

Unfamiliar words and concepts:

- Fastidious - attentive to detail
- Specious - initially plausible, found to be false
- Mahometanism - obsolete term for Islam
- Abrogated - repealed
- Inveigh - protest
- Shew - archaic spelling of show
- Turgid - swollen, pompous
- Bombast - grand but lacking substance
- Vitiate - spoil, damage
- Seraglio - separate living space for women, also, harem
- Bugbear - object of dread, annoyance
- Preponderates - prevails, dominates
- Impediment - obstacle
- Coverture - the legal status of a married woman, considered under his protection and authority
- Jeremy Bentham - English philosopher and jurist, believed coverture to be a legal fiction
- Antipathy - aversion, dislike
- Jurisprudence - legal system
- Abrogating - repeal, eliminate
- Historiography - the study of historical writing
- Circuitous - indirect, roundabout
- Moribund - close to death, declining, lacking vigor
- Millinery - hatmaking
- Paeon - a strong tribute to something
- Clandestine - secret
- Bann - public marriage announcement
- Tenor - underlying meaning
- Laudable - admirable
- Bramin - highest social caste in Hindu society

Thoughts:

I most enjoyed reading Nicola Phillips' analysis of legal fictions vs. legal facts, and Wollstonecraft's Vindication. I thought they presented two vastly different perspectives on the lives of women in this era. Phillips seems largely critical of assumptions that "common law" applies in all situations and defines cultural attitudes, and challenged some of my assumptions about female submission in the era before increased legal gender equality. It was a valuable reminder that women have always been fully grown humans with autonomy

and ideas, and that they would still act as individuals in order to trade, even if they had to exploit legal blind spots to do so.

Wollstonecraft's *Vindication*, on the other hand, still feels highly relevant to our society and was a very motivating read for me. Her critiques of beauty when it overpowers critical thinking and becomes a defining trait feel emotionally driven, like she has realized a fundamental truth and cannot believe that others don't see it, and I would argue they still feel appropriate in the modern day. Her call for masculine women makes sense when she demonstrates that "masculine" is simply accepted as the baseline human.

Montgomery's exploration of the expansion of women's rights from 1770 onwards is a very helpful resource for understanding the status of women in each period and for providing historical context for individual events. The focus on marriage is logical and reminds me of how closely women's rights are tied to their right to marry, their principal vector for social mobility. The BBC article and excerpts from Wollstonecraft highlight the racial and cultural biases at play in women's social position, and I am interested in how the two movements for equality work with or against one another throughout this period.