William Godwin

Respected Anarchist Philosopher and Sociologist of the Enlightenment Era

(1756 - 1836)

Description: His most famous work, An Inquiry concerning Political Justice, appeared in 1793, inspired to some extent by the political turbulence and fundamental restructuring of governmental institutions underway in France. Godwin's belief is that governments are fundamentally inimical to the integrity of the human beings living under their strictures... (From : University of Pennsylvania Bio)

Tags: libertarian, journalist, philosopher, british, novelist, writer, feminist, radical, utilitarian, political theorist.

Quotes:

"Anarchy and darkness will be the original appearance. But light shall spring out of the noon of night; harmony and order shall succeed the chaos." (From : "Instructions to a Statesman," by William Godwin.)

"Courts are so encumbered and hedged in with ceremony, that the members of them are always prone to imagine that the form is more essential and indispensable, than the substance." (From : "Instructions to a Statesman," by William Godwin.)
"Fickleness and instability, your lordship will please to observe, are of the very essence of a real statesman." (From: "Instructions to a Statesman," by William Godwin.)

**Biography:**

William Godwin (3 March 1756 -- 7 April 1836) was an English journalist, political philosopher and novelist. He is considered one of the first exponents of utilitarianism, and the first modern proponent of anarchism. Godwin is most famous for two books that he published within the space of a year: An Inquiry Concerning Political Justice, an attack on political institutions, and *Things as They Are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams*, which attacks aristocratic privilege, but also is the first mystery novel. Based on the success of both, Godwin featured prominently in the radical circles of London in the 1790s. In the ensuing conservative reaction to British radicalism, Godwin was attacked, in part because of his marriage to the pioneering feminist writer Mary Wollstonecraft in 1797 and his candid biography of her after her death from childbirth. His daughter, Mary Godwin (later Mary Shelley) would go on to write *Frankenstein* and marry the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley. Godwin wrote prolifically in the genres of novels, history and demography throughout his lifetime. With his second wife, Mary Jane Clairmont, he wrote children's primers on Biblical and classical history, which he published along with such works as Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*. Using the pseudonym Edward Baldwin, he wrote a variety of books for children, including a version of Jack and the Beanstalk. He also has had considerable influence on British literature and literary culture.

From: Wikipedia.

**Works:**

Author of *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Political Justice and Its Influence on General Virtue*, Fourth Edition (November 30, 1792)Author of *An Enquiry*
Concerning the Principles of Political Justice and Its Influence on General Virtue, First Edition (December 31, 1969)  
Author of An Account of The Seminary (November 30, 1782)  
Author of A Defense of the Rockingham Party (November 30, 1782)  
Author of The History of the Life of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham (November 30, 1782)  
Author of The Herald of Literature (November 30, 1782)  
Author of Damon and Delia (November 30, 1783)  
Author of Imogen: A Pastorial Romance From the Ancient (November 30, 1783)  
Author of Instructions to a Statesman (November 30, 1783)  
Author of Things as they are, or the Adventures of Caleb Williams (November 30, 1792)  
Author of Cursory Strictures On the Charge Delivered By Lord Chief Justice Eyre To The Grand Jury, October 2, 1794 (October 02, 1794)  
Author of Reflections On Education, Manners, And Literature, In A Series Of Essays (November 30, 1796)  
Author of Of History and Romance (November 30, 1796)  
Author of Thoughts occasioned by the perusal of Dr. Parr's Spital Sermon (April 15, 1800)  
Author of Fleetwood: Or, The New Man Of Feeling (November 30, 1804)  
Author of Of Population (November 30, 1819)  
Author of Thoughts on Man, his Nature, Productions and Discoveries (November 30, 1830)  
Author of Lives of the Necromancers (November 30, 1833)  

**Chronology :**

**March 03, 1756 :** William Godwin's Birth Day.

**April 07, 1836 :** William Godwin's Death Day.


**Links :**

- [Anarchy Archives: William Godwin Archive](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/godwin/Godwinarchive.html)
• Anarchist Library: William Godwin
  https://theanarchistlibrary.org/category/author/william-godwin

• Wikipedia: William Godwin

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