

ENGLISH OPINIONS ON THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION

By

W. T. WAGONER

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas at Arlington in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN HISTORY

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

May 2009

Copyright © by W.T. Wagoner 2008

All Rights Reserved

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the University of Texas at Arlington for employing the faculty and providing the facilities that made my education such a memorable experience. I would like to give a special note of appreciation to the professors of my committee, Dr. Reinhardt, Dr. Cawthon and Dr. Narrett who have shown extraordinary patience and kindness in helping me find my voice and confidence during this process.

I appreciate my family and friends who tolerated both my mood swings and my forgetfulness as I thought about events hundreds of years ago. I would like to thank my mother. You encouraged me that there was more to life than flooring. To my wife, Rae, I want to thank you for loving me and keeping me centered. Finally, to my daughter Miranda, you are the reason I have undertaken this journey.

December 20, 2008

ABSTRACT

ENGLISH WORDS ON THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION

W.T. WAGONER, M.A.

The University of Texas at Arlington, 2008

Supervising Professor: Steven Reinhardt

Just as the French Revolution changed the French political landscape, it also affected other European countries such as England. Both pro-revolutionaries and anti-revolutionaries argued in the public forums the merits of the events in France. Gradually the arguments became less about the French Revolution and more about the future of England. The intent of this paper is to show how English conservative and radical authors and politicians debated the merits of the French Revolution, and how this proved to be the catalyst for more moderate reformers who would work to create a progressive England.

Three areas that concerned England are examined. First is the debate between Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine. These two authors are considered the standard bearers for their causes. The second chapter spotlights how other English authors, citizens and politicians responded to the French Revolution and what actions they took to protect or change their country. Finally, this paper will explore the emergence of women writers advocating equality for their sex. The battle between conservative and radicals in these three areas created a more progressive state.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
CHAPTER	Page
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. BURKE vs. PAINE.....	6
3. ENGLISH SOCIETY.....	31
4. WOMEN'S MOVEMENT.....	58
5. CONCLUSION.....	90
6. AFTERWORD.....	98
WORKS CITED.....	102
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION.....	108

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

To many historians the French Revolution has been one of those events in history that literally changed the planet. School children are made aware of the names of Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette, and Robespierre. European countries beyond France were affected by the Revolution, perhaps no other European country more so than England. For the previous hundred years, England had been a leader in giving its citizens liberties—limited though that set of liberties might have been. By no means was England a republic, but it did have some form of representative government. When the French Revolution began, many Britons welcomed the coming of another free nation. However, as the Revolution progressed, many others in England began to take a more skeptical look at France. Supporters and critics of the Revolution began to publicly voice their opinion in books, pamphlets, letters and journals. The increased expression of one's opinion created a divided England on the subject of France. The contention of this paper is that the spread of English progressive liberties in regard to class and gender did not derive solely from the French Revolution but instead issued from the philosophical debate that occurred in England over the French Revolution. An examination of this debate will show how it served as a catalyst for the emergence of a more progressive nation.

Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine, Arthur Young, and Mary Wollstonecraft, for instance, are remembered as literary figures, who, with many others, debated the relevance of the French Revolution. Other names, such as William Pitt, Charles Fox, and John Reeves, are recalled for their part in the political aspect of the battle for public opinion about the Revolution. Ultimately, England divided into two separate camps. One side consisted of conservatives, like Burke, Pitt and Young, who argued that France's revolution not only spelled ruin for France but, if those

ideas were carried to England, could spell trouble for the island nation. The other side contended that the ideas of democratic reform and abolition of class privilege, which were initially born in the United States and transferred to France, should be implemented in England. Those that supported those ideas were individuals such as Paine, Wollstonecraft, and Fox.

Historians and other scholars have meticulously examined these divisions and they are still the subject of political debate in the twenty-first century. In the short term, the discussion over the French Revolution about social class and gender issues that were expressed in late eighteenth century literature, newspapers and political speeches cleared the way for further progressive democratic reform that changed England and its internal political landscape. These changes were not only in the shape of political reform inspired by the Revolution across the Channel, but also in the ability and outlets for the English to express themselves in opposition to their nation's course. This paper will examine how English citizens, both commoner and aristocrat, thought about the Revolution and, more importantly, how they expressed those feelings about the Revolution. These debates in turn, transformed England.

The debate in England over the French Revolution caused innovations in political thought that in turn were brought to the forefront of politics. Burke became England's leading advocate of slow political development and respect for "inherited wisdom," leading to his being considered the founder of the modern conservative movement. Burke's theory was countered by Paine's democratic ideas that found expression if not full realization in the United States. Paine believed that while the American Revolution had created something special, the French, with their Revolution, could create something never seen before. The debate that arose between Burke and Paine created armies of writers on both sides, who took up the battle cry of their leader. While their political theories gained both zealous supporters and opponents, both men suffered because of their intense devotion to their respective beliefs. Each of them was ostracized by both the English and French. Paine even faced bad publicity in the United States.

Those two men were not the only ones writing about the French Revolution. Many authors took sides in the debate about what was occurring in France. Along the way these authors proceeded to influence public opinion and challenge the traditional roles played by the English citizen. These authors published hypotheses and counter hypotheses; the number of publications was immense—perhaps unprecedented since the heyday of pamphlet production during the English Civil War. Book and pamphlet writers were not the only ones taking sides. Anonymous letters published in newspapers and newspaper editorials proliferated. As more liberal and radical writers began to be read and write more conservative writers responded. The opposition, however, shifted in terms of its composition and arguments. This thesis will show how writers who were initially pro-revolutionary soon came to be disgusted by the violent turns occurring in France. The corresponding public relations war spilled out from the pamphlets and books and into the streets, where pro-revolution mobs faced anti-revolution mobs. Men such as Reeves created organizations that aimed to intimidate their political enemies. The resulting clash produced losers on both sides.

These debates in the literary circles and among the public were not limited to private individuals. The English government was very concerned about the chaos that was occurring in the land of their traditional enemy. As it would do with any adversary, England attempted to keep a close eye on France. Many in the pre-revolutionary French royal government maintained that their long-time enemy England was attempting to bring chaos and anarchy to France. As those royal ministers and governmental agents were replaced by the original revolutionaries, the collective French feeling toward Britain changed to one of fellowship. It was at this time that many in English literary circles found themselves in sympathy with the French. As fear bordering on paranoia brought the Jacobins into control of France, however, the French revolutionaries' and citizens' attitude towards England changed into suspicion. Accusations of spying and manipulating the newly established French government caused tension between the two countries. Soon France declared war on England, and those English authors still living in

France faced suspicion, imprisonment and death. As England responded to France's declaration of war, some Englishmen debated whether France had been forced into war. Many believed that William Pitt, the English Prime Minister, wanted to restore the French monarchy and that he maneuvered France into declaring war. Others in England responded, though, that Pitt did not want to go to war to reestablish a traditional enemy but to protect England's vulnerable market economy.

From the beginning of the French Revolution, English politicians such as Charles James Fox tried to raise support for the French Revolution, while yet facing opposition from those who were lukewarm—and sometimes hostile—to that cause. Support for the Revolution in France soon became a much harder position for Fox to maintain because his dreams for France dissolved with the beginning of the Terror of 1793-94. Fox was concerned not only with French liberty but he also decried what he perceived as encroachments on English civil liberties. As Pitt and the English government began to pass restrictive acts such as the Gagging Acts and the Combination Acts, Fox and others argued that England was becoming more authoritarian than France. In the final analysis, however, the French Terror and the ensuing war with France damaged Fox's and his political party's reputation.

The French Revolution was not only about representative government. The Revolution was also about traditional gender roles. Women such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Helen Maria Williams, and Laetitia Hawkins debated each other on the subject of women's position in society. Writers such as Wollstonecraft sought innovations such as unisex classrooms and advocated stronger classroom leadership by teachers in her literary works. Williams and Hawkins debated whether the French Revolution and its initial promise of gender equality was the best course for English women. Wollstonecraft and Williams moved to France and witnessed the revolution first hand. The results of their collective works aroused considerable vilification both of themselves and all women who had strived for equality. In the end, their goal was crushed due to the unpopularity in England of those revolutionaries they supported.

Examination of these three aspects of the English debate -- Burke versus Paine, the fight for public opinion, and English women writers -- will be the focus of this thesis. By using as primary sources the works of these authors, along with correspondence and private journal entries, this thesis will argue that the evolving English reaction to the French Revolution enabled England's own liberty to eventually grow.

CHAPTER 2

BURKE vs. PAINE

This English literary battle of wits concerning the French Revolution was not only lively but also vicious. The two most important antagonists in this contest were Burke and Paine. So vital was Burke's and Paine's presence in the debate that everyone else who entered the fray seemed compelled to take time to repudiate one of these two authors. Burke, the elder statesman, wrote one of the most widely read books on the French Revolution, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Burke believed that France had searched for its liberty incorrectly and would suffer because of the “unnatural” events that had taken place. This disapproval from Burke, one of Britain's political stalwarts, would bring both negative and positive attention from other political writers. Many authors wrote to Burke and to the public at large to denounce his remarks. Paine, already well known for his role in the American Revolution, was one of those authors to respond to Burke's criticism with his pamphlet, popularly known as *The Rights of Man*. This battle of literary giants helped shape the English nation's collective opinion. Despite the way in which the debate of France enhanced both Burke's and Paine's visibility as literary and political figures, however, both men would suffer—personally and professionally—because of their writings.

In a study of English literary response to the French Revolution, a researcher must begin with Burke. *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, is the source from which much of the debate over events in France flows. To understand Burke, one must know about his life and reputation before the events in France catapulted him to even greater prominence. Burke was born in Dublin in 1729. His father was a Protestant lawyer, and his mother's family was Roman

Catholic.¹ His mother converted to being a Protestant shortly after her marriage but continued her daily life as a practicing Catholic.² His mother may have had some influence on Burke's early education. As a young boy, Burke had been sent to live with his maternal uncle to attend school. Historian O'Brien speculates that this allowed Burke to attend a Catholic school without embarrassing the family or endangering the family politically.³ Burke's education progressed from to a Quaker secondary school to Trinity College, Dublin, where he attained enough success to obtain a scholarship.⁴ While at Trinity College, Burke formed both a debating society and a school paper called *The Reformer*.⁵ Through these organizations, Burke began to link morality with religion: a philosophy that Burke would employ years later during composing *Reflections*.⁶ The young Burke was fascinated with both literature and history. His father, however, wanted his son to follow in his footsteps and become an attorney. When Burke reached twenty-one, his father sent him away to London to pursue his law education.⁷ Burke would eventually discard his father's dreams and pursue literature. He even wrote several manuscripts, only a few of which were published. With little success as an author, Burke turned to a new career, politics.⁸

Burke began his political career as a private secretary to two different gentlemen. This allowed him to gain sufficient contacts so that he could run for a seat in the House of Commons

¹ George Fasel, *Edmund Burke*. (Twayne Publishers: Boston, 1983), 1.

² Conor Cruise O'Brien, *The Great Melody: A Thematic Biography and Commented Anthology of Edmund Burke*. (The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1992), 16.

³ O'Brien, 19.

⁴ Fasel, 1.

⁵ O'Brien, 31.

⁶ O'Brien, 36.

⁷ Fasel, 1.

⁸ Fasel, 2-3.

for Wendover, located in Buckinghamshire. Burke won that election.⁹ Even as a member of Parliament, Burke was still regarded poorly by some of his contemporaries. To begin with, Burke was a member of the Whig party, which had been out of favor with the King for many years. However, more importantly to those who were against him, Burke's parentage was viewed unfavorably by respectable Englishmen. Burke would never be able to shed the label of a papist, even though he was reared as a Protestant. His mother's religion and his being Irish were targets for Burke's political enemies even during his debates on the French Revolution.¹⁰ Political cartoonist portrayed Burke in Jesuit robes with potatoes and whiskey next to him to show his Irish-Catholic heritage.¹¹ Burke did not let this criticism stop him, because as the American Revolution drew near he wished to side with the colonists and their grievances against their mother country. At the time, Burke had moved to Bristol, where he again won a seat in the House of Commons. That commercial city, however, was concerned about the effect a rebellious America would have on their markets. Feeling that he was pressured to side against the Americans, Burke resigned his seat and moved to Malton, where he could state his feelings on the crisis without political ramifications.¹² Burke survived the American Revolution in a political sense; however, a new revolution was brewing in France. Burke's involvement with French affairs, would all start with a sermon.

Dr. Richard Price, an English minister and reformer, stepped up to the podium one November day in 1789. Coaxed out of retirement, Price named his sermon "A Discourse on the Love of Country." In his sermon, Price glorified both the American Revolution of a decade ago and the new Revolution taking place in France. Price is quoted as saying, "After sharing in the benefits of one revolution, I have been spared to be a witness to two other revolutions, both

⁹ Fasel, 4.

¹⁰ Fasel, 5-6.

¹¹ O'Brien, 50.

¹² Fasel, 7-8.

glorious.”¹³ He believed that England should follow the examples set by the new democracies. In the congregation was the elder statesman Burke, and he was decidedly displeased with what he heard. This sermon “provoked” Burke into writing *Reflection on the Revolution in France*.¹⁴ Burke’s book would in turn lead many other authors to write in response to him.

His book, Burke issues a warning to his fellow Englishmen not to follow the same path as France. “France has always more or less influenced manners in England; and when your fountain is choked up and polluted, the stream will not run long, or not run clear with us, or perhaps with any nation.”¹⁵ Burke also admonishes the French for forgetting their past. The French, according to Burke, were “despising everything” in their past.¹⁶ It was the past with which Burke was most concerned.

A country and its past were crucial to the health of that country, according to Burke. He believed the past contained a wisdom and intelligence that men and women have inherited from their ancestors. Therefore, Burke stated, “Government is not made in virtue of natural rights...Government is a contrivance of human wisdom. . .”¹⁷ Slow progress is preferred because it allowed both the state and individual time to learn how to use their new liberties and new responsibilities.¹⁸ The Englishman points to his own country as an example how this inheritance of culture works. To him the Magna Carta and the Declaration of Right are historical documents that form the historical foundation of the English Constitution. These documents are

¹³ Ray B. Brown, *The Burke-Paine Controversy; Texts and Criticism*. (Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc: New York, 1963), vii.

¹⁴ John Derry, “The Opposition Whigs and the French Revolution; 1789-1815.” *Britain and the French Revolution, 1789-1815*. Ed. H.T. Dickenson, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989), 41.

¹⁵ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Ed. L.G. Mitchell, *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke, Vol.III French Revolution 1790-1795*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 131.

¹⁶ Burke, *Reflections*, 86.

¹⁷ Burke, *Reflections*, 110.

¹⁸ Burke, *Reflections*, 217.

England's history and its inheritance.¹⁹ Burke continues on this line of thought when he claims that any government based on natural rights is a government that is a "consideration of convenience." The Englishman worried that making a government for convenience would make it easier for the next generation to tear the previous plans up and start all over. This constant refiguring of government would lead to anarchy. "Make the Revolution a parent of settlement, and not a nursery of future Revolutions," he said.²⁰

Burke was concerned about the French use of natural rights and reason to form a government. He goes on to state that it is not hard to have freedom or to govern:

But to form a free government; that is to temper together these opposite elements of liberty and restraint in one consistent work, requires much thought, deep reflection, a sagacious, powerful, and combining mind. This I do not find in those who take the lead in the National Assembly.²¹

As for the French declaration that reason should lead men and not religion, Burke argued that to base government on reason was wrong because one could not turn the business of governing men and women into a math problem, where solutions are devised by computing morality.²² Burke believed that the current aristocracy of a country was responsible for its "moral essence". He also believed that for a monarch to rule morally, he had to trust his subjects. He blamed the French Revolution for destroying the monarchical system, and therefore asked how a French monarch could trust his subjects.²³ Because France had determined that reason was needed and not the aristocracy, Burke concluded that this new revolutionary reason and France were

¹⁹ Burke, *Reflections*, 83.

²⁰ Burke, *Reflections*, 77.

²¹ Burke, *Reflections*, 291.

²² Burke, *Reflections*, 112.

²³ Burke, *Reflections*, 89.

not moral. Historian Deane Seamus argues that Burke's sense of moral outrage allowed him to capture the high road in all future debates on the French Revolution.²⁴

Burke believed morality and religion were inseparable. Religion held the people of that nation to high standards.²⁵ Both religion and the aristocracy were beacons of morality, according to Burke, for the common English citizen to look to. To change one's government, religion, and morality too quickly would be disastrous according to Burke: "Rage and phrenzy will pull down more in half an hour, than prudence, deliberation, and foresight can build up in a hundred years."²⁶ Burke believed that moving too quickly with instituting freedoms, forgetting morality and the "inherited" wisdom of one's fore fathers endangered the state's future. Indeed, in the pages of *Reflections*, Burke seems to predict the coming of the Terror to France.

Their cruelty [French Revolutionaries] has not even been the base result of fear. It has been the effect of their sense of perfect safety, in authorizing treasons, robberies, rapes, assassinations, slaughters, and burning throughout their harrassassed land. But the cause of all was plain from the beginning.²⁷

When asked by a French minister in the National Assembly whether Britain would need a "committee of research," whose job would be to seek out conspiracies and subversion, Burke replied in a forceful negative.

You ask me too, whether we have a committee of research. No, sir-God forbid! It is a necessary instrument of tyranny and usurpation; an therefore I do not wonder that it has had an early establishment under your present Lords. We do not want it.²⁸

²⁴ Deane Seamus, *The French Revolution and Enlightenment in England, 1789-1832*. (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 1988), 18.

²⁵ Burke, *Reflections*, 143.

²⁶ Burke, *Reflections*, 216.

²⁷ Burke, *Reflections*, 90.

²⁸ Edmund Burke, *Letter to a Member of the National Assembly 1791*. Ed. L.G. Mitchell, *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke, Vol.III French Revolution 1790-1795*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 334.

Burke also was concerned that France had misinterpreted the English form of liberty and government. Burke foretold of a diminished role the French monarch would play in French affairs. Eventually, he said, the King would be no more than a figurehead and the state would be ruled by the National Assembly. According to Burke the National Assembly had taken, from the King of France, the role as “sole sovereign” of France. This was the opposite of England, which was jointly ruled by the House of Commons, House of Lords and the King. He also predicted a time when France’s new “sovereign” would began to act like the old king. The Assembly would overtax their subjects with “patriotic donations,” and in doing so, according to Burke, the Assembly would use Louis XVI’s wig to cover the Assembly’s premature baldness.²⁹

In reading *Reflections*, the reader might wonder how Burke could oppose the French Revolution. His own country had experienced a similar revolution over a hundred years earlier. Like France, England’s legislative body had opposed a divine right monarch and in the end defeated and executed that monarch. With England, the monarch was Charles I, and with France, Louis XVI. However, to Burke the true English Revolution was not the blood-soaked war between Charles I and Parliament, but the Glorious Revolution, when William of Orange replaced James II as the English monarch. Compared with the previous civil conflict, the change in power in 1688 was relatively bloodless. Burke, however, appears to be splitting hairs as he focuses only on the Glorious Revolution. He states that during the “true” English Revolution of 1688, his country did not dispose of a monarch but replaced him legally because that monarch, James II, unknowingly abdicated his throne, when he fled to France.³⁰

Burke rarely mentions Cromwell, and one gets the impression that he would rather not have such a weak flank position. He does note that Cromwell had to assert his “natural place in society”. While he did not believe that excused Cromwell’s crimes, to Burke there was an

²⁹ Burke, *Reflections*, 276-277.

³⁰ Burke, *Reflections*, 74.

element of correctness to Cromwell's actions.³¹ In a letter written to the same member of the French National Assembly, with whom he had corresponded about the subject of a committee of research, Burke addresses the Cromwell episode further. Burke claimed that Cromwell was a military dictator who kept the nation out of anarchy and preserved the peace.³² He does acknowledge Cromwell's usurpation of the Crown, but believed that his appointment of Sir Matthew Hale, a royalist, to run the courts, deserved some praise for Cromwell, because of Hale's moral religious views.³³ Does this backhanded compliment reveal what Burke truly believed? Burke states that he does not want to excuse Cromwell's behavior of ridding England of its king, Charles I; and yet, the best thing Burke could say about Cromwell was that he kept order. It might be possible that Burke's reaction to the French Revolution would not have been so negative if the fall of the Bastille and other violent acts had not been occurring through out France.

Burke's book was shocking in England when it was released. In the first year of publication, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* sold thirty two thousand copies. Boyd Hilton claims that much of the attention was due to the book's being written by Burke, who was a Whig.³⁴ Moreover, radical authors, feeling betrayed, lashed out at him. Burke's parentage came under attack by the feminist Mary Wollstonecraft when she noted the fact that his mother was Catholic and Irish.³⁵ Radical Benjamin Vaughn also claimed that if the French Revolution were to cause any bloodshed, then it would be partially Burke's responsibility.³⁶ Burke's support

³¹ Burke, *Reflections*, 98.

³² Burke, *Letter*, 321.

³³ Burke, *Letter*, 302-303.

³⁴ Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?: England 1783-1846*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 58.

³⁵ G. J. Barker-Benfield, "Mary Wollstonecraft: Eighteenth-Century Commonwealth Woman.", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol.50, No. 1., January-March 1989, 104.

of the American Revolution, but subsequent rejection of the French Revolution also affected some American politicians. Thomas Jefferson is quoted by L.G. Mitchell as saying that while the French Revolution did not surprise him, he was shocked at “the revolution of Mr. Burke.”³⁷ Indeed, Jefferson felt dumbfounded by Burke’s attitude and wondered whether Burke had become senile, calling his rejection of the French Revolution as a “rottenness of his mind”. What depressed Jefferson even more was that he perceived the entire English nation turning conservative, because Burke had changed to a conservative.³⁸

Jefferson was not the only one to charge Burke with altering his stance on liberty and freedom. While it is true that Burke supported the American Revolution and opposed the French Revolution, there is some evidence that he did not transform his fundamental ideology. Before the American Revolution took place, Burke tried to reach a reconciliation with the colonies. This attempted reconciliation took place in a speech before the House of Commons on March 3, 1775. In the speech Burke attempted to paint the Americans as following in their mother country’s footsteps:

The fact is, that they did thus apply those general arguments; and your mode of governing them, whether through lenity or indolence through wisdom or mistake, confirmed them in the imagination, that they, as well as you, had an interest in these common principles.³⁹

This shows the difference that Burke perceived between the American and French Revolutions. The colonies had not forsaken their past as Burke believed the French had. In fact, the colonies were fulfilling their rights as English subjects.

³⁶ L.G. Mitchell, *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke, Vol.III French Revolution 1790-1795*. Ed L.G. Mitchell, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 15.

³⁷ Mitchell, 13.

³⁸ Browne, 117.

³⁹ Edmund Burke, *Speech on Conciliation with America, March 22, 1775*. Ed. Hon. LL.D. Bombay, F.G. Selby, M.A. Oxon, *Burke’s Speeches: On American Taxation, On Conciliation with America, Letter to the Sheriffs of Briston*, 81.

As he would do years later in 1792 when writing *Reflection on the Revolution in France*, Burke relied on his love of history as an argument in his 1775 speech. In the speech, he retells of the assimilation of the Welsh into England. According to Burke, this Welsh assimilation would take two hundred years because “the march of the human mind is slow.” It was at the end of these two hundred years that England accepted the Welsh. This was because, as Burke stated, “Your ancestors did however at length open their eyes... They found that tyranny of a few people could of all tyrannies the least be endured.”⁴⁰ Burke is consistent with his theory of slow progress as the best for both the nation and citizens. The Welsh example can be compared with the American colonies, because the colonies had existed for over a period of time. To Burke there had been an appropriate amount of time for the colonists to have learned their lessons in liberty as the Welsh had, and, therefore, it was logical that England recognize Americans as equals. Religion also figured in Burke’s speech. In *Reflections*, Burke would savage the French for their belief in reason over faith. Burke found the opposite among American colonists: “Religion, always a principle of energy, in this new people is no way worn out or impaired; and their mode of professing it is also one main cause of this free spirit.”⁴¹

In those three ways Burke’s 1775 speech on America is consistent with his writings on the French. In his belief of a slow progression of liberty, Burke in 1775 had related to the House of Commons with the story of Welsh assimilation and compared the Welsh to the colonists. Burke showed a recognition of the past and the “inherited wisdom” that comes with the past when he claimed that the North American colonist were building local governments based on the English style of government. Burke spoke of the Americans as a religious people, while he did not consider the French as such. These consistencies between his position on the American Revolution and his objections to the revolution in France refute the charges that Burke had changed his mind on liberty.

⁴⁰ Burke, *Speech*, 104.

⁴¹ Burke, *Speech*, 81.

While many of Burke's fellow authors debated the merits of the French Revolution, another set of his colleagues attacked one of his more famous comparisons. Burke had labeled some of the French rioters as swine. No other label for the French revolutionaries seemed to attract so much attention. Radicals jumped on Burke's description, as a phrase, most likely to make political points with the common Englishman. One radical publisher, Eaton, named his journal, *Politics for the People: a Hog's Wash or Salmagundy for Swine*.⁴² In an anonymous letter published in 1793, the author, who identified with the "swinish multitude" attacked Burke for his eloquence:

So that perhaps, thou master of rhetorical flourishes, this hoggish honour, is after all, only one of your poetical and eccentric compliments. If so, we are well satisfied it is no worse, since it would but have been characteristic of your fondness for stage tricks, and of your goodwill towards us, to have seen you with a dagger in your hand ready to plunge in our throats.⁴³

Many radicals and Whigs obviously found it difficult to accept that Burke had betrayed the Revolution. The author continues his letter by stating that while the "common English pigs" are exposed to all the elements, the aristocracy is safe inside their homes. The author then continues his direct attack on Burke by saying that if common Englishmen or Frenchmen were swine, then Burke could be labeled as a "venomous asp."⁴⁴

With other writers savaging him, Burke found no refuge from England's politicians either. William Pitt, "the Younger", prime minister of Britain, was tepid toward Burke's book, saying that Burke should have celebrated the English instead of attacking the French.⁴⁵ Pitt's

⁴² Stephen Prickett, *England and the French Revolution*. (Macmillan Education Ltd.: London, 1989), 91.

⁴³ *An Address to the Hon. Edmund Burke, from the Swinish Multitude*. (J Ridgway: London, 1793). Ed. Ray Brown, *The Burke-Paine Controversy; Texts and Critisms*. (Harcourt, Brace and World Inc.: New York, 1963), 125-126.

⁴⁴ *An Address to the Hon. Edmund Burke, from the Swinish Multitude*, 125-126.

⁴⁵ J. Holland Rose, *William Pitt and the Great War*, (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd, 1911), 16.

main political rival, Charles Fox, who had been a lifelong friend of Burke, merely wanted not to draw any attention to Burke. Fox was fighting desperately to preserve the Whig party, which was beginning to split on the issue of the French Revolution.⁴⁶ This isolated Burke from almost everyone. A letter written to the National Gazette in November 1791, explained it succinctly:

Mr. Burke raved in the House of Commons, and had the mortification to find that both his friends and the world are deserting him: nor do the King's ministers give any ear to his very open advances of good will and friendship.⁴⁷

Some authors just assumed that Burke was badly misinformed. At the beginning of the Revolution, Paine was in Paris, and had sent letter after letter to Burke celebrating the Revolution, but the Englishman seemed to ignore them.⁴⁸ Burke was very friendly with several nobles who had emigrated from France, and it was generally believed that they were feeding him biased information. Burke seemed to omit pro-Revolution correspondence he had received so as not to embarrass his French contacts. He was quoted as saying that he knew "France, by observation."⁴⁹ In fact, Burke had visited France in the 1773 and had not enjoyed the trip. He denounced France shortly afterwards in the House of Commons for what he perceived as atheism.⁵⁰ Burke also repeated his statement that Reflection on the Revolution was more a warning to England than it was an attack on France.⁵¹

Historian G. J. Barker-Benfield states that Burke might have had an alternative motive to writing his book. The Reverend Price, who reportedly the one who inspired Burke to write Reflections, was a well-known reformer who had been moving steadily into more radical circles

⁴⁶ Derry, 43.

⁴⁷ Browne, 123.

⁴⁸ Mitchell, 12.

⁴⁹ Mitchell, 1-2.

⁵⁰ Seamus, 9.

since the 1770s. Barker-Benfield suggests that Burke may have been motivated by a desire to discredit Price politically.⁵² Could Burke have been so easily antagonized? There is some proof to suggest that Burke had a thin political skin. In Parliament, Fox was giving a speech concerning his continuing support for the French Revolution. Burke rose and stated that while Fox and he had been friends for many years their disagreement over the French Revolution “envenomed everything”. Fox protested that there was still a friendship, but Burke cut him off and claimed that their comradeship was over. This brought Fox to tears: only after he composed himself did he announce to the House of Commons that he still considered Burke a friend.⁵³ The rift between the two would never close. In 1794, Burke went into seclusion and shortly became very ill. Even while Burke lay on his deathbed, he refused to see Fox.⁵⁴ Burke died soon afterwards, a bitter man who felt his book was never given its due.⁵⁵ So vicious had been the debate over Burke’s work that he had requested to be buried in a secret and anonymous grave, so that no radical or revolutionary could desecrate his remains.⁵⁶

Modern historians still argue over his work. A.J. Ayer contends that Burke did not “make any original contribution to political philosophy”. In Ayer’s opinion, Burke merely used Locke’s work as inspiration for his own.⁵⁷ J.H. Plumb claims that Burke used rhetoric rather than argument in his book. According to Plumb, it is fairly easy to discredit Burke’s arguments both then and today. He states that the key to dismissing Burke is to ask: “if reason is so

⁵¹ Mitchell, 28.

⁵² Barker-Benfield, 103.

⁵³ Joel Barlow, *The History of England, from the Year 1765 to the Year 1795. Being a Continuation of the Histories of Mr. Hume and Dr. Smollell.* Vol. 5, (London: J. Parsons, 1795), 318-319.

⁵⁴ Mitchell, 35.

⁵⁵ Mitchell, 51.

⁵⁶ Fasel, 10.

⁵⁷ A.J. Ayer, *Thomas Paine.*, (Macmillan Publishing Co.: 1988), 13.

wrong why does reason solve so many problems?”⁵⁸ Seamus believes that Burke’s past helped shaped his opinions. The fleeing French nobility, according to Seamus, might have reminded Burke about the persecution that the Irish Catholics received from Irish Protestants. Seamus’s theory might explain why Burke did not object to the American Revolution.⁵⁹ Plumb agrees with Seamus that Burke’s past played a role. However, Plumb points to Burke’s personal history, such as his rough up-bringing and his road to respectability. When the Revolution from below threatened Burke’s position, he lashed out.⁶⁰ Boyd Hilton recognizes that history has awarded Burke a “reputation for great foresight.” However, Hilton also believes that while its seemed that Burke did not want to speak about the English Civil War, he used the history of England during that time and just transposed it to France.⁶¹ Seamus discusses Burke’s legacy:

His objections to the philosophes and to Rousseau, his attacks on the coarsening of the sexual relationship, the threat to the family and marriage, the existence of a conspiracy against throne and altar, the seductions of abstract theory, the attractions of the English character and its close bond with church and Constitution, the contrast between 1688 and 1789, the plight and the prominence of the men of letters, the new urban intelligentsia in the new world which had come to replace the old- all of these survive intact into the age of Carlyle and beyond. In molding an attitude toward France, Burke molded an attitude toward the Revolution and gave to the anti-revolutionary forces the potent weapon of conservative nationalism.⁶²

Even today, historians and political writers can say or write cheap shots at Burke. Plumb, while recognizing that Burke is one of the founders of England’s conservative movement, can not resist a jibe when he claims that Burke’s views were “silly and self-deceiving.”⁶³

⁵⁸ J.H. Plumb, *In the Light of History*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1973), 98-100.

⁵⁹ Seamus, 16.

⁶⁰ Plumb, 98-99.

⁶¹ Hilton, 60.

⁶² Seamus, 42.

⁶³ Plumb, 96.

Future President Woodrow Wilson argued that Burke's brilliance lay in his belief that slow progress was best for a nation because it allowed both nation and citizen to learn slowly both the advantages and responsibilities and to master each step.⁶⁴ Wilson also admired Burke's willingness to break with Fox over the French Revolution. "A shallower man . . . might have kept his friend without giving up his opinions."⁶⁵ Burke's ground-breaking conservatism and uncanny predictions on the transition of the French constitutional monarch into a Republic and then Terror, set him apart from many writers.

The greatest voice counter to Burke's in England during their day was none other than the famous American Revolutionary author, Thomas Paine. Paine was born in England in 1737 to parents of diverse ages and background. His twenty-nine year old father was a staymaker compared with his forty year old mother, who came from money.⁶⁶ At the age of six the class differences between his parents became more apparent. His father wanted Paine to learn a trade, while his mother wanted him to concentrate on academics.⁶⁷ When he was twenty years old Paine moved to London where he experienced the city's overcrowding and mounting filth.⁶⁸ While in London, Paine became familiar with Ben Franklin, who was representing the colonist in England at the time. This familiarity enabled Paine to gain a letter of recommendation from Franklin when he immigrated to the colonies in 1774.⁶⁹ In America, Paine would become known as the pamphleteer who received enormous affection and praise for his pamphlet *Common Sense* during the American Revolution. Before the American Revolution, one can already see

⁶⁴ Woodrow Wilson, "Edmund Burke and the French Revolution". Ed. Ray B. Brown, *The Burke-Paine Controversy*. (Harcourt: New York, 1963), 143.

⁶⁵ Wilson, 138.

⁶⁶ Craig Nelson, *Thomas Paine: Enlightenment, Revolution and the Birth of Modern Nations*. (Penguin Group: New York, 2006), 14.

⁶⁷ Nelson, 17.

⁶⁸ Nelson, 22.

⁶⁹ Nelson, 48-49.

Paine's habit of responding to a letter or book with which he did not agree. John Dickinson wrote a letter imploring his fellow citizens not to rebel against the British. Dickinson signed the letter as "a Pennsylvanian Farmer". Historian Ayer believes that Paine wrote a letter to the magazine, where he was an editor, employed the pseudonym "a Continental Farmer," and published his own (Paine's) letter in order to rebut Dickinson.⁷⁰

Paine would return to Europe in 1787 to sell a design for a bridge he had developed. He would make continuous trips to both France and London in an attempt to sell the bridge design. While visiting the two countries Paine became friendly with several writers, such as Wollstonecraft and Burke.⁷¹

When the French Revolution began Paine received correspondence from Thomas Jefferson, who was the American ambassador in Paris, describing the events in France. Excited by the new revolution, Paine shared these letters with his new friend, including Burke. After the royal family was forced to move from Versailles to Paris, Paine was compelled to move to France to witness the revolution first hand. He continued his correspondence with Burke, never realizing that Burke was horrified by the words he read.⁷²

Paine was in France at the time Burke released his book, but it did not take long for Paine to respond to Burke. Just as he had so often done in the American Revolution, Paine dashed off a pamphlet; this publication was called, Rights of Man. By 1793, Paine's pamphlet, now published as a short book sold even more copies than Burke's book. At least two hundred thousand copies of Paine's work were printed. Unlike Burke, Paine wrote his book in plain language that immediately made the work appealing to a broader audience than Burke's more

⁷⁰ Ayer, 9.

⁷¹ Nelson 176.

⁷² Nelson 188-190.

scholarly sounding tone.⁷³ In Paine's opinion this debate, over the French Revolution, need to be stated plainly to be more understandable from the common man's perspective.

Paine begins his book by stating that he had considered Burke a friend from the latter's support of the American Revolution, and was therefore shocked by the attack on the French Revolution.⁷⁴ Paine continues reproaching Burke by saying, "I can not consider Mr. Burke's book in any other light than a dramatic performance..."⁷⁵ Paine considered Reflections as an unprovoked attack against France, her people and the Assembly.⁷⁶ At one point in the introduction, Paine speculates whether Burke would be afraid if both England and France became friends.⁷⁷ Paine next tackles a few of Burke's criticisms of the Revolution. The revolutionary author defends the crowd violence that had horrified both Burke and others by claiming that the peasants had learned such behavior from the monarchy's troops during riots and rebellions.⁷⁸ He also noted that Burke had used French nobles as sources for his book. Paine attacks one of those sources, M. Lallytollendal, a former noble who was a member of the Estates General before fleeing to Britain.⁷⁹ Paine tries not only to discredit Burke and his sources but his followers as well. According to Paine, those that agreed with Burke and the philosophies laid out in Reflections were "childish thinkers and half-way politicians born in the last century".⁸⁰

⁷³ Gilmour., 398-399.

⁷⁴ Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man: Being an Answer to Mr. Burke's Attack on the French Revolution.*, (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1915), 4.

⁷⁵ Paine, 34.

⁷⁶ Paine, 9.

⁷⁷ Paine, 6.

⁷⁸ Paine, 31.

⁷⁹ Paine, 39.

⁸⁰ Paine, 144.

These are small and rather constructive criticisms of Burke: Paine's most severe criticism was for Burke's "inheritance" theory of government. To Paine this is the weakest spot in Burke's argument and he returned to it multiple times. Paine even has a "Miscellaneous" chapter at the back of the first book so he can revisit the issue. In short, Paine maintained that if Burke's theory were correct, Englishmen after the Glorious Revolution would no longer need their wisdom because their right to exercise their reason would have been forfeited by earlier generations. Instead, Paine believes that every generation should have the right to choose its form of government.⁸¹ In the "Miscellaneous" chapter, when Paine returns to the "inheritance" theory, he asks if Burke had considered if wisdom was truly hereditary.⁸²

Paine's next task was to attack Burke's theory on the English Constitution. Since Burke believed that the English Constitution was an idea passed down through the generations in the Magna Carta and other documents, Paine could have included this with his attack on the inheritance theory. Instead, he attacked Burke within a different context saying that a constitution was a real object and not an idea, and a constitution needed to be visible for all people to see.⁸³ This is so important to Paine that he defined what the word constitution means to him. Since Burke's theory on an inherited constitution does not match Paine's definition of a physical constitution, Paine reckoned that he won that debate. The reason Paine felt that he won, because he defined the word "constitution", and Burke's definition does not agree with Paine's. Paine is not finished at that juncture, however, and for the next portion of his argument lists provisions of the French Constitution comparable to the English constitutional strictures.

In debating the French Revolution, Paine's book differs from Burke's in another fundamental respect. Paine is reacting to what Burke has already written, and therefore to a certain extent Burke controls the arguments. The American author spent most of *The Rights of*

⁸¹ Paine, 11-12.

⁸² Paine, 101.

⁸³ Paine, 48.

Man responding to Burke's accusations against France. At one time Paine even deflects the criticism that France had fallen into Revolution only because of its support of the American Revolution. Paine claims this was not the reason for the fall of the Old Regime in France. He argues that the decline of the Ancien Regime was due to the fact that "Mr. Neckar[sic] was displaced in May, 1781; and by the ill-management of the finances afterwards." After going through the French Constitution, as mentioned above, Paine then describes the French Revolution and the Declaration of the Rights of Man. It is ironic that Paine complains about the length of Burke's book because Paine adds two sections to his own book that are not totally necessary for his response to Burke.⁸⁴

Response to *The Rights of Man* was quick and in some cases vicious. A review in the *Monthly Review*, for example, criticized Paine's creation without any mercy, calling Paine "desultory, uncouth and inelegant. His wit is coarse and sometimes disgraced by wretched puns; and his language, though energetic, is awkward, ungrammatical and often debased by vulgar phraseology."⁸⁵ Paine undoubtedly lost little sleep because of this review. As noted above, Paine's purpose was to speak in plain English and to rouse many common people's sympathy for the French. Now, though, Paine had to defend his thesis against other authors who began, just as Paine did to Burke, to pick at Paine's inconsistencies. Arthur Young, who wrote in 1793, pointed out that Paine's comment about England's having no written constitution was irrelevant. The French government, according to Young, had written a constitution, but since they allowed the Terror to take hold, they violated their own constitution.⁸⁶

Paine's book received both acclaim and criticism from all over the world. His friend in the United States, Thomas Jefferson, praised *The Rights of Man*: "Mr. Paine's answer to Burke

⁸⁴ Paine, 94.

⁸⁵ Seamus, 164.

⁸⁶ Arthur Young, *The Example of France a Warning to Britain; The Third Edition*. (London: Bury St. Edmund's, 1793), 22.

will be a refreshing shower to their minds. It would bring England itself to reason and revolution if it was permitted to be read there.”⁸⁷ John Adams, however, who broke with Jefferson on the issue of the French Revolution, did not care for Paine’s work. “I have seen so many firebrands, thrown into the flames,” said Adams, “not only in the worthless and unprincipled writings of the profligate and impious Thomas Paine and the French Revolution, but in many others.”⁸⁸ The English aristocracy was shocked that the little pamphlet written in such coarse language held any interest for anyone. In a letter written to her son in December, 1792, Lady Stafford expresses this dismay.

Is it true that Paine’s writings are translated and read all over Sweden? I am surprised that the Government does not foresee what confusion they may cause in that country, for the ignorant are easily led wrong, and his falsities are plausible and imposing to those whose understandings are not improved.”⁸⁹

Like Burke, Paine received scant attention from politicians. Fox, after reading part one, stated that he had no further interest in reading part two.⁹⁰

Paine’s work was naturally compared to Burke’s book. Some critics pointed out contrasts not only in the content of the two authors but also in the obviously differing style of the two. One pamphlet that examined Paine harshly was authored by an anonymous barrister. This barrister complimented Burke’s attempt to keep his reader grounded in what Burke considered reality, which, according to the barrister, is contrary to human nature. In contrast to Burke’s focus on the here and now, the barrister observed, Paine encouraged his reader to dream:

⁸⁷ Jefferson quoted by Browne, 117.

⁸⁸ Adams quoted by Browne, 115-117 .

⁸⁹ *Lord Granville Leveson Gower’s Private Correspondence 1781-1821*. Ed. Castalic Countess Granville, Vol. 1, (EP Dutton and Company: New York, 1916), 60.

⁹⁰ Derry, 43.

While Mr. Paine on the contrary is continually assisting you to throw out ballast, till you are lifted out of sight of all fabricks of human contrivance, and having brought you to those sublime heights, he keeps you out of reach of all useful and practical inference.⁹¹

When Paine published part two of his book, the English government began to take an interest in Paine. Soon it brought an action for seditious libel against Paine and *The Rights of Man*. Told by the poet, William Blake, that his life was endangered, Paine fled to France.⁹² This flight, in turn, exposed Paine to further attacks from his contemporaries. Young intimated that Paine fled England not to escape a prosecution for libel, but to run from his mounting debt, since his debts could not be collected in France.⁹³

If one compares Paine's writings during the American Revolution, one finds similar expressions in *The Rights of Man*. In both *Common Sense* and *The Rights of Man*, Paine ridicules the English constitution. In *Common Sense*, Paine mocks the "boasted constitution of England."⁹⁴ Paine's theory of government also remains the same. The revolutionary's distrust of any monarchy is mentioned several times. Also present in both works is Paine's belief that reason allowed the respective revolutionaries to change their government. With the American Revolution, Paine reasons that a revolution is necessary because America is too large and too far away for England to govern.⁹⁵ This theory differs only slightly from Paine's belief during the French Revolution that each new generation deserves to choose a new form of government.

⁹¹ A Barrister, *Rights of Citizens, Being an Examination of Mr. Paine's Principles, Touching Government, By a Barrister*. (Dublin, 1791), 4.

⁹² Gilmour, 399.

⁹³ Arthur Young, *The Example*., 35.

⁹⁴ Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*. Ed. Harry Hayden Clark, *Thomas Paine; Representative Selections, with Introduction, Bibliography, and Notes by Harry Hayden Clark*. (Hill and Wang: New York, 1965), 6.

⁹⁵ Paine, *Common Sense*, 6-7.

Modern historians have also taken Paine to task. Ian Gilmour notices that Paine attacked Burke's weakest point, and then spent the rest of the book painting a rosy picture of the French Revolution. (One also could argue that Paine painted that rosy picture to contrast with Burke's dreary predictions for the future of France.) Gilmour, in addition, points to Paine's declaration that he did not advocate illegal violence in overturning a government. Gilmour notes that Paine did not tell his audience how to overthrow a government using legal means.⁹⁶ Historian John Stevenson agrees with Gilmour, stating that Paine did not supply any "strategic or tactical" advice to his audience.⁹⁷

Gary Kates analyzes Paine's book from a different perspective. His theory is that the first part of Paine's work is much less radical than the second part of *The Rights of Man*. Kates notes that in Paine's first part, Marie-Joseph Lafayette appears to be Paine's sole source about events transpiring in the French Revolution, and other leaders are nowhere to be found.⁹⁸ (Both Lafayette and Paine were involved heavily in the American Revolution, so it would make sense that they knew each other.) Kates implies that upon reading *Reflections*, Paine may have changed a book he had already begun. The timeline supports his theory. In January 1790 Lafayette had written to George Washington and told him that Paine will be sending him a description of Lafayette's adventures. Paine's first part is dedicated to George Washington. Only in April of that same year does Paine hear of Burke's book. So, according to Kates, Paine may have taken his account of the exploits of Lafayette and changed it to respond to Burke.⁹⁹ Paine himself may have provided evidence in support of this theory himself. In *The Rights of Man*, Paine claims that the seeds of French Revolution were planted in French soldiers fighting

⁹⁶ Gilmour, 399.

⁹⁷ John Stevenson, "Popular Radicalism and Popular Protest", *Britain and the French Revolution, 1789-1815.*, Ed. H.T. Dikerson, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 73.

⁹⁸ Gary Kates, "From Liberalism to Radicalism: Tom Paine's *Rights of Man*", *Journal of History of Ideas*, Vol.50, No. 4., October-December, 1989, 572.

⁹⁹ Kates, 574-575.

in the American Revolution.¹⁰⁰ One must note that this is contrary to his earlier assertion that the American Revolution did not cause the French Revolution. In part two of his book, Paine admits breaking with Lafayette.¹⁰¹ Who in particular among the French does Paine support? Kates believes that it is the Girondins, since they supported the publication of part two. In the French version of part two, Kates tells how the Girondins cut the preface, which dealt again with Burke and was dedicated to Lafayette.¹⁰² At this time Lafayette's reputation among the French citizens had plummeted.

In an ironic turn of events, Paine suffered at the hands of the Revolution he helped to defend. When the Jacobins took over France, Paine began to see that perhaps Burke's prophecies were beginning to take place. In a letter to Jefferson, Paine confessed that if the French Revolution stayed faithful with the principles of liberty, then liberty would surely spread. However, seeing the Jacobins take over the dream of liberty, Paine wrote, "I now relinquish that hope."¹⁰³ Paine did not surrender hope completely, even upon the creation of the Committee of Public Safety. In a letter to Danton, Paine wrote that he was troubled that France was beginning to talk about going to war. Paine asked that Danton help keep France out of any European war.

Paine was in danger, although it is not known if he perceived the degree of his peril. In August 1793 France began to expel all English subjects who had come to France. Paine, although made a French citizen, had never learned the language and was therefore vulnerable to being arrested.¹⁰⁴ Three days after Christmas, the Jacobins did arrest him. Ayer discusses the two main reasons that Paine was arrested: first, the Jacobins labeled Paine as a British

¹⁰⁰ Paine, 76.

¹⁰¹ Kates, 582.

¹⁰² Kates, 585.

¹⁰³ Ayer, 121-122.

¹⁰⁴ Ayer, 124-125.

citizen, despite the fact that Paine was listed as both an American and a French citizen. This is where Paine's refusal to learn the local language paid a negative dividend. The second reason given by Ayer is Paine's involvement with the Girondins, who had helped Paine with the publication of the second part of the Rights of Man, but had insisted that he omit two controversial sections.¹⁰⁵ When the Jacobins took over they would revive the sections cut from part two and convict Paine of counter-revolutionary activities.¹⁰⁶ This conviction almost sent Paine to the guillotine.¹⁰⁷

When Robespierre and the Jacobins fell, ending the radical phase of the French Revolution, many political prisoners were released, but not Paine. Paine even wrote to the Convention and pleaded for release, but the outspoken author had too many enemies still in power and was forced to wait in prison. Paine finally was given his freedom in November 1794 when James Monroe, the new American ambassador, intervened.¹⁰⁸

Although he spent less than a year in prison, the ordeal seemed to have changed Paine, making him angrier with society. Paine wrote a public letter to a man he once adored, George Washington. Rather than writing this missive to praise the former president, however, he criticized the war hero for betraying both the American and French Revolutions. Ayer argues, Paine was upset that Washington was not more proactive in getting Paine released.¹⁰⁹ His public letter to Washington, who was still regarded as a national treasure, became well known. Another of Paine's books, *The Age of Reason*, in which Paine blasted organized religion and the role it played in society, caused Paine's popularity to plummet, especially in the

¹⁰⁵ Ayer, 128-129.

¹⁰⁶ Kates, 587.

¹⁰⁷ Gilmour, 413.

¹⁰⁸ Ayer, 130-131.

¹⁰⁹ . Ayer, 161-162.

United States. When Paine returned to the United States in October 1802, he did not receive a warm reception because of his writing since the French Revolution.¹¹⁰

On June 8, 1809, Paine died. He was buried in a small ceremony at his farm in New Rochelle, New York.¹¹¹ Like Burke and other writers during this period, death would not absolve Paine of his perceived “crimes.” One author, for example, wrote a deathbed confession for Paine. Although this fictional autobiographical essay is a fabrication, it does allow the reader to understand the feelings of Paine’s political opponents. Within this piece the author had Paine confess that he hired himself out to write against all governments, and admit that because France had obeyed him, the country had suffered.¹¹² With Paine joining Burke in death, so went the two best and brightest combatants in the English literary war in reaction to the French Revolution. Seamus says it best when discussing Paine: “In the great pamphlet war only Paine matched Burke in influence, although in every other respect he was Burke’s antithesis.”¹¹³

¹¹⁰. Ayer, 139.

¹¹¹. Ayer, 180.

¹¹². Brown, 135.

¹¹³. Seamus, 167.

CHAPTER 3

ENGLISH SOCIETY

Burke and Paine were only the best known individuals who voiced their concerns about the French Revolution. Sentiments expressed by other writers, journalists, and diarists from both political persuasions reveal the public opinion of the English population. By examining these records and the reaction and steps taken by the English government, one can learn the extent to which the government felt threatened by events in France in the 1790s. The contributions of professional writers such as Burke and Paine helped prime the discussion. Most writers of the late eighteenth century who supported social reforms generally greeted the French Revolution with a sense of approval, even euphoria. The confusion of the Terror, however, would lead some authors to abandon the Revolution altogether. Others changed from radical to reformer in the face of development in France.

Before the Revolution, England was war weary and financially depressed. Between the years 1689 and 1789, France and Great Britain had been at war for at least thirty-five years. The last war had ended badly for England; France joined with the new nation of the United States to win the American Revolutionary conflict. Both France and England's stature as European powers dipped even more after the conclusion of the war with the United States. Prussia took advantage of England's stature and slipped into Holland to take control.¹¹⁴ Despite this downturn, many of England's European rivals maintained that England's modest army, formidable navy, and vast colonial resources guaranteed that it was still a powerful country.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Michael Duffy, "British Diplomacy and the French Wars 1789-1815." Ed. H.T. Dickinson, *Britain and the French Revolution 1789-1815*. (St. Martin's Press: New York, 1989), 128.

¹¹⁵ Duffy, "British", 137.

Historian Piers Mackesy argues that even though England remained a colonial empire, it could not ignore its interests on the European continent. To begin with, the Low Countries, comprising modern-day Belgium and the Netherlands, were crucial for England's economy since most of their financial dealings flowed through that region's ports. Secondly, France was still considered public enemy number one. So as long as France remained a viable enemy, England had to make sure that her rival felt threatened enough by other European nations to maintain a large land force. English politicians used alliances with other European nations to threaten France. Only thereby would France be unable to afford to build a navy strong enough to challenge England with a possible invasion.¹¹⁶ Wars were expensive, however, and England was heavily taxed. Pitt worked very hard to relieve some of the burden on the citizenry. In February 1791 he announced that revenue had risen, and he believed that he could lower taxes and give the citizens some relief. To accomplish this, he planned to cut funding for the military.¹¹⁷ This was shown by Pitt's 1792 budget in which he planned to have only a little more than seventeen thousand troops guard Great Britain.¹¹⁸

During this period England's population was also growing markedly even as the percentage of literate citizens was increasing. In fact, between 1790 and 1810, literacy rates increased enormously.¹¹⁹ More people were reading in part because more authors were publishing. Publications during the late eighteenth century became more accessible to a growing middle class of professionals. With the increase in literacy, publishing, and a middle class, Great Britain seemed to be experiencing a cultural revolution. Poets such as Blake explored the concept of religion and God. In his poem "There is No Natural Religion" Blake

¹¹⁶ Piers Mackesy, "Strategic Problems of the British War Effort." Ed. H.T. Dickinson, *Britain and the French Revolution 1789-1815.*, (St. Martin's Press: New York, 1989), 147-148.

¹¹⁷ J. Holland Rose, *William Pitt and the Great War.* (G Bell and Sons, Ltd.: London, 1911), 31.

¹¹⁸ Rose, 124.

¹¹⁹ Prickett, 26.

spoke of using reason to determine the existence of God. His conclusion was that organized religion cannot find God, but man can. Blake wrote, "He who sees the Infinite in all things sees God. He who sees the Ratio only sees himself only." He ends the poem by arguing that "Therefore God becomes as we are, that we may be as he is."¹²⁰ Blake's use of reason to explain God and religion attracted many to the theories of the Enlightenment.

Gary Kelly believes that this cultural revolution led by the professional middle class had two objectives. The first objective was to consolidate the middle class and detach it from both the lower class and the aristocracy. Secondly the new class wanted to professionalize the dominant classes and form a political coalition.¹²¹ As France's internal political state began to unravel, England stood by and watched with intrigue. Stephen Prickett simply attributes the rise in literacy in England to this English intrigue with the French Revolution.¹²² French events were noticed throughout the English government, in popular printed media and among intellectuals. As the Revolution gave way to the Terror in 1793-94, fascination tended to be replaced by shock and dismay.

Within the English political structure, the French Revolution appeared at first to be a blessing. Many of England's internal ministers were pleased that France's domestic politics appeared to be in disarray.¹²³ With this being said, not everyone in England was rooting for a complete collapse of France. Pitt was said to have been pleased when Jacques Necker was recalled as director general of finance in France. He was quoted to have said that Necker's

¹²⁰ William Blake, "There is No Natural Religion". Ed. David V. Erdman, *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. (University of California Press: Berkely, 1982), 2.

¹²¹ Gary Kelly, *Women, Writing, and Revolution 1790-1827*. (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1993), 9.

¹²² Prickett, 26.

¹²³ Duffy, 178.

return was “the best thing” that could have happened to France.¹²⁴ Pitt did not allow his pleasure at Necker’s resuscitation keep him from looking after Britain’s own interest. In 1789, Necker came to Pitt, seeking a flour shipment to help feed the citizenry of France. Pitt refused to help, stating that he had to keep his reserves in case Britain might need them. Frank O’Gorman uses this example to bolster his argument that Pitt was hostile toward France. According to O’Gorman, this particular flour shipment could have helped support the French monarchy at least for a little while.¹²⁵

While some among Britain’s political leadership were only privately happy to see a rival collapse, some were openly overjoyed about the change in government. After the fall of the Bastille, Fox was supposed to have said, “How much the greatest event it is that ever happened in the world, and how much the best.”¹²⁶ The British ambassador in Paris also rejoiced because he thought that France would now become a free society and follow the example of the Glorious Revolution.¹²⁷ He was not alone. In fact Fox and the Whig party began to compare the French Revolution with the Glorious Revolution. It seemed logical that France would set up a constitutional monarchy.¹²⁸

Outside of the political realm, however, initial reaction to the Revolution was mixed. Several newspapers were excited about what they saw as the further development of Enlightenment ideas of freedom. Charles Morande, a former newspaper editor, reminded his readers:

¹²⁴ Jennifer Mori, “The British Government and the Bourbon Restoration: The Occupation of Toulon, 1793.”, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 3, September 1997, 702.

¹²⁵ Frank O’Gorman, “Pitt and the ‘Tory’ Reaction to the French Revolution 1789-1815.” *Britain and the French Revolution 1789-1815*. Ed. H.T. Dickinson, (St. Martin’s Press: New York, 1989), 30.

¹²⁶ Hilton, 61.

¹²⁷ Gilmour, 392.

¹²⁸ John Derry, “The Opposition Whigs and the French Revolution, 1789-1815.” *Britain and the French Revolution 1789-1815*. Ed. H.T. Dickinson, (St. Martin’s Press: New York, 1989), 40.

Having lived to see the liberty of the press expire in England, it is with peculiar pleasure, I can tell you, that I have also lived to see it revived in France. While the Constitution of France has been brought to perfection in the rigorous school of public calamity, that of England is every day becoming more and more corrupted. France is at this hour a country the most free of any in the universe; ancient prejudices are done away, and despotism has in an agony of pain [sic] yielded her last breath.¹²⁹

For the English aristocracy, the French Revolution may not have provided them with outright joy or fear but this revolution did provide some trepidation. Correspondence between aristocrats tells of their early wariness. In February 1792, Lady Sutherland, visiting France at the time, wrote to her friend Lady Stafford in England. Sutherland tells her friend that, "all is quiet again in Paris." She does mention that this quiet might be interrupted if the Jacobins began causing trouble.¹³⁰ Four months later, in a letter to Lord Granville Leveson Gower, Lady Stafford quotes Sutherland's description of the continuing drum beating going on in Paris. She confesses, "I hear that the confusion at Paris is now very bad, and that the King and Queen have more reason now than ever to fear for their lives."¹³¹ English aristocrats were wary of this Revolution and feared that it could jump the Channel and bring the end of their way of life. This wariness felt by the aristocrats may not have been shared with the common Englishman. Ian Gilmour quotes an English citizen who mentioned in his journal the fall of the Bastille and a "great rebellion in France" between his comments on the Somerset weather and a purchase of crab.¹³² While the public and press looked warily towards France, the poets and novelists looked to France with the same kind of awe that Fox did.

¹²⁹ Browne, 123.

¹³⁰ *Lord Granville Leveson Gower's Private Correspondence 1781-1821.*, Ed. Castalia Countess Granville, Vol. 1, (EP Dutton and Company: New York, 1916), 31-32.

¹³¹ *Lord Granville*, 41-42.

¹³² Gilmour, 391.

The traveler Arthur Young wrote two telling books about France, and is a perfect example of someone who changed his opinion. The first book dealt with his journeys in France leading up to and during the 1789 Revolution, and his second (written in 1793) was a call of warning to England about the threat of that Revolution. Born in 1741, Young began farming in 1763.¹³³ For the next thirty years, Young wrote and published forty books and pamphlets. While most of those books concerned agriculture, Young also wrote political books.¹³⁴ Young gave up farming when he was appointed as Secretary for the Board of Agriculture in 1794. A move author Liam Brunt called; “a sideways move into public policy”.¹³⁵ Brunt has taken notice that Young, in his books about farming, produced many hypotheses. This eighteenth century author noted both successes and failures of these hypotheses. Those keen observation skills that Young had shown in discussing farming, translated well with his writings on the French Revolution.¹³⁶

In his first book, Young’s opinion was neutral towards the Revolution. There were some experiences during this trip that generally brought hope to the author. One example is a tale told by Young while traveling with the Duke of Liancourt. Young spied a group of men working on a plot of land that belonged to the duke. When asked why they were working the land, their response was that they were cultivating the field for the benefit of their village. Noticing that the duke, who owned this land, was not displeased with that reply. Young states; “This circumstance shews the universal spirit that is gone forth; and proves, that were it pushed a little farther, it might prove a serious matter for all the property of the kingdom.” Young can not help

¹³³ Liam Brunt, “Rehabilitating Arthur Young”. *The Economic History Review*. Vol.56, No.2, (May, 2003), 269.

¹³⁴ Brunt, 265.

¹³⁵ Brunt, 269.

¹³⁶ Brunt, 275.

himself when he openly commends both the duke and the men in the field. He hopes that some day England would allow for such action.¹³⁷

Young did see some things that disturbed him. In particular, in his first book, Young witnessed the arrival of the king of France to Paris from Versailles. He took particular notice of the “mob” that followed very closely behind the King and Queen.¹³⁸ Another concern of Young’s was that it seemed that Paris was running the whole of France recklessly. With the type of foresight that Burke would have commended, Young noted that the Assembly’s decisions were first reached in clubs such as the Jacobins’ meetings the night before and then proposed the next day in the Assembly. Young interviewed a few Assembly members about this trend, and at the time he was told that it was necessary to prevent a counter-revolution. What is more disturbing to Young was when some of those Assembly members confessed that in their opinion the Revolution would not be complete until both the King and Queen made an escape attempt from France. If and when that escape took place, Young was assured they would be captured and then executed to complete the Revolution.¹³⁹

As the Terror unfolded, Young’s cautious optimism or neutrality quickly switched to firm opposition. In his next piece, *The Example of France as a Warning to Britain* published in 1793, Young states that the change in his opinion is due to how the Revolution had turned violent since August, 10 of that year:

¹³⁷ Arthur Young, *Travel during the Years 1787, 1788, and 1789, Undertaken More Particularly with a View of Ascertaining the Cultivation, Wealth, Resources and National Prosperity of the Kingdom of France.*, Vol. 1. (Dublin, Messrs Cross, P. Wagon, L. White, P. Byrne, A. Grueber, 1973), 557-558.

¹³⁸ Young, *Travels*, 553-554.

¹³⁹ Young, *Travels*, 560-561.

How little reason therefore for reproaching me with sentiments contrary to those I published before the 10th of August! I am not changeable, but steady and consistent; the same principles which directed me to approve the Revolution in its commencement (the principles of real liberty), led me to detest it after the 10th of August.¹⁴⁰

Without the assurance of personal security for her citizens, Young argued that the Terror could not assure the rights of man.¹⁴¹ For him, the true danger to England did not lie with the French or their revolution. According to Young, the true danger was the English radicals who wanted to change England into France.¹⁴² The reformers or radicals did not see the potential danger in what was happening in France believed Young. Young took a quote from reformer Dr. Joseph Priestley, who bemoaned that the few led the many and those leaders were usually wicked. Reversing Priestley's words, Young states that in France the many now lead the few and wickedness still existed. The history of evil does not change, he concluded.¹⁴³

Many writers who inveighed against the Revolution expressed the same fear of violence coming to England. They wrote, however, that only the lower and middle class would suffer if the Terror came to England.¹⁴⁴ Young echoes this sentiment by stating in 1793 that by the fourth year of the French Revolution the people of France had suffered more than under a hundred years of a monarch.¹⁴⁵ It was not conservative writers alone who were against the Revolution and spoke up in protest to the Terror. Pro-Revolution writers began to express doubts about France after the Terror began. James Mackintosh, who was an enthusiastic

¹⁴⁰ Arthur Young, *The Example of France a Warning to Britain; The Third Edition*. (London: Bury St. Edmund's, 1793), 4-5.

¹⁴¹ Young, *Example*, 28.

¹⁴² Young, *Example*, 148.

¹⁴³ Young, *Example*, 27-28.

¹⁴⁴ H.T. Dickinson, "Popular Conservatism and Militant Loyalty 1789-1815.", *Britain and the French Revolution, 1789-1815.*, Ed. H.T. Dickinson, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 105.

¹⁴⁵ Young, *Example*, 21.

revolutionary, eventually was transformed into a moderate reformer. He found that giving up his revolutionary ardor eventually caused his fellow revolutionaries to abandon him.

After Burke's *Reflections*, many radical responses were published. One of those "answers" to Burke was *Vindicia Gallicae*, written by Mackintosh. Many radicals praised Mackintosh for developing a more moderate response to Burke than Paine did.¹⁴⁶ Indeed, *Vindicia Gallicae* was a measured defense of the French Revolution. In his book Mackintosh explains the historical events leading to the French Revolution, discusses the character of the Revolution, and even addresses the excess of the Revolution, lambasting his fellow Britons who admire the French.¹⁴⁷ Mackintosh defends the French abolition of the aristocracy on the grounds that it was necessary for the stability of the French government.¹⁴⁸ Mackintosh was not an uncritical supporter of Burke, though; he did attack Burke's theory that James II "abandoned" his throne. Mackintosh claims that James II was "dethroned."¹⁴⁹ While he agrees that the James' removal was necessary, he does not concur with Burke on the legality of the English convention of 1688 compared to the French. Mackintosh says, "They were not even legally elected, as the French Assembly must be confessed to have been."¹⁵⁰ Unlike many radicals, especially Paine, Mackintosh did not advocate revolution for England, but rather he touted reform. "We desire to avert revolution by reform", decried Mackintosh, "We admonish our governors to reform while they retain force to do it with dignity and security."¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ Seamus, 48.

¹⁴⁷ Sir James Mackintosh, *Vindiciae Gallicae: Defense of the French Revolution and its English Admirers Against the Accusation of the Right Honorable Edmund Burke; including Some Strictures of the Late Production of Mons. De Calonne*. (London, 1791), ix.

¹⁴⁸ Mackintosh, 79.

¹⁴⁹ Mackintosh, 303.

¹⁵⁰ Mackintosh, 63-64.

¹⁵¹ Mackintosh, 343.

Vindicia brought Mackintosh fame and the admiration of his peers, but doubts began to rise in him about the events in France. By the September Massacre (1792), he was already turning against the Revolution. In a 1799 series of lectures, Mackintosh surprised everyone when he switched sides. The attack he received from his former colleagues was massive. Mackintosh did not help matters, because soon afterward he accepted a knighthood and a recordership in Bombay. This made the radicals' accusation more plausible because they labeled him a bought mouthpiece for the government. Historian Seamus considers the characterization of Mackintosh as a bought man unfair; he maintains that Mackintosh was merely a scapegoat for what he called "a generation's remorse and disillusion."¹⁵² President Wilson had a similar view. In his opinion, Mackintosh's reversal of opinion was that of an author who had to confess "that he had been the dupe of his enthusiasm."¹⁵³ Mackintosh returned to England and even served in Parliament, where the former radical worked to reform the penal system. He was never able to shed the label of a turncoat who wasted his talent. Seamus characterizes him perfectly when he writes that Mackintosh was caught, "between the sage and the multitude."¹⁵⁴

Other English authors supported the Revolution but rejected the Terror, yet most did not suffer the same ridicule as Mackintosh. William Blake had proudly been a supporter of the Revolution. As discussed earlier, Blake had helped his friend Paine escape the English sedition laws. Blake showed his support for the French by wearing a French bonnet with a white cockade. As the Terror began, though, he tore off the bonnet and swore never to wear it again.¹⁵⁵ Though he was upset with the direction of the French Revolution, he could not bring

¹⁵² Seamus, 45-46.

¹⁵³ Wilson, 140.

¹⁵⁴ Seamus, 56-57.

¹⁵⁵ Prickett, 62.

himself to speak ill of it.¹⁵⁶ Samuel Taylor Coleridge did not have that problem. He wrote to his brother, "I have snapped my squeaking baby trumpet of sedition and the fragments lie scattered in the lumber room of penitence."¹⁵⁷

As the novelists and poets visited the rooms of penitence, the aristocracy was also in shock. By September 1792, Lady Stafford expressed her fears about what the Revolution was becoming. Especially how the lower classes were inspired by the Revolution:

You know the French have taken Mayence and Francfort without a shot being fired. The inhabitants are supposed to be bribed or dazzled with the idea of equality with which the French are endeavoring to bamboozle the lower orders of people and to overturn all government in every nation in Europe.¹⁵⁸

As the Terror devolved into possible war with England, a broad spectrum of the English citizenry began to worry. Pitt's job was to protect England, and he was having a hard time managing the island nation. His list of troubles consisted of food shortages, industry strikes, a flood of French refugees, and his own radicals.¹⁵⁹ Pitt's foreign position was also in trouble; and the new French government was not being very accommodating. Pitt was angered when the French government sent to England an ambassador, who was very pro-Revolutionary. Pitt thought that by accepting this ambassador, he would be publicly accepting the new French government, thus angering other European nations. To protect England from other European nations, Pitt refused to receive the ambassador.¹⁶⁰ Although this action could be interpreted as an insult, it was not Pitt's intention to do so. According to J. Holland Rose, Pitt had decided with his top

¹⁵⁶ Prickett, 111.

¹⁵⁷ Coleridge quoted by Seamus, 58.

¹⁵⁸ *Lord Granville*, 58.

¹⁵⁹ Clive Emsley, "the London 'Insurrection' of December 1792: Fact, Fiction, or Fantasy?". *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 17, No.2, (Spring, 1978), 67.

¹⁶⁰ Rose, 84.

advisors that the best way keep peace with France was to take a firm political stance to every form of French aggression.¹⁶¹

France, however, would not stand by and be treated like a child. In a speech to the Assembly, Bertrand Barere, a member of the Committee of Public Safety, pulled from his pocket what he claimed was a letter from a captured spy. In this captured intelligence, Barere claimed that Pitt planned to bring about the destabilization of their new country. This confirmed all of the Jacobins' fears. England had sent its spies, and France was now infested with them. In truth the captured letter was a forgery.¹⁶² Historian Alfred Cobban researched the British Secret Service before war broke out, and discovered that its budget was roughly twenty-five thousands pounds a year until the declaration of war.¹⁶³ For a nation to spend that little a year on obtaining intelligence about their main European foe was reckless of the Pitt government.

England did indeed have some spies in France. Cobban discovered a great deal of naval intelligence reported by English naval men posted near the French navy.¹⁶⁴ His examination of naval intelligence between 1789-1792 led Cobban to believe that only routine espionage was occurring.¹⁶⁵ Some English spies were not there to spy on France, but were there to spy on their fellow Englishmen. Colonel George Munro lived as a Jacobin Englishmen in Paris during the Revolution. His mission was not to spy on France but to keep an eye on Englishmen, Irishmen, and Americans living in Paris at the time. He accomplished this until he was recognized as an English spy and fled France. David Andress calls the English intelligence

¹⁶¹ Rose, 91.

¹⁶² David Andress, *The Terror: The Merciless War for Freedom in Revolutionary France*. (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux: New York, 2005), 199-200.

¹⁶³ Alfred Cobban, "British Secret Service in France, 1784-1792". *Then English Historical Review*. Vol. 69, No. 271. (April, 1954), 233.

¹⁶⁴ Cobban, 251.

¹⁶⁵ Cobban, 255.

operation in France, "patchy and ad hoc."¹⁶⁶ Once war with France did begin, Cobban noticed that Pitt corrected his mistakes and increased the budget for the secret service.¹⁶⁷

On November 19, 1792, the National Convention in France declared that they would assist any nation that "wished to recover their liberty."¹⁶⁸ When the Austrian Netherlands, modern day Belgium, began to revolt, Pitt's attention was stirred. Pitt was not as concerned about revolutionaries in France at the moment as he was in a revolution in the Austrian Netherlands. Boyd Hilton argues that the evidence suggests that Pitt had assisted Austria in putting down the Netherlanders' 1790 revolt.¹⁶⁹ The reason for Pitt not wanting the Austrian Netherlands and France to be revolutionary partners is that the Low Countries contained shipping ports vital to English export revenues. With a friendly ally close to the valuable ports, France would have an open door to invading or at least influencing Holland's policies. France knew of Britain's reliance on Holland; it also knew that capturing those ports would suffocate the British economy as well as cure France's own financial woes. Pitt and his advisors also realized that if they were able to hold the French off and keep their Continental gateway open, they could, in turn, suffocate the French economy.¹⁷⁰

France's open assurance of helping all foreign citizens wanting to revolt against their own governments did more than encourage the oppressed masses of other countries to express their grievances. Indeed, to many English citizens this statement was a direct threat to the English monarchy. The reason why English citizens were nervous was that many French refugees had arrived in England. By the late 1792, an estimated ten thousand French refugees

¹⁶⁶ Andress, 260-261

¹⁶⁷ Cobban, 261.

¹⁶⁸ Emsley, "The London 'Insurrection'", 72.

¹⁶⁹ Hilton, 67.

¹⁷⁰ Mackesy, 148-149.

resided in London alone.¹⁷¹ Conceivably, some of those refugees could have been agents for revolutionary France. Rumors of French agents were swirling throughout England. Numerous people swore that they had been told that armed riots were coming. Historian Clive Emsley notes that one soldier reported being warned that a revolt in England would be worse than the French Revolution.¹⁷² In December 1792 the Times reported that the British government had prevented an insurrection from happening on the first of December by bolstering the defenses around London and sending in regular troops.¹⁷³ In response to this rumored insurrection the British government suspended habeas corpus and passed laws called “Gagging Acts” that included banning meetings of fifty people or more.¹⁷⁴ The radicals objected to these laws. Coleridge denounced them saying, “the present bills were conceived and laid in the dunghill of despotism among the other unhatched eggs of the old serpent[sic].”¹⁷⁵

In addition by 1795 the British government had passed laws that expanded the definition of treason.¹⁷⁶ This period, starting with the “insurrection” and the beginning of the war between France and Britain, was called Pitt’s Terror by many British radicals. While Pitt was satisfied with the response to the perceived danger, he knew there would be questions from his citizenry and Parliament about the details of the threat. In a letter dated December 4, he wrote: “I doubt whether we could, from our present materials, give as precise answer as we should wish.”¹⁷⁷ He was never more right.

¹⁷¹ Hilton, 62.

¹⁷² Emsley, “The London ‘Insurrection’”, 72-73.

¹⁷³ Emsley, “The London ‘Insurrection’”, 66.

¹⁷⁴ Gilmour, 411-412.

¹⁷⁵ Coleridge quoted by Andrew, 53.

¹⁷⁶ Clive Emsley, “Repression, ‘Terror’ and the Rule of Law in England During the Decade of the French Revolution”, *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 100, No. 397, October, 1985, 811.

¹⁷⁷ Pitt quoted by Emsley, “The London ‘Insurrection’”, 82.

Political opponents attacked the British Terror as a usurpation of British liberty. Fox was one of these vehement critics of Pitt's policies. Fox claimed that the insurrection of December was a fraud. One again, Fox's ex-friend Burke called him out. In the House of Commons, Burke used this insurrection to undercut Fox's position. Burke rose and threw down a dagger to the floor. Burke stated that, unlike Fox, his goal would be, "to keep the French infection from this country." Many radicals believed that it was Pitt's Terror that caused the failure of the radicals' cause. By January 1793 Pitt responded to Fox's accusations by saying the external danger, i.e. future war with France, was linked to the internal danger.¹⁷⁸ Hilton doubts the accuracy of Pitt's claim and contends that although Pitt may not have knowingly started the Terror with information that was false, Pitt failed to carefully inspect the evidence to see if it was lacking.¹⁷⁹ Compared with the French Terror, however, England's Terror was mild.¹⁸⁰ Daniel Eaton, who had published Paine's Rights of Man between 1792 through 1795, was arrested six times, stood trial for all six arrests, and was acquitted by a jury all six times.¹⁸¹ In fact, unlike France, the English government only executed two people on charges of treason in relation to pro-French activity.¹⁸²

Modern historians, much like British citizens in the eighteenth century, have argued about the proposed insurrection and the English Terror. Lucylle Werkmeister, a historian who has researched the English Terror, agrees with Fox that the insurrection was fabricated by Pitt's government.¹⁸³ In contrast, J. Rose claims that Pitt's main mistake was responding to the insurrection. According to Rose the "more intelligent and more courageous course" was to rely

¹⁷⁸ Emsley, "The London 'Insurrection'", 85.

¹⁷⁹ Hilton, 65.

¹⁸⁰ Hilton, 72-73.

¹⁸¹ Prickett, 91.

¹⁸² Gilmour, 414.

¹⁸³ Emsley, "The London 'Insurrection'", 67.

on the English population to shout down the radicals.¹⁸⁴ Emsley does not say whether the insurrection was true or not, but he does theorize that the government leaked this hearsay evidence. The reader might ask why the British government would leak this information. Emsley's answer is short and simple. He claims that this was a perfect way to assess public opinion and to influence loyalists into action.¹⁸⁵ Gilmour's contention that Pitt needed to have public opinion on his side by the time France and England began to exchange war shots does lend credence to Emsley's theory.¹⁸⁶ O'Gorman studied Pitt's political maneuvering during this time, and states that Pitt did contain the threat, no matter how small, by the radicals and the French Revolution by expanding his "political base" and mobilizing his supporters.¹⁸⁷ Foremost among these who rallied in support of Pitt was a man named John Reeves.

A simple advertisement was placed in the *Morning Chronicle* and *Star* newspapers on November 23, 1792, by Reeves, who announced the creation of a loyalist club to combat the pro-revolutionary clubs springing to life in England.¹⁸⁸ According to A.V. Beedel, Reeves was a man of learning, but, unlike many, the more Reeves learned the less tolerant of the Enlightenment he grew.¹⁸⁹ By organizing the public, Reeves and other loyalists made life hard on the radicals. This can be seen in one pamphlet produced by the Association for Preserving Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers, an organization that was chaired by Reeves. In Reeves' four page pamphlet, the organization states its purpose:

¹⁸⁴ Rose, 171.

¹⁸⁵ Emsley, "The London 'Insurrection'", 86.

¹⁸⁶ Gilmour, 400.

¹⁸⁷ O'Gorman, 21.

¹⁸⁸ Michael Duffy, "William Pitt and the Origins of the Loyalist Association Movement of 1792.", *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 4, December 1996, 950.

¹⁸⁹ A.V. Beedel, "John Reeves's Prosecution for Seditious Libel, 1795-96: A Study in Political Cynicism.", *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 4, December, 1993, 800.

That it is now become the duty of all persons, who wish well to their native country, to endeavor, in their several neighbourhoods, to prevent the sad effects of such mischievous industry; and that it would greatly tend to promote these good endeavours, if societies were formed in different parts of the kingdom, whose object should be to support the laws, to suppress seditious publications, and to defend our persons and property the innovations and depredations that seem to be threatened by those who maintain the mischievous opinions before alluded to.¹⁹⁰

Reeves' intolerance of the ideas of the Enlightenment can be seen through the words of the organization. By the second page, the organization states that mankind is happier when the social system is unequal in both rank and fortune. According to Reeves, such inequality is due to the individual and the varying talents of that individual to succeed in the world. It also was this group's contention that if all men were created equal, then those with talent would still succeed and rise in both wealth and rank over other men. To prove the association's theory, they examine France. It was their opinion that as France went about redistributing its wealth, the decisions would be made by "self-opinionated philosophers," an unveiled reference to Robespierre. While France attempted raise the lower orders, it was the "wild and needy mob," which, according to the association, would not be satisfied until they "be gratified with plunder, and afterwards would sink into a state of disappointment and adject [sic] poverty."¹⁹¹

Reeves saw himself as a champion of king and country, and he was willing to do what not even the English government could do. He openly intimidated the radicals.¹⁹² Reeves' organization forced innkeepers, for example, to refuse to allow radicals to hold meetings and pressured local house owners to sign loyalty oaths. This put a stranglehold on the radicals'

¹⁹⁰ Association for Preserving Liberty, and Property Against Republicans and Levellers, *Association for Preserving Liberty and Property Against Republicans and Levellers. At a Meeting of Gentlemen at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, November 20, 1792, John Reeves, Esq. in the Chair, the Following Considerations and Resolutions were Entered into and Agreed Upon.* (London, 1792), 1.

¹⁹¹ Association, 2.

¹⁹² Beedel, 808.

ability to meet and organize their responses.¹⁹³ Hilton observes that the radicals and loyalists seemed to have a “symbiotic relationship,” where the strength of the conservative movement relied on the supposed threat the radicals posed.¹⁹⁴ H.T. Dickerson also agrees; he states that by the 1790’s the radicals were becoming less vocal. As a result, ironically, with out an identifiable foe, English conservatives had nothing to bind them and lost focus.¹⁹⁵

Reeves had written another rumination on the French Revolution, *Thoughts on the English Government*. In this book, Reeves calls on the English public to reject not only the French Revolution, but also the Enlightenment.¹⁹⁶ According to Reeves, the “true” Englishman does not only love liberty; he also trusts his liberty to his social betters.

Thus, an Englishman loves liberty but he loves it not for the sake of the mere name; he must have something substantial that results from it; something that he can see and feel: this he has in the freedom of his person, and the security of his property. An Englishman, therefore, thinks more of his civil than his political liberty; more of the end than the means.¹⁹⁷

Along with liberty, according to Reeves, Englishmen love peace and quiet, and that is one of the main reasons a monarchy is the best form of government. It is the king who makes and executes the laws, allowing the English to enjoy their peace.¹⁹⁸ Reeves was imploring his fellow countrymen to abandon all the progress the nation had made in democratic reforms. These reforms that England had implemented were “seeds” of a foreign infection that had been

¹⁹³ Dickinson, 118.

¹⁹⁴ Hilton, 70.

¹⁹⁵ Dickinson, 116.

¹⁹⁶ Beedel, 807.

¹⁹⁷ John Reeves, *Thoughts on the English Government. Addressed to the Quiet Good Sense of the People of England. In a Series of Letters. Letter the First...* (London, 1795), 5.

¹⁹⁸ Reeves, 8-10.

“scattered in this island.”¹⁹⁹ The author blamed the foreign infection on France. He stated that all the corruption that has occurred in England begins and ends with France. To back his claim, Reeves recounted English history and how changes from the Reformation to the English Civil War were caused by evil influences from the French.²⁰⁰ This arch conservative called the current cry from the radicals for a physical constitution as sad.²⁰¹ Reeves claimed that the only reason that Americans and French created a written constitution was to be different from the English.²⁰² Reeves then went on to examine how the republicans made a decision to damage the English form of government by joining the Whig party.²⁰³ He was concerned about the English radicals and their call for universal suffrage and annual Parliaments. The middleclass, bolstered by dangerous thoughts from both the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, were beginning to have unreasonable expectations, according to Reeves. He continues his attack on the middle class, “This, with an idea of their own importance, inspired by the doctrine of unalienable rights and the natural equality of man.”²⁰⁴ This arch-conservative had no concern about those that disagreed with him. This can be seen by his statement that those that did not approve of a monarchical style of government seemed to be “influenced by a defect of mind.” Reeves did not stop there, and further labeled his political opponents as those who hated peace and also had no form of employment. Instead, they wanted to be politicians and hated all power but their own.²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁹ Reeves , 17.

²⁰⁰ Reeves, 71.

²⁰¹ Reeves, 46.

²⁰² Reeves, 56.

²⁰³ Reeves, 44.

²⁰⁴ Reeves, 74-75.

²⁰⁵ Reeves, 15.

His rejection of the Enlightenment sealed Reeves' fate. After being outmaneuvered continuously by the Pitt government, the opposition led by Fox denounced Reeves' book as seditious libel, the same charge that Pitt's government had leveled against Paine's book. Even Reeves' allies realized Reeves' mistakes. Burke was quoted saying, "If indeed he had left out his entire dissertation on dead men and dead parties his book would not have been the worse for it."²⁰⁶ Although there was conservative pressure on Pitt to save Reeves, Pitt was not in a position to do so. As Beedel explains the situation, Pitt was in a political battle not of his choosing. To sacrifice Reeves to Fox would be a political choice. To satisfy Fox and other Whigs, Pitt maneuvered Parliament into putting Reeves on trial. However, Beedel believes this move allowed Pitt to stack the jury pool and, with the help of an unconvincing prosecutor, win an acquittal for Reeves. Unfortunately that was the best Pitt could do for Reeves, because afterwards Reeves' political career was over.²⁰⁷ Historians differ about the trial of Reeves. John Ehrman believes the trial showed Pitt's sense of fair play and points to Pitt trying both Paine and Reeves, men of opposite political leaning for seditious libel. Robert Dozier disagrees with Ehrman. To Dozier, Pitt merely used Reeves and his organization to intimidate the radicals into being quiet, then, when political pressure from those opponents was too much for Pitt to withstand, he disposed of both Reeves and his organization.²⁰⁸

The French Terror was not the only thing that changed the euphoria of British writers who initially supported the Revolution. Public opinion began to swing against them. Pitt and other anti-revolutionary writers worked to contain the threats caused by these radicals by using the Revolution to move public opinion towards the conservatives.²⁰⁹ One anonymous writer,

²⁰⁶ Burke quoted by Beedel., 813-814.

²⁰⁷ Beedel., 817-819.

²⁰⁸ Beedel., 820.

²⁰⁹ O'Gorman, 21.

who labeled himself “a plain well-meaning Briton” attempted to scare his audience by asking why Paine and others like him supported a new constitution:

What do they desire – a participation of French patriotism – surely not; - for I really think, that those who have not murdered the innocent and drank [sic] the blood of the slain, must sicken to behold the novelties which the doctrines of the Rights of Man have produced.²¹⁰

Indeed, arguments like that did work on the English population. In fact, many citizens were becoming convinced that the natural rights promoted by the French were not rights necessary or suitable for English persons.²¹¹ An Englishman might look around at the time and wonder why he or she should support the radicals when he was content with the status quo. According to Historian Ian Gilmour, the average citizen believed that England’s current political system allowed them to live a freer, successful, and richer life than most Europeans.²¹² Why fix what was not broken? To reinforce this opinion, the anti-revolutionary writers hammered the point that if a revolution happened in England, patterned on the French example, the middle and lower classes would suffer the most.²¹³ A fear of urban resistance allowed the middle and upper classes to meekly submit to the “Gagging Acts.” They did not protest the governmental censorship or Reeves’ loyalists intimidating radicals. With these actions taking place unchecked, the output of revolutionary literature from the radical minority among the middle class slowed down.²¹⁴

²¹⁰ Plain Well-Meaning Briton, “*A Whipper for Levelling Tommy; in Which the Modern Doctrines of the Rights of Man are Properly Stated and the Constitution of England. Fairly Considered, in a Fraternal Address to Manufacturas, Traders, Farmers.*” Ed.. Ray B. Brown, *The Burke-Paine Controversy.* (Harcourt: New York, 1963), 129-130.

²¹¹ Gilmour, 405.

²¹² Gilmour, 397.

²¹³ H.T. Dickinson, 105.

²¹⁴ Kelly, 170.

As noted before, Burke stated that his opposition to the French Revolution was on moral terms. He and other conservatives now viewed the fleeing French Catholic priests not as hated instruments of popery, but rather as fellow Christians escaping an immoral and atheistic revolution.²¹⁵ Indeed, they believed the Jacobins had discarded religion in favor of reason and now were living in anarchy for that sin. The pious English with their god-fearing social order enjoyed calmer political scene.²¹⁶ English clergyman of all political persuasions joined the conservatives and preached about the godlessness of the French Revolution. Apparently this type of sermon was so prevalent that Robert Bage in his novel, *Hermespong*, wrote:

Sermons, to succeed now, must either ascend to the heaven of heavens with Swedenborg or must pour out with pious effusion, and in the most vituperative terms the English tongue will afford, death and damnation to the French.²¹⁷

The use of moral outrage toward the happenings in France allowed conservatives to once again beat the radicals in defining the issue. To be conservative in England at the time was now equal to being both patriotic and virtuous, in contrast to the anarchical and immoral radicals who supported revolution.²¹⁸ By the time the standoff between Britain and France happened over Holland, Pitt did not have to worry about support; he had public opinion on his side.²¹⁹

By 1793 many radical writers found themselves alone in their opinion, and one year later, some of those writers fell silent.²²⁰ John Stevenson believes that Paine needs to share in

²¹⁵ Seamus, 22.

²¹⁶ Dickinson, 22.

²¹⁷ Bage quoted by Seamus, 32.

²¹⁸ Seamus, 169.

²¹⁹ Gilmour, 400.

²²⁰ Ian Robertson Scott, “‘Things as They are’: The Literary Response to the French Revolution 1789-1815”, *Britain and The French Revolution, 1789-1815.*, Ed. H.T. Dickinson, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989), 236.

some of the responsibility. Not only did Paine fail to lead the movement he inspired with the Rights of Man, he also had a hand in altering the language of the debate. Before the Revolution, an English reformer was a good person, who was seeking to improve the lot of common Englishmen and women. According to Stevenson, Paine's radical writings transformed a reformer into a radical, and radicals were not popular in England at the time. This prevented genuine reformers from expressing concerns, because they would be described as radical.²²¹ Reformer soon had to redefine their positions. Historian Ian Scott wrote that the typical English reformer changed. Instead of justifying their reforms by citing rational behavior and the natural rights of man, these writers began to celebrate "the social man", whom would exhibit morals, love of one's country, and championed liberties at the same time.²²²

Time had run out for Pitt; on January 10 France decided to push its claims in Holland.²²³ The French Convention also declared Pitt, "an enemy of the human race."²²⁴ Given France's other foreign conflicts--with Austria and Prussia--Pitt felt fairly sure that defeating France would be easy. From the shadows, Burke declared to Pitt, "No sir, it will be a long war and a dangerous war, but it must be undertaken."²²⁵ This was not the only assumption under which the opponents of France operated, for both England and France assumed that war and the financial constraints of that war would break the treasury of each country.²²⁶ This assumption was correct; England's national debt skyrocketed after war was declared. To help the treasury Pitt believed he also had to raise taxes.²²⁷

²²¹ Stevenson, 71.

²²² Scott, 241.

²²³ Rose, 117.

²²⁴ Rose, 134.

²²⁵ Burke quoted by Rose, 119.

²²⁶ Mackesy, 158.

²²⁷ Rose, 32-33.

Pitt might have had public opinion on his side, but the radicals still raised their voices against what they feared was an unjust war. In the *Monthly Review* one author denounced the war as one “of bigotry, injustice and persecution; a war against the right of reason and of consciences.”²²⁸ An anonymous author in the *Analytical* asked:

What is the irremediable offence, the crime never to be atoned, that the people of France have committed against this country? It is having effected a change in their government by revolution of 1789? They differ from ourselves in this instance only by being a century behind us. Is it in subjecting their monarch to the axe? The British nation set the example.²²⁹

Some modern historians agree with this sentiment. J.H. Plumb argues that the war with France served two purposes. The first was to extend the commercial empire, and the second was to support monarchy and aristocracy. He continues that England fought “not for liberty but for privilege not for equality, but for human subordination.”²³⁰ Plumb’s argument is half borne-out by Pitt’s own words. Pitt admitted that preservation of the Continental entry ports for English export goods made war necessary. If French industry faltered because England kept control of those ports, then there would be a larger market share for England to take. But Plumb’s accusation that England was defending the French monarchy appears groundless in the light of Pitt’s other policies. As noted before, many English ministers were pleased with the downfall of the current French and wished for the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in which a legislative body carried the power of the nation. Historian Rose puts it best when he states that this war was not about monarchy versus republic but was a war to preserve the status quo in Europe.²³¹ At the time, Pitt declared that the war was being fought for security of the nation.²³²

²²⁸ Andrews, 43.

²²⁹ Quoted by Andrews, 71.

²³⁰ Plumb, 92-93.

²³¹ Rose, 100.

Critics, however, would not be silenced with their continuous denunciations that this war was about the destruction of the French republic. That accusation was wrong then and wrong now, according to Duffy. Duffy states that the restoration of the French monarchy was the least important objective in the strategic plans of England at the time. The most important objective was the protection of their trading ports.²³³

Pitt continuously called the war one of French aggression. Fox disagreed. He believed that England had pushed France too far. England, according to Fox, did not deal with the French in a “forthright manner.”²³⁴ Fox could not let the dream of the French Revolution fade. As a politician, Fox was invested both mentally and politically in France. Gilmour argued that Fox could not abandon France because Fox could not separate the French Revolution from its predecessor, the American Revolution.²³⁵ This refusal to accept the failure of the French Revolution began to hurt Fox’s political standing. Lady Stafford in a letter to her son mentioned that Fox was trying everything he could to make the war unpopular. She wrote, “in short, he seems to be leagued with the reigning power in France, and does his utmost to bring this country in the same miserable situation in which France is.”²³⁶ Like the radical writers he supported, Fox had supported a sinking ship called the French Revolution, and was now paying the political price.

Nothing shows how the French Revolution affected the middle class of England as much as the example of the Watt family. James Watt, Sr. was a steam engineer with an industrial plant in Birmingham. He was a widower who had remarried and had four children, two from each marriage. James, Jr., was his eldest son from the first marriage, who was shipped to

²³² Rose, 119.

²³³ Duffy, 134.

²³⁴ Derry, 49.

²³⁵ Gilmour, 412.

²³⁶ *Lord Granville*, 79.

Geneva at the age of fifteen to continue his education.²³⁷ Geneva was not kind to James, Jr. for he was expelled. Back at home, life did not get any easier, and he soon left his family home. James, Sr., fearing that his son could not handle the family business, arranged another position for his son.²³⁸ During this time, Dr. Priestley had come to live in Birmingham. As the debate about the French Revolution heated up, a loyalist mob attacked the Priestly estate. James, Sr., fearing damage to his own plant, was forced to bring a cannon to defend the factory. James, Jr., living in Manchester, had become friends with some English Jacobins. With these new friends, the son believed he had found some kindred spirits. His father, hearing about his son's exploits from some business contacts, was decidedly displeased, especially after the damage and anxiety that had occurred in Birmingham.²³⁹ The son's exploits only got worse for his father when the son landed in France with two of his friends to witness the Revolution. In April of 1792 he wrote his father that he had been invited to address the Paris Jacobin club. His parents were not the only ones disturbed by this. Burke had also found out about James, Jr. and his travels and denounced them in a speech in the House of Commons the same month. Burke made no attempt to separate the younger Watt from his father, and therefore the father's business received a rash of bad publicity. When James, Sr. wrote his child and explained that his actions were hurting his income, his son professed indifference.²⁴⁰

By July 1792 James, Jr. had fully moved into the Jacobin camp on the Revolution. He now supported a continental war and revolution throughout Europe. Peter Jones notes that James, Jr. was not unlike many other "friends of liberty" and that their devotion to the Revolution blinded them. James, Jr. even made excuses for the September Massacres. When the

²³⁷ Peter M. Jones, "Living the Enlightenment and the French Revolution: James Watt, Matthew Boulton, and Their Sons." *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 1, March 1999, 166.

²³⁸ Jones, 168.

²³⁹ Jones, 169-170.

²⁴⁰ Jones, 171-172.

Jacobins began the Terror, James, Jr. heard news of his friends, the Brissotins, being arrested. The Terror's "betrayal" of the Revolution caused the son to have a nervous breakdown. When he recovered from his breakdown and repudiated his revolutionary past, he reconciled with his father and moved back to Birmingham.²⁴¹ Soon the son took over his father's business and shed his radical label. His new realization about his country was, "After all my rambles..., I probably shall never quit this country any more. Particularly as I find all my friends, Dr. Priestley excepted, determined to remain here. Indeed, bad as this country may be, it is the best I know."²⁴²

Watt's example shows how many English, especially well educated persons dealt with the French Revolution. From excitement to disappointment, the English radicals had to adapt to a reality they did not see coming. In their hearts they only saw the possibility for rapid progress in England. With the onset of the Terror and corresponding quick push to influence public opinion by English conservatives, these radicals found themselves drowned out in a din of disapproval both from the outside and from within. They, in turn, decided to silence themselves by never publishing again or by adapting new ways to promote change.

²⁴¹ Jones, 173-175.

²⁴² Quoted by Jones, 182.

CHAPTER 4

WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

As England debated the French Revolution and its potential for disturbance of the traditional English class structure, a new type of author began to emerge in English publications. Those authors were female writers who advocated the revolution in France. However, their enthusiasm for the Revolution derived from their perception of a need for equality between the sexes. These writers challenged not only the traditional social order but also traditional gender roles in English society.²⁴³ Before the Revolution, female authors were confined to writing books such as novels, children books, and biographies that dealt within “women issues”. Books that handled philosophical and political topics authored by women were deeply discouraged by the English publishers.²⁴⁴ With the beginning of the French Revolution, many women began to break through those barriers. Women like Mary Wollstonecraft, Helen Maria Williams, and Mary Hays attempted in their books to raise the consciousness of both men and women not only to the French Revolution but also to the cause of female equality.²⁴⁵ Their public advocacy of women’s rights deprived them of what most English considered a normal life, but to some of them the level of ostracism was worthwhile; in the French Revolution, these women saw the promise of a new civilization where a woman would only be judged on her merits.

²⁴³ Eileen Janes Yeo, “Introduction.” *Radical Femininity: Women’s Self-Representation in the Public Sphere*. Ed. Eileen Janes Yeo, (Manchester University Press: New York, 1998), 2.

²⁴⁴ Kelly, 12.

²⁴⁵ Iain Robertson Scott, “‘Things as They are’: The Literary Response to the French Revolution 1789-1815.” *Britain and the French Revolution, 1789-1815*. Ed. H.T. Dickenson, (St. Martin’s Press: New York, 1989), 236.

During the eighteenth century and before the French Revolution, a woman's life in England was not easy. An upper or middle class woman was only allowed to conduct business if she had an "appropriate" companion. This companion could have been a father, husband or even a paid companion.²⁴⁶ Parliamentary acts such as the Lawes of Resolution of 1632 made it legal in England for a husband to beat his wife. The situation would not change even a hundred and thirty years later, when the Hardwicke Act of 1753 was passed. Although the Hardwicke Act made some changes in women's martial status, it still allowed a woman after marriage no rights of property, no rights to the children produced by the marriage, and no habeas corpus.²⁴⁷ In 1766, James Fordyce wrote *Sermons to Young Women*, in which he advocated proper female behavior and warned his female readers about exhibiting "masculine behavior."²⁴⁸ Three years later in the book, *Médecine de l'Esprit*, the author claimed that there was a link between a human's soul and that person's nerves. The author's hypothesis concluded that since women had extremely poor or fragile nerves then it made sense that women possessed weaker souls than men.²⁴⁹ With the social debate brought about by the French Revolution, English women began to challenge those concepts.

Women writers during the eighteenth century had to overcome a great many entrenched traditions, and long standing social and moral expectations that society had placed on women. While legally women had the right to be seen and heard in the public forum, it was not socially accepted. Author Catherine Decker explains it best:

²⁴⁶ Catherine H. Decker, "Women and Public Space in the Novel of the 1790s". *Women, Revolution, and the Novels of the 1790s*. Ed. Linda Lang-Peralta, (Michigan State University Press: East Lansing, 1999), 3.

²⁴⁷ Lyndall Gordon, *Vindication: A Life of Mary Wollstonecraft*. (Harper Collins Publishers: Great Britain, 2005), pgs 10-11.

²⁴⁸ Steven Blakemore, "Revolution and the French Disease: Laetitia Matilda Hawkins's Letters to Helen Maria Williams," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Vol. 36, No. 3., Summer 1996, 674.

²⁴⁹ Decker, 6.

Any woman who has not gone out to buy milk late at night because she is afraid of being attacked can understand this problem. Legally, she has every right to go to a public store and purchase an item at any time the store is open. However, going out alone late at night is socially suspect – the woman is “asking for trouble.”²⁵⁰

If a woman was to have any political power in the English society it was through influencing her marriage partner. Marie Antoinette, in many radicals’ opinion, was a prime example of a bad spousal influence.²⁵¹ In her book published in 2004, Miriam Burstein claimed that there were two forms of influence available to women before the French Revolution. Those forms of influence were sexual and moral. She even quotes Jon Burton who during the eighteenth century argued that properly educated women should only use influence.²⁵² The best way for a woman to use both sexual and moral influence was through the marriage bed. In English society, the wife was the “custodian” of the family house, she made sure that the domestic and private space for her husband and family was kept in order. This domestic space was considered as feminine. The “masculine” or public arena was too dangerous for women and was handled by the man. Steven Blakemore wrote in 1998 that this perception of a woman’s place was, “not seriously challenged until the French Revolution exploded into European consciousness.”²⁵³

By the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, women of the middle and upper classes were much more literate than ever before. These women were producing a

²⁵⁰ Decker, 1.

²⁵¹ Sian Reynolds, “Introduction:” *Women, State, and Revolution: Essays on Power and Gender in Europe since 1789*. Ed. Sian Reynolds, (The University of Massachusetts Press: Amhurst, 1987), xii.

²⁵² Miriam Elizabeth Burstein, *Narrating Women’s History in Britain; 1770-1902*. (Ashgate: Burlington, 2004), 54-55.

²⁵³ Blakemore, 673-674.

variety of writings for public rather than private consumption. Gary Kelly believes that the French Revolution, combined with the Enlightenment, created a cultural revolution of feminization in England and caused a spike in female participation in literature.²⁵⁴ Kelly explains:

Print enabled women to participate in the Cultural Revolution, and thus in public political life, without relinquishing the feminine character of 'domestic woman'. Commercialized print offered new opportunities to women lacking professional education, authorship did not require leaving the actual or notional confines of domestic life, and the prominence of 'domestic woman' in the Cultural Revolution encouraged a feminization of culture on which women could claim to have some authority."²⁵⁵

The French Revolution showed women writers that influence alone, no matter if it was sexual or moral, was no longer an accepted form of female expression. Many women began to feel that direct participation in the public political process was needed. For many women authors the use of any type of influence in the political process was seen as available only to the aristocrats or very rich. Direct participation in the political process was advocated among more middle class authors like Williams and Wollstonecraft. This influx of direct female action in the public arena disturbed several English conservatives, including Burke. Burke showed his concern when he described those female revolutionaries that had chased Antoinette from her bed chamber in unflattering terms.²⁵⁶ In contrast, Jacobin authors such as Williams and Wollstonecraft took advantage of the opportunity that this new cultural revolution had created and set down the principles for the equality of women.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁴ Kelly, 3.

²⁵⁵ Kelly, 9.

²⁵⁶ Burstein, 58.

²⁵⁷ G. J. Barker-Benfield, "Mary Wollstonecraft: Eighteenth-Century Commonwealth Woman.", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 50, No. 1, January – March, 1989., 108.

Biographer Janet Todd believes that the French Revolution allowed Wollstonecraft and other Jacobin authors to enter the debate for equality among the sexes. Conservatives such as Burke advised readers to conform to traditional gender and society roles.²⁵⁸ Women like Wollstonecraft, who defied Burke, and used the French Revolution to discuss equality between sexes, were seen as masculine women by conservatives. Not only were these women not looked upon as feminine, but also as traitors to both their sex and their country.²⁵⁹ To many men, for women to have a more public role—even in discourse--was not only wrong but a dangerous advancement. Burke likened a French revolutionary woman to a person having a venereal disease. In using the term “French Disease” to apply to women writers, conservative contemporaries suggested that a female writer who advocated the rights of women had contracted a sickness of the mind by learning revolutionary ideas from French.

Helen Maria Williams is a perfect example of someone who was accused of being tainted in this way. Born in 1761 to Welsh and Scottish parents, Williams was educated by teachers who were religious dissenters and pupils of the Enlightenment. Williams wrote reformist literature from the beginning, but always under the guise of a woman’s perspective. This style of writing Gary Kelly calls, “sentimental feminization.” An example of Williams’ work, *On the Bill . . . for Regulating the Slave-Trades*, shows Williams’ use of emotional arguments and an appeal to the supposed “weakness” of her gender.²⁶⁰ Before the Revolution she was considered one of the up-and-coming female poets.²⁶¹ When the Revolution arrived, Williams was attracted to a discussion of events in France because of the anti-slavery position being taken by the revolutionaries. Sold on the merits of the French Revolution, Williams began to

²⁵⁸ Janet Todd, *Mary Wollstonecraft: A Revolutionary Life*. (Columbia University Press: New York, 2000), 181.

²⁵⁹ Blakemore, 675.

²⁶⁰ Kelly, 31-32.

²⁶¹ Blakemore, 675-676.

write revolutionary literature such as *Julia: A novel; Interspersed with some Poetical Pieces*. Williams attached herself to this revolution by using a character named Julia, the same character that revolutionary hero, Robespierre, had previously written about.²⁶² By doing this she had interjected herself into the debate on the Revolution without being invited. To many in England, Williams had been infected with the dreaded “French Disease.” To answer those critics, Williams wrote letter after letter from France detailing the good that was happening in France. The letters were bound together into several volumes of her book, *Letters from France*.

In volume one of her book, which contains letters written during the summer of 1790, Williams was ecstatic over the developments of the Revolution, although she did realize that many in England did not share her feelings. Williams considered England’s disapproval to be the consequence of negative writing on the French Revolution by authors such as Burke, and by fleeing French aristocrats who had taken refuge in England.²⁶³ In response to that English negativity, Williams described a very pleasant picture of France in volume one. In the second letter written, she describes a procession in which the King was to administer an oath to the National Assembly. The mood of the crown is jubilant:

In the streets, at the windows, and on the roofs of the houses, the people, transported with joy, shouted and wept as the procession passed. Old men were seen kneeling in the streets, blessing God that they had lived to witness that happy moment. The people ran to the doors of their houses, loaded with refreshments, which they offered to the troops; and the crowds [sic] of women surrounded the soldiers, and holding up their infants in their arms, and melting into tears, promised to make their children imbibe, from their earliest age, an inviolable attachment to the principles of the new constitution.²⁶⁴

²⁶² Kelly, 33.

²⁶³ Helen Maria Williams, *Letters from France*, Vol. I, (New York: Scholars’ Facsmiles and Reprints Delmar, 1975), 222.

²⁶⁴ Williams, *Letters*. Vol. I, 9-10.

After visiting the Bastille, she claimed that if anyone could not rejoice at the liberation of that structure, that person would not be someone she would want to know, because that individual would not have any room in his heart for joy.²⁶⁵ To Williams, France was much more enlightened country than Britain. While England remained a very pious country, Williams notes that France had little in the way of religion. She does admit that “There is still sufficient degree of superstition and ignorance in some of the provinces, to give the priest a very dangerous influence.”²⁶⁶ When the National Assembly began to debate abolishing slavery, William chided her English brethren: “The French will have the glory of setting us an example, which it will be our humble employment to follow.”²⁶⁷

Williams, like many British writers, gradually began to see the darker side of the French Revolution and eventually was repelled by its transformation. Even as early as the second volume of letters, Williams saw possible problems with the Revolution, although it is doubtful she foresaw the Terror. On the day war was declared against French continental foes, the French mob killed a man. The incident disgusted Williams, who merely wanted to forget the matter, but she did not blame the entire nation: “Let us not, however, include the whole French nation in the disgrace of a few.”²⁶⁸ By late 1792 the Jacobins were a major force in the Convention and Paris. In the third volume of her letters, Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety began to tighten their grip on the French political machine. Williams raged about the future of France and complained that it had “fallen on evil days and evil tongues.”²⁶⁹

²⁶⁵ Williams, *Letters*. Vol. I, 24.

²⁶⁶ Helen Maria Williams, *Letters from France*, Vol. II, (New York: Scholars’ Facsmiles and Reprints Delmar, 1975), 153.

²⁶⁷ Williams, *Letters*. Vol. II, 48.

²⁶⁸ Williams, *Letters*. Vol.II, 201-202.

²⁶⁹ Helen Maria Williams, *Letters from France*, Vol. III, (New York: Scholars’ Facsmiles and Reprints Delmar, 1975), 21.

Realizing that her political opponents would be capitalizing on the misfortune of France, she called Burke out by name, claiming that he could now glory in “his prophecies.”²⁷⁰

Men were not the only writers who stepped up to chastise Williams and Wollstonecraft. Laetitia Matilda Hawkins wrote her own book that attacked Williams. Copying Williams’ Letters from France, Hawkins named her book, Letters on the Female Mind. Hawkins “wrote to” Williams to plead with her to forsake the French Revolution that was threatening England. Born in 1759 to another conservative author, John Hawkins, she was raised in aristocratic surroundings. Hawkins’ politics and beliefs were as conservative as any man wanting to preserve the status quo. This need to maintain the status quo is evident in Hawkins’ first draft of her book.²⁷¹

Hawkins was concerned that these revolutionary thoughts of Williams would not only damage the government of England but also might imperil the traditional concept of womanhood in England. Hawkins painted Williams as being emotionally involved with the French Revolution. This accusation by Hawkins was a strong charge, because the Revolution was about the rights of “rational” men. Hawkins writes about Williams’ involvement, “that the heart unaided by the head is the most deceitful advisor we can listen to.”²⁷² Hawkins and Williams even disagreed on whether the French Revolution was either “feminine” or “masculine”. Hawkins compared Williams and other female radical to the biblical character of Eve, a woman who caused masculinity to fall.²⁷³ In his article on the Hawkins-Williams debate, author Blakemore explained why Hawkins’ feared the French Revolution:

²⁷⁰ Williams, *Letters*. Vol. III, 39.

²⁷¹ Blakemore, 676-677.

²⁷² Blakemore, 677-678.

²⁷³ Blakemore, 681.

Consequently, the role of English women in the counter revolutionary crusade was crucial – women were the guardian of the private, familial morality that created and sustained national morality. The Revolution constituted a national crisis in mores and manners.²⁷⁴

The battle between these authors sounds very much like the contest between Paine and Burke. Like Burke, Hawkins wrote her book more for an English audience, and like Paine, Hawkins had the advantage over Williams. She got to read Williams first, before she responded. This allowed her to devise an argumentative stance stronger than Williams' position.²⁷⁵ Even Hawkins' choice to publish anonymously is seen today as political statement. Historian Kelly explains that women, "Published anonymously so as not to transgress the convention that publishing or making oneself public was in its nature unfeminine and un-lady like."²⁷⁶ Author Blakemore agrees with Kelly, he says Hawkins is not only telling Williams but all of England that since she published anonymously, Hawkins was more feminine than Williams.²⁷⁷

By the time the French Revolution moved into a more radical stage, the movement for the improvement of women's status began to lose steam. Even the famous English reformers Reverend Price and Dr. Priestley were interested only in universal male suffrage; as radical as they were, they did not advocate female suffrage.²⁷⁸ Indeed, soon the French Revolution would turn against women's suffrage: Robespierre and the Jacobins would soon repress women even further.²⁷⁹ To Williams this was the end for the French Revolution, because she had always

²⁷⁴ Blakemore, 687.

²⁷⁵ Blakemore., 684-685.

²⁷⁶ Kelly, 112.

²⁷⁷ Blakemore, 677-678.

²⁷⁸ Barker-Benfield, 98.

²⁷⁹ Blakemore, 688.

seen the Revolution as something truly feminine. To her, the Jacobins and their version of Revolution were decidedly masculine and thus counterrevolutionary.²⁸⁰

Wollstonecraft is considered by many historians as the trail blazer for women's equality. Her theories on equality between the sexes were not born during the French Revolution, but were developed during her early childhood. Those experiences of her early life would show their influence in her writings during the French Revolution. Wollstonecraft was born in London on April 27, 1759. From the beginning, Wollstonecraft felt like a second-class citizen because Edward, Mary's older brother, was their mother's favorite child.²⁸¹ Mary's father, Edward John Wollstonecraft, had received an inheritance and had decided to use that money to raise his social standing. He packed his wife Elizabeth Wollstonecraft and family and moved to the country, where he attempted to become a gentleman farmer.²⁸² Mary's father's plans were ill conceived, and his family was forced to pay the price for his failures. With each failure, Wollstonecraft's father drank excessively and then took out his frustrations by physically abusing his wife.²⁸³ Along with the physical mistreatment, the father emotionally abused the rest of the family. With every failure he uprooted his family and moved to a new location to avoid debt collectors.²⁸⁴ The emotional toll on his daughter Mary can be seen by reading her work. In her novel, *Mary*, the fictional father routinely beats his wife.²⁸⁵ William Godwin, Mary's future husband, and an author himself, wrote that Mary described her father as a despot.

²⁸⁰ Kelly, 63.

²⁸¹ Gordon, 6.

²⁸² Gordon, 7-8.

²⁸³ Gordon, 9.

²⁸⁴ Gordon, 18.

²⁸⁵ Gordon, 9.

Lyndall Gordon believes that combining Godwin's description of Mary's father and the fictional father in *Mary*, the reader can discover Wollstonecraft's true feelings about her father.²⁸⁶

Another possible despot in Wollstonecraft's youth was the family favorite, her elder brother Edward, commonly called Ned. As was tradition at that time, the eldest son received the entire inheritance. Therefore, all marriages and family business had to flow through Ned. This gave the Wollstonecraft children's brother an enormous amount of power to exert over his siblings' lives and reminded Mary of how men could control women's lives.²⁸⁷ The fact that both her father and older brother were socially able to become domestic despots or tyrants explains the underlining anger Wollstonecraft brought to her writing. One historian believed that Wollstonecraft transferred her own feelings towards her despots, her father and brother, to the French peasantry. This is why, when the French Revolution began, she was so much in favor of it. To Wollstonecraft, the average French citizen was like an English woman. Neither was defenseless, but those with power in France and England made the French citizen and English woman weak.²⁸⁸

As a woman with few opportunities because Ned controlled her dowry, Mary was forced into traditional jobs for women such as a paid companion, governess, and teacher. By the time she was twenty-five the independent daughter had taken a teaching position at Newington Green and was able to earn enough money to monetarily support her sisters.²⁸⁹ During this time, when Wollstonecraft began attending sermons of Dr. Price, she decided to become a writer.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁶ Gordon, 11.

²⁸⁷ Gordon, 19-20.

²⁸⁸ Irene Coltman Brown, "Mary Wollstonecraft and the French Revolution or Feminism and the Rights of Men." *Women, State, and Revolution: Essays on Power and Gender in Europe since 1789*. Ed. Sian Reynolds, (The University of Massachusetts Press: Amhurst, 1987), 3.

²⁸⁹ Gordon, 46.

²⁹⁰ Gordon, 48-49.

At the age of twenty-nine, however, Wollstonecraft found she could not support herself in such an enterprise. So she went to see Joseph Johnson, an old friend and publisher.²⁹¹ Johnson arranged for Wollstonecraft a modest apartment and even provided a servant for her. The budding author did not even have to let household chores interfere with her work.²⁹² Along with financial help, Johnson offered Mary moral support. Soon Wollstonecraft would rub elbows with Paine and even William Godwin, who were members of Johnson's circle of friends.²⁹³ For approximately two years Wollstonecraft produced traditional women's literature such as novels and children's books.²⁹⁴ Wollstonecraft even did a translation of one of Jacques Necker's books. (At the time, Necker was King Louis XVI's financial minister and a reformer along the same lines as Dr. Price.²⁹⁵) To all appearances, Wollstonecraft had found her calling and was able to make a modest living at writing. Then Dr. Price provoked Burke to write *Reflections* in reaction.

As previously discussed, Burke created a firestorm of opinion with his book. Of all the talented radicals and reformers in England during this time, Wollstonecraft was the first to respond to Burke. Within four weeks she had completed *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* as an answer to Burke. Midway through the book, however, Wollstonecraft decided to abandon her endeavor. Once again, the publisher Johnson came to her rescue and was able to coax her into finishing the book.²⁹⁶ Johnson published Wollstonecraft's response for half the cost of

²⁹¹ Gordon, 125.

²⁹² Gordon, 127.

²⁹³ Gordon, 130.

²⁹⁴ Gordon, 138.

²⁹⁵ Barker-Benfield, 101.

²⁹⁶ Gordon, 141.

Burke's, which allowed Wollstonecraft to appeal to her main audience, the common Englishman.²⁹⁷

A Vindication of the Rights of Men is a short, blunt attack on Burke and his *Reflections*. Both Paine's and Wollstonecraft's responses to Burke are very similar. A majority of the book is spent responding to Burke's allegations or insulting the elder author. Much like Paine's book, Wollstonecraft's book was addressed to the commoner and is phrased in ordinary language. The first paragraph in *Vindication* makes this point:

I have not yet learned to twist my periods, nor in the equivocal idiom of politeness, to disguise my sentiments, and imply what I should be afraid to utter. ... You see I do not condescend to cull my words to the invidious phrase, nor shall I be prevented from giving a manly definition of it, by the flimsy ridicule which a lively fancy has interwoven with the present acceptance of the term.²⁹⁸

As noted earlier, Wollstonecraft and others may have chosen to tell their audience that they would use common language to gain the reader's sympathy.

In a more substantial argument, Wollstonecraft attacks Burke's inheritance theory, just as Paine did. Where she separated herself from Paine and others is that Wollstonecraft attacked the premise that the Magna Carta was a good thing. Paine and other radical writers claimed that an "inherited" constitution could not exist because a country needed a written constitution. Wollstonecraft allowed for the premise of an "inherited" constitution, but she believed that the foundation of that constitution was invalid because it was signed out of duress. She called the nobles "barbarous insurgents" that forced a king by sword point to assent to the Magna Carta. If one is to take Burke's theory seriously, according to Wollstonecraft, the entire civilization of England had its foundation built in the sand. She spoke about how the Magna Carta had caused this English foundation to be built poorly, since "chaos becomes the base of

²⁹⁷ Gordon, 143.

²⁹⁸ Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*. Ed. Janet Todd and Marilyn Butler, *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft*, Vol.5. (New York: University Press, 1989), 7.

the mighty structure.”²⁹⁹ It is obvious why she disliked inherited theories. Both her father and older brother abuse of their inherited rights had soured Wollstonecraft. Her life and her liberty had been curtailed because of the inherited rights that her father and brother had. Burke, being a man, could easily accept an “inherited” constitution, but to Wollstonecraft “divine right” and not inheritance should determine any man or woman’s fate.³⁰⁰

Wollstonecraft also attacked what many saw as internal contradictions in Burke’s writing:

I glow with indignation when I attempt, methodically, to unravel your slavish paradoxes, in which I can find no fixed first principle to refute; I shall not, therefore, condescend to shew where you affirm in one page what you deny in another; and how frequently you draw conclusions without any previous premises.”³⁰¹

She points the reader’s attention to Burke and his support of the Prince of Wales during the crisis that occurred during the madness of George III. Wollstonecraft asked why Burke wept after the dethronement of Louis and Antoinette while he attempted to dethrone his own king.³⁰²

Wollstonecraft did not merely attempt to counter every argument that Burke made, but decided to sling some mud at her opposing author. In of her accusations she insinuated that Burke had been paid off by the government to produce anti-revolutionary literature. She wondered whether he was enjoying “the wages of falsehood” and had “secured himself a pension of fifteen hundred pounds per annum on the Irish Establishment?”³⁰³ Editors Janet Todd and Marilyn Butler researched Wollstonecraft’s claims. The two found that Pitt did not

²⁹⁹ Wollstonecraft, 11.

³⁰⁰ Glynis Ridley, “Injustice in the Works of Godwin and Wollstonecraft.” *Women, Revolution, and the Novels of the 1790s*. Ed. Linda Lang-Peralta, (Michigan State University Press: East Lansing, 1999), 83.

³⁰¹ Wollstonecraft, 10.

³⁰² Gordon, 142.

³⁰³ Wollstonecraft, 12.

grant Burke a pension of twelve hundred pounds until 1794, which leaves Wollstonecraft's accusation groundless.³⁰⁴ Wollstonecraft did not stop there. At one point she even compared Burke to the Jewish leaders who wanted to crucify Jesus Christ.³⁰⁵ To Protestant England, this might have been a more damning personal attack than it would appear to modern readers. Why did Wollstonecraft depart from her attempt to refute Burke's theory to engage in a personal attack? An answer might be in the person of Dr. Price. It was he who was Mary's earlier inspiration, and it was he who provoked Burke to write *Reflections*. If avenging Price's honor was the purpose of Wollstonecraft's personal attacks, then she outdid herself. Todd and Butler noted that Burke did not attack Price as savagely as Wollstonecraft attacked Burke.³⁰⁶

Towards the end of *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*, Wollstonecraft took on Burke on the importance of property. One of Burke's objections to the French Revolution was the lack of respect the revolutionaries showed to private property, such as land and property owned by the Church. Wollstonecraft saw Burke's defense of private property as his siding with the oppressors against the needy. She writes, "But, among all your plausible arguments, and with your contempt for the poor always appears conspicuous, and rouses my indignation."³⁰⁷ While Burke theorized that hard work pays off with material goods, she saw only the oppressors gaining a greater slice of the pie. Wollstonecraft calls Burke's opinion as a, "tyrannic spirit". She continues, "Why cannot large estates be divided into small farms? These dwellings would indeed grace our land."³⁰⁸ Why is she expressing opposition toward private property rights? Many Englishmen at the time saw French Revolutionaries as "enemies of property", because they relied on communes; therefore, English artists who supported the Revolution were also

³⁰⁴ Wollstonecraft, 12.

³⁰⁵ Wollstonecraft, 13-14.

³⁰⁶ Wollstonecraft, 44.

³⁰⁷ Wollstonecraft, 55.

³⁰⁸ Wollstonecraft, 57.

labeled as “enemies of property”.³⁰⁹ Gordon’s biography on Wollstonecraft develops a reasonable theory explaining why she did not respect the rights of property. Gordon believes that Wollstonecraft was inveighing against private property because throughout her life she had fought against being property. With the marriage laws, a woman was her father’s property till she married, and then she became her husband’s. The two male authority figures in her life, a drunken and abusive father, and a powerful and manipulative brother, were both men of property. Evidently Mary wanted nothing to do with them, and she also rejected the capitalist society that raised them.³¹⁰ Angela Keane in the beginning of the twenty-first century had another theory why Wollstonecraft seemed to be against the rights of property owners:

Wollstonecraft explicitly turned against the image of the commercial citizen, portraying the deadening effects of trade on the imagination, which she regarded as a vital faculty for social sympathy. The imagination, she suggest, has been appropriated by capitalism.³¹¹

Whether it was Wollstonecraft’s hatred of her two despotic figures or her feeling that capitalism stunted the creative mind, she was definitely drawn to the communal aspect that the French Revolution proposed.

A *Vindication of the Rights of Men* was received very well, especially by women. Being one of the first to respond to Burke cast Wollstonecraft in the spotlight for a moment. But her spotlight quickly faded as Paine’s response to Burke soon followed. It was Paine’s rejoinder to Burke that garnered the greatest attention in the 1790s, as it has since that time.³¹² In part this was due to Paine’s ability as an advocate: Paine was also a more accomplished writer than she. Even William Godwin, her future husband, pointed out that Wollstonecraft’s book had

³⁰⁹ Todd, 199.

³¹⁰ Gordon, 146.

³¹¹ Angela Keane, *Women Writers and the English Nation in the 1790s*. (Cambridge University Press: New York, 2000), 8.

³¹² Kelly, 17.

errors in both grammar and composition. It did not matter to Wollstonecraft because she was working on a new book that would be a more memorable product than her initial offering.

Wollstonecraft's next work was *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. Unlike her previous book, she set down her own ideas and paid little attention to other authors. In short, Wollstonecraft took the concept of "divine right" that was used in *Vindication for the Rights of Men*. If the citizens of France could see that everybody had a "divine right" then so could the women of England. She proposed that women's perceived feebleness was derived from education and was not hereditary.³¹³ Her thesis revolutionized future movements to enhance women's legal and social standing. Historian Kate Soper claims that Wollstonecraft's book is the source book for modern feminist and democratic thinking.³¹⁴ Mary's creation influenced many women through out the world.

Since being an educator was part of Wollstonecraft's past, the future of education always seemed to interest her. The notion of women being "soft" irritated the author. She believed that being vulnerable was equivalent to loosing one's soul. She writes:

To account for, and excuse the tyranny of man's many ingenious arguments have been brought forward to prove, that the two sexes, in the acquirement of virtue, ought to aim at attaining a very different character: or, to speak explicitly, women are not allowed to have sufficient strength of mind to acquire what really deserves the name of virtue. Yet it should seem, allowing them to have souls, that there is but one way appointed by Providence to lead mankind to either virtue or happiness.³¹⁵

³¹³ Barker-Benfield, 110.

³¹⁴ Kate Soper. "Naked Human Nature and the Draperies of Custom; Wollstonecraft on Equality, and Democracy". Ed. Elleen Janes Yeo, *Mary Wollstonecraft and 200 years of Feminism*. (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1997), 207.

³¹⁵ Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: with Stricture on Political, and Moral Subjects*. Ed. Janet Todd & Marilyn Butler, *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft*. Vol.5, (New York: University Press, 1989), 88.

Wollstonecraft claimed that without an education, and hence without a soul, women were forced to rely on their husbands. Wollstonecraft's own experiences with men of authority warned her not to accept this because, as she put it, men could act like overgrown children. This allowed, "The blind to lead the blind."³¹⁶ When couples are young and in love their mutual attraction creates blindness. Wollstonecraft asks the reader what happens when the fire and beauty fades from the marriage. She answers this question by stating that a woman allowed to develop both her mind and body would become a greater friend and helpmate to her husband when the fires of desire fade.³¹⁷

Wollstonecraft then challenged Rousseau on the issue of women's education. She even labels Rousseau's opinions as "unintelligible paradoxes."³¹⁸ As noted above, Wollstonecraft believed her experience in education gave her the knowledge and right to speak on the subject, and that she had witnessed more girls educated than had Rousseau.³¹⁹

Wollstonecraft tackled Rousseau's opinions not only on access to education but also with regard to the traditional roles of women as educators. One example was the traditional view that women, who have a softer maternal temperament, are better teachers. Wollstonecraft discounts this argument, contending those types of teachers spoil the children.³²⁰ She even speaks to parents of children and encourages them to allow their children freedom of expression. She believes that children who blindly obey their fathers develop a weak character.³²¹ A reader might infer that since Wollstonecraft mentioned obedience to a father and not to the parents, she was again reliving those nights when a drunken father beat his wife.

³¹⁶ Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of Woman*, 91.

³¹⁷ Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of Woman*, 96-98.

³¹⁸ Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of Woman*, 159.

³¹⁹ Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of Woman*, 110-112.

³²⁰ Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of Woman*, 137.

³²¹ Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of Woman*, 225.

Not all her thoughts on education are today regarded as progressive. While Wollstonecraft did advocate boys and girls going to school together, she also advocated separating the children by social status after a set time. She reasoned that students who were more inclined toward manual labor needed to be separated from more intellectually focused and highly gifted students.³²² Wollstonecraft's last challenge is for civilization to allow women to have the same legal, political, social and even economic rights as men. Wollstonecraft believes that with equality women can prove themselves. She did hold that if women could not prove themselves, women's own lack of success might "justify the authority that chains such a weak being to her duty."³²³

Once published, Wollstonecraft did not have to wait long to know of her creation's success. By 1793, three thousands copies had been sold. While this could not compare with Paine's two hundred thousand copies of the Rights of Man, Wollstonecraft had firmly positioned herself as a supporter of equality for women. The author had many admirers, including Abigail Adams, wife of John Adams. In one letter to her husband, Abigail reminded John not to forget women as the new nation struggled to find its way. John wrote back and teased his wife for being, "a disciple of Woolstonecraft [sic] ." Abigail responded that she was no disciple, but she was a, "pupil of Woolstonecraft [sic]."³²⁴ However, not all of the reviews were positive. Thomas Taylor, a former landlord of Wollstonecraft's, wrote a satire titled, A Vindication of the Rights of Brutes.³²⁵ Mary did not reply. Just as she did after her completion of The Rights of Men, Mary had already left The Rights of Woman behind her and decided to view the French Revolution in person.

³²² Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of Woman*, 240.

³²³ Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of Woman*, 266.

³²⁴ Quoted by Gordon, 152-153.

³²⁵ Gordon, 154.

Unfortunately, Wollstonecraft arrived in Paris to witness the violence that the Revolution produced. On December 26, King Louis XVI's trial was held. Mary wrote that she could see people with blood-stained hands looking through her glass door. This truly frightened her and she wrote, "For the first time in my life, I cannot put out my candle."³²⁶ She went on to describe what was happening to Revolutionary France.

I would I could first inform you that out of the chaos of vices and follies, prejudices and virtues, rudely jumbled together, I saw the fair form of Liberty slowly rising, and Virtue expanding her wings to shelter all her children! I should then hear the accounts of the barbarities that have rent the bosom of France patiently, and bless the firm hand that lopped off the rotten limbs. But if aristocracy of birth is leveled with the ground, only to make room for that of riches, I am afraid that the morals of the people will not be much improved by the change...³²⁷

Paine has been quoted defending these revolutionary actions, when he said that these terrible actions were learned behavior. Wollstonecraft, however, did not defend the Revolution as Paine had. Instead, she truthfully exposed the continuing atrocities she witnessed. Although the aristocracy was gone from France, Wollstonecraft wrote that she still saw the same lust for power that was in France before the Revolution.³²⁸ At this point, many British citizens began to flee France, fearing they would be caught up in the Terror, or worse, war with England. Wollstonecraft stayed. Gordon argues that she stayed because she could not pass up the opportunity to view the new education system being installed and wanted to contribute to the birth of that system.³²⁹

Staying in France at this time, however, was extremely dangerous. Thankfully, Wollstonecraft had a guardian angel in the name of Gilbert Imlay. Imlay was an American

³²⁶ Gordon, 183.

³²⁷ Stuart Andres, *The British Periodical Press and the French Revolution, 1789-99*. (Palgrave: New York, 2000), 113.

³²⁸ Andres, 113.

³²⁹ Gordon, 186.

citizen who had written his own feminist novel about women issues, *The Emigrants*. In his book, Imlay discussed the oppression of the married woman, even discussing domestic rape. Wollstonecraft felt that she had met a kindred spirit, and the couple soon fell in love, so much so that she wrote about her dreams of living in the United States.³³⁰ Meanwhile, foreigners in Paris were being investigated for disloyalty to the Revolution. Wollstonecraft decided that her time in France had ended and requested a pass to leave for Switzerland. The request was denied. Instead, Wollstonecraft took up residence at a cottage outside the walls of Paris, where she began work on her history of the French Revolution.³³¹ Even in the cottage, though, the specter of the Terror loomed. While visiting Imlay inside the Paris walls, Wollstonecraft slipped in a pool of blood. Offended, she began to complain loudly, but was warned to keep silent for her own safety.³³²

Her danger only increased. Soon war between the two countries made life for any English person in France mortally dangerous. Imlay declared Wollstonecraft his wife and thus an American citizen. From that moment Wollstonecraft was safe in Paris, and soon she moved back into the city to set up housekeeping with Imlay. Shortly thereafter she became pregnant.³³³ Wollstonecraft seemed happy; however, the thoughts of tyrants and despots were still with her. After the birth of their daughter, Wollstonecraft wrote to Imlay and confessed that she still considered most men “systematic tyrants,” except for him. On January 1, 1794, Wollstonecraft and her child left France for England, where Imlay was conducting business. There was no problem with a pass this time, thanks to Imlay’s American status. Wollstonecraft had witnessed the brutality of the Terror and was determined to share her observations with the

³³⁰ Gordon, 202-204.

³³¹ Gordon, 206-207.

³³² Gordon, 211.

³³³ Gordon, 212-213.

world. So as she left, she smuggled out her manuscript on the history of the Terror. If the manuscript had been found, she could have ended up in prison.³³⁴

Indeed, the lives of writers such as Wollstonecraft and Williams often shed light on the plight of women in the eighteenth century. In her writings, Wollstonecraft urged women to become “active citizens” and to “discharge their civil duties.”³³⁵ While Wollstonecraft encouraged her readers and followers to participate in the public sphere of English politics, there were still women who continued to rely on the “influence”, either sexual or moral, to participate in politics. Antoinette’s supposed use of her influence was one of the leading pre conditions for the French Revolution. However, moral influence was touted by evangelical, Hannah More, who wrote texts encouraging her female readers to use their influence to improve English life. She also wrote sophisticated patriotic texts denouncing the French Revolution.³³⁶ This is not to say that More was against female equality. Like Wollstonecraft, More advocated a better form of female education. Unlike Wollstonecraft, however More believed that a better educated woman could reject the influence of an atheistic revolution like the French Revolution.³³⁷

More believed that women who used moral influence were the backbone not only of English society but of the country’s economy as well.³³⁸ The evangelical writer felt that a woman’s role in her home economics was crucial; she even disagreed with a giant in the field of economics, Adam Smith. Smith argued that there was no connection between the national economic health and the home economic health. More disagreed. She felt that a woman, who was in charge of the family’s home, including how her family spent money for food and services,

³³⁴ Gordon, 226.

³³⁵ Barker-Benfield, 112.

³³⁶ Keane, 134.

³³⁷ Keane, 146.

³³⁸ Keane, 146.

was the link between an average home and a nation's economy. If More's theory was correct, that would make women into Smith's "invisible hand" that was Smith's answer for the self-correcting agent of capitalism.³³⁹ Elizabeth Wallace in 1991 described More's philosophy: "For at the heart of [More's work] lies a pattern of female domestic heroism, an image of activity, strength, fortitude, and ethical maturity, or self-denial, purity, and truth."³⁴⁰

It seems odd to today's modern reader that a woman who entered into the public arena wrote to encourage women to behave in traditional roles and only use moral influence. More, unlike Wollstonecraft, belonged to the evangelical movement. This movement gave More a socially acceptable platform from which to preach her message. Wallace described this relationship between More and the evangelicals as "paradoxical." In Wallace's opinion, even though More defended the social norms and morality, she was raised to a position of prominence because she was a woman.³⁴¹ However, even though More preached to women the maintenance of social norms, people were afraid that promoting More would emasculate the Evangelical church's leadership.³⁴² While she promoted traditional social norms, her mere presence made traditionalist afraid.

Life after the French Revolution was difficult for both Williams and Wollstonecraft. Both suffered personal and professional hardships. Williams faced professional setbacks due to her Revolutionary past. Her continual praise for the French Revolution had caused many in the British reading public to turn their backs on her and any of her future writings.³⁴³ For Wollstonecraft, life after the French Revolution would mirror those obstacles she had warned

³³⁹ Keane, 143-144.

³⁴⁰ Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Their Fathers' Daughters: Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth, and Patriarchal Complicity*. (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1991), 59.

³⁴¹ Wallace, 57.

³⁴² Wallace, 88.

³⁴³ Todd, 213.

her readers about. After surviving a bad relationship, suicide attempts, and poor public relations, Wollstonecraft died in child birth.

The end of Wollstonecraft's life seemed to be the zenith for pro-women writing and also the demonization of radicalism.³⁴⁴ Controversy would continue to be associated with Wollstonecraft. In 1885, Karl Pearson wanted to rename the Men and Women's Club, a social club, the Mary Wollstonecraft Club, in honor of the writer. Amazingly, the women of the club objected because they considered Wollstonecraft not to have been nor was then a respectable person.³⁴⁵ The "French Disease" would not scrub off even after death. In today's society Wollstonecraft has been given the label of "feminist", and has been called the founder of the feminist movement. Irene Brown disagrees with that sentiment. To Brown, Wollstonecraft was not as much as a feminist as an anti-despot.³⁴⁶ Brown's use of the word "anti-despot" is appropriate. Wollstonecraft herself said that she hated despots. Her hatred of the two domestic despots of her childhood led to her support for the revolution in France. That support of the French Revolution led to her writing a book for the equality of women. Indeed, Wollstonecraft led her life in the pursuit of despots.

Williams also suffered. After the French Revolution, she attributed its failure to the Girondins' inability to control the revolution: too few women had been free to participate. According to her, women who had an eye toward their equal status would have been better able to see the evil of the Jacobins' rise to power.³⁴⁷ Williams wrote a post-mortem on the French Revolution called *Memoirs of the Reign of Robespierre*, in which she showed examples of the strong femininity demonstrated during the Revolution. One such woman was Charlotte Anne Marie Corday, who assassinated Jean Paul Marat. As Williams retells the story of the

³⁴⁴ Blakemore, 689.

³⁴⁵ Gordon, 389.

³⁴⁶ Brown, 21.

³⁴⁷ Kelly, 197.

assassination and Corday's trial, she confers upon Corday a dignity worthy of a hero. Williams describes Corday as she is led to the guillotine:

...it is difficult to conceive the kind of heroism which she displayed on the way to execution. The women who were called "furies of the guillotine," and who had assembled to insult her on leaving the prison, were awed into silence by her demeanour, while some of the spectators uncovered their heads before her, and others gave loud tokens of applause.³⁴⁸

Williams recounted how some women revolutionaries had attempted to delay the Convention with a list of demands such as the exclusions of all former nobles and the provision that all women revolutionaries should wear red caps. But they had insulted some at the Convention and, according to Williams, these female revolutionaries disappeared.³⁴⁹ Williams clearly wanted to show how the feminized revolution created by the Girondins was destroyed by the Jacobins.

After the 1801 peace treaty, Williams wrote *Ode to Peace*, which experienced some success, most likely due to the war weariness of Britain at the time, says Kelly. As soon as war resumed between the two countries Williams experienced a backlash from both countries. English citizens saw her work as treasonous, while Napoleon rejected her because she did not mention him.³⁵⁰ As Napoleon began to censor some literature, Williams found her own works being censored. She did not publish any work in England till 1814.³⁵¹ Williams began to see Napoleon in the same way as she envisioned Robespierre and the Jacobins, as leading

³⁴⁸ Helen Maria Williams, *Memoirs of the Reign of Robespierre*. (London: John Hamilton Limited), 65-66.

³⁴⁹ Williams, *Memoirs*, 68-69.

³⁵⁰ Kelly, 199-200.

³⁵¹ Kelly, 206.

“masculine” revolutions. Therefore, when Wellington defeated Napoleon, Williams celebrated, because to her Wellington represented the feminine triumphing over the masculine.³⁵²

With the defeat of Napoleon, Williams decided to tackle the history of the French Revolution. She wrote her version as a counterpoint to other histories that did not take into consideration the effect the “feminized” Girondins played in the Revolution.³⁵³

Both England and France, however, were moving away from Williams’ view of political history. Her next-to-last work was not even published in England. Williams was being forgotten.³⁵⁴ On December 15, 1827, Williams died. Her accomplishments were not well remembered by the critics at the time of her passing. The Monthly Review claimed that while her works were popular at the end of the last century, they were not memorable and were already being forgotten. The modern day scholar Gordon disagrees, saying that if it were not for Williams, there might not have been such a thing as a perspective on history through a woman’s eyes³⁵⁵ This insistence by Williams that women could have a unique approach to the writing of history could also be considered as one of the forerunners to social history, Gordon concludes.

Many women looked to the example of Wollstonecraft and Williams as they wrote about the French Revolution for an English audience. One such woman was Mary Hays. Hays was born in 1760 to two middle class dissenters. Although she was already an author, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* inspired her.³⁵⁶ When Hays sought out Wollstonecraft for advice, she was sorely rejected. Wollstonecraft blasted her work for being too “feminine” because it was fictional in format.³⁵⁷ Hays would not let this criticism affect her confidence. Like many women

³⁵² Kelly, 211.

³⁵³ Kelly, 227.

³⁵⁴ Kelly, 222.

³⁵⁵ Kelly, 232-233.

³⁵⁶ Kelly, 80.

³⁵⁷ Kelly, 84-85.

authors, Hays used novels to present her perception of intelligent women and domineering men. In Hays' *Memoirs of Emma Courtney*, the protagonist's father begins the book as a greedy and self-serving man. Within the first few paragraphs of the first chapter, however, Hays describes the father as a man with "some talents" who courts his future wife for her inheritance. When the protagonist is born, the father merely kisses his child and allows the mother's aunt to take temporary guardianship. Hays' opinion of most women at this time was not any kinder. Her explanation of why her protagonist's mother married the father does not describe a woman that Hays would have admired: "dazzled by vanity, and misled by self-love, she married him; found, when too late, her error; bitterly repented and died in child bed...."³⁵⁸

Hays did not write only novels regretting women's position within English society; she also spoke her mind in essays and poems. In one essay, Hays explained why the current opinion of a woman's worth was unacceptable.

Of all bondage, mental bondage is surely the most fatal; the absurd despotism which has hitherto, with more than gothic barbarity, enslaved the female mind, the enervating and degrading system of manners by which the understanding of women have been chained down to frivolity and trifles, have increased the general tide of effeminary and corruption.³⁵⁹

In Hays' opinion, governments needed to accept more women into governmental positions. She wrote that women would better lead a government because they were emotionally detached enough to avoid the corruption that affected men in power.³⁶⁰ Those men in authority had no interest in a strong or assertive woman discussing her opinion on important matters. Hays believed powerful men feared that type of women because it damaged not only their

³⁵⁸ Mary Hays, *Memoirs of Emma Courtney*. Introduction by Sally Cline, (London: Pandora, 1987), 6-7.

³⁵⁹ Mary Hays, "On the Influence of Authority and Custom on the Female Mind and Manners". *Letters and Essays, Moral and Miscellaneous*. (London, 1793), 19.

³⁶⁰ Kelly, 87.

“mistaken self-interest”, but degraded their authority also.³⁶¹ Her views became even more radical. In a letter to Godwin, Hays stated that there were two classes of women victims. In the first class were women who married and exchanged sex for material security. The second class of victims was women who rejected marriage and then were forced to be celibate by society.³⁶² To not be celibate would mean that a woman was infected by the “French Disease.” It was married men who labeled women in such way. Those men formed their opinion, according to Hays, only because the women in question dared to be unmarried.³⁶³ Hays looked to Wollstonecraft and Williams as examples. Hays had no doubt that women’s issues would become more recognized. She said, “The rights of woman, and the name of Woolstonecraft[sic], will go down to posterity with reverence, when the pointless sarcasm of witlings are forgotten.”³⁶⁴

Like Williams, Hays attempted to write history from a woman’s perspective. The History of England and Historical Dialogues for Young Persons were Hays’ contributions to that form of social history. In writing these books, Hays explained that, she was trying to “repair women’s alienation from both history and historiography.” In an essay on civil liberties, she assured her reader that the French Revolution would bear fruit: “Posterity will, I have no doubt, reap the benefit of the present struggles in France, but they are ruinous and dreadful to those actually engaged in them.”³⁶⁵ Unfortunately some of her work has not stood the test of time. Gordon labeled The History of England as nothing more than “hack work.”³⁶⁶

³⁶¹ Hays, “Influence”, 22.

³⁶² Kelly, 92.

³⁶³ Hays, “Influence”, 28-29.

³⁶⁴ Hays, “Influence”, 21.

³⁶⁵ Mary Hays, “Thoughts on Civil Liberty,” *Letters and Essays, Moral and Miscellaneous*. (London, 1793), 17.

³⁶⁶ Hays Quoted by Kelly, 250.

Hays, like Wollstonecraft and Williams, learned that the “French Disease” was hard on both personal and professional lives. After the French Revolution, Hays wrote, *The Victim of Prejudice*. Her advocacy of women playing a greater role in government and society, however, was increasingly spurned by the public. Kelly quotes the *Anti-Jacobin Review* that savagely attacked her:

‘It is most for the advantage of society that women should be so brought up as to make them dutiful daughters, affectionate wives, tender mothers, and good Christians, or, by a corrupt and vicious system of education, fit them for revolutionary agents, for heroines, for stael, for tallien, for stones, setting aside all decencies, the softness, the gentleness of the female character, and enjoying indiscriminately every envied privilege of man.’³⁶⁷

Hays’ personal reputation was tarnished shortly after the publication of *The Victim of Prejudice*. Poet and novelist Charles Lloyd claimed discretely that he was having an affair with Hays. Hays denied the rumor, calling their relationship nothing more than a “sentimental correspondence.” When she confronted Lloyd, he argued that the misunderstanding was her own fault because of the tone of both her writings and behavior.³⁶⁸ In short order, Hays’ former readers would believe the rumors because Hays had been infected with the “French Disease.” By February 1796, Hays was marginalized and considered professionally dead.³⁶⁹ Hays was not the only woman writer of her era to face irreverence. During the period from 1792 through 1810, women had dominated fictional writing in novels. Like the French Revolution, however, novels came to be more masculine. During this time men were beginning to offer their own novels for publication.³⁷⁰ Even though Hays lived to see Reform Bill 1832, she had given up writing; she published nothing else after *Memoir*. Hays died February 21, 1843.³⁷¹

³⁶⁷ Kelly, 124-125.

³⁶⁸ Kelly, 124-125.

³⁶⁹ Kelly, 110.

³⁷⁰ Kelly, 177.

Why did the French Revolution create writers in England so dedicated to examining and changing women's roles? More importantly why did such women advocates all seem to disappear after the French Revolution? Steven Blakemore believes he can answer the first question. He notes that the French Revolution created the opportunity for those women writers to advance their causes: "For women the Revolution produces a crisis in female identity and hence a revolution in the family affecting the nation."³⁷² He also notes that although the creation of these pro-women writers was attributed to the French Revolution, there were other factors that allowed women to stand up and demand that their voices be heard. One factor was the secularism of the Enlightenment. The second factor was the rise of the middle class. There were no longer just the aristocracy and the peasants, but a growing middle class who wanted their place in the class structure. The next factor was a growing cult of "sensibility" among the population. The final factor, according to Blakemore was the increased participation of women in English society.³⁷³

The second question—how to explain the decline of writing advocating women's equality—is equally complex to answer. As noted before, novels, histories, and biographies during the Revolutionary period often had been authored by women. Historian Angela Keane believes that the cause of this decline was the time period itself. The 1790s was pivotal for two reasons. First the flood of radical literature allowed the emergence of those women who advocated equality. Secondly, when those radical thoughts of equality began to affect the traditionalist form of femininity in the middle class, traditionalists took notice and decided to act against those radical thoughts.³⁷⁴

³⁷¹ Kelly, 264.

³⁷² Blakemore, 682.

³⁷³ Blakemore, 673-674.

³⁷⁴ Keane, 12.

Another theory on why women protest writing in the late eighteenth century lost its influence was the connection between women protest writing and the abolitionist movement. Deirdre Coleman presented this theory in a magazine article in 1994. According to Coleman, with many women writers advocating not only increase in women equality but also the abolition of slavery, many conservatives became worried about interracial mixing.³⁷⁵ As seen before, Wollstonecraft, Williams, and Hays had a very public private life. Each indiscretion was examined in the public sphere. This increase female sexuality caused many conservatives to fear that these liberated middle class women would run amok sexually with liberated black men, whom these women were trying to free through abolition.³⁷⁶ However, this scare tactic had been used since the 1770s by pro-slavery writers. These writers would point to the high level of mulatto populations. What those writers did not discuss was the social inequity when it came to interracial sex. It was perfectly fine for a white male slaver to have sex with black female slave, which might produce a mulatto offspring. It was not socially acceptable for a white female to have sex with a black male, free or otherwise. That act was considered a betrayal of one's race.³⁷⁷

After the Revolution, the forms of literature that had been open to women began to become masculinized and women were forced out of the marketplace. Kelly notes in his book, *Women, Writing, and Revolution, 1790-1827*, that both Williams and Hays seemed less political in their post revolutionary works. Being authors themselves, the women had to eat, and so they wrote on subjects that sold to the public.³⁷⁸ In other words, they adapted to the marketplace to survive. Why they ceased to be considered important after their deaths is perhaps not as

³⁷⁵ Deirdre Coleman, "Conspicuous Consumption: white Abolitionism and English Women's Protest Writing in the 1790s". *The John Hopkins University Press*. Vol. 61, No.2 (Summer 1994), 341.

³⁷⁶ Coleman, 352.

³⁷⁷ Coleman, 356.

³⁷⁸ Kelly, 393.

important as what they did while they were alive. Wollstonecraft, Williams and Hays were part of a movement that helped England move toward equality between the sexes.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Why should one study England's reaction to the French Revolution? In Seamus's opinion, not only were the French and English mortal enemies but they also had a symbiotic relationship with each other. Seamus believes that what the English believed and wrote about the French is exactly what the English believed about themselves.³⁷⁹ Burke's *Reflections* is a perfect example. Burke claimed that *Reflections* was not meant for a French speaking audience but rather the book was composed for Englishmen and women. Burke feared that English radicals could take England down the same path that France was traveling. *Reflections* was Burke's warning of how a revolution could turn into mob violence even with the limited liberties that England enjoyed. The debate created by Burke and others, according to Seamus, would raise questions and issues that affected both "English political and literary life for much of the nineteenth century."³⁸⁰

Burke, as noted before, created a national debate with his opposition to the French Revolution. His strength of character for standing up not only to his own political party but also to many of his friends cannot be doubted, although the reasons for his opposition were debated. What Burke created was a reflection of the sum of his past. From his early childhood, Burke had been fascinated with literature and history. In 1790, he drew upon both those skills in his writing. With his early love of history, Burke formulated a competitive rival theory in response to the French and their supporters who cried out for a new constitution. The "inheritance" theory not only drew upon Burke's love of history but also appealed to his readers' most basic hopes.

³⁷⁹ Seamus, 1.

³⁸⁰ Seamus, 175.

Burke assured those hopes when he claimed that previous events such as the signing of the Magna Carta and the Glorious Revolution were historic proof that England had a constitution, even if it was an implied constitution. However, it must be restated that the scant attention that Burke showed to Cromwell and the English Revolution appeared to show that Burke was “cherry picking” his evidence. When Burke does address Cromwell, the reader is told that Cromwell was a historical necessity to maintain order in England. Why was Cromwell a historical necessity to Burke? The answer is that Burke believed that Cromwell provided a source of moral stability for England. The English Parliament chopped off the head of the previous king during a dispute over who controlled England, so Cromwell, according to Burke, assumed the role of monarch to provide the moral guidance that a monarch should. Burke’s omission of this fact undermines his arguments in *Reflections*.

While Burke’s love of history helped him create and develop the “inheritance theory,” Burke’s love of literature helped him set the tone of the debate that was sure to follow. With his mastery of the English language, Burke was able to establish the conservative view point on top of a literary mountain, which the radical writers would always have to climb. Olivia Smith contends that the anti-revolution crowd controlled the debate early because Burke captured the “linguistic high ground” and that the radicals did not have an adequate vocabulary to go toe-to-toe with Burke. Prickett disagrees and contends that Paine, Wollstonecraft, and Blake had the linguistic skill to debate Burke but ultimately lost due to the evolving outcome in France.³⁸¹ Smith and Prickett miss an important detail. Radicals and reformers that were led by writers such as Paine and Wollstonecraft made a political calculation to appeal directly to the common English citizen. Both Paine and Wollstonecraft asked for “forgiveness” from Burke for their “straight talk”; their writing was not filled with flowery language like his. This pattern was repeated by other authors, both known and anonymous. One radical writer wrote, “I hope you

³⁸¹ Prickett, 12-13.

will not be offended at the plain homely style of this address."³⁸² Their goal was not to convince Burke to grant them some form of absolution. Instead, they intended to inform the reader that the radicals and reformers were common people, and convince them that they should join the radical cause and force a new revolution. Whether this political calculation was correct or not would be unknown for some time.

The reason why the radicals' appeal to the common English man and woman was for naught would be the French Terror and its moral ambiguity. With the realization of the Terror came a validation of Burke's fears and the worries of the thousands who had read Burke. As the Jacobins began to take over France, violence increased and religion seemed to be forced out. Burke and others took advantage of the Jacobins' campaign to replace religion with reason. While the Protestant English held no love for the Catholic French, conservatives defended Catholicism and attacked the Jacobins as non-believers who forced all Christians to leave France. When radicals such as Wollstonecraft attacked Burke as an agent of popery, a charge that once was very serious, it fell on deaf ears, because Burke and others had already set the tone of the debate as one of Christian versus atheist.

Paine appeared to be best at responding to Burke in this battle for public opinion. Such public discourse was exactly Paine's forte. The literary skills acquired by Paine during the American Revolution were used again during the French Revolution. Among the many responders to Burke's *Reflections*, why is Paine considered the first among equals? Martin Pugh explains:

In the short term, Paine popularized the abstract cause of reform for a working-class audience, as is indicated by the sale of 200,000 copies of his book. In the longer run, *The Rights of Man* helped to set the agenda for radicals throughout the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century.³⁸³

³⁸² *Thoughts*, 49.

³⁸³ Martin Pugh, *Britain Since 1789: A Concise History*. (St. Martin's Press: New York, 1999), 23.

As the default leader of the British radicals, Paine set the tone of the radicals' response to Burke. Paine did not believe in a violent revolution but still did not forsake the Revolution when it did turn violent. Paine's readiness to make excuses for the Terror crippled the movement that he started. Instead of leading the British radicals and forcing the British Empire to conduct a show trial that could have paid political dividends, Paine fled his post in the wake of sedition charges and traveled to France.

Events like the September Massacres and the Terror forced many radical British authors into disavowing their former allegiances. Authors like Young and Mackintosh initially showed excitement at the possibility of even more freedoms coming to England because of the French Revolution. Violence eventually forced both into the conservative camp. Some authors, such as Mackintosh, were even accused of being bribed by the government to turn against the Revolution. Whether this accusation was true or not, the damage done by those defections could not have been taken lightly.

One form of attack in which both conservatives and radicals participated was the vicious personal attack to discredit one's opponents. Paine's answer to Burke was composed of personal attacks and rebutals of Burke's theories. Wollstonecraft's response to Burke, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*, was very much like Paine's book. Anonymous authors wrote vicious letters meant for publication that intended to degrade public figures such as Pitt, Fox, Burke, and Paine. Young claimed Paine was running from debt collectors, while Burke was compared to a snake. It does appear that the use of negative campaigning was not an original American invention.

The outcome in France affected Wollstonecraft's and Williams' short term success in promoting the status of women. The "French Disease" could have been forgotten if the Revolution had succeeded and not devolved into the Terror. Wollstonecraft's ideas about women's issues have been seen in subsequent centuries as progressive and correct. Her

arguments might have appealed widely within England; the domestic tyranny shown by both Wollstonecraft's father and brother was not uncommon with English families.

A Vindication of the Rights of Men, while first in the series of responses to Burke, was similar in content as other responses to Burke. The book is filled with rebukes and personal attacks. However, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman is not the same as its predecessor. Instead, this work was graced with original theories and examples of how to implement the changes that Wollstonecraft promoted. Most of all, Wollstonecraft insisted that there was an advantage to couples choosing to live as equals rather than in a traditional married state. Unfortunately, the pitfalls that Wollstonecraft warned of in her books lay ahead in her own future. With the Terror and the "remasculinization" of English literature, her place in history would have to wait.

Although Williams had seen and written about the dangers of the Jacobins ruling France, their rule during the Terror still affected her reputation. The English public could not separate the public personae from the private lives of these women. From Williams taking lovers in France to Wollstonecraft's secret marriage to Godwin, these scandals allowed political enemies to denigrate both women. This can also be seen with the previous example of Hays when she protested the false rumors spread by a male colleague, Lloyd. The ensuing cool reception of Williams by her former readers shows how falsehoods could be taken as truth by the public.

This written debate on the Revolution in France had an effect on the English government. When Pitt took steps to stop the rumored insurrection in England and created the English Terror, he knew that questions would be asked not only by Fox and the Whigs but also by radical writers. Perhaps that is one reason that Pitt's government worked very hard to reiterate the point that the upcoming war with France was over the Low Countries and economics, not the restoration of the French crown. The opposition, led by Fox, had a similar

fine line to walk. But the task Fox faced along with the job that lay ahead of radical writers was made initially more difficult by the Terror.

The political ramifications would be felt by the English middle class as well as politicians. The Watt family is one of the best examples of how the middle class was affected. When James Watt Jr.'s exploits were vilified by Burke in the House of Commons, James Sr. felt the weight of negative publicity. Although James Watt Sr. did not share his son's feelings on the Revolution, he had to be concerned about the possibility of public retribution for his son's politics. Groups of loyalists, like the organization run by Reeves, believed they were doing God's work and were assisting their government in intimidating radicals. Although some believed that the Pitt government was responsible for Reeves' loyalist campaign and Fox called Reeves "a ministerial hireling," there is little proof to back their accusation.³⁸⁴ To put it bluntly, Fox and supporters of the French Revolution were outnumbered by the anti-Revolutionary factions. The numbers never got any better for the radicals, and, in fact, they grew even worse as the French Terror began to erode much of the support the French Revolution once had.

Could the radicals have succeeded in causing a revolution in England? Gilmour does not believe so. According to Gilmour, an English revolution could only have happened if there were a social breakdown within Parliament.³⁸⁵ At the time of the Revolution, France's government consisted only of the king and his ministers. While England had its own king and ministers, it also had Parliament, which in the seventeenth century had defeated two kings and controlled the national purse strings. Not only did Parliament act as a third institutional barrier against a possible revolution, but it did give the English population a semblance of representative government, which France did not.

Gilmour further notes that the percentage of poor or destitute in France was five to ten percent of the population. Within the walls of Paris at the time of the Revolution, according to

³⁸⁴ Beebel, 799.

³⁸⁵ Gilmour, 442.

Gilmour, sixty percent of the city's population relied on some form of private charity. In contrast to France, England did have a form of governmental welfare to help the poor. The English Poor Laws, which although unwieldy and not comprehensive, were long-established as a form of policy that did provide some aid to the destitute. England had also passed a minimum wage law, which ironically Burke had opposed. These sorts of social programs were instrumental in pacifying the lower class and thus preventing England from experiencing a revolution, according to Gilmour.³⁸⁶ He argues that this is one reason England did not have to be concerned with the lower classes turning into mobs that would rob and destroy the property of the higher classes.

In contrast, another historian, Pugh, believes that the governmental pressure placed upon the radical reformers prevented any form of revolution. Radical groups, between 1793-1795, were attracting larger groups of people into their meetings. While Pugh believes that this increase of attendance was due to food shortages, inflation, and high unemployment, the English government did not seem concerned. Only when the government noticed these large groups attending radical meetings did the government act quickly to squash the radicals. Pugh writes that the Government acted against the radicals as if they were developing an "organized revolution" instead of a call of reform.³⁸⁷ These protective measures were discussed before, with the government's new treason acts and libel suits against authors like Paine. Those measures worked to calm the country by silencing the middle class radicals.³⁸⁸ Pugh writes that Pitt and the English government overreacted in their attitude toward radicals and reformers. The historian believes that there were two reasons for the government overreacting: a fear of invasion and their perception that the local law enforcement organizations were inadequate to handle an uprising.³⁸⁹ The French Revolution which caused this fear in the British government

³⁸⁶ Gilmour, 439-440.

³⁸⁷ Pugh, 23.

³⁸⁸ Pugh, 23.

³⁸⁹ Pugh, 24.

also rearranged the political power within the British nation. Fox witnessed an implosion within the Whig party. Conservative Whigs followed Burke and supported Pitt and the conservative Tory party. The embattled Fox handed the leadership reins to the Earl of Gray. Gray tried twice, in 1793 and 1797, to pass more expansive reform bills, but both bills were soundly defeated. For a generation the Tory party would control British politics.³⁹⁰

So did all this literary squabbling benefit Great Britain? Iain Scott maintains that it did:

They sustained the debate on political ideas into a new century of change and reflected its differing problems. They probably addressed a wider popular readership than political theorist and the political philosophy which emerged was less abstract and more pragmatic, reflecting their literary interest in everyday life and thought of the people. Thus, their political work is important in its own right and it presents, perhaps, the best means for understanding how the radical movement in Britain came to terms with the death of revolutionary idealism.³⁹¹

The political debate certainly had changed. As occurred in France, in England the proliferation of political pamphlets allowed unconventional political thought to seep into the political debate. Men like Paine wrote in a simple voice that appealed to the common man to gain that individual's trust. In the debate over the French Revolution, real reforms were voiced. While some were temporarily shoved to the side—notably women's suffrage and abolishment of slavery--those ideas would be reborn in a more enlightened England where an audience could be found and real progress could take place.

In the end, English writers such as Burke and Paine, Young and Wollstonecraft spoke their minds on the French Revolution under a government that did not imprison or kill them. Their debate allowed England to experience the French Revolution in a somewhat peaceful observation, compared to France, and gave England the luxury of deciding to effect change only gradually.

³⁹⁰ Pugh, 26-27.

³⁹¹ Scott., 249.

CHAPTER 6

AFTERWORD

Defeated in the public relations battle by the conservatives, the radicals altered their persona. As noted above, in England the French Revolution had changed the definition of a reformer. After the Revolution, the definition of a reformer and a radical became one and the same. Burke's and others' attacks on the "rational behavior" favored by the radicals--which conservatives characterized as immoral--had stained the rationality of the Enlightenment. This caused many radical writers to revise their vision of the "rational man" into "social man". Such an individual used his or her own will and reason, but that will and reason would be subservient to the greater good of the nation and religion. Authors like William Coleridge in his work, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, reinforced this perception that moral responsibility must balance reason.³⁹² After a decade of violence and protest, the new British social man began to be perceived as more charitable. The historian Kelly believed this accomplished two things. First, the total amount of charity did increase which, in turn, pacified the poorer classes. Second, this development unified the middle and upper classes. For the middle class it was crucial to join with the upper class so as to protect their newly obtained wealth and property. Also, with an increase in charitable donations from both classes, the burden would be shared more evenly between the middle and upper class.³⁹³ The "social man" also changed his language of reform. Instead of the angry radical demanding wholesale changes in the 1790s, "social man" now openly celebrated both his nation and culture, while simultaneously promoting small changes

³⁹² Scott, 239-241

³⁹³ Kelly, 168.

that encouraged the poorer classes to become more invested in seeing themselves as British.³⁹⁴ As Prickett states, this allowed the English reformer to survive:

At a political level the battle for reform had only just begun in the 1790's, and it was to be waged unremittingly for the next thirty years before a near-revolutionary situation in England finally persuaded a moderate consensus, on good Burkeian principles, to allow the measure of cautious change represented by the 1832 Reform Bill and its attendant legislation.

This measured, Burkeian change would occur very soon with the death of the English king in 1830.

George IV died on June 26, 1830, and was succeeded by his brother William IV. Unlike his older brother, William was not as fiercely opposed to reform as the previous king was. With the death of a king, the English Parliament dissolved. When the new Parliament was assembled nearly five months later, the Tories led by the Duke of Wellington, were defeated in the House of Commons by the Whigs, led by an old Fox disciple, the Earl of Grey.³⁹⁵ Grey had been waiting for this moment even during the dark days of the French Revolution, so the new leader of the House of Commons pushed and pulled to get a reform act passed. Grey reminded everyone of the trials through which England had already been. On March 22, 1831, Gray wrote a secret letter to a Sir H. Taylor about the others who had wished for reform.

I wish to impress upon the King's mind:-- That we did not cause the excitement about reform. We found it in full vigor when we came into office; and the King told me that every one of the late ministers, except the Duke of Wellington, when they took leave of him, acknowledged that some reform was necessary.³⁹⁶

³⁹⁴ Kelly, 183-184..

³⁹⁵ George Gordon Andrews, *Parliamentary Reform in England 1830-1832*. (F.S. Croft & Co.: New York, 1927), 9.

³⁹⁶ Gray Quoted by Andrews, 15.

A year later, Grey succeeded. In June 1832 the Reform Act was passed. Simon Schama notes that the Great Reform Bill did not aim to destroy the aristocracy, as many old French Revolutionaries had dreamed, but it did promise to increase the rights of those Englishmen who could vote.³⁹⁷ Indeed the number of voters eligible to vote in England doubled to seven hundred seventeen thousand Englishmen.³⁹⁸ The responsible parties in the Great Reform Act of 1832 were not so much interested in individual rights as in preventing violent revolution.³⁹⁹ In addition to empowering those who already had the franchise, the Reform Act of 1832 gave Englishmen with property worth at least ten pounds the right to vote. Schama claims that the Whigs had no intention of denuding the aristocracy. Increasing the voting population allowed the middle class to join with the aristocracy to protect its wealth and property. With some in the middle class allied to the upper class, the Reform Act also prevented old radicals from solidifying with the middle class.⁴⁰⁰ Pugh agrees that the enfranchising of the middle class into the political process acted as a wedge between the middle class and the working poor of England.⁴⁰¹ If those two social groups had merged, then a violent revolution against England's aristocracy could have become possible. The outcome of the reform act was a much more progressive Parliament composed of "social men". The new Parliament passed laws providing relief to the poor and abolished slavery.⁴⁰² These acts provided a foundation for other civil right legislation, including the 1870 Married Women's Property Act.⁴⁰³

³⁹⁷ Simon Schama, *A History of Britain; The Fate of Empire 1776-2000*. (Miramax Books: New York, 2002), 139-140.

³⁹⁸ Pugh, 49.

³⁹⁹ Norman McCord and Bill Purdue, *British History 1815-1914*. (Oxford University Press: New York, 2007), 153.

⁴⁰⁰ Schama, 139-140.

⁴⁰¹ Pugh, 50.

⁴⁰² McCord, 157.

⁴⁰³ McCord, 364.

If one accepts Gilmour's earlier premise that the philosophical debates that occurred during the Revolution broadened the political discourse of Britain, eventually allowing the Reform Act of 1832 to become reality, then again Burke's theory is prophetic. In *Reflections* Burke argued that it is more natural for a country to experience freedoms slowly than for it to undergo a rapid revolution. It appears that Burke was correct: England was more successful than France at expanding its liberties by using the slower path of reform rather than revolution. As the French Revolution began to end, the new class of "social men" emerged in England and urged their government to reform.

WORKS CITED

Primary Sources

An Address to the Hon. Edmund Burke, From the Swinish Multitude. London: J. Ridgway, 1793. Edited Ray Brown, *The Burke-Paine Controversy; Texts and Criticisms.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1963).

Association for Preserving Liberty, and Property Against Republicans and Levellers, Association for Preserving Liberty and Property Against Republicans and Levellers. At a Meeting of Gentlemen at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, November 20, 1792, John Reeves, Esq. in the Chair, the Following Considerations and Resolutions were Entered into and Agreed Upon. London, 1792.

Barrister. Rights of Citizens, Being an Examination of Mr. Paine's Principles, Touching Government, By a Barrister. Dublin: 1791.

Barlow, Joel. *The History of England, from the Year 1765 to the Year 1795. Being a Continuation of the Histories of Mr. Hume and Dr. Smollell.* Vol. 5. London: J. Parsons, 1795.

Blake, William. "There is No Natural Religion". Edited by David V. Erdman. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake.* Berkely: University of California Press, 1982.

Burke, Edmund. *Burke's Speeches: On American Taxation, On Conciliation with America, Letter to the Sheriffs of Briston.* Edited by Hon. LL.D. Bombay, F.G. Selby, M.A. Oxon.

Burke, Edmund. *The Writing and Speeches of Edmund Burke, Volume III; The French Revolution 1790-1794.* Edited by L.G. Mitchell. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.

Hays, Mary. *Memoirs of Emma Courtney.* Introduction by Sally Cline. London: Pandora, 1987.

Hays, Mary. "On the Influence of Authority and Custom on the Female Mind and Manners". *Letters and Essays, Moral and Miscellaneous.* London: 1793.

Hays, Mary. "Thoughts on Civil Liberty." *Letters and Essays, Moral and Miscellaneous.* London: 1793.

Lord Granville Leveson Gower's Private Correspondence 1781-1821. Edited by Castalic Countess Granville, Vol.1. New York: EP Dutton and Company, 1916.

Mackintosh, James. *Vidiciae Gallicae: Defense of the French Revolution and its English Admirers Against the Accusation of the Right Honorable Edmund Burke; including Some Strictures of the Late Production of Mons. De Calonne.* London: 1791.

- Paine, Thomas. *Common Sense*. Edited by Harry Hayden Clarke. *Thomas Paine: Representative Selections with Introduction, Bibliography, and Notes by Harry Hayden Clark*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1965.
- Paine, Thomas. *Rights of Man: Being an Answer to Mr. Burke's Attack on the French Revolution*. Edited by Ernest Rhys. London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1921.
- Plain Well-Meaning Briton, *A Whipper for Levelling Tommy; in Which the Modern Doctrines of The Rights of Man are Properly Stated and the Constitution of England. Fairly Considered, in a Fraternal Address to Manufacturas, Traders, Farmers*. Ed.. Ray B. Brown, *The Burke-Paine Controversy*. New York: Harcourt, 1963.
- Reeves, John. *Thoughts on the English Government. Addressed to the Quiet Good Sense of the People of England. In a Series of Letters. Letter the First*. London, 1795.
- Thoughts on the Present War with France; an Expostulatory Letter, Addressed to the Right Honorable William Pitt, M.P.* London, 1793.
- Williams, Helen Maria. *Letters from France Vol.1-4*. New York: Scholars' Facsimiles And Reprints Delmar, 1975.
- Williams, Helen Maria. *Memoirs of the Reign of Robespierre*. London: John Hamilton Limited.
- Young, Arthur. *The Example of France a Warning to Britain: The Third Edition*. London: Bury St. Edmund's, 1793.
- Young, Arthur. *Travels During the Years 1787, 1788 and 1789, Under Taken More Particulary with a View of Ascertaining the Cultivation, Wealth, Reasources, And National Prosperity of the Kingdom of France. Vol. 1*. Dublin: Messrs R. Cross, P. Wogan, L. White, P. Byrne, A. Grueber, 1793.
- Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*. Edited by Janet Todd and Marilyn Butler. *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft. Vol.5*. New York: University Press, 1989.
- Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Edited by Janet Todd and Marilyn Butler. *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft. Vol.5*. New York: University Press, 1989.

Secondary Sources

- Andres, Stuart. *The British Periodical Press and the French Revolution, 1789-99*. New York: PAL Grave, 2000.
- Andress, David. *The Terror: The Merciless War for Freedom in Revolutionary France*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2005.
- Andrews, George Gordon. *Parliamentary Reform in England 1830-1832*. New York: F.S. Croft & Co., 1927.
- Ayer, A.J. *Thomas Paine*. Macmillan Publishing Co., 1988.
- Barker-Benfield, G.J. "Mary Wollstonecraft: Eighteenth-Century Commonwealth Woman." *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 50, No. 1., Jan.- March, 1989, 95-115.
- Beedel, A.V. "John Reeves's Prosecution for a Seditious Libel, 1795-6: A Study in Political Cynicism." *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 4, December, 1993, 799-824.
- Blakemore, Steven. "Revolution and the French Disease: Leatitia Matilda Hawkins's Letters to Helen Maria Williams." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*. Vol. 36, No. 3. Summer 1996, 673-691.
- Brown, Irene Coltman. "Mary Wollstonecraft and the French Revolution or Feminism and the Rights of Men". Edited by Sian Reynolds. *Power and Gender in Europe Since 1789*. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1987.
- Brown, Ray B.. *The Burke-Paine Controversy; Texts and Criticism*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1963.
- Brunt, Liam. "Rehabilitating Arthur Young". *The Economic History Review, New Series*. Vol.56, No.2, May, 2003, 265-299.
- Burstein, Miriam Elizabeth. *Narrating Women's History in Britain, 1770-1902*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2004.
- Cobban, Alfred. "British Secret Service in France, 1784-1792". *The English Historical Review*. Vol. 69, No. 271. April, 1954.
- Coleman, Deirdre. "Conspicuous Consumption: White Abolitionism and the English Women's Protest Writing in the 1790s". *The John Hopkins University Press*. Vol. 61, No. 2, Summer 1994, 341-362.
- Decker, Catherine H.. "Women Public Space in the Novel of the 1790s". Edited by Linda Lang-Peralta. *Women, Revolution, and the Novels of the 1790s*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1999.
- Derry, John. "The Opposition Whigs and the French Revolution, 1789." Edited by H.T. Dickenson, *Britain and The French Revolution, 1789-1815*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.

- Dickinson, H. T. "Popular Conservatism and Militant Loyalism, 1789-1815." Edited by H.T. Dickenson, *Britain and The French Revolution, 1789-1815*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.
- Duffy, Michael. "British Diplomacy and the French Wars, 1789-1815." Edited by H.T. Dickenson. *Britain and The French Revolution, 1789-1815*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.
- Duffy, Michael. "William Pitt and the Origins of the Loyalist Association Movement of 1792." *The Historical Journal*. Vol. 39, No.4. December, 1996, 943-962.
- Emsley, Clive. "The London 'Insurrection' of December 1792: Fact, Fiction, or Fantasy?" *The Journal of British Studies*. Vol. 17, No. 2. Spring, 1978, 66-86.
- Emsley, Clive. "Repression, 'Terror' and the Rule of Law in England during the Decade of the French Revolution." *The English Historical Review*. Vol. 100, No. 397. October, 1985, 801-825.
- Fasel, George. *Edmund Burke*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1983.
- Gilmour, Ian. *Riot, Risings and Revolution Governance and Violence in Eighteenth-Century England*. London: Pimlico, 1992.
- Hilton, Boyd. *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People? England 1783-1846*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006.
- Jaggard, Edwin. *Cornwall Politics in the Age of Reform: 1790-1885*. Rochester: The Boydell Press 1999.
- Jones, Peter M. "Living the Enlightenment and the French Revolution: James Watt, Matthew Boulton, and Their Sons." *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 1, March 1999.
- Kates, Gary. "From Liberalism to Radicalism: Tom Paine's Rights of Man." *Journal Of History of Ideas*. Vol. 50, No.4. October-December, 1989, 569-587.
- Keane, Angela. *Women Writers and the English Nation in the 1790s*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Kelly, Gary. *Women, Writing, and Revolution 1790-1827*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.
- Kowaleski-Wallace, Elizabeth. *Their Fathers' Daughters: Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth, and Patriarchal Complicity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Mackesy, Piers. "Stategic Problems of the British War Effort." Edited by H.T. Dickinson. *Britain and the French Revolution 1789-1815*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.
- McCord, Norman and Purdue, Bill. *British History 1815-1914*. Second Ed. Oxford: Oxford Universtiy Press, 2007.
- Mitchell, L.G. "Introduction". Edited by L.G. Mitchell. *The Writing and Speeches of Edmund Burke, Volume III; The French Revolution 1790-1794*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.

- Mori, Jennifer. "The British Government and the Bourbon Restoration: The Occupation of Toulon, 1793". *The Historical Journal*, Volume 40, Number 3, September, 1997.
- Nelson, Craig. *Thomas Paine: Enlightenment, Revolution and the Birth of Modern Nations*. New York: Penguin Group, 2006.
- O'Brien, Conor Cruise. *The Great Melody: A Thematic Biography of Edmund Burke*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- O'Gorman, Frank. "Pitt and the 'Tory' Reaction to the French Revolution 1789-1815." Edited by H.T. Dickenson, *Britain and the French Revolution, 1789-1815*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.
- Prickett, Stephen. *England and the French Revolution*. London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1989.
- Plumb, J.H. In *the Light of History*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1973.
- Pugh, Martin. *Britain Since 1789; A Concise History*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.
- Reynolds, Sian. "Introduction". *Power and Gender in Europe Since 1789*. Edited by Sian Reynolds. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1987.
- Ridley, Glynis. "Injustice in the Works of Godwin and Wollstonecraft". Edited by Linda Lang-Peralta, *Women, Revolution, and the Novels of the 1790s*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1999.
- Rose, J. Holland. *William Pitt and the Great War*. London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1911.
- Schama, Simon. *A History of Britain; The Fate of Empire 1776-2000*. New York: Miramax Books, 2002.
- Scott, Iain Robertson. "'Things as They are': The Literary Response to the French Revolution: 1789-1815." Edited by H.T. Dickenson, *Britain and the French Revolution, 1789-1815*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.
- Seamus, Deane. *The French Revolution and Enlightenment in England, 1789-1832*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Soper, Kate. "Naked Human Nature and the Drapersies of Custom; Wollstonecraft on Equality, and Democracy". Edited by Elleen Janes Yeo. *Mary Wollstonecraft and 200 years of Feminism*. London: Rivers Oram Press, 1997.
- Stevenson, John. "Popular Radicalism and Popular Protest." *Britain and the French Revolution, 1789-1815*. Edited by H.T. Dickenson. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.
- Taylor, Barbara. "For the Love of God; Religion and the Erotic Imagination in Wollstonecraft's Feminism." Edited by Elleen Janes Yeo. *Mary Wollstonecraft and 200 years of Feminism*. London: Rivers Oram Press, 1997.

Todd, Janet. *Mary Wollstonecraft: A Revolutionary Life*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

Wilson, Woodrow. "Edmund Burke and the French Revolution". Edited by Ray B. Brown, *The Burke-Paine Controversy; Texts and Criticism*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1963.

Yeo, Eileen Janes. "Introduction". Edited by Eileen Janes Yeo. *Radical Femininity: Women's Self-Representation in the Public Sphere*. New York: Manchester University Press, 1998.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

After graduating the University of Texas Tech with a Bachelor degree in Marketing, Wilburn Wagoner moved to the Dallas-Fort Worth area to begin a business career. Twelve years later, Wilburn gave up his career to pursue his love of history. Wilburn's interest includes England and that country's role in the development of both the European continent and the United States of America. Wagoner still lives in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area with his wife, Rae, and his daughter, Miranda.