

Group Discussion

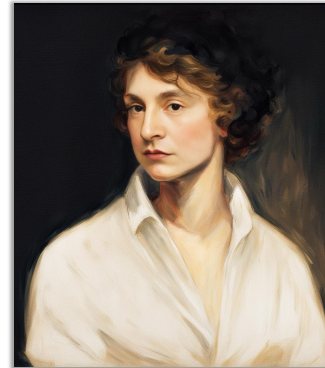
10
minute
timer

1. Dedication (231-33)
2. Introduction (233-37)
3. Chapter 2 (Milton) (237-41)
4. Chapter 2 (Rousseau) (241-44)
5. Chapter 2 (Gregory) (244-49)
6. Chapter 2 (concluding) (249-52)
7. Chapter 4 (opening) (252-55)
8. Chapter 4 (concluding) (255-59)

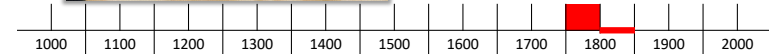
Instructions

- Divide into groups of 3.
- Collect a Discussion Question sheet from Dr May.
- Write your full names (first and last) on the Discussion Question sheet.
- Discuss and take informal notes on the Discussion Question.
- Select one person to summarize your discussion to the class.
- We will reconvene in 10 minutes.

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797)



- eldest daughter of gentleman farmer in London
- after various jobs, became well-known as a radical writer with the publication of *Mary* (1788), *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790), and *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792)
- married writer William Godwin; gave birth to Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (later Mary Shelley), author of *Frankenstein* (NAEL D228-31)



bluestocking

[The] bluestocking is the most odious character in society ... she sinks wherever she is placed, like the yolk of an egg, to the bottom, and carries the filth with her.

William Hazlitt

[The Bluestockings were] the first public female club ever known, and ... gave great offence, though the ladies were almost all of distinguished virtue.... [T]he female members were of the greatest beauty....

Horace Walpole

- a network of London intellectuals of the late 18thC, named after the garish legwear of one of the (male) participants
- encouraged intelligent conversation among men and women together, rather than tea-drinking and card-playing
- advocated for a more equitable positioning of women in society
- became a disparaging term for a woman devoted to literary, scholarly pursuits (Baldick 43-44)

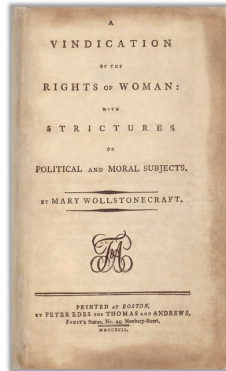
Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790)

And what has stopped [European civilization's] progress?—hereditary property—hereditary honours. The man has been changed into an artificial monster by the station in which he was born, and the consequent homage that benumbed his faculties like the torpedo's touch;—or a being, with a capacity of reasoning, would not have failed to discover, as his faculties unfolded, that true happiness arose from the friendship and intimacy which can only be enjoyed by equals; and that charity is not a condescending distribution of alms, but an intercourse of good offices and mutual benefits founded on respect for justice and humanity (NAEL D203)

Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*. 1790.

- among the first published replies to Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790)
- Burke had argued that monarchy, aristocracy, property, hereditary succession, and other British conservative social structures were valuable, god-given, and worthy of protection
- Wollstonecraft counters Burke's ideas by presenting a reasoned argument for universal equality and democracy (NAEL D194, 201)

📖 Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792)



- wrote in a six-week burst of activity in 1792
- inspired by revolutionary activities in France, specifically the denial of citizen rights to Frenchwomen in the republic
- provided an unprecedented firsthand account of the indignities suffered by women
- considered radical at a time when women were considered nonpersons with limited rights and opportunities (NAEL D229)

📖 Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792)

Dedication	7. Modesty Comprehensively Considered and Not as a Sexual Virtue
Introduction	8. Morality Undermined by Sexual Notions of the Importance of a Good Reputation
1. The Rights and Involved Duties of Mankind Considered	9. Of the Pernicious Effects Which Arise from the Unnatural Distinctions Established in Society
2. The Prevailing Opinion of a Sexual Character Discussed	10. Parental Affection
3. The Same Subject Continued	11. Duty to Parents
4. Observations on the State of Degradation to Which Woman Is Reduced by Various Causes	12. National Education
5. Animadversions on Some of the Writers Who Have Rendered Women Objects of Pity, Bordering on Contempt	13. Some Instances of The Folly Which the Ignorance of Women Generates; with Concluding Reflections on the Moral Improvement That a Revolution in Female Manners Might Naturally be Expected to Produce
6. The Effect Which an Early Association of Ideas Has Upon the Character	

Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord (1754-1838)

Let us bring up women, not to aspire to advantages which the Constitution denies them, but to know and appreciate those which it guarantees them.... Men are destined to live on the stage of the world. A public education suits them.... The paternal home is better for the education of women; they have less need to learn to deal with the interests of others, than to accustom themselves to a calm and secluded life.

Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord.
Rapport sur l'instruction publique. 1791.

- French clergyman, statesman, and diplomat; worked at the highest levels of successive French governments, including during the French Revolution
- presented his *Rapport sur l'instruction publique* to the National Assembly in 1791, which promoted public education for Frenchmen (but not for Frenchwomen) along Enlightenment principles (*Wikipedia*)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)

When I consider the special purpose of woman ... everything combines to indicate the mode of education she requires. Men and women are made for each other, but their mutual dependence differs in degree.... Hence her education must ... be different from man's education.... Do not be afraid to educate your women as women; teach them a woman's business, that they be modest, that they may know how to manage their house and look after their family....

Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Émile, or On Education*. 1762.

- Genevan philosopher and writer whose ideas influenced the Age of Enlightenment, aspects of the French Revolution, and the development of modern political, economic, educational thought
- wrote *Émile, or On Education* (1762), a treatise that uses a novelistic device to advise on how the ideal citizen should be raised and educated to retain their innate goodness in a corrupting society (*Wikipedia*)

Dr John Gregory (1724-1773)

Wit is the most dangerous talent you can possess. It must be guarded with great discretion and good nature, otherwise it will create you many enemies. Wit is perfectly consistent with softness and delicacy; yet they are seldom found united. Wit is so flattering to vanity, that they who possess it become intoxicated and lose all self command.

John Gregory. *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters.* 1774.

- 18thC Scottish Enlightenment physician, writer, and moralist
- wrote *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters* (1774) after the death of his wife in 1761, to honour her memory and record her thoughts on female education
- advises parents and women on their daughters' religious education, moral conduct, and friendship and interactions with men, with a particular focus on marriage (*Wikipedia*)

sense vs sensibility

sense

- characterized by rationality, judgement, wisdom, prudence
- an attribute stereotypically associated with men throughout the 18thC-19thC
- embodied in Elinor Dashwood in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), who manages practical matters and generally suppresses her emotions throughout the novel

sensibility

- characterized by sensitivity, sympathy, emotionality
- an attribute stereotypically associated with women throughout the 18thC-19thC
- embodied in Marianne Dashwood in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), who allows her intense emotions to dictate her actions throughout the novel

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