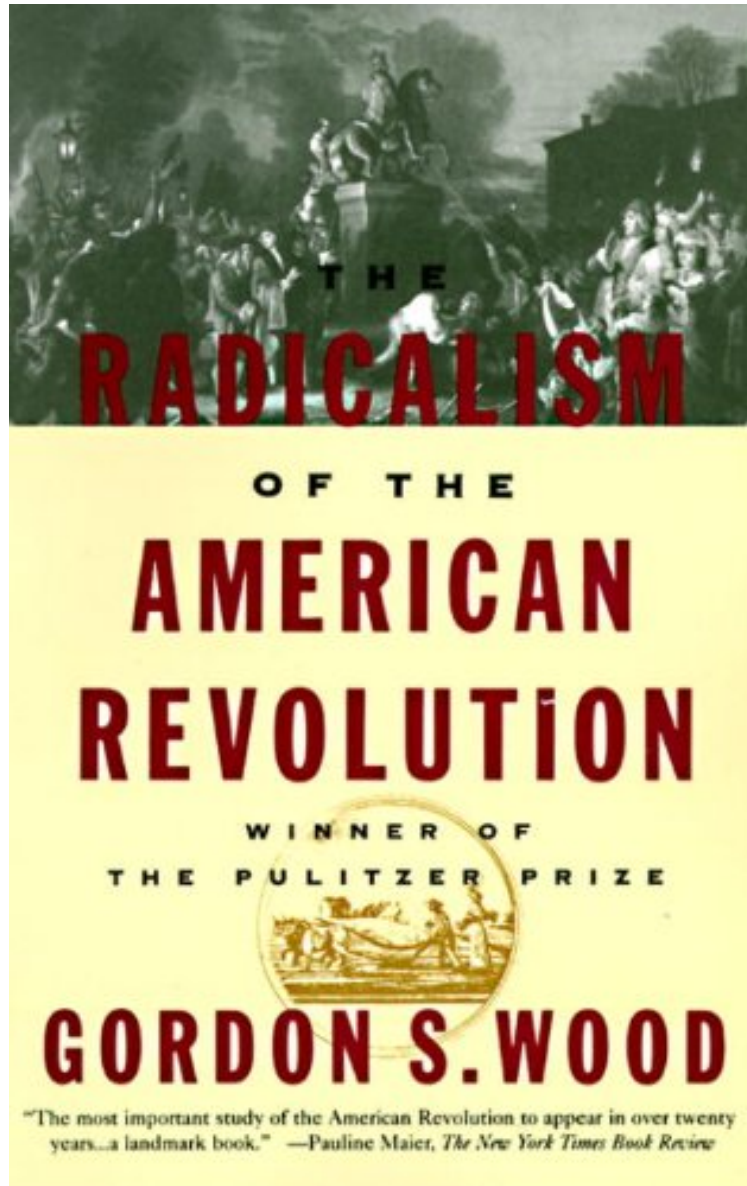


[FREE] The Radicalism of the American Revolution

The Radicalism of the American Revolution

Gordon S. Wood

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Gordon S. Wood : The Radicalism of the American Revolution before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Radicalism of the American Revolution:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The American Revolution as Radical Departure from the Monarchical and Hierarchical Mind-set of 18th Century Europe By Mike Kilianski This work was at times had some very gripping historical narrative. Most notably, what comes to mind for me, is the detailed and vivid description that

Mr. Wood provides when describing the ordering life of Revolutionary War era Americans in the Carolina backwoods region. Mr. Wood also delves deeply into the psyche of post-colonial Americans, and has a true historian's grasp on the 18th century mind-set. In fact, never once does Mr. Wood err in applying 20th or 21st century values to 18th century persons, and that alone, makes *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* a remarkable book. Gordon Wood's premise in this work is simple and concise and it can be summed up by saying that given the monarchical/hierarchical mind-set of 18th century Europeans, the Republicanism that the American Revolution instilled and promulgated for all white males (not just property owners) was truly radical and revolutionary for its time. It was only by way of revisionist history which represented our American founders as stable pillars of traditionalism that we have been conditioned to think that the American Revolution was not as radical as the nearly contemporary French Revolution which began in 1789. This work, I believe won the Pulitzer Prize for history in 1991, and even some 25+ years later its general assertions still ring true. However, at times, probably because of the general simplicity of the work's main premise, the narrative does drag and become a little bit redundant. That is the only reason that I did not give Mr. Wood's study 5 stars. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The origins of individualism

By Stuart W Grande Wood is one of the leaders in the field. His narrative dives deeply into the lives and context of the 19th century. He provides an illustrative picture of daily life without getting lost in the detail. By showing his readers how daily events reflect the context of the period and the overall political will of the day, Wood gives us both a grounded and informed view of the Revolution. I particularly enjoyed how he provides evidence to support his suppositions about culture or changes in culture. While I might be less comfortable with some of his detail at times, he never loses the reader in the presentation of contextual information. You read his work feeling confident about the time period and its customs. This allows the reader to move beyond any superficial descriptions of smell, noise, and weather to more thoughtfully reflect on the much more timely and relevant social nuances the "radical" thinking of the revolution. Through a well-constructed context, Wood guides the reader through origins and consequences of English hierarchy and social stratification. While never taking sides, Wood demonstrates just how critical 19th century America was for reshaping human potential. Wood applies his narrative expertise to expose just how novel American thinking was, at the time, to fostering modern visions of individualism and capitalism. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The best discussion of the meaning of American Revolution

By CustomerProf. Wood's work ushered into the meaning of American revolution the more fundamental fact that an American society and political culture that were entirely new and original was created by the process, and that resistance needs to be treated separately from this transformative "revolution".

In a grand and immensely readable synthesis of historical, political, cultural, and economic analysis, a prize-winning historian describes the events that made the American Revolution. Gordon S. Wood depicts a revolution that was about much more than a break from England, rather it transformed an almost feudal society into a democratic one, whose emerging realities sometimes baffled and disappointed its founding fathers.

From Publishers Weekly The gifted Wood offers a fresh take on the formative years of the United States, explaining the astonishing transformation of disparate, quarreling colonies into a bustling, unruly republic of egalitarian-minded citizens. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Historians have always had problems explaining the revolutionary character of the American Revolution: its lack of class conflict, a reign of terror, and indiscriminate violence make it seem positively sedate. In this beautifully written and persuasively argued book, one of the most noted of U.S. historians restores the radicalism to what he terms "one of the greatest revolutions the world has ever known." It was the American Revolution, Wood argues, that unleashed the social forces that transformed American society in the years between 1760 and 1820. The change from a deferential, monarchical, ordered, and static society to a liberal, democratic, and commercial one was astonishing, all the more so because it took place without industrialization, urbanization, or the revolution in transportation. It was a revolution of the mind, in which the concept of equality, democracy, and private interest grasped by hundreds of thousands of Americans transformed a country nearly overnight. Exciting, compelling, and sure to provoke controversy, the book will be discussed for years to come. History Book Club main selection. - David B. Mattern, Univ. of Virginia, Charlottesville Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus s Perhaps, as is often noted, the American Revolution was not as convulsive or transforming as its French and Russian counterparts. Yet this sparkling analysis from Wood (History/Brown Univ.; ed., *The Rising Glory of America*, 1971) impressively argues that it was anything but conservative. Wood's contention that the Revolution was "the most radical and far-reaching event in American history" may stretch the point (did it really have more of an impact than the Civil War?). But from now on it will be hard to argue that the rebellion was a genteel event that left fundamental institutions unscathed. Wood pictures colonial society as overwhelmingly deferential--to king, to family patriarch, and to aristocrats--with "personal obligations and reciprocity that ran through the whole society." But patriots such as Adams, Jefferson, and Franklin, aspiring to become gentlemen, resented this entrenched order of patronage and kinship. Their classical republicanism stressed benevolence and government by an enlightened elite. To their dismay, however, they discovered that their rhetoric unleashed all the latent entrepreneurial

and egalitarian energies of American life, which even the elaborate mechanism of the Constitution could not completely contain. Among the results, Wood says, were a new concept of the dignity of labor, improvements in the lot of women, the first significant antislavery movement, and the frank acceptance of private interest underlying the political party system. Above all, Wood suggests, the Revolution produced the messy, fractious politics of liberal democracy, dominated by ordinary people pursuing commercial interests. A provocative, highly accomplished examination of how American society was reshaped in the cauldron of revolution. -- Copyright 1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.