

Reading Questions: De Gouges, *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen*; Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*; Rousseau, Excerpt from *Emile* on Sophie

1. What changes does De Gouges make to the Declaration of the rights of Man and of the Citizen?
2. What is the “invincible means” by which she intends to raise up women? What does she mean by this? Is she right in thinking it key for women’s uplift?
3. What are the duties of women “at all times” according to Rousseau?
4. What aspect of Rousseau’s account of the state of nature does Wollstonecraft take issue with? What role does God play in her disagreement with Rousseau? What role does God play in her larger theory?
5. What is the important relationship between one’s character and one’s profession according to Wollstonecraft?
6. What is the goal of education according to Wollstonecraft?
7. For Wollstonecraft, how does socialization prevent women from developing their minds and character to the fullest extent?
8. What connection does Wollstonecraft make between virtue and reason? What does she mean by virtue? What is the relationship between virtue, knowledge, and reason according to Wollstonecraft? How do these relate to independence?
9. What power does Wollstonecraft think women possess but that they should give up? Why does she think they should surrender it?
10. In what ways are women and soldiers similar according to Wollstonecraft?
11. Does Wollstonecraft think women have a unique virtue distinct from men? What does this have to do with the notion that virtue is “a relative idea?”
12. How does Wollstonecraft think love changes over time? Would you desire a marriage that ends up as she thinks love must? Why does she reject romantic love in this way?
13. What is the aim of Rousseau’s system of education for women according to Wollstonecraft?
14. How does Wollstonecraft envision a woman’s primary social role? That is, where should she find her fulfillment in life? See especially her discussion of the two widows at the end of Chapter 3. Does this role help explain why she thinks the degradation of women leads to the degradation of society as a whole? Is her vision of women’s role sufficiently ambitious?
15. For Wollstonecraft, does sexual equality come at the cost of economic equality between social classes? Is this conflict necessary?
16. Does Wollstonecraft show a class bias?