

Strong Responses to the Writing Prompts for January 19th

Example 1

Edmund Burke and Hester Chapone both discuss the women of their time yet Burke focuses his writing on what he describes as the delicacy of the feminine sex while Chapone hones in on the intellectual and conversational side of the eighteenth-century woman. Through Burke's rather short entry, the reader is able to understand that he clearly values the physical appearances of women. He concludes that their appearances are related, "to their weakness, or delicacy, and is even enhanced by their timidity," ultimately drawing the conclusion that, the weaker the woman, the more attractive she becomes (Burke 489). On the other hand, Chapone goes in depth concerning the mental achievements which she believes women should strive for within the realms of both thought and conversation. Chapone speaks of the female mind, often complimenting it, saying, "the faculty, in which women usually most excel, is that of imagination," rather than focusing on what society dwells on, beauty in appearances (Chapone 491). Overall, through their differing arguments regarding women, Burke and Chapone create multiple dichotomies when brought into conversation with one another, including, but not limited to, the physical versus the mental as well as the male perspective versus the female perspective regarding women in the eighteenth century.

Example 2

Comparing Lady Sarah Pennington's *An Unfortunate Mother's Advice to Her Absent Daughters* and John Gregory's *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters*

In both Pennington and Gregory's works, religion is a main subject. Pennington writes to her daughters, "Let, therefore, your Duty to God be ever the first and principal Object of your Care" (622). During this time, a woman was expected to practice religion; her relationship with God was her top priority in order to maintain morality and virtuosity. Additionally, religion plays a very large factor in determining a husband, as both Pennington and Gregory warn against marrying a man with no faith. Pennington writes, "The being united to a Man of Irreligious Principles makes it impossible to discharge a great Part of the proper Duty of a Wife," and Gregory writes, "If you have a sense of religion yourselves, do not think of husbands who have none." (625, 494). Therefore, a woman's duty during this time was to God first, and her husband second.

Gregory writes, "I look on your choice of a husband to be the greatest consequence of your happiness" (495). Even though a woman is expected to be devoted to God first and foremost, it is ultimately her husband that will provide her with happiness, not God. This happiness found in a marriage is extremely difficult to obtain, as Pennington writes, "Happy is her Lot, who in a Husband finds this invaluable Friend! Yet so great is the Hazard, so disproportioned the Chances, that I could almost wish the dangerous Die was never to be thrown for any of you!" (624). Even though a woman is expected to give thanks to God and trust in Him to find her a good husband, the chances are incredibly low that she will ever find true happiness here on Earth.