke, c. 1697. Engraved by George Vertue, for the 1714 edition of Locke’s works. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. | 234 |
| 8 The “Kneller” portrait of Locke, c. 1697. Engraved by I. B. Cipriani, for Locke, <i>Two Treatises concerning Government</i> , ed. Thomas Hollis (London, 1764). Seeley G. Mudd Library, Yale University. | 235 |

<i>List of illustrations</i>		vii
9	“The captain overboard.” Civil war broadside. British Library, 193.3.11.	272
10	Satirical print from <i>The Political Register</i> (1769). Reproduced in John Wingate Thornton, <i>The Pulpit of the American Revolution</i> (1860), opposite p. xxx.	276

Acknowledgments

This book was written in the flush of energy released by a late-life move to Yale University, the intellectual stimulus provided by new colleagues, and the extraordinary resources of the Stirling, Beinecke and Mudd libraries. I am particularly grateful to Alexander Welsh for triggering a proper encounter with Locke; to John Demos for reading kindly the chapter on John Adams; and to David Quint and Larry Manley for their unfailing courtesy and encouragement. Nobody, however, could be a better listener than April London, of the University of Ottawa, whose knowledge of the eighteenth century I was able to tap for the secret histories of that period; and Nicholas Van Maltzahn, from the same university, shared with me at a crucial stage his work on Milton's posthumous reception. David Norbrook and David Wootton have been consistently generous in similar academic exchanges.

Thanks to Owen Fiss and Bruce Ackermann of the Yale Law School and their Legal Theory Workshop, I was not only at once exposed to the most rigorous forms of interdisciplinary thought, but also given the opportunity to sit next to Quentin Skinner at dinner – a meeting of much consequence for the development of this book. And I am especially in the debt of the two readers for Cambridge University Press, one an intellectual historian as generous as he is shrewd, and the other Nigel Smith of Keble College, Oxford, whose knowledge of the literary-historical axis in early modern England is encyclopedic. Both engaged with my arguments so strenuously that they are, I hope, considerably better fortified now. If not, I have no one to blame but myself.

Lastly, I take this opportunity to thank all my friends in other universities on both sides of the Atlantic for the proofs they have given that there really is a republic of letters – which in the now closely-related fields of early modern English studies seems to be

Acknowledgments

ix

growing as exponentially as my family. In both arenas, if we disagree on details, we share a common project; or, as Milton actually put it, “out of many moderat varieties and brotherly dissimilitudes that are not vastly disproportionall arises the goodly and the gracefull symmetry.”