

Mary astell essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Born November 12, 1666 in England, Mary Astell was the first British feminist writer, nonfiction writer, essayist, and poet. Her published work consisted of argumentative issues about women's education, marriage, and political and religious philosophy. Specifically relating to the status of women, Astell thought about numerous controversial concerns of the era in her essays and pamphlets which were distributed anonymously to keep her identity a secret.

Astell stood for her belief that women should not be obligated into marriage and helped the thought of a Protestant equivalent of a convent, where unmarried women could be able to devote themselves to education and religious responsibilities, in such pamphlets as "A Serious Proposal To The Ladies For The Advancement Of Their True And Greatest Interest" (1694) and "Some Reflections Upon Marriage" (1700).

In addition to, Astell showed herself to be a perceptive critic of the social theories of, The Father of Liberalism, John Locke, in "Some Reflections Upon Marriage" and other writings, involving "The Christian Religion As Profess'd By A Daughter Of The Church Of England" (1705). Astell was a complicated figure whose approval of the monarchy and the Anglican Church is every now and then seen as contradictory to her feminist mind. To Peter and Mary Astell, Mary Astell was born in Newcastle upon Tyne to a family of upper middle class.

Her father was a conservative royalist Anglican who managed a local coal company. As a woman, she received an informal education from her uncle, Ralph Astell, a clergyman at St. Nicholas's Church in Newcastle, who taught her logic, mathematics, philosophy, french, and latin which was a good

education for the time. After the death of Astell's father at the age of twelve years old in 1678, her family suffered with financial problems. With the remainder of the family's finances invested in her younger brother Peter's higher education, Astell and her mother relocated to live with her aunt.

Orphaned at the age of eighteen after the death of her mother and aunt in 1688, Astell moved to London before the age of twenty. Residing in Chelsea, Astell was fortunate enough to become acquainted with a group of close friends of educated women who shared her intellectual affairs, including Lady Catherine Jones, whom she dedicated one of her works to, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Elizabeth Estob, and lady Elizabeth Hastings, who all aided in the development and publication of her works.

Additionally she was in contact with William Sancroft, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was famous for his generous works. Sancroft benefited Astell financially and as well presented her to her future publisher. Astell entered her most creative period, releasing eight works in a little more than a decade, starting with the publication of her first work, *A Serious Proposal*, in 1694. Again she attempted to put into action the thoughts she suggested in her writings.

However a school for girls was organized in Chelsea by others in 1729, not any of her recommendations were achieved, at least in an arrangement she would have agreed on. In "*A Serious Proposal*" the advancement for a Protestant convent she created met with opposition because it had connections with the pope. Astell became more and more unsociable and disguised the reality that she had breast cancer, at the end of her life. A few

months after a mastectomy to remove her cancerous right breast, Astell died in 1731. Throughout her whole life Astell never married.

Religious, social, and political questions of her day are the topics affected personally in most of Astell's works. Astell argued in publication with some of the leading intellectuals of the period, by writing in a belligerent, certain manner. Her sex and her interests about women's status spread through many of her texts, even though not all of her works exactly address women's issues. They steadily bicker against the belief that women are naturally inferior and carry on that women should be educated in intellectual matters to make them better Christians.

In "A Serious Proposal", Astell attempts to add to women's career choices apart from mother and nun, a not very probable alternative in Protestant England. Astell suggests a brand new kind of institution for women, an institution much like a secular convent, a place where women could go to live, study, learn, and teach. This work had at least four editions, and was followed by "A Serious Proposal to the Ladies Part II. Wherein a Method Is Off'd for the Improvement of their Minds" in 1697.

A response to disagreements to Astell's original suggestion, this work attempted a way for women to educate themselves, comment on the philosophy behind potential procedures, and discusses the search for truth.

In "Some Reflections upon Marriage" extends on the beliefs proposed in "A Serious Proposal", Astell examines and determines marriage from a woman's view, particularly the problem of coming across an acceptable mate. She describes many of the tricks that men use to trap women into marriage and

discusses the hazards of many of the methods that women use to catch sight of the real appearance of their promising partner.

Astell concludes that there is no trustworthy method that women can be capable of working with to guarantee that they marry respectable, accountable, generous, considerate, loving men. Astell emphasis' the requirement for equality in marriage and supports spinsterhood as an satisfactory alternative. Here and elsewhere Astell bases her views on a foundation of religious principles; indeed, religion was the primary focus of many of Astell's other works.