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Women in Britain Since 1750

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Takeaway 1

Unknown words:

Bifurcation - the point where something separates

Burgeoning - growing, expanding, or developing rapidly

Chandlery - a store that sells marine equipment

Opprobrium - public criticism

Moribund - in a dying state

Pecuniary - involving money

Ecclesiastical court - a religious court (Christian) to judge moral, spiritual, and administrative matters under the law

Licentiousness - lack of moral restraint or disregard for rules

(see next page for takeaway)

Both Montgomery and Phillips discuss laws that deal with women, but the way they do it is very different. Phillips explicitly states that her book analyzes the role of women in business over time (Phillips, 3), while Montgomery examines laws related to women. Phillips also focuses on women in business and economics, while Montgomery covers a much broader range of fields women are in through laws, though most of the laws are related to marriage and the household.

I thought the different structures of each book were interesting. Montgomery's structure, where she explains the laws, brings to light how little women are actually involved in making the laws. While the laws were made for women, as said in class, it seems as if these laws were given to women by men. Although there was progress in women's rights, women had little political power to make the change themselves. In contrast, Phillips shows women who were actively participating in business despite the legal restrictions placed on them.

While Montgomery's structure felt more restrictive, centered around the laws and looking at women from the perspective of the law, Phillips' overall writing and structure felt broader and more hopeful, as women were the center of the book. During class, we discussed life defined by the laws and reality. Sometimes society is accepting of things that don't have laws, and with Montgomery, we don't necessarily get an accurate glimpse of what a woman's everyday life is like or how women navigated those laws, but Phillips gives us a glance at what an actual woman's life is like. According to the law, there are many restrictions placed on women, but Phillips shows that it is possible for women to participate in business, something that is thought to be a "man's job".