



BIBLIOTECA UNIVERSITARIA DI GENOVA - PERCORSI TEMATICI

Universalitas & Pervasivitas

IL COSTITUIRSI E DIFFONDERSI DELLA S.J. E SUOI ECHI (1540 - 1773)

di A. Pisani

Schede autori Attività missionarie ed esplorazioni non gesuite

Guillaume-Thomas François Raynal

Guillaume-Thomas François Raynal (Lapanouse, 12 aprile 1713 – Passy, 6 marzo 1796) è stato uno scrittore francese.

Biografia

Raynal abbraccia, dopo lunghi studi dai gesuiti, il sacerdozio nel 1743 più per desiderio di avanzamento sociale che per vocazione. Nel 1746, è nominato nella chiesa di Saint-Sulpice a Parigi dove, per aumentare le sue entrate diventa precettore presso alcune importanti famiglie. Non esita neanche a rendersi colpevole di simonia vendendo i propri sermoni ad altri preti meno ispirati di lui. Provoca anche uno scandalo quando si viene a sapere che, dietro pagamento, ha acconsentito a seppellire dei protestanti facendoli passare per cattolici. D'altronde i suoi legami con i protestanti furono molto stretti per tutta la sua vita.



Lascia Saint-Sulpice e comincia a frequentare i saloni di Claudine de Tencin, poi di Marie-Thérèse Geoffrin. Vi si fa conoscere come apostolo della libertà. Si fa una piccola fortuna stampando e vendendo lui stesso le sue opere. Redige anche opere su ordinazione dei grandi dell'epoca, come ad esempio il duca de Choiseul. Ciò gli varrà, per i servizi resi, la nomina di direttore del *Mercure de France* nel 1750.

La stampa del suo ritratto all'inizio della terza edizione della *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*, il che equivaleva a dimostrare l'autorità della sua opera e un attacco appena velato alla monarchia, lo obbliga a scappare (1781) e a rifugiarsi in Svizzera dove fa erigere un monumento alla gloria della libertà. Di là si sposta in Prussia nella corte di Federico II e poi in Russia in quella di Caterina II. È autorizzato a rientrare in Francia nel 1784, ma col divieto di soggiornare a Parigi. Si stabilisce a Tolone, poi a Marsiglia e diventa fondatore di premi accademici e di beneficenza che prolungheranno il successo della sua opera nelle grandi accademie europee. Rifiuta di sedere negli Stati Generali del 1789 adducendo come pretesto l'età avanzata. Due anni più tardi egli denuncerà gli eccessi e l'indirizzo violento preso dalla Rivoluzione ai rivoluzionari che vedevano in lui un padre fondatore. Nella sua lettera all'Assemblea del 31 maggio 1791 scrive: « ...Ho parlato ai re dei loro doveri, accettate ch'io parli al popolo dei suoi errori". Il suo prestigio e la sua popolarità sono tali che i rivoluzionari non oseranno fargli subire la stessa sorte di Condorcet. Invece d'inviarlo alla ghigliottina, giustificheranno il suo intervento accusandolo di senilità.

Fu eletto membro dell' "Institut de France" nel 1795, pochi mesi prima della sua morte. Rifiutò, adducendo come pretesto, ancora una volta, l'età avanzata.



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Opere

- Histoire du Stadhoudérat*, 1747
Histoire du Parlement d'Angleterre, 1748
Mémorial de Paris, 1749
Mercure de France, 1750-1754
Anecdotes littéraires, 1750
Anecdotes historiques, militaires et politiques, 1753
École militaire, 1762
Histoire du divorce de Henry VIII, 1763
Histoire des deux Indes (1^a édition), 1770
Atlas de l'Histoire des deux Indes, 1772
Histoire des deux Indes (2^a édition), 1774
Tableau de l'Europe (supplément *Histoire des deux Indes*), 1774
Esprit et génie de Guillaume-Thomas Raynal, 1777
Histoire des deux Indes (3^a édition), 1780
Suppléments à l'Histoire des deux Indes, 1780
Atlas de l'Histoire philosophique, 1780
Révolution de l'Amérique, 1781
Lettres d'Yorick à Eliza, 1781
Lettre à l'auteur de la Nymphé de Spa, 1781
Précis de l'Histoire philosophique, 1782
Réponse à la Censure de la Faculté de Théologie, 1782
Considérations sur la paix en 1783, 1783
Histoire philosophique et politique des isles françoises, 1784
Œuvres de M. l'abbé Raynal, 1784
Essai sur l'administration de St Domingue, 1785
Maximes des trois auteurs philosophes, 1787
Tableau général du commerce de l'Europe, 1787
Éloge d'Eliza Draper, 1787 (attribuito a Diderot)
L'abbé Raynal aux Etats-généraux, 1789
Lettre à S. M. Louis XVI, 1789
Lettre à l'Assemblée nationale, 31 mai 1791, 1791
Extrait raisonné de l'Histoire des deux Indes, 1791
Histoire abrégée de l'Histoire des deux Indes, 1792
Abrégé de l'Histoire des deux Indes, 1793
Histoire abrégée de l'Établissement des Européens..., 1797
Recueil de pensées, 1802
Abrégé de l'Histoire des deux Indes à l'usage de la jeunesse, 1810
Histoire des deux Indes (4^a édition, póstuma), 1820
Le Raynal de la jeunesse, Paris, Alexis Eymery, 1821
Des Peuples et des gouvernements, 1822
Histoire philosophique des Établissements dans l'Afrique septentrionale, 1826

Cfr.: Wikipedia.it - [http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guillaume-Thomas Fran%C3%A7ois Raynal](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guillaume-Thomas_Fran%C3%A7ois_Raynal)
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Raynal, Guillaume Thomas François, Abbé, 1713-96, French historian and philosopher. Raynal was a priest, but he was dismissed from his parish in Paris; he then turned to writing and sought the society and collaboration of the philosophes. Two historical works, one on the Netherlands (1747) and one on the English Parliament (1748), established his career. His most important work, completed with the assistance of Denis Diderot, was a six-volume history of the European colonies in the Indies and Americas (1770). It was condemned by the Parlement of Paris (1781) for impiety and its dangerous ideas on the right of the people to revolt and to give or withhold consent to taxation. Nevertheless, the *History* was extremely popular, going through 30 editions between 1772 and 1789; the radical tone becoming more pronounced in later editions. Placed on the Index of the Roman Catholic Church in 1774, Raynal's book was burned and he was forced into exile in 1781. Allowed to return to France, but not Paris, in 1784; his Parisian banishment was rescinded in 1790. Elected to the States General in 1789, he refused to serve and later advocated a constitutional monarchy.

“Guillaume Raynal Guillaume Thomas Raynal (April 12, 1711 – March 6, 1796) was a French writer and man of letters during the Age of Enlightenment. He was born at Lapanouse in Rouergue. He was educated at the Jesuit school of Pézenas, and received priest's orders, but he was dismissed for unexplained reasons from the parish of Saint-Sulpice, Paris, to which he was attached, and thenceforward he devoted himself to society and literature. The Abbé Raynal wrote for the *Mercure de France*, and compiled a series of popular but superficial works, which he published and sold himself. These - *L'Histoire du stathoudérat* (The Hague, 1748), *L'Histoire du parlement d'Angleterre* (London, 1748), *Anecdotes historiques* (Amsterdam, 3 vols., 1753) - gained for him access to the salons of Mme. Geoffrin, Helvétius, and the **Baron d'Holbach**.

He had the assistance of various members of the philosophe coteries in his most important work, *L'Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* (Amsterdam, 4 vols., 1770). Diderot indeed is credited with a third of this work, which was characterized by Voltaire as "du réchauffé avec de la declamation." The other chief collaborators were Pechméja, Holbach, Paulze, the farmer-general of taxes, the Abbé Martin, and Alexandre Deleyre. To this piecemeal method of composition, in which narrative alternated with tirades on political and social questions, was added the further disadvantage of the lack of exact information, which, owing to the dearth of documents, could only have been gained by personal investigation.

The "philosophic" declamations perhaps constituted its chief interest for the general public, and its significance as a contribution to democratic propaganda. The *Histoire* went through many editions, being revised and augmented from time to time by Raynal; it was translated into the principal European languages, and appeared in various abridgments. Its introduction into France was forbidden in 1779; the book was burned by the public executioner, and an order was given for the arrest of the author, whose name had not appeared in the first edition, but was printed on the title page of the Geneva edition of 1780. Raynal escaped to Spa, and thence to Berlin, where he was coolly received by Frederick the Great, in spite of his connection with the philosophe party.



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At St. Petersburg he met with a more cordial reception from Catherine II, and in 1787 he was permitted to return to France, though not to Paris. He showed generosity in assigning a considerable income to be divided annually among the peasant proprietors of upper Guienne. He was elected by Marseilles to the States-general, but refused to sit on the score of age. Raynal now realized the impossibility of a peaceful revolution, and, in terror of the proceedings for which the writings of himself and his friends had prepared the way, he sent to the Constituent Assembly an address, which was read on May 31, 1791, deprecating the violence of its reforms.

This address is said by Sainte-Beuve (*Nouveaux lundis*, xi.) to have been composed chiefly by Clermont Tonnerre and Pierre V. Malouet, and it was regarded, even by moderate men, as ill-timed. The published *Lettre de l'abbé Raynal a l'Assemblée nationale* (December 10, 1790) was really the work of the comte de Guibert. During the Terror Raynal lived in retirement at Passy and at Montlhery. On the establishment of the Directory in 1795 he became a member of the newly organized Institute of France. He died in the next year on the 6th of March at Chaillot.

Bibliography

A detailed bibliography of his works and of those falsely attributed to him will be found in Quérard's *La France littéraire*, and the same author's *Supercherries dévoilées*. The biography by A Jay, prefixed to Peuchet's edition (Paris, 10 vols, 1820-1821) of the *Histoire ... des Indes*, is of small value. To this edition Peuchet added two supplementary volumes on colonial development from 1785 to 1824. See also the anonymous *Raynal démasqué* (1791); Cherhal Montreal, *Éloge ... de G. T. Raynal (an. IV.)*; a notice in the *Moniteur* (5 vendémiaire, an. V.); B Lunet, *Biographie de l'abbé Raynal* (Rodez, 1866); and J Morley, Diderot (1891); A. Jay, *Précis historique sur la vie et les ouvrages de l'abbé Raynal*, Paris, 1820 ; A. Feugère, *Un Précurseur de la Révolution. L'Abbé Raynal (1713-1796)*, Angoulême, 1922; *Raynal, de la polémique à l'histoire*, G. Bancarel, G. Goggi ed. Oxford, SVEC, 2000; G. Bancarel, *Raynal ou le devoir de vérité*, Genève Champion, 2004; Ashgate plans to publish a translation of Raynal's selected writings in 2006.”

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