

## Fall 2016 Adapting Jane Austen

A Xavier University First Year Seminar

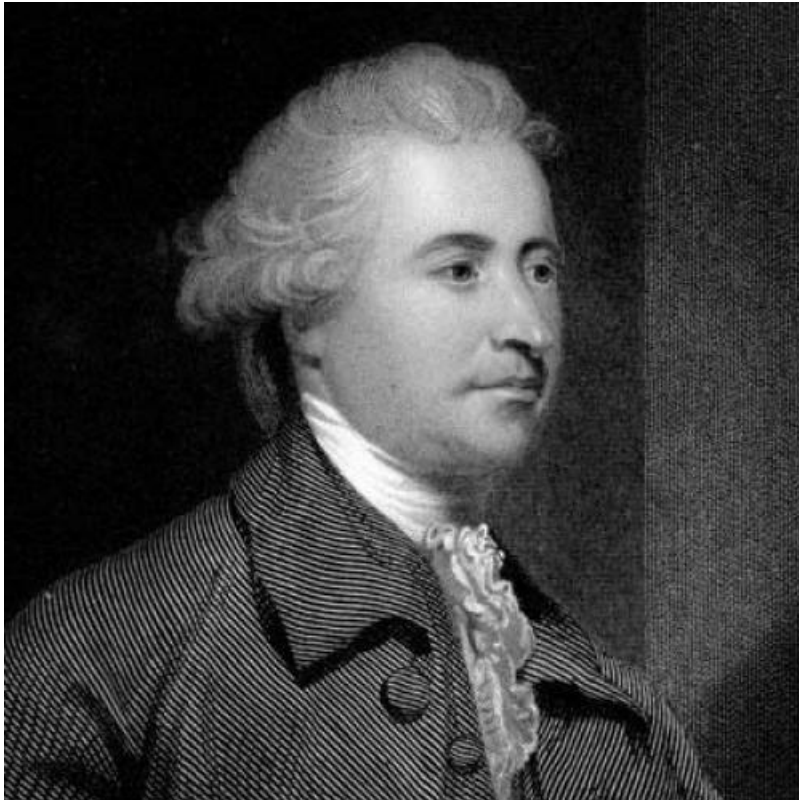
*Menu*

## Edmund Burke

By Joshua House

### Edmund Burke on *The Standard of Life*

In most of Burke's novels, he "highlighted the dangers of revolutionary communism. According to Burke, such an ideology promises a better world, but ineluctably engenders regimes of violence and domination"(White 1 ). Burke focuses on the disparities that a society with a heightened focus on the progression of the most influential people have. However, his critiques were mostly not antagonistic, however were overall criticisms of such a system that only favored individuals in a particular class. Such a systematic structure he deemed as dehumanizing. Burke wrote, "when we define, we seem in danger of circumscribing nature within the bounds of our own notions, which we often take up by hazard or embrace on trust, or form out of a limited and partial consideration of the object before us; instead of extending our ideas to take in all that nature comprehends, according to her manner of combining"( Burke 105).



*Edmund Burke*

Burke used the **French Revolution** as a springboard to project his concrete thoughts into the public sphere. Burke in his *Reflections on the French Revolution*, focused on the injustices, which were ignored, about the dogma of the French Revolution. Moreover, there was a concentration on the misuse of power. For instance, Burke states in regards to the French, “Already there appears a poverty of conception, a coarseness and a vulgarity, in all the proceedings of the Assembly and of all their instructors. Their liberty is not liberal. Their science is presumptuous ignorance. Their humanity is savage and brutal”(134 Burke). Burke developed the progression of awareness of and commented on the sensibilities of the War.

In regards to the **East India Company**, Burke thought incredibly poorly of the motives and endeavors of the British. Burke’s thoughts were that this company was especially corrupt and through his writings he wanted to, “Appeal to the public through an imagined national sensibility”( Bolton 872). Burke was vocal his views on this matter, which then attracted **Frances Burney** to chime in and voice her’s against him. Burke urged the public to take into account the extremely detrimental economic and moral implications of the company’s actions. However, Burney’s “attempts to convert party violence to consensus and moral education succeeded only by bracketing all mention of India, and all acknowledgement of the female spectator’s own physical and social suffering, her own marginality”( Bolton 873). Burney deliberately applied a plea for moral consciousness that would only apply to one issue and not an absolute truth. The absolute truth would then conclude that the East India Company is corrupt.



*East India Company*

## Edmund Burke’s Life

Edmund Burke was born on December 31st in 1729 in Dublin to a family that had a great number of its children die in their and his childhood. Dublin in the early to mid-18th century did not have much of a middle class environment and place in the socioeconomic structure, in which Burke was raised in. Burke as a teenager at the ripe age of 18 years old stated, “Money is a stranger to them...[those in poverty] as for their food, it is notorious they seldom taste bread or meat...Their clothes so ragged...nay, it is no uncommon sight to see half a dozen children run quite naked out a cabin”(Norman 10). The environment and background in which Burke grow up in had no disparity between the extremely wealthy and the incredibly impoverished. In relation to the disparities in education, but more specifically **male education**, “Access to education and opportunities for advancement were similarly restricted”(Norman 11). Thus, the demeaning of those who were of the lowest class in the socioeconomic hierarchy of scale was not that hard to facilitate. “The result was huge inequalities of wealth and well-being, compounding and in turn compounded by religious hatred and political instability”(Norman 11). The existent of not only the intangible superiority of those who were wealthy versus those who were not equaled the surplus of superiority in regards to the tangible items that were allowed specifically to the wealthy and not those in poverty.

The goal in most of Burke’s initiatives was to “reaffirm traditional values under new circumstances”(BBC). Burke never gave into the political climate of the 18th century British society and government, which made him somewhat heroic and villainous to many. At one point Burke was quoted saying, “the revolutionaries were ‘a lawless and sanguinary mob’, which had ‘committed every sort of excess, marked their footsteps with blood, singled out every man of rank...for vengeance””(Norman 143).



Burke favors in his treatise, [A Philosophical Inquiry Into The Origin of Our Ideas of The Sublime and Beautiful](#) the extrapolation of the idea of basing one's future solely upon the socioeconomic background of their familial predecessors. Essentially, he was advocating for the debunking of the belief and systematic structure that one's lifestyle is, for the majority, predetermined by the family that they are born into. These ideas that are mentioned in his treatise reveal themselves in Austen's novels to a certain extent as well. Fanny, the main character in *Mansfield Park*, is one who is transitioned from her somewhat destitute and impoverished upbringing in her early childhood to a wealthy and elitist family. Overtime, Fanny eventually assimilates to the aristocratic lifestyle and becomes a product of her community. She makes the most of her completely different lifestyle and ultimately lives better than she ever could have, if she remained in poverty.

In the 18th century British society, the concept of standing up against the socioeconomic hierarchy was an idea that secretly and deeply resonated with the individuals that lived during that particular time in that specific setting. In *Pride & Prejudice*, makes numerous connections to such an idea when she developed the character by the name of Elizabeth Bennet. Elizabeth is a character that is belligerent; internally and externally she processes every aspect of her life as an individual differently than her counterparts. Elizabeth even to a certain extent might be referred to as a radical, not necessarily attacking callously the structures that were in place. However, she did question them. For instance, Bennet states, "I am only resolved to act in that manner, which will, in my own opinion, constitute my happiness, without reference to you, or to any person so wholly unconnected with me"(Austen 543). Austen purposefully placed an emphasis and frankly centered the whole entire novel around a woman who made her own path and said how she really felt, in order to achieve what she wanted out of life. Austen correlates with Burke on the level that they were willing to pay the consequences upfront to tell the truth. Moreover, to be the truth and live the truth they truly want to envision for themselves.

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**audreyadams16**

October 27, 2016 at 2:17 pm

You have a lot of great info, however I feel like the visual of your wiki could be better. Perhaps some paragraphing or creating several sub topics and then adding a few pictures and a works cited.

★ Liked by 1

person

Reply



**marshm2**

October 27, 2016 at 2:20 pm

Add pictures, delete bullets and make them paragraphs separated by headings instead of bullet points. Revolutionary communist, 1st bullet, quotation hanging- put end quotation. Is it Edwardian era? I ask because Austen was Regency (second paragraph) "Jane Austen's mere character development in her novel" take out mere that minimizes it and fix spelling of character.

★ Liked by 1

person

Reply



**drwyett**

October 27, 2016 at 7:13 pm

To get a flavor for Burke's (in?) famous response to the French Revolution, check out this section from Reflections on the Revolution in France: <http://www.bartleby.com/24/3/6.html>. When people say "chivalry is dead," they are paraphrasing Burke....

★ Like

Reply



**abigailbeekman**

October 27, 2016 at 8:28 pm

I thought the information you talked about today in class was interesting and i think it could be the same here if you add pictures and had more of a layout!

★ Like

Reply



**audreym98**

October 27, 2016 at 9:40 pm

You have a lot of great information in your wiki, although I would suggest organizing it in a different fashion and adding visuals.

★ Like

Reply



**teresaell**

October 27, 2016 at 9:44 pm

I would definitely include links in your wiki, even if some of them are to outside sources. The layout of your wiki could also be changed so that it flows better and adding pictures could really enhance it.

You mentioned the French Revolution multiple times so I believe that you can connect your wiki to mine, which is the French Revolution.

★ Liked by [1](#)

[person](#)

Reply



**isabellasheanshang**

October 27, 2016 at 9:49 pm

Your wiki is very full of great information and facts, but I think you need to add some images to invite the reader in more and make it less intimidating to read.

★ Liked by [1](#)

[person](#)

Reply



**kinziebaker**

October 28, 2016 at 3:04 am

I agree with the others that posted comments before me, you have quality information but you should improve structure of post (don't stick with the bullet points) and add pictures. You also need to add a Works Cited at the end of your wiki or else it could be plagiarism.

★ Liked by [1](#)

[person](#)

Reply



**drwyett**

October 28, 2016 at 2:40 pm

There are some factual errors here. Burke neither lived in Edwardian England nor in French society. As we discussed, Burke's ideas were politically seminal. So try to focus less on the details and more on the big picture. Simplify. You've made Burke sound like a revolutionary or a champion of disrupting the social hierarch here. He wasn't those things. Lose the bullets, use more spacing and headers. Also, you need some images! You have connections here to the French Revolution, possibly Frances Burney, maybe male education.

★ Like

Reply



**drwyett**

October 28, 2016 at 2:42 pm

No way to tell if you've addressed the assignment re: number and types of sources...

★ Like

Reply



**clintonmorgan**

October 28, 2016 at 6:34 pm

Make sure that you are citing everything! Also, your connections were very abstract, which I kind of liked, but is there anything more concrete?

★ Like

Reply



laynedownney

October 31, 2016 at 8:35 pm

Your wiki contains a lot of great information about Edmund Burke but all the information seems tedious to read when it isn't broken up in different paragraphs and sub-paragraphs. I would also put in some pictures as well. Great job though!

★ Like

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hogyaa

November 2, 2016 at 1:24 pm

Your info is divided into sections really well so you just need to format it in WordPress. In the very first paragraph, it seems from the description that Burke's writings were nonfiction, so make sure that the genre is changed from "novels." Unless they were fiction, in which case, it is correct! You may be able to link to my Wiki as Edmund Burke seems like the sort of man who would not approve of some of the goings-on at seaside resorts.

★ Like

[Reply](#)



rosek10s

November 2, 2016 at 5:11 pm

I trust that you have researched Burke well at this point. Make sure there aren't any errors in your research, cite your sources and provide your references for us to see. I also think it would really polish this wiki up if you divided your work into specified sections so your audience has more of an outline to follow as you tell this man's story. Keep up the good work here.

★ Like








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