

## Document #5

Catherine Macaulay. *Observations on the Reflections of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke, on the Revolution in France, in a Letter to the Right Hon. The Earl of Stanhope*. London, 1790.

This was written by Englishwoman Catharine Macaulay in response to a pamphlet written by British statesman Edmund Burke. Macaulay was England's first female historian and her work inspired Mary Wollstonecraft to describe her as "a woman of the greatest ability, undoubtedly, that this country has ever produced."

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MY LORD,

Your lordship's character as a patriot, a philosopher, and the firm friend of the general rights of man, encourages me to present to you the following Observations on Mr. Burke's famous Reflections on the Revolution in France. They claim no popular attention for the ornaments of stile in which they are delivered; they can attract no admiration from the fascinating charms of eloquence; they are directed, not to *captivate*, but to *convince*; and it is on the presumption that your lordship attends more to the substance and *end* of literary compositions, than to the *art* of their arrangement, which induces me to flatter myself with your approbation.

It is not surprizing that an event, the most *important* to the dearest interests of mankind, the most *singular* in its nature, and the most *astonishing* in its means, should not only have attracted the curiosity of all civilized nations, but that it should have engaged the passions of all *reflecting* men.

Two parties are already formed in this country, who behold the French Revolution with a very opposite temper: to the one, it inspires the sentiments of exultation and *rapture*; and to the other, indignation and *scorn*. I shall not take upon me to consider what are the *secret* passions which have given birth to these last sentiments; and shall content myself with observing, that Mr. Burke has undertaken to be the oracle of this last party.

Questions for Document #5:

1. How does Macaulay view the French Revolution?
2. What charges does she make against Edmund Burke?
3. Do you believe Macaulay believes in the liberty of speaking one's mind?