



CATHARINE MACAULAY

Eliza Sarazua

BACKGROUND

- b. 1731 at Olantigh in Kent to John Sawbridge and Elizabeth Wanley.
 - Olantigh was a property from her grandfather
 - He made a fortune & lost it and his reputation as a director of the South Sea Company (founded 1711; defunct 1720)
 - John Sawbridge insisted on her private education and was a large source for much of Macaulay's knowledge.
 - She had two brothers and a sister, and after four children her mother passed away.
- Little is known about her early life:
 - Marries George Macaulay on June 18 1760, a Scottish physician. Marriage only lasted 6 years before he died in 1766.
 - Marries William Graham in 1778 (twenty six years younger than her!!!)
 - A source of a lot of her ruined reputation
- Died in 1791 after a lifetime of dealing with a painful and chronic illness



M^{rs}. Catharine Macaulay.

Mrs. Catharine Macaulay. Engraving published by Vernor, Hood & Sharpe, March 1 1812.

POLITICS

- Her self education in her father's libraries = history of the Greeks and Romans and "*their laws and manners interested her understanding, the patriotism seized her, and she became an enthusiast in the cause of freedom.*"
- Her brother, John Sawbridge, was a **MP** in 1769, founding member of "**Society of the Gentleman Supporters of the Bill of Rights**".
- Initially **welcomed by Rockingham Whigs** but later abandoned when she discussed the Commonwealth as '*the brightest age that ever adorned the page of history.*'
- America
 - Wrote letters to friends in America that she "anxiously waited for the determinations of America" (letter to Henry Marchant, Oct. 1774).
 - John Sawbridge: "defended the rights of America throughout the last session of Parliament, and even when almost every member were against him,".
- Macaulay was a supporter of some form of '**republicanism**' **liberty**,
 - Believes in the right balancing of wealth by equally dividing estates among sons,
 - she associates women's power as closely associated with luxury and aristocratic privilege (sacrificing women's apparent interest for the sake of equality)

HISTORIES AND OTHER WORKS

➤ *The History of England from the Accession of James I to that of the Brunswick Line.*

Vol. 1 published 1763

The following three volumes were published in regular intervals in 1765, 1767, and 1768

Printed for the author and sold by various booksellers. (vol. 4 was the first to discuss the 'rise of the republicans')

Vol. 5 published in 1771

Vols. 6 & 7 published in 1781 with a different title *A*

History of England from the Accession of James I. to the Revolution,

A History of England from the Revolution to the present time, in a series of letters to the Reverend Doctor Wilson

Vol. 8 published in 1783

For a time, they outsold David Hume's work of the same name

➤ *Loose remarks on certain positions to be found in Mr. Hobbes's Philosophical Rudiments of Government and Society (1767)*

Rebuts Hobbes's purely political conception of the state & gives her own more moralised conception of the nature of political authority (which includes her account of the Civil War)

• Her Histories can be read as a response to popular history of the time by David Hume

◦ Her understanding of the English Civil War, the virtues of republicans, grounds of mortality directly challenge Hobbes

• Their thoughts are two diametrically opposed strands of Enlightenment thought.

◦ Macaulay: religious + ethical views = "moderate enlightenment"

◦ Hume: naturalist + sceptic = "radical enlightenment", yet he is a political conservative

➤ *Observations on a Pamphlet entitled "Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents". (1770) (this helped her gain some of her popularity back)*

◦ Her first public attack on Edmund Burke

➤ *Address to the people of England, Scotland and Ireland on the present important crisis of affairs (1775)*

◦ Calling people to support America using economy (support the rev. Or when it's over we lose all commercial advantages that flowed from the Empire)

➤ *Treatise on the Immutability of Truth (1783)*

➤ *The Letters on Education (1790)*

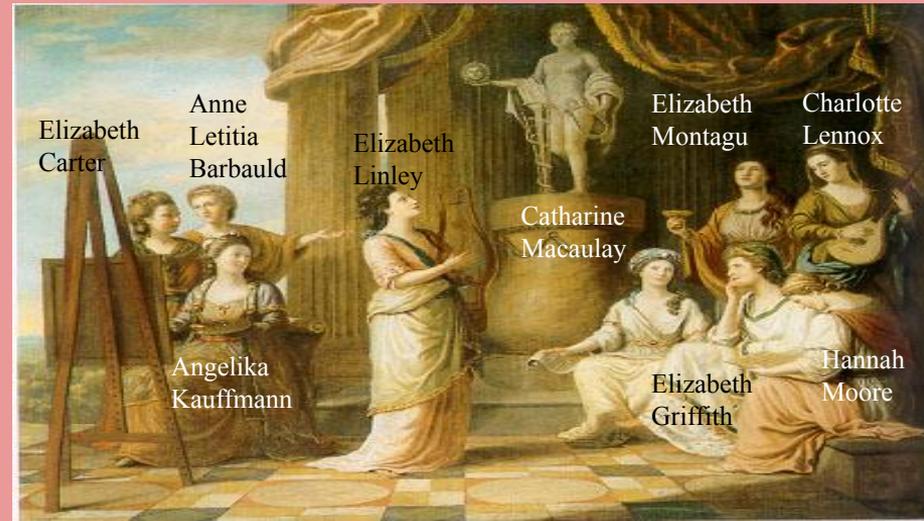
➤ *A response to Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790) (Last published work)*

CONTEMPORARIES

- Elizabeth Montagu, her sister Sarah Scott
 - Friend and correspondent within the Bluestocking Society
 - “more deeply learned than becomes a fine lady” who “between Spartan laws, the Roman politics, the philosophy of Epicurus, and the wit of St Evremond” had formed “a most extraordinary system,” (Carter 1808, 2. 260; Hill 1992, 11). (initial regard).
- Elizabeth Carter
 - Macaulay was a subscriber to her translations of *Epictetus*
- Edmund Burke; Mary Wollstonecraft
 - Wollstonecraft/ Macaulay had works reviewed in *Analytical Review* (1790)...later, the magazine published an admiring review by Wollstonecraft on Macaulay’s *Letters on Education*.
 - Macaulay/ Wollstonecraft in private communication during the reviews (1790), though were never to meet.
- George Washington, Henry Marchant. Benjamin Franklin,



Above: Laurie & Whittle, *Catharina Macaulay*, March 12 1800. Below: Richard Samuel, “The Nine Living Muses of Great Britain”, 1779



REPUTATION/SCANDAL

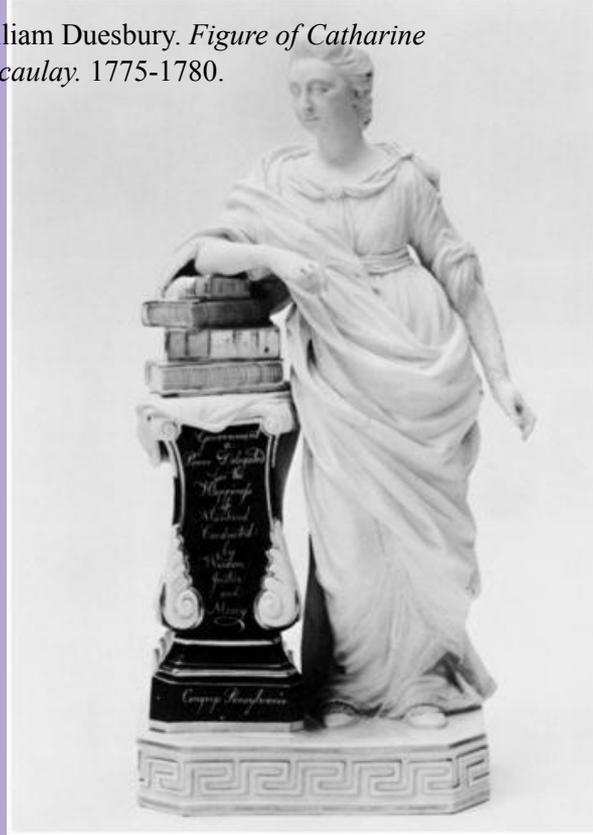
- Marriage to William Graham tarnished her reputation
 - 26 years younger; people accused her of having an affair with his *father* Dr. James Grant because of their interactions as he treated her chronic ill with unconventional remedies.
 - Wilson and Wilkes accused her and ridiculed her for marrying below her
 - This rumor ruined her reputation, though criticism doesn't appear until 1773
 - Regardless, her second marriage was happy and fruitful
- Elizabeth Montagu & Sarah Scott
 - Heavily criticized Macaulay for marrying Graham
 - “[we] being pure virgins and virtuous matrons should drown her in the Avon, and try if she can be purified by water” (Sarah Scott to Elizabeth Montagu, 27 November 1778, Bath. Huntington Library, MSS MO 5391).
- Her support for America
 - She was represented in *Westminster Magazine* as a dagger-wielding hybrid of Roman matron and Indian chief, about to plunge her weapon into Britannia's breast.

MACAULAY IN ART

William Duesbury. *Figure of Catharine Macaulay*. 1775-1780.



J.F. Moore, *Statue of Mrs. Macaulay*.
1777



Paul Revere (attrib.) *Mrs. Catharine M'Cauley*.
1771

- As early as 1775 her figure was modeled by Patience Lovell Wright and exhibited in the London waxworks along with celebrities such as George III, Queen Charlotte, John Wilkes, and William Pitt.
- A lifelike wax figure was also shown in Philadelphia

ANALYSIS OF *LETTERS ON EDUCATION*

“There is not a virtue or vice that belongs to humanity, which we do not make ourselves. There is not a wretch who ends his miserable being on a wheel, as the forfeit of his offenses against society, who may not throw the whole blame of his misdemeanors on his education; who may not look up to the very government, by whose severe laws he is made to suffer, as the author of his misfortunes; and who may not with justice utter the hardest imprecations on those to whom the charge of his youth was entrusted, and to those with whom he associated in the early periods of his life”
(Macaulay 1974, 11)

- Understanding of the mind is necessary for the moral improvement of human beings
- If crime and vice are effects of environment and education, then careful and correct education and parenting are vital.
- The role of education and environment in cultivating sympathy
- Education can teach moral truths, but in order to form individuals who can act in accordance with the dictates of reason, must must take account of emotional characteristics and unhelpful associations.

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