



'A Sleeping Nymph Watched by a Shepherd', by Angelica Kauffman (1780)

# Women and Romanticism

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# What is Romanticism?

‘Does [Romanticism] have, or can we give it, a satisfactory definition? After nearly two centuries, of course, we have acquired a sense for the people and ideas that should be subsumed under it, but they are so many and various that it seems hopeless to search for a single universal feature’

Michael Ferber, *Romanticism: A Very Short Introduction*, pp. 7-8.

# Who were the Romantics?

- **The Big Five/Six?**

William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, Percy Shelley, George Gordon (Lord) Byron

- **Where are the women?**

‘By the 1960s, five male poets constituted the Romantic canon. The women of that period were so effectively ‘not there’, except as sisters, wives and mothers, that they were excluded from consideration even as ‘minor’ writers’ [...] the history of women’s writing in the early nineteenth century was an issue separate from Romanticism’ (Paula R. Feldman and Theresa Kelley, *Romantic Women Writers: Voices and Countervoices*)

‘By the 1790s in Great Britain, there were many more women than men novelists, and the theatre was actually dominated by women [...] In the arena of poetry, the place of women was likewise, for a time, predominant, and it is here that the distortions of our received history are most glaring. Its chronology has been written along wholly, and arbitrarily, a masculine gender line’. Stuart Curran, ‘The ‘I’ Altered’, *Romanticism and Feminism* (1988) ed. Ann Mellor.

‘What has transpired in this short space (1988-1999) is no less than a wholesale rethinking of British Romanticism, both as an intellectual and cultural phenomenon, and as a site of literary production’. Harriet Kramer Linkin and Stephen Behrendt, *Romanticism and Women Poets* (1999)



Anna Letitia Barbauld (née Aikin), 1743-1825

**Anna Letitia  
Barbauld**



**The Nine Living Muses of Great Britain: portraits in the characters of the  
Muses in the Temple of Apollo  
by Richard Samuel, 1778**

# 'The Mouse's Petition'

"Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento  
(hae tibi erunt artes), pacisque imponere morem,  
**parcere subjectis et debellare superbos.**"

(Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 6, lines 852-853)

"You remember to guide the peoples with power, Roman,  
(these will be your arts), to impose the way of peace, to  
**spare the conquered and to battle down the proud.**"

# 'The Mouse's Petition'

OH ! hear a pensive captive's prayer,  
For liberty that sighs;  
And never let thine heart be shut  
Against the prisoner's cries.

For here forlorn and sad I sit,  
Within the wiry grate ;  
And tremble at th' approaching morn,  
Which brings impending fate.

If e'er thy breast with freedom glow'd,  
And spurn'd a tyrant's chain,  
Let not thy strong oppressive force  
A free-born mouse detain.



# 'The Mouse's Petition'

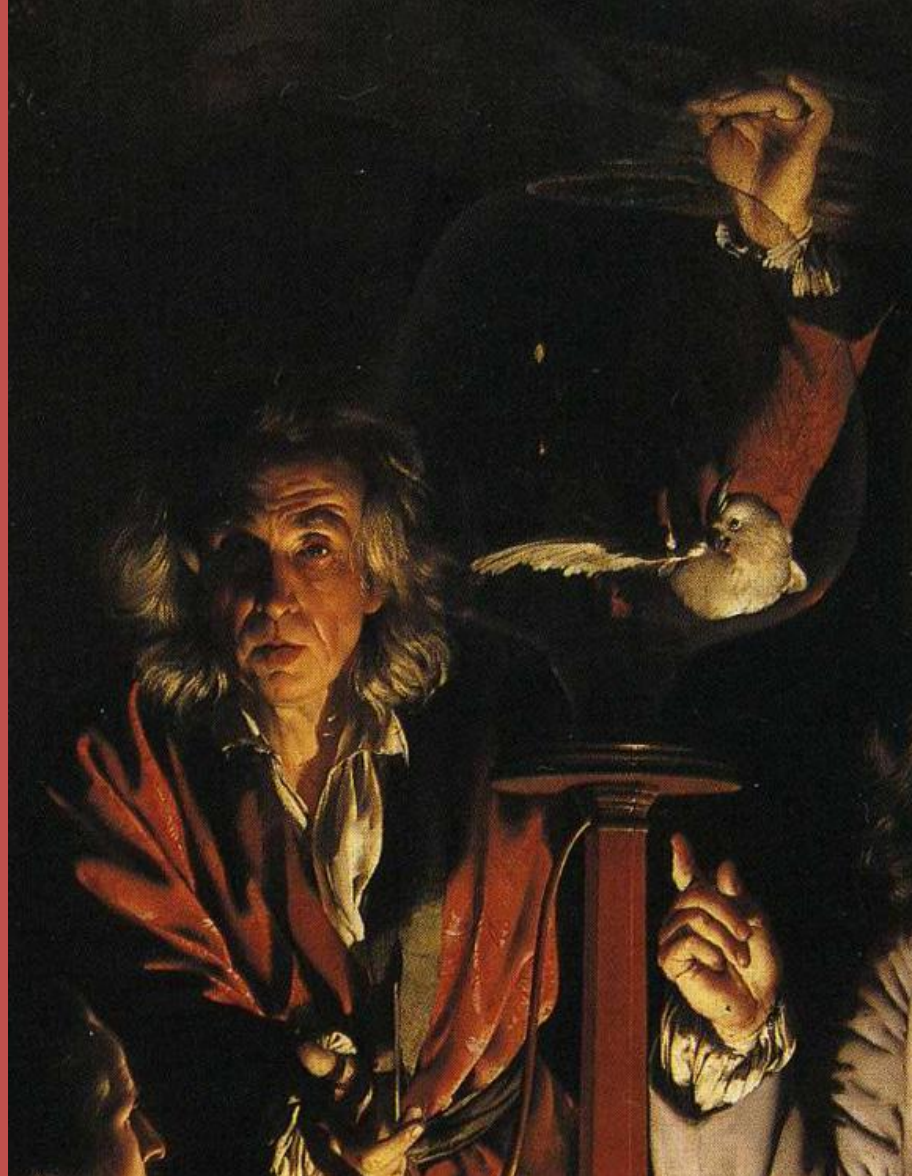
The well taught philosophic mind  
To all compassion gives;  
Casts round the world an equal eye,  
And feels for all that lives.

If mind, as ancient sages taught,  
A never dying flame,  
Still shifts thro' matter's varying forms,  
In every form the same,

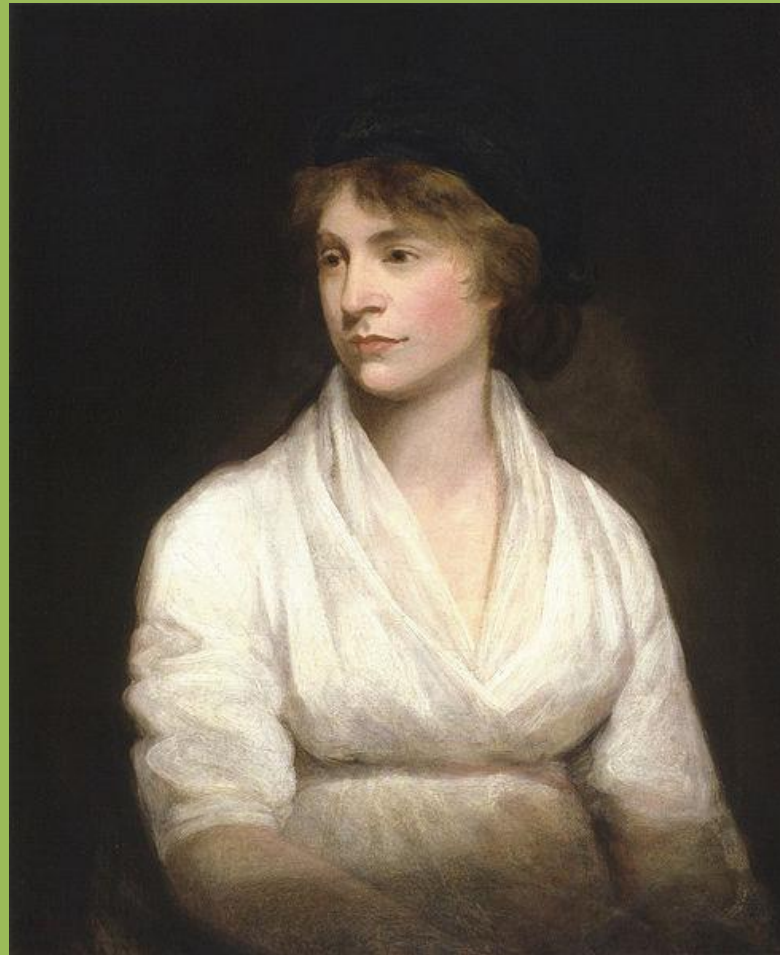
Beware, lest in the worm you crush  
A brother's soul you find ;  
And tremble lest thy luckless hand  
Dislodge a kindred mind.



An Experiment on a Bird in an Air-Pump, Joseph Wright of Derby, 1768.



An Experiment on a Bird in an Air-Pump, Joseph Wright of Derby, 1768 (detail).



## Mary Wollstonecraft, 1759-1797

John Opie, portrait of Mary Wollstonecraft (1797)  
© National Portrait Gallery, London

# MEN ARE FROM MARS, *Women Are* *from Venus*

A Practical Guide for  
Improving Communication and  
Getting What You Want in Your Relationships

**JOHN GRAY, Ph.D.**

Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus

男は火星人 女は金星人

心理学者

ジョン・グレイ

すべての悩みを解決する  
恋愛相談Q&A



Women, I allow, may have different duties to fulfil, but they are *human* duties, and the principles that should regulate the discharge of them, I sturdily maintain, must be the same

*Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

A  
VINDICATION  
OF THE  
RIGHTS OF MEN,  
IN A  
LETTER  
TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
EDMUND BURKE;  
OCCASIONED BY  
HIS REFLECTIONS  
ON THE  
REVOLUTION IN FRANCE.  
By MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.  

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THE SECOND EDITION.  

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LONDON:  
PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON,  
NO. 72, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.  
M. DCC. XC.

## *Vindication of the Rights of Men (1790)*

‘the birthright of man  
[...] is such a degree of  
liberty, civil and  
religious, as is  
compatible with the  
liberty of every other  
individual’

VINDICATION  
OF THE  
RIGHTS OF WOMAN:  
WITH  
STRICTURES  
ON  
POLITICAL AND MORAL SUBJECTS.

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By MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.

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L O N D O N:  
PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, N<sup>o</sup> 72, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD.

1792.

*Vindication of the Rights  
of Woman (1792)*

‘It is time to effect a  
revolution in female  
manners’



‘Boys love sports of noise and activity ; to beat the drum, to whip the top, and to drag about their little carts: girls, on the other hand, are fonder of things of show and ornament, such as mirrors, trinkets, and dolls: **the doll is the peculiar amusement of the females**, from whence we see their taste plainly adapted to their destination’, Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile* (1762)

‘I have, probably, had an opportunity of observing more girls in their infancy than J. J. Rousseau-I can recollect my own feelings, and I have looked steadily around me; yet, so far from coinciding with him in opinion respecting the first dawn of the female character, I will venture to affirm, that a girl, whose spirits have not been damped by inactivity, or innocence tainted by false shame, will always be a romp, and **the doll will never excite attention unless confinement allows her no alternative. Girls and boys, in short, would play harmlessly together, if the distinction of sex was not inculcated long before nature makes any difference.**-I will go further, and affirm, as an indisputable fact, that most of the women, in the circle of my observation, who have acted like rational creatures, or shewn any vigour of intellect, have accidentally been allowed to run wild-as some of the elegant formers of the fair sex would insinuate’ (Wollstonecraft, *Vindication*, 1792)

‘ Let it be observed, that in your sex manly exercises are never graceful; that in them a tone and figure, as well as an air and deportment, of the masculine kind, are always forbidding; and that **men of sensibility desire in every woman soft features, and a flowing voice, a form, not robust, and demeanour delicate and gentle.**’

James Fordyce, *Sermons to Young Women* (1765)

**Is not the following portrait—the portrait of a house slave?** [...] Such a woman ought to be an angel-or she is an ass-for I discern not a trace of the human character, neither reason nor passion in this domestic drudge, whose being is absorbed in that of a tyrant's. (Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792))

# Love life

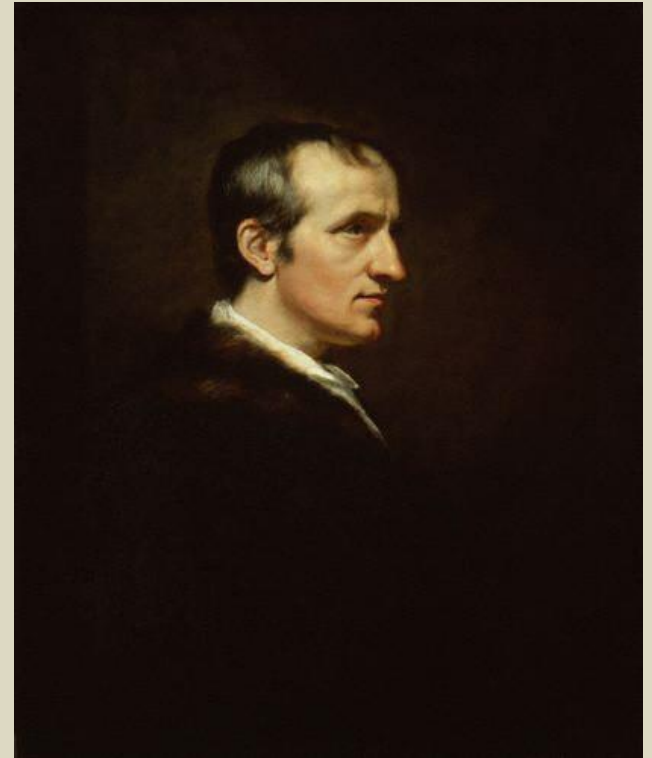
- 1790? Affair with the painter Henry Fuseli
- 1793 Goes to France and meets the American, Captain Gilbert Imlay
- May 1794 Imlay's daughter, Fanny, born
- May 1795 first attempt at suicide
- November 1795 second suicide attempt

# Love life

- Summer 1796 begins relationship with Godwin
- December 1796 discovers she is pregnant
- March 1797 marries Godwin

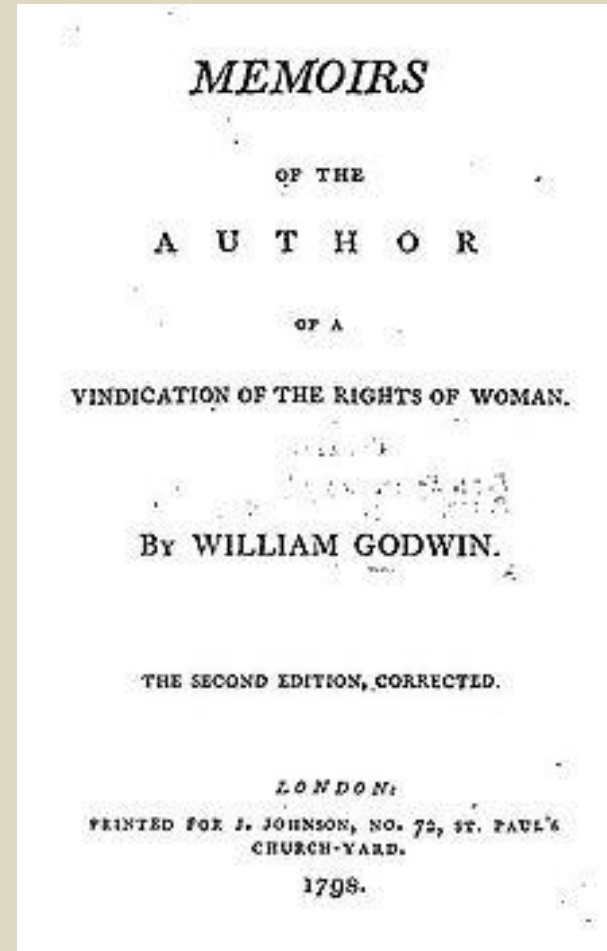
We did not marry [...] nothing can be so ridiculous upon the face of it, or so contrary to the genuine march of sentiment, as to require the overflowing of the soul to wait upon a ceremony [...] Mary felt an entire conviction of the propriety of her conduct.

from William Godwin, *Memoirs of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (London: Johnson, 1798) [this passage is from the 1<sup>st</sup> edition]



# Death and *Memoirs*

- **30 August 1797** Mary (will be Mary Shelley) born
- **10 Sept** Wollstonecraft dies of puerperal fever
- **1798** Godwin publishes *Memoirs and Maria, or the Wrongs of Woman*



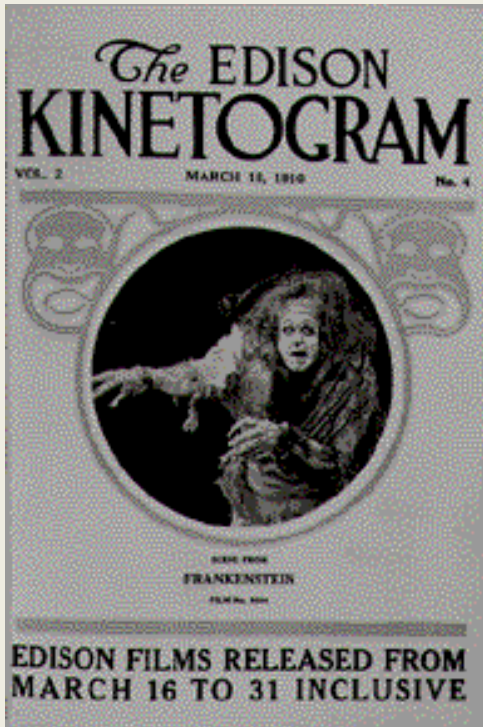
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Mary Shelley, née Wollstonecraft Godwin  
(1797-1851)

Portrait of Mary Shelley by Richard Rothwell, shown at the Royal Academy exhibition (1840).





1910 version of *Frankenstein*; 1931 version of *Frankenstein*





<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EOcJwt8XB4M>

**FRANKENSTEIN ;**  
OR,  
**THE MODERN PROMETHEUS.**

—◆—  
IN THREE VOLUMES.  
—◆—

Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay  
To mould me man? Did I solicit thee  
From darkness to promote me?—

PARADISE LOST.

—  
VOL. I.  
—

—  
London :  
PRINTED FOR  
LACKINGTON, HUGHES, HARDING, MAVOR, & JONES,  
FINSBURY SQUARE.

—  
1818.

TO  
WILLIAM GODWIN,  
*AUTHOR OF POLITICAL JUSTICE,*  
*CALEB WILLIAMS, &C.*

THESE VOLUMES  
*Are respectfully inscribed*  
BY  
THE AUTHOR

First edition of  
*Frankenstein* (1818) and  
dedicatory page



John Opie, portrait of Mary Wollstonecraft (1797)



**Percy Shelley (1792-1822)**



Mary and Percy used to meet at Wollstonecraft's tomb in St Pancras church: 'That churchyard with it[s] sacred tomb,' Mary would write later in her journal, 'was the spot where first love shone in you[r] dear eyes' (Journals, II: 479)

**from Volume I, ch. 4, *Frankenstein* (1818)**

“I traversed the streets, without any clear conception of where I was, or what I was doing. My heart palpitated in the sickness of fear; and I hurried on with irregular steps, not daring to look about me:

Like one who, on a lonely road,  
Doth walk in fear and dread,  
And, having once turn'd round, walks on,  
And turns no more his head;  
Because he knows a frightful fiend  
Doth close behind him tread. “



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pkAiQctFos&feature=related>