***Vindication of the Rights of Women*** *excerpts, Mary Wollstonecraft*

Focus question: What are her main arguments and goals?

**It is justice, not charity, that is wanting in the world.**

**Till women are more rationally educated, the progress in human virtue and improvement in knowledge must receive continual checks.**

**To be a good mother — a woman must have sense, and that independence of mind which few women possess who are taught to depend entirely on their husbands.** Meek wives are, in general, foolish mothers.

**Should it be proved that woman is naturally weaker than man, from whence does it follow that it is natural for her to labour to become still weaker than nature intended her to be?** Taught from their infancy that beauty is woman's sceptre, the mind shapes itself to the body, and roaming round its gilt cage, only seeks to adorn its prison…Confined, then, in cages like the feathered race, they have nothing to do but to plume themselves, and stalk with mock majesty from perch to perch.

**It would be an endless task to trace the variety of meannesses, cares, and sorrows, into which women are plunged by the prevailing opinion, that they were created rather to feel than reason, and that all the power they obtain, must be obtained by their charms and weakness.**

Women are systematically degraded by receiving the trivial attentions which men think it manly to pay to the sex, when, in fact, men are insultingly supporting their own superiority.

How many women thus waste life away the prey of discontent, who might have practised as physicians, regulated a farm, managed a shop, and stood erect, supported by their own industry, instead of hanging their heads surcharged with the dew of sensibility, that consumes the beauty to which it at first gave lustre.