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Abstracts

DIEGO LUCCI, *Discussing Deism: An Attempt to resolve a Conflict of Interpretations*

In the historiography on English deism, two opposite tendencies have developed in the last few decades. On the one hand, scholars such as Robert Sullivan, Frederick Beiser, Brian Young and Roy Porter have emphasized the autochthonous origins of English deism. However, Sullivan and Beiser have highlighted the deists' borrowings from the English Unitarians and latitudinarians, while Young and Porter have theorized a sort of «separateness» of deism from the so-called «conservative» or «clerical» English Enlightenment. On the other hand, Margaret Jacob and Jonathan Israel have interpreted deism as an important component of the so-called «Radical Enlightenment». They have drawn attention to the Continental roots of English deism, and particularly to Spinoza's influence on deist thinkers such as Blount, Toland and Collins. Moreover, these historians have pointed out that the deists used, and radicalized, English sources such as the works of John Locke, Henry Dodwell and the Unitarians in view of their own «irreligious» goals. This article, making reference to the studies published in the last few years by Justin Champion, Wayne Hudson, Jeffrey Wigelsworth, and the author of this paper as well, aims at proposing a viable solution to the conflict of interpretations of deism. The article combines the two above mentioned perspectives and presents deism as a result of both English and Continental influences. Thus, in this paper deism is considered both as a part of what J. G. A. Pocock has called the «English Protestant Enlightenment» and, also in light of its contributions to the making of modernity, as one of the most significant elements of the Radical Enlightenment.