

**Two “10” Writing Responses to the August 22<sup>nd</sup> prompt:**

**In the reading for today, which words and ideas are in contention? What literary techniques do these writers employ when in dialogue with one another? See literary terms above and discuss at least two of the assigned terms in your response. A strong response will discuss at least 2 terms, 2-3 writers, and support argument at least 2 specific examples. [Please do read the assignment information on the website for other specifics.]**

**Example 1:**

These texts debate the morality of the French Revolution while fighting to define what freedom means to England and to the world. Beginning a contentious series of writings, Richard Price’s *A Discourse on the Love of Our Country* celebrates the French Revolution as a stepping stone toward true global freedom, writing, “Behold kingdoms, admonished by you, starting from sleep... Behold, the light you have struck out, after setting AMERICA free, reflected to FRANCE, and there kindled into a blaze that lays despotism in ashes, and warms and illuminates EUROPE” (67). In repeating the beginning word, “behold,” Price uses anaphora to create an inspiring feeling of progression and culmination that ultimately leads to the grand image of global freedom triggered by England’s Glorious Revolution of 1688. In refutation of this invigorating depiction of freedom, Edmund Burke’s perception of the concept is imbued with tyrannical notions of inheritance as he asserts that true English freedom results from the “natural” order of bequeathing titles to succeeding generations. In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, he writes, “Thus, by persevering the method of nature in the conduct of the state, in what we improve, we are never wholly new; in what we retain, we are never wholly obsolete” (69). Continuing to support his definition of inherited liberties, Burke employs parallelism in this quote to create an underwhelming sense of harmony reflective of his mundanely elitist perception of apparently superior English freedom. Unsurprisingly, Burke’s suffocating ideologies are not popular with the common person, as reflected by plentiful and immediate outcries of dissent.

Mary Wollstonecraft is among these opposing voices, cleverly responding to Burke’s writing with a tone of condescension peppered with mocking “sirs” and unrestrained judgments. Most apparent, however, is her frequent use of rhetorical questions. The first in the textbook’s excerpt of *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* asks, “...the ivy is beautiful, but when it insidiously destroys the trunk from which it receives support, who would not grub it up?” (74). Combining metaphor and rhetorical questions, Wollstonecraft dismisses Burke’s assertion that the English should uphold and maintain the system of “freedom” that ultimately exploits most under its rule and that the French people are justified in their own uprising. This discussion of the French Revolution presents many conflicting view points regarding freedom, with each perspective bolstered by their own literary devices designed to propel their arguments into the English and global consciousness

## Example 2:

In *Reflections on the Revolution of France*, Edmund Burke calls for the preservation of the constitution in England, which grants hereditary rights and power. He argues that the constitution should be reformed, not subverted, referring to revolutionaries as “those children of their country, who are prompt rashly to hack that aged parent in pieces, and put him into the kettle of magicians, in hopes that by their poisonous weeds, and wild incantations, they may regenerate the paternal constitution, and renovate their fathers life” (73). Burke uses this extended metaphor of a father and his son to not only justify inheritance, but to also distinguish between the old and the new—between the “paternal constitution” that has been England’s source of authority for centuries, and the “children” who seek to revamp it. Burke poses through this analogy the idea that the constitution is something to be revered, and that the people should treat its flaws with care instead of harm.

Mary Wollstonecraft, who, unlike Burke, believes in a republican government, argues against what she considers to be his “blind fealty” to the constitution in *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*. She poses many rhetorical questions to point out the flaws in Burke’s argument, one of which is in regards to the inheritance of the clergy: “Were those monsters to be revered on account of their antiquity, and their unjust claims perpetuated to their ideal children, the clergy, merely to preserve the sacred majesty of Property inviolate, and to enable the Church to retain her pristine splendor” (75). Wollstonecraft uses several conflicting words in this context, such as “monsters” and “antiquity”, and “unjust and sacred”, as a means of directly countering Burke’s argument that the preservation of hereditary succession and the union of Church and State is necessary to protect rights. She does this in order to prove that the Church mixing with the state leads to the endangerment of rights, as allies of the monarch enter into the Church, leading to a corruption of power.

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