

「ロマン主義の諸相」(特別招聘講義)

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第12回 女性とロマン主義 (WOMEN AND ROMANTICISM)

Women and Romanticism: some critical views

'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* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1995)

'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, 'Romantic Poetry: The 'I' Altered', *Romanticism and Feminism*, ed. Ann Mellor (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1988)

'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 C. Behrendt, *Romanticism and Women Poets: Opening the Doors of Reception* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999)

Anna Letitia Barbauld (1743-1825)



For more information on Barbauld, please see the edition of her work by William McCarthy and Elizabeth Kraft, *The Poems of Anna Letitia Barbauld* (University of Georgia Press, 1994). William McCarthy's biography, *Anna Letitia Barbauld: Voice of the Enlightenment* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009) is the most important work on Barbauld of recent years. There are also some resources available online, including:

<http://www.usask.ca/english/barbauld/>

Here's one of her most famous works from her collection *Poems* (London: 1773):

The MOUSE's PETITION,*

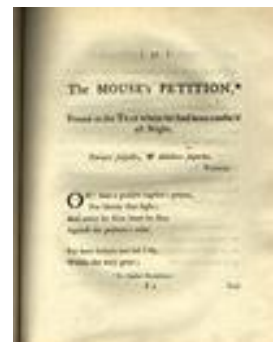
*** To Doctor PRIESTLEY.**

Found in the TRAP where he had been confin'd all Night.

Parcere subjectis, & debellare superbos.

VIRGIL

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.

Oh ! do not stain with guiltless blood
Thy hospitable hearth;
Nor triumph that thy wiles betray'd
A prize so little worth.

The scatter'd gleanings of a feast
My scanty meals supply ;
But if thine unrelenting heart
That slender boon deny,

The chearful light, the vital air,
Are blessings widely given ;
Let nature's commoners enjoy
The common gifts of heaven.

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.

Or, if this transient gleam of day
Be all of life we share,
Let pity plead within thy breast,
That little all to spare.

So may thy hospitable board
With health and peace be crown'd ;
And every charm of heartfelt ease
Beneath thy roof be found.

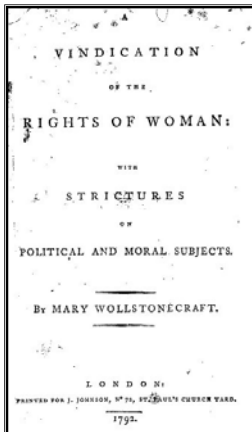
So when unseen destruction lurks,
Which men like mice may share,
May some kind angel clear thy path,
And break the hidden snare.

Mary Wollstonecraft, 1759-1797

For more information on Mary Wollstonecraft, including her novels, *Mary* and *Maria, Or, the Wrongs of Woman*, as well as her political and educational writing, the best edition to use is the Pickering and Chatto 7 volume edition, edited by Janet Todd and Marilyn Butler (1989). There is an excellent introduction to her life and work by Janet Todd on the BBC website:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/empire_seapower/wollstonecraft_01.shtml

Her most famous work is *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), which followed her *Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790). Both of them were responses to the French Revolution, and, in particular, to the work of the conservative thinker, Edmund Burke.



VINDICATION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN (1792)

'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.'

'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 mirrours, 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)**]

Wollstonecraft responds to Rousseau: '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'

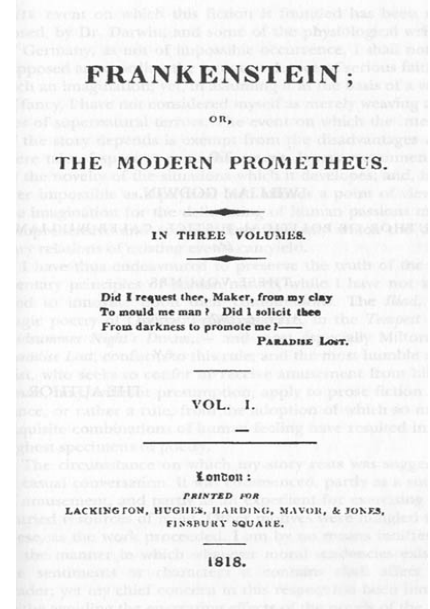
['Let it be observed, that in your sex manly exercises are never graceful; that in them a tone and figure, as well as an air and deportment, of the masculine kind, are always forbidding; and that **men of sensibility desire in every woman soft features, and a flowing voice, a form, not robust, and demeanour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

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

Wollstonecraft responds to Fordyce: 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))

Mary Shelley, née Wollstonecraft Godwin (1797-1851)

For more information on Mary Shelley, a good place to start is the Oxford World's Classics edition of *Frankenstein*, edited by Marilyn Butler (Oxford University Press: 1994). Then the best edition to use is the one available in your literature lab, the eight volume Pickering and Chatto edition, by Nora Crook and Pamela Clemit. This includes all her novels – *Matilda* (1819), *Valperga* (1823), *The Last Man* (1826), *Perkin Warbeck* (1830), *Lodore* (1835) and *Falkner* (1837). I would especially recommend *The Last Man*, an early science fiction work which portrays a devastating plague, and the terrifying plight of the last man left on earth. If you are interested in the life of Mary Shelley, you can also find useful biographical information at <http://people.brandeis.edu/~teuber/shelleybio.html>.



FRANKENSTEIN (1818)

Volume I, chapter 4 Frankenstein suffers guilt:

"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. "

(The quotation is from Coleridge's poem "The Ancient Mariner")

Volume III, chapter I Frankenstein describes his friend Clerval, destroyed by the monster:

His wild and enthusiastic imagination was chastened by the sensibility of his heart. His soul overflowed with ardent affections, and his friendship was of that devoted and wondrous nature that the worldly-minded teach us to look for only in the imagination. But even human sympathies were not sufficient to satisfy his eager mind. The scenery of external nature, which others regard only with admiration, he loved with ardour:

----- "The sounding cataract
Haunted *him* like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to him
An appetite; a feeling, and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, or any interest
Unborrowed from the eye*."

* Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey.

And where does he now exist? Is this gentle and lovely being lost forever?

Volume II, chapter 9 The creature argues with his creator, Frankenstein, for a companion:

"You must create a female for me, with whom I can live in the interchange of those sympathies necessary for my being. [...] I am malicious because I am miserable. Am I not shunned and hated by all mankind?

[...] Oh! my creator, make me happy; let me feel gratitude towards you for one benefit! Let me see that I excite the sympathy of some existing thing; do not deny me my request!"