



# MARY AND THE HYENAS

**Written by Maureen Lennon**  
**Music by Billy Nomates (Tor Maries)**  
**Directed by Esther Richardson**

**LEARNING RESOURCE A**



# CONTENTS

<a href="#">4</a>	About <i>Mary and the Hyenas</i>
<a href="#">5</a>	About this Pack
<a href="#">6</a>	Who was Mary Wollstonecraft
<a href="#">7 - 10</a>	A Timeline of Mary's Life
<a href="#">11 - 13</a>	Wollstonecraft in London
<a href="#">13 - 14</a>	Wollstonecraft in East Yorkshire
<a href="#">14 - 17</a>	Wollstonecraft and Feminism
<a href="#">18 - 20</a>	Wollstonecraft and Liberalism
<a href="#">21 - 25</a>	Wollstonecraft and The French Revolution
<a href="#">26 - 29</a>	Representations of Mary Wollstonecraft
<a href="#">30 - 40</a>	Extracts from Wollstonecraft's Writing
<a href="#">41 - 43</a>	Endnotes, Links and Resources
<a href="#">44 - 43</a>	Upcoming Resources and Workshops





# MARY & THE HYENAS

Presented by Pilot Theatre and Hull Truck Theatre

Written by Maureen Lennon

Music by Billy Nomates (Tor Maries)

Directed by Esther Richardson

## Six microphones, an electrifying score and a feminist icon.

Meet Mary and the Hyenas, a band who will sing you the inspiring story of Mary Wollstonecraft. A woman centuries ahead of her time: trailblazer, feminist and literary pioneer.

From her passionate advocacy for women's rights to her tumultuous personal journey, *Mary and the Hyenas* captures the spirit and resilience of a woman who dared to defy the conventions of her time, and who kept going when so many wanted to bring her down. This is a witty, laugh out loud and searing tribute to the courage and determination of a woman who fought for equality and justice.

Featuring music by the acclaimed artist Billy Nomates, written by Maureen Lennon, and directed by Esther Richardson, prepare for our all female cast to roar onto the stage, singing and dancing with their chins up in defiance to the injustices of the world. Be prepared for petticoats to be lifted, boots stomped and voices raised in the determined pursuit of change.

*Mary and the Hyenas* was developed with the support of the National Theatre's Generate programme.

## TOUR DATES

### Hull Truck Theatre

Fri 07 Feb – Sat 01 Mar 2025

### Wilton's Music Hall, London

Tue 18 Mar – Sat 29 Mar 2025

## ABOUT THIS PACK

Resource Pack produced by Pilot Theatre

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This resource pack accompanies the theatre production of *Mary and the Hyenas* and is aimed at educators who are exploring the life and historical context of Mary Wollstonecraft. This resource may be of particular interest to those teaching: English (KS3-KS5); the French Revolution in A-level History (KS5); and liberalism in A-level Politics (KS5). For those based in East Yorkshire and London, this resource could support the teaching of local history (KS3).

Resource Packs – Parts B and C will be published in Spring 2025, and will support Drama and Performing Arts students to explore the play and the theatre production, along with the themes and characters. These resources will include interviews with the cast and creative team, as well as filmed scene extracts to watch again.

We are not responsible for the content of external links, and we strongly recommend checking the suitability of external content before sharing with your students.

If you have any questions or feedback about this resource pack, please contact [info@pilot-theatre.com](mailto:info@pilot-theatre.com)

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# WHO WAS MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT?

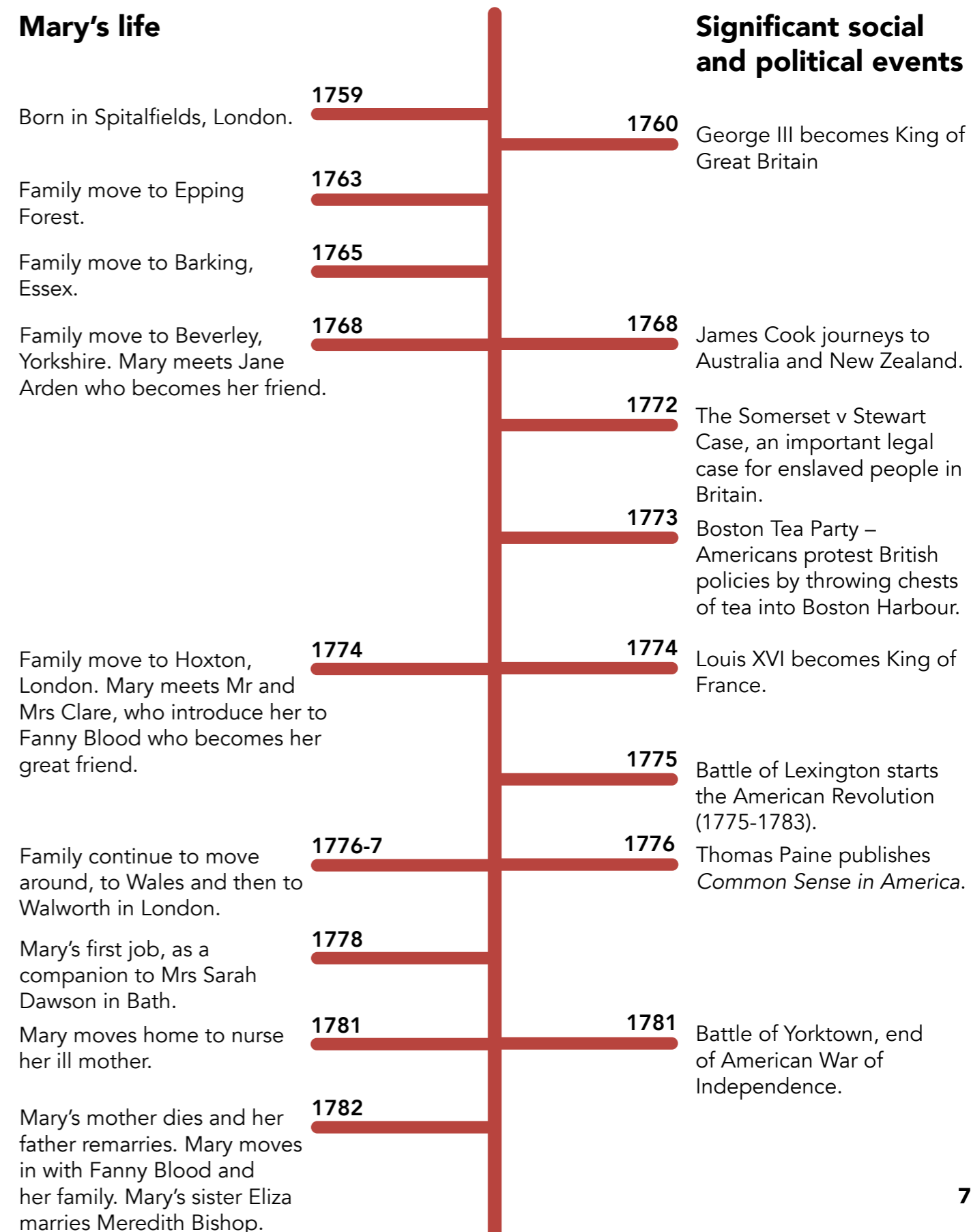
Mary Wollstonecraft was a radical writer and philosopher, known for her early feminist views and advocacy for equality between men and women. In eighteenth-century Europe, she challenged convention by campaigning for the education of girls so that they could contribute more fully to society, arguing that women were not inferior to men, but that they were limited by their lack of education and opportunities.

In early adulthood, she took on traditional feminine roles as a lady's companion, governess and teacher, before establishing herself as a writer. She worked as a writer, reviewer and translator for the radical publisher Joseph Johnson in London, further challenging convention by being financially self-sufficient with a career. She believed in the philosophy of classical liberalism and supported the French Revolution, travelling to France during this time and writing about it. She wrote fiction, conduct guides, political pieces and children's stories, but is most known today for her work *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* published in 1792.

In the final year of her life, she married fellow radical and early anarchist William Godwin and was the mother of Mary Shelley, who became the author of *Frankenstein*.

# A TIMELINE OF MARY'S LIFE

Here you can see a timeline of Mary's life, set against the social and political context of the time.



1783  
Eliza gives birth to a child, and develops serious postnatal depression, Mary supports her.  
Mary opens her first school in Islington, London.

1784  
Mary suspects Eliza is being abused by her husband, and persuades her to leave him with the baby.  
Later, the baby dies.  
Mary's school in Islington fails and she opens another school in Newington Green.

1785  
Fanny marries in Portugal  
Mary travels to Lisbon to support Fanny after the birth of her child .  
Fanny dies shortly after childbirth.  
Mary returns to London.

1786  
Newington Green school closes.  
Mary takes her next job as a governess to the Kingboroughs in Ireland.

1787  
Publishes first work, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*.  
Mary is dismissed from governess role.  
Meets publisher Joseph Johnson and works as a translator, writer and assistant for him.

1788  
*Mary: A Fiction* published. Also publishes children's fiction and translated texts this year, all published by Johnson.

1787  
First Fleet of British convicts sent to Australia.  
Committee for abolition of the Slave Trade is formed in Britain.

1789  
French Revolution begins  
July – Storming of the Bastille in Paris.  
Dr Richard Price gives sermon which begins Revolution Controversy in Britain.  
George Washington, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and others write first US Constitution.

1790  
Mary writes *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (anonymously at first) in response to Burke's pamphlet.  
Republishes it under her name after its initial success.

1791  
Starts writing *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.  
First meets William Godwin at a dinner held by Johnson in honour of Thomas Paine.

1792  
Publishes *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.  
Relationship with Henry Fuseli.  
Moves to Paris when this ends and sees King Louis XVI taken to trial.

1793  
Meets and starts relationship with American Gilbert Imlay, registers as his 'wife' to protect herself and becomes pregnant.

1794  
Fanny Imlay, Mary and Gilbert's daughter born in Le Havre, France.  
Imlay leaves them in France and moves to England.  
Mary publishes writing on the French revolution, *An Historical and Moral View of the Origin and Progress of the French Revolution*.

1795  
Mary and Fanny move to London, discovers Imlay is unfaithful.  
Mary attempts suicide.  
Travels to Scandinavia on a mission from Imlay, to recover some lost silver. Takes Fanny and her nanny, Marguerite.  
When she returns, discovers Imlay living with someone else and attempts suicide for a second time.

1790  
Edmund Burke publishes *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.

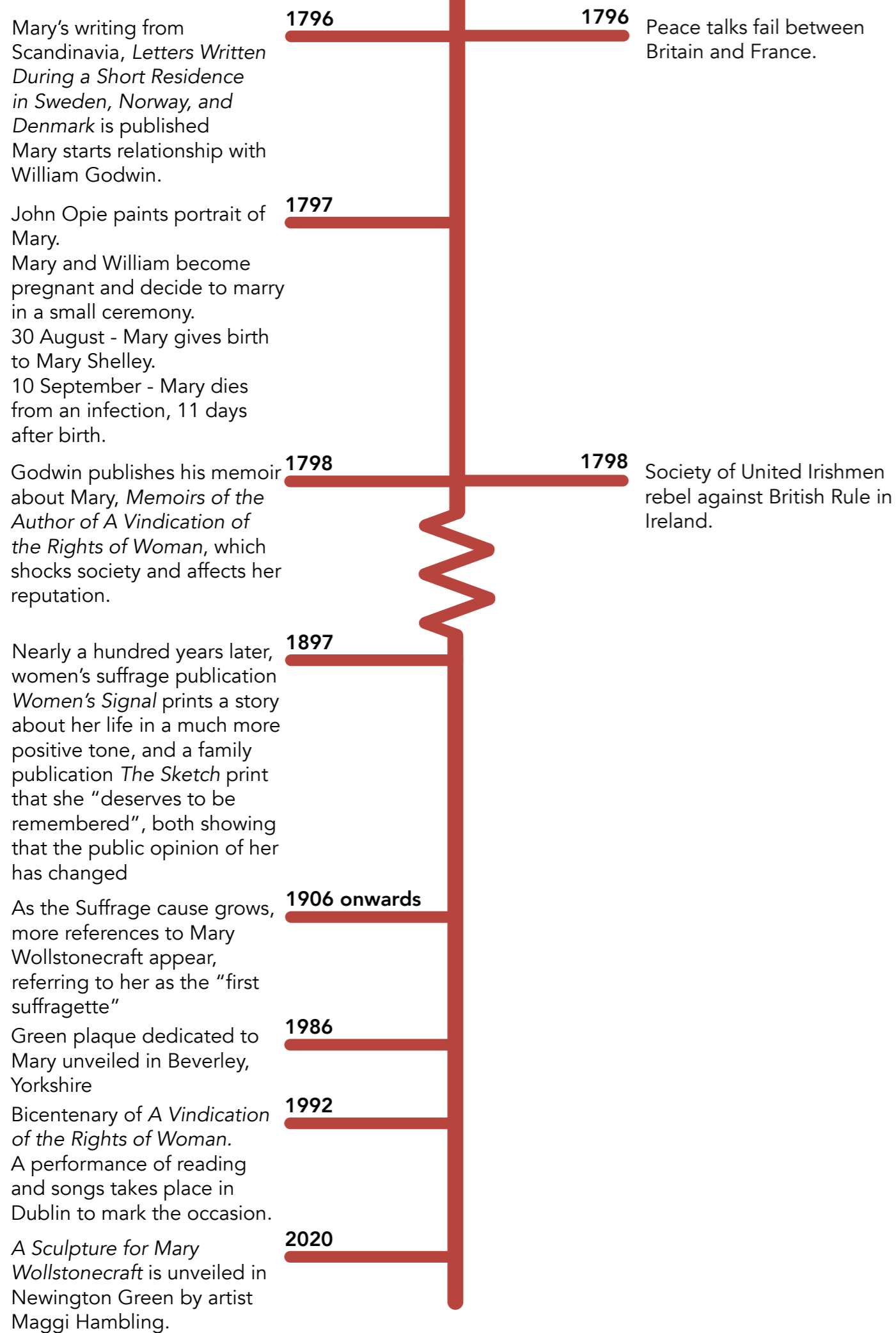
1791  
Thomas Paine publishes *Rights of Man* in England.

1792  
August - King Louis XVI arrested.  
September - France declared a republic.  
December – King Louis XVI taken to trial.

1793  
January – execution of King Louis XVI.  
February – France declares war on England.  
July – Reign of Terror begins.  
October – execution of Marie Antoinette.

1794  
July – Robespierre executed, Reign of Terror ends

1795  
Seditious Meetings Act, Gagging Act and Treason Act passed to try and limit rebellious groups and prevent revolt in Britain.



## WOLLSTONECRAFT IN LONDON

### Mary's birth and childhood in London

Mary was born in London and returned to London and its surrounding areas throughout her life. Her family moved a lot when she was a child because of her father's inability to secure a stable profession. Apart from brief stints in Wales and Yorkshire, the family lived mainly in and around London.

Mary was born in Spitalfields, East London. Whilst this is now a hugely redeveloped area, in the eighteenth century it was the centre of the silk trade, and as more workers joined this growing trade, the area became overcrowded, noisy and chaotic.

One person who profited from the silk business was Edward Wollstonecraft, Mary's grandfather. Mary's father also joined the business and became a handkerchief weaver, and lived in a cottage in Primrose Street, where Mary would have been born in 1759. With his money and status as a gentleman, Mary's grandfather was able to buy a farm in Epping for Mary's family, and so they moved there.

After Edward's death, the family moved out further to Barking, before moving to Beverley, and after their time in Yorkshire moved back to London to live in Hoxton.

### Mary in Hoxton

In Hoxton, Mary again searched for like-minded people outside of her family, and met Mr and Mrs Clare, a retired couple who shared literature and intellectual conversation with her. They would have given her books to read and introduced her to poets and writers she would not have had access to before. At the Clare house, Mary also met Fanny Blood, who was to become her most intimate friend.

Godwin's memoirs describe this intense friendship, and describe how Mary idolised and worshipped Fanny, and had dreams to live with her. Fanny did not quite return Mary's intensity of feeling, and was engaged to a man called Hugh Skeys, whom she later married. When Mary's family moved yet again, to Wales, and Mary got her first job in Bath, she wrote to Fanny and dreamt of their future together.



Later, Mary moved in with Fanny and her parents, the Blood family, in Fulham, London.

### **Newington Green**

In 1784, Mary, Eliza and Fanny opened a school together. Mary needed money to live independently, and teaching at the time required no qualifications and was an acceptable profession for a woman. Their first school was in Islington, but this failed, and a second school was set up in Newington Green.

Newington Green in the eighteenth century was a centre for non-conformists – intellectual and radical thinkers who challenged the religious and political expectations of the time.

Mary met Dr Richard Price, the “*first radical intellectual she had encountered in her life*”<sup>1</sup> and enjoyed an intellectually stimulating life in a more equal society. For the first time, she was among people who were rational, fair, respectful to women, believed in individual will and not state regulations, and wanted to improve society – and so this time in Newington Green was hugely important in developing Mary’s beliefs and writing.

In Newington Green, Mary also met Joseph Johnson, another dissenter who was to become Mary’s publisher and mentor. She wrote *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* here which Johnson published.

### **George Street and St Paul’s Churchyard**

After working as a governess in Ireland, Mary returned to London and was given a home and job by Joseph Johnson. She initially stayed with him, before he set her up at 45 George Street, Blackfriars, (now Dolben Street, in Southwark). She worked for him at his booksellers and publishers in St Paul’s Churchyard, a street which was the centre of the book trade at the time. This was life changing for Mary because she could become financially independent, not dependent on a husband nor father like so many women at the time, and she could start to develop a career as a writer, which was relatively unheard of for women. Just like with the Ardens and Clares, Johnson also gave her the opportunity to learn and broaden her mind. He held famous dinners with radical

intellectuals, and so Mary met more and more people with thoughts similar to her own. Encouraged by Johnson, she worked as a writer and reviewer for Johnson’s magazine *Analytical Review*, and translated texts from French to English. Through Johnson, Mary also met two of the men she had love affairs with: Henry Fuseli and William Godwin.

## **WOLLSTONECRAFT IN EAST YORKSHIRE**

In 1768, when Mary was nine years old, her family moved to the market town of Beverley in Yorkshire, where they lived on a farm.

After a time, they moved to a house in the town centre, and Mary had access to the Gothic Minster, music theatre, and a literary club.

Still craving an education, Mary met the Arden family. Mr Arden ‘*received himself as a philosopher and gave public lectures on science and literature.*’ Mary was acutely aware of the lack of education she was getting at home, and so attached herself to the Arden family. Letters between Mary and Jane show a deep friendship between them, and also hinted at her unhappiness with her own home life.

The deep friendship Mary formed with Jane was the first of several very intense female relationships she had throughout her life, her strong feelings evident from the possessive and jealous tone in her letters. Mary felt deeply and did not hide it; she openly admitted to Jane that she ‘*must have the first place or none*’ - there could be no other close friends in Jane’s life!

Mary’s openness and strength of feeling toward Jane seems to be the start of her radical nature - it would have been deemed unfeminine and not acceptable to feel so openly and strongly, especially for another woman, but convention didn’t bother Mary, a quality we see throughout her life.

However, Mary’s education did have a significant development in Beverley, as Mary was sent to a day school. Her brother Ned enjoyed the privilege of a grammar school, but for Mary this was not an option. She would have learned reading and writing but not a lot more,

perhaps 'traditional' female activities such as sewing and needlework.

Although this education would not have been what her intellectual mind craved, the attendance of school in Beverley must have been a significant event in her life, as she dedicated a lot of her future career and writing to education, especially the education of girls.

## WOLLSTONECRAFT AND FEMINISM

### What is feminism?

Feminism is the belief in true social, political and financial equality between the sexes, advocating for women to receive the same opportunities and rewards as men. Feminism is a worldwide response to the gender-based oppression of women throughout history. Historically, women have not had the right to vote, to own property, to attend university, study medicine, to receive birth control, or even to receive a basic education.

### Mary's feminist beliefs

From an early age, Mary believed in equal rights for the sexes and individualism, and as a child was frustrated at her lack of status and opportunities, compared to her brother Ned. For example, Ned went to a boys' grammar school with access to a library and wide range of subjects and activities, whereas Mary went to a small village school and would have studied little more than reading and writing. Ned was entitled to inherit from his grandfather, and Mary was not. Ned was able to graduate into a career as a lawyer, Mary was not entitled to any such path.

She witnessed her mother's abuse at the hands of her alcoholic father and nursed her mother before her death in her early fifties. Much about her mother's life would have fuelled Mary's determination not to experience a similar fate.

In her letters and stories, Mary was critical of the need for women to dress attractively for men, to do their hair and wear make-up, or to wear corsets and petticoats. When working as a companion in Bath,

she wrote critically about the girls who were obsessed with fashion; as a governess for the Kingboroughs, she was critical of Caroline, Lady Kingborough, for wearing too much rouge, bathing in milk and caring more about her pet dogs than educating her children.

In one letter to Jane Arden, she wrote: *"It is a happy thing to be a mere blank, and to be able to pursue one's own whims, where they lead, without having a husband and half a hundred children at hand to tease and control a poor woman who wishes to be free."*

Mary wanted to be financially independent, not have to find a husband for security, and had no interest in the 'traditional' feminine pursuits of needlecraft, music and sewing. However, although she shunned marriage until later in life, she still found herself in the traditional feminine roles of lady's companion, governess and teacher, as no other options were available to her. In her writing, she criticised the lack of independence women had in society. This all changed when she met the publisher Joseph Johnson, a like-minded radical, who employed her as a writer and allowed her to live alone and work, breaking the mould for eighteenth-century women.

Mary had unconventional views towards sex, marriage and children which were not widely acceptable in the eighteenth century. She had relationships with married men, had a child out of marriage, lived with a man without being married, and, although she later married William Godwin whom she loved dearly, they unconventionally lived in separate apartments. When Godwin wrote his memoir about Mary after her death, the details of her love life shocked readers and ruined her public reputation for years to come, showing that society was not ready to accept women as equally as men.

In both *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and her unfinished novel *Maria: Or, the Wrongs of Woman*, Mary compares marriage to a prison and argues that marriage as an institution controls female sexuality and reduces women to commodities.



## Mary's contribution to feminism

Mary is sometimes described as a 'proto-feminist' (proto meaning first) or the 'mother of feminism', as she lived before the concept and term existed, but her life and work undoubtedly contributed to the development of feminism many years later.

In her early book, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*, Mary gives her opinion on the education of children, and although there is a focus on how girls can be good wives and daughters, there is an emphasis on the importance of education, reading, good conversation, and a good moral upbringing, and this is a key early feminist idea. As Mary states: *"Girls learn something of music, drawing, and geography; but they do not know enough to engage their attention, and render it an employment of the mind."*

On reading, she has a passionate view: *"A relish for reading, or any of the fine arts, should be cultivated very early in life."* She also expands on her feelings about feminine dress, hair and make-up which she had previously expressed her distaste for.

Wollstonecraft was critiquing the view of some male writers at the time, particularly Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who had some progressive ideas on education, but argued that women should be submissive to men, were natural care-givers and home-makers and were incapable of reason.

The argument that girls should receive a full education and learn skills to enable them to function independently was built on later in her seminal text *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.

Published in 1792, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* is considered an important early work of feminist philosophy. It follows her classical liberalist beliefs that the rights of men and the rights of women are the same. Women are human beings first, and women second, and therefore should be entitled to all the same rights as men. She makes the argument that if women are to contribute fully to society, and not just be 'domestic slaves', then they should be educated, allowed to work and be financially independent:

*"my main argument is built on this simple principle, that if she be not prepared by education to become the companion of man, she will stop the progress of knowledge, for truth must be common to all".*

*"Strengthen the female mind by enlarging it, and there will be an end to blind obedience".*

She writes about how women are told from being children that their main role is to be submissive and beautiful and to attract the attention of men, and this prevents them from achieving more in life. Whereas, it is clear that Mary wants women to be able to achieve so much more: *"Women are told from their infancy, and taught by the example of their mothers, that a little knowledge of human weakness, justly termed cunning, softness of temper, OUTWARD obedience, and a scrupulous attention to a puerile kind of propriety, will obtain for them the protection of man; and should they be beautiful, everything else is needless".*

Many years after her death, she influenced several significant writers such as Virginia Woolf, who said that Mary's voice was still being heard. Even later, she was quoted and remembered in connection with the Women's Suffrage Movement, as an *"early claimant to feminist freedom."*<sup>2</sup>

# WOLLSTONECRAFT AND LIBERALISM

## What is classical liberalism?

Linked to Mary's feminist attitudes are her beliefs in liberalism and individualism. Classical liberalism is an early form of liberalism, a political philosophy that developed amongst the middle classes in the eighteenth century, which centred around individual freedoms and equal rights, maximising opportunities for individuals to grow and develop skills, and a move towards a more democratic society<sup>3</sup>. Although different from what we would consider equality and liberalism today, the key thinkers in the movement had radical ideas for their time.

## Key themes in liberalism:

**Natural rights** – everyone is born with rights at birth. John Locke developed this theory, arguing that all humans should have the right to freedom, life and property.

**Democracy** – a way of governing where society has a say, through elected representation or where power is given to members of a society.

**Less government control** – A liberalist philosophy believes in less government control and interference, in order to allow people to make their own rights and choices. Liberalists also believe in a 'free market economy', which means the markets should also operate outside of government control.

**Individual freedoms** – Liberal thinkers believed that the individual is the best person to make their own choices and should have the right to freedom of speech, to own property, to manage their own money and choose their own faith.

**The Enlightenment and reason** – The Enlightenment is closely linked to the beliefs of liberalism. The Enlightenment was an intellectual and cultural movement and a time of rapid scientific and technical discovery in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe, and celebrated reason, rational thought, science and logic.

## Development of Mary's liberalist beliefs

In Newington Green, Mary met many radical free thinkers who greatly influenced her political views. This group of people were called the 'Rational Dissenters'<sup>4</sup>, and many of the famous Dissenters such as Dr Richard Price, Joseph Johnson, and Joseph Priestley became Mary's friends and associates<sup>5</sup>. The Dissenters believed in Unitarianism rather than the traditional hierarchical Church of England, and had more rational views of religion.

They believed the Church of England was too strict and hierarchical; they believed in one God and Jesus as a human teacher, rather than the spiritual concept of the Holy Trinity; and they resented state control of religion and education. In response, they instead set up their own churches and educational institutions<sup>6</sup>. Newington Green was home to a famous Unitarian Chapel, where Dr Price preached and Mary attended sermons.

This freedom of thought was inspirational to Mary, who felt trapped as a powerless female in a male-dominated society, and responded to her own lack of education with a strong assertion that girls should be educated just as much as boys if they are to contribute fully to an equal society.

## Key liberalist thinkers

**John Locke (1632–1704)** – Often referred to as the father of classical liberalism, he championed individual rights and freedoms, developed theory of 'natural rights' and the 'social contract'.

**Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)** A key Enlightenment thinker known for his child-centred educational theories, which influenced progressive educational theory today. He believed that children should be taught depending on their own interests and not through rigid schooling, but he also had some controversial ideas about how arts and sciences had led to moral decay. Mary Wollstonecraft critiqued Rousseau heavily in her work, as he did not think girls should be educated as equally as boys.



**Adam Smith (1723–1790)** - Famous for his work *The Wealth of Nations* and his radical thoughts about the economy and free markets.

**Dr Richard Price (1723–1791)** – A philosopher and theologian, minister of the Unitarian Chapel in Newington Green. One of the first radicals Mary Wollstonecraft met, he introduced her to many more. Known for his support of the American Revolution.

**Joseph Priestley (1733–1804)** – A key scientific thinker, who discovered oxygen. A big thinker in the Radical Dissenters movement and promoted Unitarianism as a religion.

**Thomas Paine (1737–1809)** – A key political and pro-republican thinker of the eighteenth century. Though born in England, he moved to America where he published *Common Sense* in 1776, which was highly influential for American independence. His text *Rights of Man* supported French Revolution and also influenced Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*.

**Joseph Johnson (1738–1809)** - A bookseller and publisher who advanced liberalism through his publishing of radical texts in the eighteenth century. As well as publishing Mary's work, he published work by William Godwin and Thomas Paine.

## WOLLSTONECRAFT AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The French Revolution was a series of events which happened from 1789 to 1799, which took France from being ruled by a monarch, King Louis XVI, to being a republican state.

### Background of the French Revolution

In the late eighteenth century, King Louis XVI's excessive spending and his support of the American Revolution had nearly bankrupted France. Although there was a government with ministers, the King historically had the 'divine right to rule' and France was ruled as an absolute monarchy, meaning no one could effectively prevent the King from doing as he pleased. There were high taxes, huge social inequalities and poverty. Bad harvests and lack of money led to riots and revolts, such as the Parisian Bread Riots. The Enlightenment period and ideas circulating about freedom, rights and equality inspired the people to challenge the monarchy to have a greater say in how the country was governed.

Before the Revolution, the King summoned a meeting of the Estates-General - an assembly of representatives from the people of France. The First Estate were religious figures; the Second Estate were the nobility, people with titles; and the Third Estate were supposed to represent everyone else in France. The Third Estate had more numbers but much less power in this assembly, and so they broke away in June 1789, and instead formed the National Assembly – a revolutionary group formed of the ordinary people of France. This signified a loss of control by the King and started the period of the Revolution.

The National Assembly produced the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* in 1789, a key civil rights document that was the foundation of the beliefs during the French Revolution. It was originally drafted by Marquis de Lafayette, who had played a role in the American Revolution, and Thomas Jefferson supported him in producing it. The declaration draws on ideas from the Enlightenment such as liberty, individualism and equal rights to all men.

## The Storming of the Bastille

On 14 July 1789, the people of France broke into the Bastille Prison, rioting and killing the Governor. Seven prisoners were freed. This was a significant event for the Revolution as it marked a violent escalation of events, moving the country into outright revolution and away from compromise with the monarchy.

## The Arrest of the King

Shortly after Bastille Day, a mob arrived at Versailles, and the King and his family were forced to move to Paris to live in Tuileries Palace. The revolutionaries thought that the King would be more accountable to them and would lead better if he was among them in Paris, rather than enjoying court life in Versailles.

In June 1791, the King, along with his wife Marie Antoinette and their family, tried to escape Paris to Verannes in the night, aiming for the Austrian border in disguise. They were caught and returned to the Palace under house arrest. The King's attempt to escape weakened his position even more, and angered the French people, who thought he was a coward and must be colluding with foreign powers, such as Austria.

In 1792, the Revolution was intensifying and revolutionaries stormed the Tuileries Palace, overwhelming the guards and setting fire to parts of the Palace and grounds. King Louis XVI was arrested on 13 August 1792 and taken to Temple, a prison fortress in Paris. The National Assembly then declared France to be a republic on 21 September and stripped the King of his titles. He was marched through the streets in December and put on trial for treason, an event which Mary Wollstonecraft witnessed when she had arrived in Paris. He was found guilty in January, and the National Convention voted on execution by the guillotine, which took place on 21 January 1793.

## The Reign of Terror

After the King's death, the revolutionaries went to war with different European powers and led a bloodthirsty campaign against people accused of being traitors or counter revolutionaries, resulting in thousands of deaths, known as The Terror. One key figure in this period was Maximilien Robespierre, an influential lawyer and member of the Committee of Public Safety, who ordered public executions for any 'enemy of France' whose philosophies differed from his own. Apparently influenced by Enlightenment ideas, Robespierre was seeking to establish Rousseau's idea of a social contract, a government formed of people with equal rights and powers, but believed he first had to eliminate anyone who was not 'virtuous' enough. He did this by terrorising his enemies in order to break down their will to resist.

## Mary Wollstonecraft in France

Mary Wollstonecraft was already following the events of the French Revolution keenly, as she had published her *Vindication on the Rights of Men* in response to Edmund Burke's anti-revolution pamphlet (more on that below), but she travelled there in the winter of 1792. She stayed in the house of a French family, and witnessed King Louis XVI passing by on the way to his trial. This event moved and disturbed her, and she wrote to Johnson: *I can scarcely tell you why, but an association of ideas made the tears flow insensibly from my eyes, when I saw Louis sitting, with more dignity than I expected from his character, in a hackney coach going to meet death.*

Despite this shocking start, Mary seemed to enjoy life in Revolutionary Paris, meeting like-minded radicals and enjoying the more relaxed attitudes to women. Women attended clubs and societies and spoke publicly in assemblies<sup>7</sup>. No fault divorce had been legalised in France, and she met intellectual women in social circles with whom she identified. She attended 'salons' (social get togethers for intellectuals) hosted by Helen Maria Williams, an English poet and writer, religious Dissenter and fellow pro-revolutionary, who was later arrested and imprisoned during the Terror. Mary wrote frequently in France, and at one point was writing a plan for education for the National Convention.



Along with other British radicals, she later became disillusioned with the Revolution and the ultra-violence of the Terror, and wrote: "*I am afraid that the morals of the people will not be much improved by the change, or the government rendered less venal.*"

As the reign of terror intensified, foreigners living in Paris were put under surveillance. The English were enemies, and Mary could have been considered a spy. Mary moved to a small village outside of Paris, just before many English people, including Helen Maria Williams, were arrested. She met and started a relationship with Gilbert Imlay, an American diplomat and entrepreneur, and, when realising she was pregnant, moved back to Paris. Imlay registered her as his wife to give her the protection of being married to an American, though an actual marriage never took place. Life in Paris seemed chaotic, with Mary writing of "*a round of prison visits and all too frequent news of the execution of her friends.*"

She continued writing, working on her book about the French Revolution whilst she was pregnant. She posted the manuscript to Johnson in England, and the book entitled *An Historical and Moral View of the French Revolution* was published in London in 1794. The book is praised for being one of her best works, drawing on journals, articles and records of the time to present an "*accurate history of the Revolution to counteract the increasing counter-revolutionary repression and hysteria in Britain,*" according to academic Tom Furniss.<sup>8</sup>

She gave birth to Fanny Imlay in Le Havre. Imlay left Mary and their daughter and moved to England, and Mary struggled in a very cold winter of 1794-5. She followed Imlay back to London with baby Fanny, and on finding him living with an actress, attempted suicide for the first time.

## **The Revolution Controversy in Britain**

The 'Revolution Controversy' is the name given to the intellectual and political debates which happened in Britain around the time of the French Revolution, also known as a pamphlet war. Pamphlets were quickly produced written arguments about a current issue, around the time when developments in the printing press meant that they could be mass-produced cheaply. Pamphleteers often attacked or defended

an idea, producing an argument or counter-argument to advance the debate.

The French Revolution pamphlet war in Britain began when Whig MP Edmund Burke produced *Reflections on the Revolution in France* in 1790, heavily criticising the French Revolution and defending the monarchy. Burke himself wrote this in response to Dr Richard Price's sermon supporting the Revolution, which he gave in Newington Green. Burke criticised the views of many British radical thinkers and argues that the people of a country do not have the right to challenge the authority of the government or monarchy, as such actions would lead to anarchy.

Many radical writers quickly wrote a response, including Thomas Paine and William Godwin. The first response to be published was Mary Wollstonecraft, who responded with her pamphlet *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*, also in 1790. Mary criticised Burke's gendered language and his arguments that the passivity of women would be part of a successful society, and instead presented a view of an equal society based on Enlightenment principles and progressive republican views.

# REPRESENTATIONS OF MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT IN ART

There are several images of Mary Wollstonecraft that exist today, and all are interesting representations of her, especially when compared to representations of women at the time in the eighteenth century. Two of the most well-known paintings are by John Opie, a fellow radical who was a friend of Mary's in London, who painted many of Mary's contemporaries.

## Portrait by John Opie 1790-1

This portrait by Opie, presents Mary sat sideways, in a powdered wig, holding a book and dressed in a black silk gown. Her facial expression is firm, and she looks as if she has been momentarily drawn away from reading to look at the viewer. It is an academic, intellectual pose, which the Tate Britain suggests was a pose more commonly used for male sitters at the time<sup>9</sup>. The dark background is characteristic of Opie's portraits.



## Portrait by John Williamson, 1791

This portrait, which sits in the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, is a fascinating portrayal of Mary. Mary is presented as a "powerful, asexual and atypical eighteenth-century woman. In a powdered wig, clad in the revolutionary style of French intellectuals." She stares straight at the viewer with a firm expression, piercing eyes, and demands we look back. This portrait was commissioned by Liverpool radical John Roscoe, but is



not the portrait most associated with Wollstonecraft today. When the Walker Art Gallery conducted some research into responses to this painting, viewers said she looked "strong, smart and proud"<sup>10</sup>. A letter written to Roscoe reveals that Mary did not have high expectations of recognising herself in the image: "I do not imagine that it will be a very striking likeness; but, if you do not find me in it, I will send you a more faithful sketch – a book that I am now writing, in which I myself . . . shall certainly appear, hand and heart."<sup>11</sup> This quote also suggests that she felt like her work was the true representation of herself, and reveals how much of herself she put into her writing.

## Portrait by John Opie, 1797

Painted in the year of her death, Mary is therefore most certainly pregnant in this portrait. She wears a simple white blouse and a black beret, her hair is simply done and she wears little or no make-up. Her expression is composed, but her gaze is focused, her brow slightly arched and her lips pursed. Although this portrait has a softer style to the Williamson portrait and Opie's previous portrait, when compared to other eighteenth-century paintings of women, it is still



startlingly different. It does not have any of the fuss or frills of other paintings of women, her style is much simpler, and so the viewer is drawn more to her face and expression. There is also a plain dark background, again drawing focus to her face. It is almost monochrome, again very different to more traditional eighteenth-century paintings, which feature pastel colours, such as soft pinks and blues, and bows, frills, flowers and ribbons to adorn the subject. According to the National Portrait Gallery, where this portrait hangs, the painting stayed in the family after it was produced, and Godwin hung it over the fireplace after the tragic death of his wife<sup>12</sup>.



## Engraving by John Chapman, after unknown artist, 1798

This engraving is entitled *Mrs Godwin* and considering the date, was produced after her death. It is an engraving from an unknown painting, which could have been painted during Mary's lifetime. In the image she appears younger with her hair loose, and unusually she wears a black top hat!

## Contemporary artwork inspired by Mary Wollstonecraft

In 2020, a sculpture entitled *A Sculpture for Mary Wollstonecraft* was revealed in Newington Green, by British contemporary artist Maggi Hambling. The silver statue shows a small, naked female figure emerging from the top of organic matter, and is said to be inspired by Mary's own quote that she was the "first of a new genus." One of Mary's most famous quotes, "I do not wish women to have power over men but over themselves" is inscribed on the plinth.

The sculpture caused controversy because some feminist critics thought the figure was too small, and moreover that Mary should not have been commemorated by a nude, which arguably is a portrayal following the male gaze (the feminist theory that women are represented in art in a sexualised way to please heterosexual men). Hambling defended the decision saying that clothing would have immediately made the piece into a period figure and she wanted the sculpture to be contemporary. She further argued "I wanted to capture the spirit of Mary Wollstonecraft and the struggle for the rights of women. It's a struggle that goes on – and so the figure is a



challenge to our world."<sup>13</sup> Notably, the title of the artwork is 'for' Wollstonecraft, and not a representation 'of' her specifically.

## Representation of Mary Wollstonecraft in *Mary and the Hyenas*

Before you see the production, you could discuss with students how you think Mary will be portrayed in this contemporary play. Looking at the publicity poster, we can see this is a bold and contemporary interpretation of Mary. Her costume makes reference to clothing of the eighteenth century with a corseted bodice and full skirt, and the neutral colour is what we associate with Mary Wollstonecraft's colour palette in the eighteenth-century portraits. The actress wears knee-high lace-up boots, a contemporary design which alludes to women's ankle-high lace-up boots of the eighteenth century, but in a bolder and more gothic style. The actress's flame-red and loose hair suggests that Mary's character is wild and bold, and the unflinching gaze she gives to the camera reminds us of Mary's direct gaze in the Opie and Williamson portraits.





## EXTRACTS FROM MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT'S WRITING

Mary wrote throughout her life from being a child, and a lot of what we know about her is from her own letters. Her writing was passionate, personal, articulate and enlightening. She wrote across genres and languages, and she wrote at speed – her text *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* written in response to Burke's anti-revolution pamphlet was published just six weeks after Burke.

Note: The full titles of Mary's works and links to the online texts are in the [Links and Resources](#) section of this resource pack.

In the below extracts, students can consider the differences in tone, style, purpose and audience of Mary's writing, and some questions are provided as prompts:

### **Letters to Jane Arden when Mary was aged 13 or 14 (circa 1773/4)**

These are a series of personal letters which Mary sent to her friend Jane Arden whom she met in Beverley, Yorkshire.

- What does the tone of Mary's letters to Jane suggest about their relationship?
- What do we learn about Mary's feelings towards Jane in her letters and what she wants in response?

### **Thoughts on the Education of Daughters (1787)**

This is an example of a conduct book, a genre which gave advice to women on social and moral conduct, etiquette and gender roles. Mary wrote this after her time as a governess and teacher.

- What advice is the author giving mothers about their daughters in *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*?
- How might the author's personal feelings about being a woman be understood from this text?
- Can you detect the author's feminist or liberalist attitudes in this text?
- What rhetorical devices does the author use to emphasise her point?

### **Original Stories from Real Life (1788)**

This was Mary's only complete work of fiction for children, and is a series of moral tales set within the framing device of a character called Mrs Mason who is caring for two children, called Mary and Caroline.

- How does the author use allegory to convey her message, and what is the message?
- Compare and contrast the style of this text and *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*, which both aim to educate women and girls. Which is the most successful in your opinion?
- After writing *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*, which was aimed at mothers, why do you think the author produced this work which has a similar purpose?

### **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 (1790)**

This was a pamphlet written as a letter in response to Burke's anti-revolutionary pamphlet in 1790, which was part of the Revolution Controversy in Britain at the time of the French Revolution.

- The author directly addresses Burke throughout the letter, how is this device used effectively?
- How would you describe the tone of this letter? For example, do you detect sarcasm, or mockery in its tone?
- What do you ascertain about the author's thoughts and feelings in response to Burke?
- What points is the author making in this extract? How does she use rhetorical devices to convey her message?

### **A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects (1792)**

This text followed Mary's first *Vindication* and focuses more on the need for women to be educated. She responds to many male writers of the time, such as Rousseau.

- Is the tone similar or different to that of *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*?
- What message do you feel the author is conveying in this extract?

- How is metaphor used to convey meaning in this extract?
- What sense do you get of the author's personal feelings in this extract?
- How are rhetorical questions and capitalisation used here to add emphasis?

**Letters Written During A Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark (1796)**

The letters Mary wrote during her trip to Scandinavia to try and find Imlay's treasure were published together in this volume. They are part-travel writing, part-romantic, and part-personal musings on life.

- These two extracts contrast in their tone and style - what do you notice about the differences between them and the rhetorical devices used?
- What sense do you get of the author's mood as she writes Letter XII?
- In Letter XII the author writes about her baby daughter Fanny, what sense do you get about her feelings towards her daughter?
- Letter XIII is much more factual - what do you think the author's opinion is of the places she has visited? How is this conveyed?

**The extracts:**

**Letters to Jane Arden when Mary was 13-14**

**A letter to Jane Arden (circa 1773/74)**

Miss A. – Your behaviour at Miss J ----'s hurt me extremely, and your not answering my letter shews that you set little value on my friendship. – If you had sent to ask me, I should have gone to the play, but none of you seemed to want my company. – I have two favors to beg, the one is that you will send me all my letters; - the other that you will never mention some things which I have told you. To avoid idle tell-tale, we may visit ceremoniously, and to keep up appearances, may whisper, when we have nothing to say: – The beaux whisper insignificantly, and nod without meaning. – I beg you will take the trouble to bring the letters yourself, or give them to my sister Betsy. – You never called yesterday; if you wish to be on the least friendly footing, you will call this morning. – If you think it worth while, send an answer by my sister.

M.W.

**A letter to Jane Arden (circa 1773/74)**

Miss Arden. – Before I begin I beg pardon for the freedom of my style. – If I did not love you I should not write so; - I have a heart that scorns disguise, and a countenance which will not dissemble: - I have formed romantic notions of friendship. – I have been once disappointed: - I think if I am a second time I shall only want some infidelity in a love affair, to qualify me for an old maid, as then I shall have no idea of either of them. – I am a little singular in my thoughts of love and friendship; I must have the first place or none. – I own your behaviour is more according to the opinion of the world, but I would break such narrow bounds. – I will give you my reasons for what I say; - since Miss C---- has been here you have behaved in the coolest manner. – I once hoped our friendship was built on a permanent foundation: - We have all our failings – I have more than usual, but I thought you might mildly have corrected me as I always loved you with true sisterly affection. If I had found faults I should have told you but a lady possessed of so many accomplishments as Miss A cannot want for admirers, and who has so many friends cannot find any loss in your humble Servant. – I would not have seen it, but your behaviour the other night I cannot pass over; - when I spoke of sitting with you at Church



you made an objection, because I and your sister quarrelled; - I did not think a little raillery would have been taken in such a manner, or that you would have insinuated, that I dared to have profaned so sacred a place with idle chit-chat.

I once thought myself worthy of your friendship; - I thank you for bringing me to a right sense of myself. - When I have been at your house with Miss J ---- the greatest respect has been paid to her; every thing handed to her first; - in short, as if she were a superior being: - Your Mama too behaved with more politeness to her.

I am much obliged to your Papa and Mama and desire you will give them my complimentary thanks, and as I have spent many happy hours in your company, shall always have the sincerest esteem for Miss A. - There is no accounting for the imbecility of human nature - I might misconstrue your behaviour, but what I have written flows spontaneously from my pen, and this I am sure, I only desire to be done by as I do; - I shall expect a written answer to this, -

and am yours  
M.W.

Don't tell C ---- to you I have told all my failings; - I would not be so mean as to shew only the bright side of the picture; - I have reason to think you have not been so ingenuous to me. - I cannot bear the reflection that when Miss R ---- comes I should have less of your company. - After seeing you yesterday, I thought not to have sent this - (but you desire it) for to see you and be angry, is not in my power. - I long for a walk in my darling Westwood. Adieu.

Mary Wollstonecraft

### **Extract from *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1787)**

By far too much of a girl's time is taken up in dress. This is an exterior accomplishment; but I chose to consider it by itself. The body hides the mind, and it is, in its turn, obscured by the drapery. I hate to see the frame of a picture so glaring, as to catch the eye and divide the attention. Dress ought to adorn the person, and not rival it. It may be simple, elegant, and becoming, without being expensive; and ridiculous fashions disregarded, while singularity is avoided. The beauty of dress (I shall raise astonishment by saying so) is its not being conspicuous one way or the other; when it neither distorts, or hides the human form by unnatural protuberances. If ornaments are much studied, a consciousness of being well dressed will appear in the face—and surely this mean pride does not give much sublimity to it. It gives rise to envy, and contests for trifling superiority, which do not render a woman very respectable to the other sex.

It is an old, but a very true observation, that the human mind must ever be employed. A relish for reading, or any of the fine arts, should be cultivated very early in life; and those who reflect can tell, of what importance it is for the mind to have some resource in itself, and not to be entirely dependant on the senses for employment and amusement. If it unfortunately is so, it must submit to meanness, and often to vice, in order to gratify them. The wisest and best are too much under their influence; and the endeavouring to conquer them, when reason and virtue will not give their sanction, constitutes great part of the warfare of life. What support, then, have they who are all senses, and who are full of schemes, which terminate in temporal objects?

Reading is the most rational employment, if people seek food for the understanding, and do not read merely to remember words; or with a view to quote celebrated authors, and retail sentiments they do not understand or feel. Judicious books enlarge the mind and improve the heart, though some, by them, "*are made coxcombs whom nature meant for fools.*"

### **Extract from Chapter I of *Original Stories from Real Life* (1788)**

One fine morning in spring, some time after Mary and Caroline were settled in their new abode, Mrs. Mason proposed a walk before breakfast, a custom she wished to teach imperceptibly, by rendering it amusing.

The sun had scarcely dispelled the dew that hung on every blade of grass, and filled the half-shut flowers; every prospect smiled, and the freshness of the air conveyed the most pleasing sensations to Mrs. Mason's mind; but the children were regardless of the surrounding beauties, and ran eagerly after some insects to destroy them. Mrs. Mason silently observed their cruel sports, without appearing to do it; but stepping suddenly out of the foot-path into the long grass, her buckle was caught in it, and striving to disentangle herself, she wet her feet; which the children knew she wished to avoid, as she had been lately sick. This circumstance roused their attention; and they forgot their amusement to enquire why she had left the path; and Mary could hardly restrain a laugh, when she was informed that it was to avoid treading on some snails that were creeping across the narrow footway. Surely, said Mary, you do not think there is any harm in killing a snail, or any of those nasty creatures that crawl on the ground? I hate them, and should scream if one was to find its way from my clothes to my neck! With great gravity, Mrs. Mason asked how she dared to kill any thing, unless it were to prevent its hurting her? Then, resuming a smiling face, she said, Your education has been neglected, my child; as we walk along attend to what I say, and make the best answers you can; and do you, Caroline, join in the conversation.

You have already heard that God created the world, and every inhabitant of it. He is then called the Father of all creatures; and all are made to be happy, whom a good and wise God has created. He made those snails you despise, and caterpillars, and spiders; and when He made them, did not leave them to perish, but placed them where the food that is most proper to nourish them is easily found. They do not live long, but He who is their Father, as well as your's, directs them to deposit their eggs on the plants that are fit to support their young, when they are not able to get food for themselves.—And when such a great and wise Being has taken care to provide every thing necessary for the meanest creature, would you dare to kill it, merely because it appears to you ugly?

Mary began to be attentive, and quickly followed Mrs. Mason's example, who allowed a caterpillar and a spider to creep on her hand. You find them, she rejoined, very harmless; but a great number would destroy our vegetables and fruit; so birds are permitted to eat them, as we feed on animals; and in spring there are always more than at any other season of the year, to furnish food for the young broods.—Half convinced, Mary said, but worms are of little consequence in the world. Yet, replied Mrs. Mason, God cares for them, and gives them every thing that is necessary to render their existence comfortable. You are often troublesome—I am stronger than you—yet I do not kill you.

### **Extract from *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* (1790)**

SIR,

It is not necessary, with courtly insincerity, to apologise to you for thus intruding on your precious time, not to profess that I think it an honour to discuss an important subject with a man whose literary abilities have raised him to notice in the state. I have not yet learned to twist my periods, nor, in the equivocal idiom of politeness, to disguise my sentiments, and imply what I should be afraid to utter: if, therefore, in the course of this epistle, I chance to express contempt, and even indignation, with some emphasis, I beseech you to believe that it is not a flight of fancy; for truth, in morals, has ever appeared to me the essence of the sublime; and, in taste, simplicity the only criterion of the beautiful. But I war not with an individual when I contend for the rights of men and the liberty of reason. You see I do not condescend to cull my words to avoid the invidious phrase, nor shall I be prevented from giving a manly definition of it, by the flimsy ridicule which a lively fancy has interwoven with the present acceptation of the term. Reverencing the rights of humanity, I shall dare to assert them; not intimidated by the horse laugh that you have raised, or waiting till time has wiped away the compassionate tears which you have elaborately laboured to excite.

A sentiment of this kind glanced across my mind when I read the following exclamation. 'Whilst the royal captives, who followed in the train, were slowly moved along, amidst the horrid yells, and shrilling screams, and frantic dances, and infamous contumelies, and all the

unutterable abominations of the furies of hell, in the abused shape of the 'vilest of women.' Probably you mean women who gained a livelihood by selling vegetables or fish, who never had had any advantages of education; or their vices might have lost part of their abominable deformity, by losing part of their grossness. The queen of France—the great and small vulgar, claim our pity; they have almost insuperable obstacles to surmount in their progress towards true dignity of character.

**Extract from Chapter 4 of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792)**

Fragile in every sense of the word, they are obliged to look up to man for every comfort. In the most trifling dangers they cling to their support, with parasitical tenacity, piteously demanding succour; and their NATURAL protector extends his arm, or lifts up his voice, to guard the lovely trembler—from what? Perhaps the frown of an old cow, or the jump of a mouse; a rat, would be a serious danger. In the name of reason, and even common sense, what can save such beings from contempt; even though they be soft and fair?

These fears, when not affected, may be very pretty; but they shew a degree of imbecility, that degrades a rational creature in a way women are not aware of—for love and esteem are very distinct things.

I am fully persuaded, that we should hear of none of these infantine airs, if girls were allowed to take sufficient exercise and not confined in close rooms till their muscles are relaxed and their powers of digestion destroyed. To carry the remark still further, if fear in girls, instead of being cherished, perhaps, created, were treated in the same manner as cowardice in boys, we should quickly see women with more dignified aspects. It is true, they could not then with equal propriety be termed the sweet flowers that smile in the walk of man; but they would be more respectable members of society, and discharge the important duties of life by the light of their own reason. "*Educate women like men,*" says Rousseau, "*and the more they resemble our sex the less power will they have over us.*" This is the very point I aim at. I do not wish them to have power over men; but over themselves.

**Extract from *Letters Written During A Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (1796)**

**Extract from *Letter XII***

I rose early to pursue my journey to Tonsberg. The country still wore a face of joy—and my soul was alive to its charms. Leaving the most lofty and romantic of the cliffs behind us, we were almost continually descending to Tonsberg, through Elysian scenes; for not only the sea, but mountains, rivers, lakes, and groves, gave an almost endless variety to the prospect. The cottagers were still carrying home the hay; and the cottages on this road looked very comfortable. Peace and plenty—I mean not abundance—seemed to reign around—still I grew sad as I drew near my old abode. I was sorry to see the sun so high; it was broad noon. Tonsberg was something like a home—yet I was to enter without lighting up pleasure in any eye. I dreaded the solitariness of my apartment, and wished for night to hide the starting tears, or to shed them on my pillow, and close my eyes on a world where I was destined to wander alone. Why has nature so many charms for me—calling forth and cherishing refined sentiments, only to wound the breast that fosters them? How illusive, perhaps the most so, are the plans of happiness founded on virtue and principle; what inlets of misery do they not open in a half-civilised society? The satisfaction arising from conscious rectitude, will not calm an injured heart, when tenderness is ever finding excuses; and self-applause is a cold solitary feeling, that cannot supply the place of disappointed affection, without throwing a gloom over every prospect, which, banishing pleasure, does not exclude pain. I reasoned and reasoned; but my heart was too full to allow me to remain in the house, and I walked, till I was wearied out, to purchase rest—or rather forgetfulness.

Employment has beguiled this day, and to-morrow I set out for Moss, on my way to Stromstad. At Gothenburg I shall embrace my Fannikin; probably she will not know me again—and I shall be hurt if she do not. How childish is this! still it is a natural feeling. I would not permit myself to indulge the "*thick coming fears*" of fondness, whilst I was detained by business. Yet I never saw a calf bounding in a meadow, that did not remind me of my little frolicker. A calf, you say. Yes; but a capital one I own.



### Extract from *Letter XIII*

In France the farmers generally live in villages, which is a great disadvantage to the country; but the Norwegian farmers, always owning their farms or being tenants for life, reside in the midst of them, allowing some labourers a dwelling rent free, who have a little land appertaining to the cottage, not only for a garden, but for crops of different kinds, such as rye, oats, buck-wheat, hemp, flax, beans, potatoes, and hay, which are sown in strips about it, reminding a stranger of the first attempts at culture, when every family was obliged to be an independent community.

These cottagers work at a certain price (tenpence per day) for the farmers on whose ground they live, and they have spare time enough to cultivate their own land and lay in a store of fish for the winter. The wives and daughters spin and the husbands and sons weave, so that they may fairly be reckoned independent, having also a little money in hand to buy coffee, brandy and some other superfluities.

## ENDNOTES, LINKS AND RESOURCES

- 1 Tomalin, C. *The Life and Death of Mary Wollstonecraft*. 1974. p.46.
- 2 In *Westminster Gazette* 16 October 1906 <https://blog.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/2024/03/27/legacy-of-mary-wollstonecraft/>, accessed: 03 December 2024
- 3 <https://iea.org.uk/publications/research/classical-liberalism-a-primer>, accessed: 03 December 2024
- 4 Smith, V. *Rational Dissenters in Late Eighteenth-Century England: An Ardent Desire of Truth*, 2021
- 5 Tomalin, C. *The Life and Death of Mary Wollstonecraft*. 1974
- 6 Ibid
- 7 *Mary Wollstonecraft Biography*, By Laura Kirkley, University of Cambridge
- 8 Furniss, T. 'Mary Wollstonecraft's French Revolution' in *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. Claudia L. Johnson. 2006 p.68.
- 9 <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/opie-mary-wollstonecraft-mrs-william-godwin-n01167> accessed: 03 December 2024.
- 10 <https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/stories/allure-of-mary-wollstonecraft>, accessed: 03 December 2024
- 11 <https://wordsworth.org.uk/blog/2017/03/23/a-revolution-in-female-manners-the-political-portraiture-of-mary-wollstonecraft/>, accessed: 03 December 2024
- 12 <https://www.npg.org.uk/schools-hub/mary-wollstonecraft-by-john-opie>, accessed: 03 December 2024
- 13 <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/dec/16/plenty-schlongs-art-maggi-hambling-defends-nude-sculpture-of-mary-wollstonecraft>, accessed: 03 December 2024

The following websites provide information about Mary Wollstonecraft's life and the context in which she lived:

[Wollstonecraft Society](#)

[Fawcett Society](#) - more information about the history of feminism  
[Newington Green and the non-conformist society in the 18th century](#)

[Newington Green Unitarian Chapel](#) - where Mary was inspired by Dr Richard Price

[Royal Museums, Greenwich](#) - key facts and timeline for the French Revolution

[Michigan State University](#) - useful set of lectures on the events of the French Revolution

[National Portrait Gallery](#) - information on Mary Wollstonecraft portrait by John Opie

[Liverpool Museums](#) - information on Mary Wollstonecraft portrait by John Williamson

[The Political Portraiture of Mary Wollstonecraft](#)

[British Newspaper Archives](#) - the Legacy of Mary Wollstonecraft

[Women Writers](#)

### **Mary's Writing:**

Most of Mary Wollstonecraft's writing is freely available digitally on the Project Gutenberg website:

- [Thoughts on the Education of Daughters: With Reflections on Female Conduct, in the more important Duties of Life, 1787](#)
- [Original Stories from Real Life, with conversations, calculated to regulate the affections, and form the mind to truth and goodness. 1788](#)
- [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 \(1790\)](#)
- [A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects, 1792](#)
- [Letters written during a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark, 1796](#)
- *The Collected Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. Janet Todd. Columbia University Press, 2004

### **Books:**

*Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, William Godwin. 1798.

*Romantic Outlaws: The Extraordinary Lives of Mary Wollstonecraft & Mary Shelley*, Charlotte Gordon. Random House, 2015

*The Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. Claudia L. Johnson. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

*The Life and Death of Mary Wollstonecraft*, Claire Tomalin. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1974

### **Podcasts:**

There are several great and accessible podcasts about Mary Wollstonecraft and her contemporaries, which you can search for in any podcast app:

*History Extra Podcast: Life of the Week – Mary Wollstonecraft 19/3/24*

*BBC: You're Dead To Me – Mary Wollstonecraft 19/11/21*

*BBC: In Our Time - Edmund Burke 03/06/20*

*Talking Politics: History of Ideas – Mary Wollstonecraft on Sexual Politics 28/4/20*

*The Dead Ladies Show - Mary Wollstonecraft 12/12/18*

*BBC: In Our Time - Mary Wollstonecraft 31/12/09*





## UPCOMING RESOURCES AND WORKSHOPS

### Resource Pack – Part B: available from January 2025

This resource will introduce students to the synopsis of the play *Mary and the Hyenas*, its themes, and the characters in the performance. It will also feature an interview with the playwright Maureen Lennon.

### Resource Pack - Part C: available from March 2025

Ideal for students preparing for the Live Theatre component of their GCSE / A-level Drama exams, this resource will include filmed scene extracts from the live performance, allowing students to watch key scenes again, with accompanying analysis. It will also feature interviews with members of the cast and creative team.

### Workshops

A practical drama session exploring the play, production, characters, and themes delivered by a Pilot artist. The workshop can be tailored to using *Mary and the Hyenas* as a creative stimulus for devising, or examining social justice issues related to the play.

We can also offer workshops focusing on creative writing and music in relation to this production.

All workshops are bespoke and tailored to the needs of your students, and can be scheduled pre- or post-performance at your school, college or university. To arrange a workshop, please email us directly: [info@pilot-theatre.com](mailto:info@pilot-theatre.com)

For state schools and colleges:  
2 sessions or a full day: £350 + VAT  
1 session (up to 2 hours): £275 + VAT

For private schools and universities:  
2 sessions or a full day: £475 + VAT  
1 session (up to 2 hours): £400 + VAT



## Mailing List

If you would like to join Pilot Theatre's mailing list to hear about our future projects, [please sign-up here](#).

## Feedback

If you have any feedback about this resource, please do share it with us!

We would love to hear your thoughts: [info@pilot-theatre.com](mailto:info@pilot-theatre.com)

## Support Us

We are grateful for the support of our funders and donors which enables us to make this resource freely available to all.

If you would like to consider supporting Pilot Theatre and to help us continue creating learning resources alongside our productions, please visit our website for more information: <https://pilot-theatre.com/about/support-us/>







# TOUR DATES

## Hull Truck Theatre

Fri 07 Feb – Sat 01 Mar 2025

## Wilton's Music Hall

Tue 18 Mar – Sat 29 Mar 2025



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