

<<阿斯特尔政治著作选>>

图书基本信息

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内容概要

The writings of the High Church Tory pamphleteer Mary Astell are a remarkable and underestimated contribution to the constitutional debates which ushered in the modern liberal democratic state. An interlocutor with Swift and Defoe, Astell was perhaps the first systematic critic of Locke's entire corpus, something which has been overlooked in the considerable literature evaluating the reception of Locke's Two Treatises on Government. Astell's political pamphlets *Reflections upon Marriage*, *A Fair Way with the Dissenters* and *An Impartial Enquiry into the Origins of Rebellion* ran to some five editions in her lifetime, but have never been reprinted in their entirety. This new edition makes accessible the major works of a fine English stylist and important political theorist. Patricia Springborg is Reader in the Department of Government at the university of Sydney, new South Wales. She has held visiting appointments at the University of Pennsylvania, the University of California, Berkeley, and the Brookings Institution in Washington. Her publications include *The Problem of Human Needs* (1981), *Royal Persons* (1990) and *Western Republicanism and the Oriental Prince* (1992).

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Again , Men are possess'd of all Places of Power , Trust and Profit , they make Laws and exercise the Magistracy , not only the sharpest Sword , but even all the Swords and Blunderbusses are theirs , which by the strongest Logic in the World , gives them the best Title to every thing they please to claim as their Prerogative; who shall con-tend with them ?

Immemorial Prescription is on their side in these parts of the World , Antient Tradition and Modern Usage! Our Fathers have all along both Taught and Practis'd Superiority over the weaker Sex , and consequently Women are by Nature inferior to Men , as was to be Demonstrated. An Argument which must be acknowledg'd unanswerable , for as well as I love my Sex , I will not pretend a Reply to such Demonstration! Only let me beg to be inform'd , to whom we poor Fatherless Maids , and Widows who have lost their Masters , owe Subjection ?

It can't be to all Men in general , unless all Men were agreed to give the same Commands; do we then fall as Strays to the first who finds us ?

By the Maxims of some Men , and the Conduct of some Women one wou'd think so. But whoever he be that thus happens to become our Master , if he allows us to be Reasonable Creatures , and does not merely Compliment us with that Title , since no Man denies our Readiness to use our Tongues , it wou'd tend , I shou'd think , to our Master's advantage , and therefore he may please to be advis'd to teach us to improve our Reason. But if Reason is only allow'd us by way of Raillery , and the secret Maxim is that we have none , or little more than Brutes , 'tis the best way to confine us with Chain and Block to the Chimney-Corner , which probably might save the Estates of some Families and the Honor of others. I do not propose this to prevent a Rebellion , for Women are not so well united as to form an Insurrection. They are for the most part Wise enough to Love their Chains , and to discern how very becomingly they set They think as humbly of themselves as their Masters can wish , with respect to the other Sex , but in regard to their own , they have a Spice of Masculine Ambition , every one wou'd Lead , and none will Follow. Both Sexes being too apt to Envy , and too backward in Emulating , and take more delight in detracting from their Neighbour's Vertue than in improving their own. And therefore as to those Women who find themselves born for Slavery and are so sensible of their own Meanness as to conclude it impossible to attain to any thing excellent , since they are , or ought to be best acquainted with their own Strength and Genius , She's a Fool who wou'd attempt their Deliverance or Improvement. No , let them enjoy the great Honor and Felicity of their Tame , Submissive and Depending Temper! Let the Men applaud , and let them Glory in , this wonderful Humility! Let them receive the Flatteries and Grimaces of the other Sex , live unenvy'd by their own , and be as much Belov'd as one such Woman can afford to Love another! Let them enjoy the Glory of treading in the Footsteps of their Predecessors , and of having the Prudence to avoid that audacious attempt of soaring beyond their Sphere! Let them Huswife or Play , Dress and be pretty entertaining Company! Or which is better , relieve the Poor to ease their own Compassions , reade Pious Books , say their Prayers and go to Church , because they have been Taught and Us'd to do so , without being able to give a better Reason for their Faith and Practice!

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