

Mary Wollstonecraft



About:

- Born on the 27th of April, 1750 in London England
- Brought up by an abusive father, Mary left home to dedicate herself to a life of writing
- Was a philosopher, novelist, historian, women's rights activist, scholar, educator, etc
- Died September 10, 1797

Important Ideas

- Mary argued that if women were going to be good wives and mothers, they needed to first be intelligent, educated citizens
- In Wollstonecraft's book *The Wrongs of Woman*, she asserted that women have strong sexual desires and that it was degrading to pretend otherwise
- Argued against the idea that that women are helpless adornments of a household. She states that society breeds "gentle domestic brutes" and that a confined existence makes women frustrated, and transforms them into tyrants
- Insisted that that what she observed to be superficialness of the mind of a women of her time was not due to any sort of natural deficiency, but to the lack of education
- Accused a culture where woman were taught from infancy that the only thing they should care about is their beauty

Accomplishments

- She wrote the essay *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), which is considered one of the first feminist philosophical writings
- She got a lot of response to her essay, yet not all of it was positive. People were not so much against the content of the essay, but rather that a woman should be writing at all
- Men felt attacked by the essay, but she was really calling out women. She demanded of her fellow females to stop letting themselves be treated like children, and to start acting like responsible adults

Legacies

- Her essay is the basis of modern feminism, and has influenced generations of women, and how they view themselves and their obligations to society
- Gave birth to Mary Shelley, who was born ten days before Wollstonecraft died
- Mary Shelley went on to write the famous book *Frankenstein*