

American enlightenment: The reconciliation between liberty and religion , the triumph of action)

الأستاذ عبد الحكيم بليبيطة

جامعة سطيف2

ملخص

يحاول هذا المقال تسليط الضوء على التنوير الأمريكي الذي مثل فترة تخمر فكري في المستعمرات الأمريكية الثلاث عشرة من الفترة 1714-1818، مما أدى إلى الثورة الأمريكية وإنشاء الجمهورية الأمريكية. تأثر التنوير الأمريكي بالتنوير الأوروبي في القرن الثامن عشر. وطبق الاستدلال العلمي على السياسة والعلوم والدين. وعزز التسامح الديني. واستعاد الأدب والفنون والموسيقى باعتبارها تخصصات مهمة تستحق الدراسة في الكليات. تم تأسيس كليات على الطراز الأمريكي "نموذج جديد" ككلية الملك في نيويورك (الآن جامعة كولومبيا) وكلية فيلادلفيا (الآن بن). وقد تم إصلاح كلية بيل وكلية وليام وماري. وقد حلت الفلسفة الأخلاقية غير الطائفية محل اللاهوت في العديد من البرامج الجامعية. وقد قامت حتى الكليات المتقلبة مثل كلية نيو جيرسي (جامعة برينستون الآن) وجامعة هارفارد بإصلاح مناهجها لتشمل الفلسفة الطبيعية (العلوم)، وعلم الفلك الحديث، والرياضيات.

كلمات مفتاحية: التنوير-التنوير الأمريكي- العقل-الدين – العمل.الجمهورية

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to shed light on the American Enlightenment which was a period of intellectual ferment in the 13 American colonies of 1714-1818, which led to the American Revolution and the establishment of the American Republic. American enlightenment influenced European enlightenment in the eighteenth century and its Indo-American philosophy. He applied scientific reasoning to politics, science and religion. And promoted religious tolerance. Literature, art and music have been restored as important disciplines worthy of study in colleges. American-style colleges have been established as a "new model" like King's College in New York (now Columbia University) and Philadelphia

College (now Benn). Yale College and William and Mary College have been reformed. Non-sectarian moral philosophy has replaced theology in many university programs. Even unstable colleges such as New Jersey College (Princeton University) and Harvard University have reformed their curricula to include natural philosophy (science), modern astronomy, and mathematics.

Key Words: Enlightenment-American Enlightenment- Reason-Religion-Action. Republicanism

Introduction

In the middle decades of the eighteenth century (the "century of lights"), the cultural movement of the Enlightenment spread rapidly from Great Britain (which in fact it had preceded and greatly influenced the scientific and political revolution of the seventeenth century: Newton, Locke, Berkeley -who resided in America- or Hume) to France (Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, the Encyclopaedists) , and particularly in the Thirteen Colonies of North America, where it found sufficiently trained elites , a particularly favorable public opinion and a free and dynamic press. Intellectual debates had a clear influence on the political and social movement of the American revolution, which led to the formation of an independent United States (1776). Among the American enlightened were both local characters (Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams or James Wilson) and British settled in the new nation (Thomas Paine or Joseph Priestley). In fact, most of the so-called "founding fathers" can be considered both political and intellectual enlightened, who politically defended the concept of social contract, civil and political rights and religious tolerance. But , in fact what was actually the American Enlightenment? Whom were their main representatives ? what were the main characteristics of the American Enlightenment? And what were its most important realizations? Is it true that the Europeans imagined The Enlightenment and the Americans applied it?

1-American Enlightenment : definition , figures and dates

a) Definition

The American Enlightenment was the era of intellectual motivation in the thirteen American colonies in the eighteenth century, leading to the American Revolution and the creation of the United States of America. It was influenced both ,by European

Enlightenment and the mainstream of American philosophy. Scientific thinking has been implemented in politics, science and religion. Literature, art and music have been restored as important disciplines for study in universities. Columbia College in New York (now Columbia University) and College of Philadelphia (now Penn) have created universities of US marine models. Eli College and College William and Marie are updated. Incompatible moral philosophy replaces the scriptures in many university programs. Even old schools like New Jersey (now Princeton University) and Harvard University have improved curriculum and natural philosophy (science), astronomy and modern mathematics.

b) Representatives

Among the senior representatives of the American Enlightenment were college chiefs, including the religious leader of Jonathan Edwards Protestant, applause Thomas and Ezra Stiles and moral philosopher Samuel Johnson and the Anglican William Smith. Prominent political thinkers, John Adams, James Madison, George Mason, James Wilson, Ethan Allen and Alexander Hamilton and Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson Polymath. He was one of Benjamin Franklin's leading scientists for his work on electricity, William Smith, for his organization and observations of crossing the planet Venus, Jared Elliot for his work in the mining, agriculture and mining sectors. astronomer David Rittenhouse in astronomy, mathematics and instruments, Benjamin Rush in Medical Sciences, Charles Wilson Bell Natural History and Cadwalader Kolden for his work in plant science and remediation in urban areas. Kolden's daughter, Jane Cullen, was the first vegetarian scientist in America. Earl Romford was a pioneer scientist, especially in the field of heat.

c) Dates

As , there is no consensus about the exact span of time that corresponds to the American Enlightenment, Several dates have suggested the birth of American enlightenment, including 1750-1820,¹ from 1765 to 1815², and 1688-1815.³ The date set aside to

¹ Ferguson Robert A., *The American Enlightenment, 1750–1820*, Harvard University Press, 1994

² Adrienne Koch, referenced by Woodward, C. Vann, *The Comparative Approach to American History*, Oxford University Press, 1997

begin ⁴is the date of collection of bookkeeping bookkeepers Jeremiah Dummer given to a small librarian of the Yale University Saybrook Point, Connecticut, October 15, 1714. it was initially welcomed by a graduate student from Samuel Johnson, from Guilford, Connecticut, who had studied her. And he found out that all classes were against the Puritans. He writes that "all things are like the watercourses of the lower spirit,"⁵ and "stood as one at a time when it rose later that day, and the sun was full of open doors." Two years later, in 1716, as a Yale tutor, Johnson introduced a new program on Yale using Dummer's books and suggests what is called "The New Education" , including Francis Bacon's work and ideas, John Locke. Isaac Newton, Boyle, Copernicus, and Shakespeare's works of literature, Milton and Madison, incorporated the concept of the Light into the cultivation and spread of puritanical education and puritanical networks, Yale College in 1718.⁶

2-Main Characteristics

a) Primacy of politics(Triumph of action)

It is said that if, in Great Britain, the social virtues were in the foreground of philosophical speculation and social policy and were the first condition of the public good. In America, they were in the background, they were necessary but not sufficient condition. What was in the forefront was freedom. And not the natural freedom that Adam smith saw on the basis of a free economy and a free society, but the artificial freedom, the political freedom, the principles and the institutions proper to the new republic.⁷

And , if in England, the authors of the theory of government and government worked together. The former reveal their new theories, the latter modify or rewrite them in the light of practical

³ Henry F. May, referenced by Byrne, James M., Religion and the Enlightenment: From Descartes to Kant, Westminster John Knox Press, 1996, p. 50

⁴ Olsen,Neil C., Pursuing Happiness: The Organizational Culture of the Continental Congress, Nonagram Publications, 2013, p. 145

⁵ Johnson, Samuel, and Schneider, Herbert, Samuel Johnson, President of King's College; His Career and Writings, editors Herbert and Carol Schneider, New York: Columbia University Press, 1929, Volume 1, p. 7

⁶ Joseph J. Ellis, The New England Mind in Transition: Samuel Johnson of Connecticut, 1696–1772, Yale University Press, 1973, Chapter II and p. 45

⁷ Gertrude Himmelfarb,The roads to Modernity(The British, French and American Enlightenment), Vintage books,N.Y.2005.P 191.

experience. And in France, however, perception and practice remained very different, in the hands of two fairly independent groups. One of them realized the current administration, while the other defined the abstract principles on which to base good governance. In young America, who set forth theories are themselves who amended and circumscribed it.♦.

b)- Reconciliation between Religion and Enlightenment

If The main character of the French enlightenment was The idea of reason that had converse the idea of religion. “Reason is to the philosopher”, the Encyclopedia declared, “ what grace is to the Christian. Grace moves the Christian to act, reason moves the philosopher”⁸. As well French Encyclopaedism declares war openly on religion, on its claims to validity and truth. It accuses religion, of having been incapable of founding a genuine morality and a just social and political order. Voltaire in his writings and letters never tires of repeating his old battle cry: *Ecrasez l’infame*.⁹ Both the moderate Enlightenment and the radical or revolutionary Enlightenment were reactions against the authoritarianism, irrationality and obscurantism of established churches (establishment). Voltaire and the philosophes conceived organized Christianity as a tyrannical and oppressive instrument that underpinned the absolute monarchy (what later was called "throne and altar alliance"), intellectually unverifiable, refractory to criticism, hostile to the development of reason, science and progress. On the contrary, **In American society**, religion was not seen as a threat to enlightenment – to reason, science, and the life of the mind in general. The main Characteristic of the American illustration was the conciliation between reason and faith through a deistic sensibility, which rejected dogmas and mysticism and demanded a complete separation between the churches and the State. As example; Jonathan Edwards, the main light of the Great Awakening, was far from being the retrograde and repressive, religious and fanatic stereotyped. He was a graduate and at times a professor at Yale University. He read eclectically and admired

♦ philosophers were kings, or kings were philosophers

⁸ Diderot, « philosophe », in *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (Paris, 1751, 52), xii, p. 510.

⁹ Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, Translated by Fritz C.A. Koelln And James P. Pettegrove. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey. p. 134.

Newton like everyone else, but also John Locke, Hutcheson, and other Scottish philosophers. Impressed by Locke's essay on human understanding, he adapted his psychological and epistemological principles to his own interpretation of Calvinism. there was a broad consensus on the need to maintain religious freedom and respect minority beliefs: the very founding of the colonies was due to the emigration of religious dissenters, and the United States recognized itself as a country where people of any faith could live in peace and mutual benefit. James Madison expressed this ideal in 1792: "conscience is the most sacred of all properties"¹⁰ . Very different was the consideration of the absence of religious beliefs and no belonging to any church, common situations among the enlightened but unacceptable for most of the population. The religious positions of the enlightened ones ranged from atheism to deism, through pantheism and religious indifferentism. All of them can be found in different degrees and moments, especially in Thomas Jefferson, which was debated between doubts of faith (The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth, known as Jefferson's Bible) until finding a comfortable and reassuring option in ideas. religious of Joseph Prestley. More extreme was the case of Thomas Paine (The Age of Reason, 1794-1807, Common Sense, 1776), of which Jefferson sought to distance himself in the campaign of the presidential election of 1800.

Washington's "farewell address" is eminently quotable :” Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity , religion and morality are indispensable supports”. As if to warn his countrymen that enlightenment was no substitute for religion, Washington advises them not to “indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion¹¹

Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious

¹⁰ Bryan-Paul, Frost and Jeffrey Sikkenga, History of American political thought (2004), The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group Inc ,1st edition p. 152

¹¹ George Washington , Writings (New york , Library of America ,ed 1997) ,P.71

principle.”¹² John Adams ♦ made the point more clearly:”Our constitution was made only for a moral religious people .It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other”¹³ The French Revolution’s attempt to found a secular republic, took out his famous comment:” I do not know how to make a republic of thirty millions atheists”¹⁴

Realizations

a) The Declaration of independence

The declaration of independence of the United States is the declaration adopted by the Second Continental Congress in Pennsylvania State House (Independence Hall) in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776, which announced that the thirteen American colonies ♦♦,¹⁵ then at war with the Kingdom of Great Britanny considered itself as thirteen independent sovereign states, which were no longer under British rule. These states would have found a new nation: the United States of America. John Adams was a leader in the promotion of independence, which was adopted on July 2 without any votes against. A commission of five had already prepared the official statement, to be ready when Congress voted for independence.

John Adams persuaded the committee to select Thomas Jefferson to draft the original draft of the document, which Congress would publish to produce the final version. The declaration was finally a formal explanation of why Congress voted

¹² Gertrude Himmelfarb,The roads to Modernity(The British, French and American Enlightenment), Vintage books,N.Y.2005.P.210.

♦ John Adams 1735 – July 4, 1826) was an American statesman who served as the second President of the United States (1797–1801) and the first Vice President (1789–97). He was a lawyer, diplomat, statesman, political theorist, and, as a Founding Father, a leader of the movement for American independence from Great Britain. He was also a dedicated diarist and correspondent, particularly with his wife and closest advisor Abigail.

¹³ Works of John Adams,ix,229(Letter to officers of the 1st Regiment, Oct,11, 1798).

¹⁴ Political writings of John Adams , (Letter to Richard Price, Apr,1790,)P.663.

♦♦ The thirteen colonies were: New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

¹⁵ Becker, Carl.The Declaration of Independence: A Study in the History of Political Ideas. 1922.. Revised edition New York: Vintage Books, 1970 Becker, P. 5.

on July 2 to declare independence from Britain more than a year after the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War. The next day, Adams writes to his wife Abigail: "The second day of July 1776 will be the most memorable moment in the history of the United States." But Independence Day is actually celebrated on July 4, the date on which the Declaration of Independence was approved. It was the most important and significant statement of American political theory is that made at the time when the united States asserted the right to an independent existence.

The Declaration of independence has been generally regarded as the corner-stone of the American political philosophy. These doctrines have undoubtedly exerted a profound influence in determining the course of American political thought.

Even down of the present day , they are the standards by which must be measured all that is attempted in the world of politics. No study of American political ideas , or of American political institutions, would be complete without a careful analysis of the characteristics doctrines of 1776.

c) Constitution that created a nation(from fragmentation to unity)

The insurgents won the war, they did not win the peace. At first it seemed that young America was about to sink into disorder and anarchy. the political problem was still not solved: the same causes, in peace as in the war, continue to produce the same effects, but the salvation will come of initiative with the guarantee of the most illustrious American citizen, George Washington. After a series of shifts, delegates nominated by all other states except Rhode Island will "disclose the provisions they deem necessary to adapt the federal government's constitution to the demands of the union," which becomes available on May 25, 1787 Philadelphia. They participated in all or part of the work of this assembly, which gave talent and illustrations to almost all states (Jefferson did not really want to be an ambassador to France).

Most of them already had public experience: 39 saturated conferences, 22 professions from universities, 31 or more of them, were lawyers. Despite the history, the average age is no more than forty years old, and even some of the people who were active in the discussion were much younger than Hamilton was only 30 years old and Madison 36 years old. Such was the composition of this

exceptional assembly that American historians after contemporaries compared to a council of the demi-gods¹⁶

The consultations lasted nearly four months from May 25 to September 17, 1787 and lasted a total of 300 hours. He produced a text whose brevity is not the minimum quality. Statisticians have calculated that it consists of 89 sentences and 4000 words: reading aloud would only take 23 minutes. In short, he had anticipated all eventualities while regulating the functioning of American political institutions. The 22 amendments adopted since then, of which the first ten were interrupted in 1791, have not changed their architecture.¹⁷

The same constitution still governs the functioning of public authorities. Does this mean that its application is exactly as expected by its authors? Just because they wanted to do a work of circumstances and had forbidden to anticipate every eventuality, the frame of the text that had a margin was extended to the interpretation. The one who has established himself is probably very far from the mental state of the voters. The practice has turned the system into two main directions: first, democratic development broke all the barriers that had opposed the popular liberalism impulses of the founders, and public opinion was the basic power and source of the other on The novelty and the diversity of the questions posed by modern societies through industrialization and the clash between imperialisms, breaking the balance between the members and the state: the attention today is moved from the beginning to the second .¹⁸

C) Republicanism as identity

The word "republic" derives from the Latin *res publica* which referred to the system of government that emerged in the 6th century BC following the expulsion of the kings from Rome by Lucius Junius Brutus♦ and Collatinus♦♦.¹⁹

¹⁶ René Rémond, *Histoire des états unis*, Presses universitaires de France, Paris ,7eme édition, 1972,p 28

¹⁷ Idem 29.

¹⁸ René Rémond, *Histoire des états unis*, Presses universitaires de France, Paris ,7eme édition, 1972,p 34.

♦ Lucius Junius Brutus, or Lucius Iunius Brutus, is the legendary founder of the Roman Republic and one of the first two Roman consuls for the year 509 BC. The members of the people Iunia, including Decimus Junius Brutus Callaicus, then later Decimus Junius Brutus and Marcus Junius Brutus, consider him one of their ancestors.

The "Republicanism" derives from the term "republic", but the two words have very different meanings; while "republic" is a form of government, "republicanism" is a political ideology²⁰.

The Republicanism Is the system of political values that has been the main part of the civic thought of the United States since the American Revolution²¹. It emphasizes freedom and inalienable rights as its core values, it makes the people as a whole sovereign, rejects inherited political power, expects citizens to be independent in their performance in civic duties, and vilifies political corruption. American republicanism was founded and practiced for the first time by the Founding Fathers of the nation in the eighteenth century. The system was based on the Roman, Renaissance and English models. In addition to the American Revolution, it served as the basis for the country's declaration of independence (1776) and constitution (1787), as well as the Gettysburg Address . ♦

Republicanism is not the same as democracy, insofar as it ensures that people have inalienable rights that can not be eliminated even by a majority of voters. Since the 1830s, when Alexis de Tocqueville has warned of "tyranny of the majority" in a democracy, advocates of minorities have sought to warn of the need for courts to protect these rights, reversing efforts by voters to an unpopular minority. According to Martin Edelman, a professor of political science at New York State University in Albany (1984),

♦♦ is a legendary politician from the beginnings of the Roman Republic. Like most of the men and institutions of this Roman age, the reality of its historical existence and actions is uncertain. The lacunar sources that have come down to us also present stories and traditions that have been considerably rewritten and distorted

¹⁹ Mortimer N. S. Sellers. *American Republicanism: Roman Ideology in the United States Constitution*. (New York University Press, 1994. p. 71

²⁰ Hart, Gary. *Restoration of the Republic: The Jeffersonian Ideal in 21St-Century America* (2002)

²¹ Robert E. Shalhope, "Toward a Republican Synthesis: The Emergence of an Understanding of Republicanism in American Historiography," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 29 (January 1972), pp. 49–80.

♦ The Gettysburg Address is a speech by U.S. President Abraham Lincoln, and one of the best-known speeches in American history. It was delivered by Lincoln during the American Civil War at the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania on the afternoon of Thursday, November 19, 1863 – four and a half months after the Union armies defeated those of the Confederacy at the Battle of Gettysburg.

what Supreme Court justice Joseph Story had warned when he opposed Jackson's democracy had happened; Story saw "oppression" when the popular majorities of several states during the 1830s began to restrict and erode the property rights of the wealthy men's minority. For Edelman the Chief Justice John Marshall, in using the doctrine of judicial review played a crucial role in promoting the republicanism of the founding fathers.²²

conclusion

Although The American Enlightenment was influenced by the 18th-century European Thinkers and philosophers who imagined the Enlightenment and invented it , formulated , and agitated it, The New World realized and absorbed it , reflected and institutionalized it politically , constitutionally, intellectually , and socially. American Enlightenment made the reconciliation between enlightenment and religion, demonstrated that the realization of the project of the Enlightenment passes through the voice of politics, toleration and reconciliation between religion and liberty , in general The American enlightenment represented a fair example of the triumph of action upon theory.

²² Martin Edelman, *Democratic theories and the Constitution*, Sunny Press, (1984) p 22