

1 Introduction

At one point in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Mary Wollstonecraft positions herself as a philosopher and moralist. She writes: ‘As a philosopher, I read with indignation the plausible epithets which men use to soften their insults; and as a moralist, I ask what is meant by such heterogeneous associations, as fair defects, amiable weaknesses, &c.?’ (*Works* 5: 103). Most often the ‘sagacious’ or ‘short-sighted philosopher’ is a target of Wollstonecraft’s criticism (*Works* 5: 13, 57). Moralists are similarly limited in their thinking, most often because they hold prejudiced opinions on women (e.g. *Works* 5: 130). By identifying herself as a philosopher and as a moralist, Wollstonecraft underlines that the problem is the misuse of these disciplines, not the disciplines themselves. In order to approach her as a moral philosopher, we need to begin here.

When positively defined, a philosopher is someone in search for truth and a moralist is a defender of the true principles of morality, which depend on perfection and strength, not on defect and weakness. Wollstonecraft is a passionate lover of truth. She presents a broad concept of reason (discussed in Section 2), but favours reason understood as an ability to perceive and even to desire truth. It is no coincidence that when Wollstonecraft speaks approvingly of ‘a great philosopher’, she is referring to Plato, known for his account of intuitive – as opposed to deductive – knowledge (*Works* 5: 23; also Tomaselli 2019). In *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790), she mentions Plato and John Milton as sources of the idea that earthly love can lead to heavenly love and is ultimately a love of perfection (*Works* 5: 46). Wollstonecraft’s Plato was inspired by the Christianized Plato of Milton’s poetry and by Richard Price’s writings.¹

Richard Price is one of three interlocutors who will frame my interpretation of Wollstonecraft’s moral philosophy. The two others are Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Catharine Macaulay. Price was the only one Wollstonecraft knew in person,

¹ We do not know if Wollstonecraft read any of Plato’s dialogues. She makes no direct references to his works or to having read any of them. It has been claimed that there were no English translations of Plato’s works available to her (Bergès and Coffee 2016: 7), but as pointed out by Karen Green (2019: 231), this is not the case. Wollstonecraft would have had access to, for example, *Phedon: or, a Dialogue of the Immortality of the Soul. From Plato the Divine Philosopher* (Plato 1777) and *The Banquet, a Dialogue of Plato Concerning Love* (Plato 1767; the title page bears the addition ‘The Second Part’, but the volume includes Plato’s *Symposium* as a whole). Instead of focusing on translations available when Wollstonecraft embarked on her writing career, some scholars examining Wollstonecraft’s Platonism have concentrated on her possible acquaintance during her youth with Thomas Taylor, who published an English translation of Plato’s *Phaedrus* in 1792 (Todd 2000: 27, 461n13; Tomaselli 2019). I find it more likely that Wollstonecraft may have read published translations of Plato’s dialogues, in particular those focusing on the topics of beauty, love and immortality, than that she would have had access to Taylor’s unpublished translation when she wrote *Rights of Men* and *Rights of Woman*. By the early 1790s, Taylor was an opponent of the cause for the rights of women, which he ridiculed in his anonymously published *Vindication of the Rights of Brutes* (1792); see Todd (2000: 185, 474n21).

but all three thinkers are solid interlocutors in the sense that Wollstonecraft discusses their works in some detail. Wollstonecraft wrote her first explicitly philosophical work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*, as a criticism of Edmund Burke's attack on Price's defence of the French Revolution. Rousseau, on the other hand, is by far Wollstonecraft's most famous interlocutor. She engaged in a critical dialogue with his works that lasted throughout her intellectual career and included praise of his genius (*Letters*: 114–15) as well as severe criticism of his views on the moral education of women (e.g. *Works* 5: 108–12). Finally, Macaulay, who was one of the most famous intellectual women of her time, influenced Wollstonecraft as both a role model and philosophical source. We do not know to what extent Wollstonecraft was familiar with Macaulay's works before she read the latter's *Letters on Education* (1790), but Wollstonecraft's long review of it is one of her most systematic discussions of several essential philosophical questions, including the problem of free will (*Works* 7: 309–22). It is also evident that Macaulay's critical remarks on Rousseau's account of gendered virtue had a profound impact on the detailed criticism Wollstonecraft develops in *Rights of Woman*, published less than two years after the review (see also Gunther-Canada 2003).

We know that these three authors influenced Wollstonecraft's philosophical thought, but my main aim is not to trace influences. I will rather refer to their works – and to those of several other thinkers – in order to sketch the philosophical context in which Wollstonecraft developed her thought. Sometimes my comparisons delve a bit deeper into positions she only hints at. Sometimes I refer to differences between authors in order to show the specificities of her thought. Wollstonecraft develops her most detailed discussions of moral philosophy in *Rights of Woman*. I use that book as my main source, complemented by her other writings when relevant.

When compared to many other women philosophers, Wollstonecraft has received a fair amount of scholarly attention. In addition to many biographies casting light on her eventful life (e.g. Todd 2000), monographs by Virginia Sapiro (1992), Wendy Gunther-Canada (2001), Barbara Taylor (2003), Natalie Fuehrer Taylor (2007), and Sylvana Tomaselli (2021) have developed detailed studies of Wollstonecraft's writings from the perspectives of political theory and intellectual history. In recent years, philosophers have focused increasingly on Wollstonecraft's concept of freedom defined as liberty from arbitrary power, such as the power of non-constitutional monarchs or the power of husbands over wives, who do not have full rights as legal persons. This interpretation, which places Wollstonecraft in the republican tradition of political thought, has been influentially defended by Lena Halldenius (2007, 2014, 2015, 2016), Alan Coffee (2013, 2014, 2016), and Sandrine Bergès (2013, 2016). Halldenius has

traced Wollstonecraft's critical dialogue with the republican tradition in great detail and synthesized the feminist political philosophy which grows out of this dialogue (Halldenus 2015).

My interpretation of Wollstonecraft's moral philosophy is embedded in the republican reading, not least in the sense that the three main interlocutors I discuss – Price, Rousseau and Macaulay – are among Wollstonecraft's most important fellow republicans, but my focus is different. Rather than discussing her detailed analyses of arbitrary power or her concept of liberty and its political implications, I concentrate on her moral psychology and its metaphysical basis. Wollstonecraft's metaphysical views are intertwined with her theological views and I hope to show that by paying some attention to the latter, one finds philosophical consistency in her system of thought, which may on the surface appear unsystematic.

The Element consists of six thematic sections followed by a Conclusion. First, in Section 2 I set out Wollstonecraft's concept of reason by examining its metaphysical relations to Providence and liberty as well as its role as the most important mental capacity. According to Wollstonecraft's view, reason acts in close collaboration with the passions. In Section 3 I explore the various roles of the passions, and in Section 4, that of the imagination, the third of the mental capacities that constitute the basis for Wollstonecraft's moral psychology. Reason, passion and imagination all come together in Wollstonecraft's discussions of love and friendship, which I examine in Section 5. It is well known that Wollstonecraft values education and knowledge, but few scholars discuss her epistemology. In Section 6, I analyse some aspects of her views on knowledge, with a focus on elements of innateness and empiricist influences. Finally, in Section 7 I discuss Wollstonecraft's notion of virtue, including its unity and its relations to liberty and duty.

2 Reason

Wollstonecraft is well known for her strong emphasis on reason. At the very beginning of *Rights of Woman*, she lists 'the most simple truths' on which morality as well as society at large must be built. The first truth is posited as a question: 'In what does man's pre-eminence over the brute creation consist? The answer is as clear as that a half is less than the whole; in Reason' (*Works* 5: 81). Wollstonecraft's concept of reason is fundamental to her thought as a whole and refers to a metaphysical entity as well as a capacity of the human mind. In this section, I will first discuss the metaphysical aspects of reason by focusing in Subsection 2.1 on its relation with Providence and in Subsection 2.2 on its relation with liberty. Subsection 2.3 addresses reason as a mental capacity.

2.1 Reason and Providence

From a metaphysical point of view, reason is different from other human capacities because it is an immaterial entity, which is immutable and indestructible. ‘The stamen of immortality’, according to Wollstonecraft, ‘is the perfectibility of human reason’ (*Works* 5: 122). God posits perfect reason, and Wollstonecraft perceives reason as the most important of the divine attributes. She emphasizes that when submitting to God, she is submitting to ‘unerring *reason*’ and to ‘the authority of reason’ (*Works* 5: 34, 170). Like many Enlightenment thinkers, Wollstonecraft emphasizes that humans must submit only to reason. In her case, reason is simultaneously an external authority, deriving its power from God, and an internal authority, imprinted on the human mind.

Humans differ in how well they use their reason, but the capacity belongs equally to all. Wollstonecraft writes:

More or less may be conspicuous in one being than another; but the nature of reason must be the same in all, if it be an emanation of divinity, the tie that connects the creature with the Creator; for, can that soul be stamped with the heavenly image, that is not perfected by the exercise of its own reason?

(Works 5: 122)

Reason connects all human beings with each other and with their Creator, and distinguishes humans from those parts of creation that are made solely of matter. Non-rational creatures are governed by mechanical laws, but due to their rational natures, humans are self-governing: ‘[A]n immortal soul, not restrained by mechanical laws and struggling to free itself from the shackles of matter, contributes to, instead of disturbing, the order of creation, when, co-operating with the Father of spirits, it tries to govern itself by the invariable rule that . . . regulates the universe’ (*Works* 5: 116).

Wollstonecraft’s view of how self-governing humans contribute to the order of creation is an important aspect of her understanding of human agency and its relation to Providence. She occasionally mentions Providence, but does not discuss it in detail. We can better understand the metaphysical basis for her view if we compare it with Richard Price’s essay ‘On Providence’, in his *Four Dissertations* (1767), a work that Wollstonecraft recommended to her friend George Blood in January 1788 (*Letters*: 147).²

Price criticizes the idea of Providence as a pre-established order and defends an understanding that God produces Providence ‘by constant influences, rather than such an original establishment’ (Price 1767: 64). Divine agency is the first, but not the immediate cause of every particular event (Price 1767: 52). In the

² For a discussion of Price’s and Wollstonecraft’s theological views, see Reuter (2010: 108–13).

material world, Providence is administered in accordance with the laws of nature. Price makes frequent references to Isaac Newton and to works on the compatibility between Newton's theory and Christianity (e.g., Price 1767: 53). He holds that the Deity 'is properly the *life* of [the creation], the *infinite Spirit* by which it is informed and sustained; that all material causes are no more than instruments in his hand, and that from him their efficiency is derived' (Price 1767: 54). Price emphasizes that the 'first mover cannot be matter itself' (Price 1767: 51). His account is explicitly Platonist and he refers to Plato's *Laws* 10 (898 c, 900 c–d, 902 d–e) when arguing that '*mind* must be *prior* to *matter*, and the cause of all its modifications and changes; and that, therefore, there is an universal mind possess of all perfection, which produced and which actuates all things' (Price 1767: 10).

Rational human beings are also instruments of Providence, but in a significantly different way to that of mere material beings. According to Price, the 'doctrine of Providence . . . ought never to be explained in such a manner as to destroy the value of the agency of created beings' (Price 1767: 94). The Deity has taken care 'to give his reasonable creatures room for a proper exertion of their faculties, and for the practice of virtue' (Price 1767: 66–7). Price is not as bold as Wollstonecraft. He does not claim that reasonable creatures co-operate with their Creator, but he formulates an understanding of Providence that leaves room for Wollstonecraft's interpretation. God is the first cause of everything that happens, but human agents are immediate causes and since they are spiritual beings, they can be causes in a truer sense than mere matter.³ Thus humans can, in Wollstonecraft's words, contribute to the order of creation.

2.2 Reason and Liberty

Reason is closely related to liberty. Price notes that human beings, whom he categorizes as 'the lowest order of reasonable Beings', abuse their liberty time and again, but it would be 'absurd to ask why was liberty granted them' (Price 1767: 118–19).⁴ He emphasizes that liberty is 'essential to intelligence, and to all rational and moral happiness' (Price 1767: 119). Without liberty, reasonable beings would 'not exist at all' (Price 1767: 119). This is so because reasoning

³ Price and Wollstonecraft are dualists in the sense that they separate spirit and matter, and believe in the afterlife of the soul as a distinct entity. Sylvana Tomaselli has recently claimed that Wollstonecraft 'believed in the existence of two substances, a physical and an immaterial one' (2021: 100). It is important to note, though, that Wollstonecraft's dualism resembles Plato's rather than Descartes'. She holds that spirit infuses matter and she shares Price's Platonist idea of spirit as activity. On Price's dualism, see Hickman (2019).

⁴ On Price's view of liberty and necessity, see also Harris (2005: 135–7); and Greenberg (2013: 259–60).

beings, as we saw in the previous subsection (Subsection 2.1), are immediate causes of their own actions. In this context, liberty is indistinguishable from the ability to act as a self-governing cause. Reasoning human beings may, as Price emphasizes, abuse their liberty and fall into error, but they may also improve themselves and reach truths.

As Wollstonecraft understands it, the possibility of error is a crucial aspect of human reasoning. Making errors distinguishes humans from God, who possesses perfect reason, as well as from non-human animals, which possess neither reason nor liberty. Animals act automatically on the basis of their God-given instincts, without deliberation. This means that they neither err nor improve themselves. In her didactic children's book *Original Stories from Real Life* (1788), Wollstonecraft discusses the behaviour of birds and points out that 'the first nest they make and the last are exactly the same' (*Works* 4: 372). Birds do not make errors. They have an instinctive ability to build appropriate nests, but since they lack reason and imagination, they cannot improve their ability.⁵ Humans, however, have reason, which is 'the simple power of improvement; or, more properly speaking, of discerning truth' (*Works* 5: 122). This power needs to be strengthened through exercise, and these exercises may often include making errors. At one point Wollstonecraft concedes that 'erroneous opinions [are] better than none at all' (*Works* 5: 257). She points out that under prevailing social circumstances:

It should seem, that one reason why men have superior judgment, and more fortitude than women, is undoubtedly this, that they give a freer scope to the grand passions, and by more frequently going astray enlarge their minds. If then by the exercise of their own reason they fix on some stable principle, they have probably to thank the force of their passions, nourished by *false* views of life. (*Works* 5: 179)

I will discuss the manifold philosophical roles Wollstonecraft gives the passions in the next section (Section 3), but here they may cause error and have to be contested by reason. The same meaning is found right at the beginning of *Rights of Woman*, where Wollstonecraft writes that by struggling with the passions, humans 'attain a degree of knowledge denied to the brutes' (*Works* 5: 81). Animals have neither reason nor human passions. They do not fall into error, but neither do they attain knowledge.

⁵ Like most of her contemporaries, Wollstonecraft thought that animals belonged to a lower order of creation than humans, but this did not allow for disrespect and even less for cruelty: quite the contrary. In *Original Stories*, Wollstonecraft teaches the importance of treating animals well (*Works* 4: 367–87). Since humans are higher creatures, they have a responsibility for animals. Wollstonecraft discusses the cognitive capacities of animals in her review of William Smellie's *Philosophy of Natural History* (1790) (*Works* 7: 295–300). On Wollstonecraft's views in the context of her time, see Spencer (2012), and for a discussion of her views on animal ethics, see Botting (2016).

Reasoning is the key to improvement and to human liberty. The relation between reason and liberty is twofold: deliberation requires liberty, and reasoning produces independence. According to Wollstonecraft, it ‘is the right use of reason alone which makes us independent of every thing – excepting the unclouded Reason’ (*Works* 5: 190). Like Price, she holds that humans are free beings because they reason, not as such because they possess a free will. She did not deny the existence of free will, but she rarely mentions the will as a separate mental capacity.

In *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Wollstonecraft refers to the will in order to emphasize the non-voluntary nature of an instantaneous association of ideas, which ‘seems rather to depend on the original temperature of the mind than on the will’ (*Works* 5: 185). In another passage, she refers to ‘a free-will offering to Him’ in order to emphasize the voluntary nature that is characteristic of a true love of God (*Works* 5: 232). The opposition between reason and mere will is explicated in a passage where Wollstonecraft criticizes the habit of teaching girls ‘slavishly to submit to their parents’: if parents ‘insist on their children submitting to their will merely because it is their will’, these children will never achieve ‘rational freedom’ (*Works* 5: 227). Humans have a free will, but true freedom is achieved only when one acts in accordance with reason.

Wollstonecraft develops her most detailed discussion of the will in a review of Catharine Macaulay’s *Letters on Education: with Observations on Religious and Metaphysical Subjects* (1790). Macaulay defends a position she calls ‘moral necessity’ against that of ‘free-willers’ (Macaulay 1996: 454–507). Like Price and Wollstonecraft, she grounds her position in theology, with consequences for human moral psychology. Macaulay defends a form of intellectualism according to which God created the world to eternal standards. In her view, since God is guided by perfect reason, God *necessarily* chooses the best possible principles. She writes that ‘subjection to this necessity, is the peculiar glory of the divine character’ (Macaulay 1996: 462). Human beings are imperfect, but in a similar fashion necessitated by truth. Macaulay holds that ‘the nearer approaches which all finite creatures make to the perfections of their creator, the more they will be brought under the blessed subjection of being necessarily determined in their volitions by right principles of conduct’ (Macaulay 1996: 462).⁶ Macaulay’s free-willers, on the other hand, are voluntarists, who argue that God created the world and its principles by an act of free

⁶ Macaulay develops her position at greater length in her earlier work *A Treatise on the Immutability of Moral Truth* (Macaulay Graham 1783). On her position, see also Reuter (2007: 150–4); O’Brien (2009: 165–8); and Green (2020: 152–63).

will (Macaulay 1996: 458–9). The position goes hand in hand with an emphasis on the human will, which must be undetermined in order to be free.

Price and Wollstonecraft also hold intellectualist views of creation but, as ably argued by Karen O’Brien, ‘they stopped short of the “philosophical necessity” espoused by Macaulay and Priestley’ (O’Brien 2009: 187). With David Hartley, Joseph Priestley defended an explicitly necessitarian view that human will is always necessitated by motives (Greenberg 2013: 248).⁷ In her laudatory review of *Letters on Education*, Wollstonecraft mildly reproaches Macaulay for simplifying the position of the free-willers.⁸ She points out that few defenders of free will claim that the will ‘can choose either good or evil, without being influenced by any motive’ (*Works* 7: 320). Actually, Wollstonecraft writes, the ‘virtuous Free-Willer still continues to cultivate his mind with as much care, that he may discern good from evil, and choose accordingly’ (*Works* 7: 321). Wollstonecraft defends free-willers against charges of arbitrariness and points out that defenders of moral necessity and defenders of free will actually act in more or less the same way in order to achieve virtue. Both camps agree that in order to act virtuously, humans must act in accordance with reason. In her review, Wollstonecraft leaves open the ultimate metaphysical question of whether motives determine the will or whether the will chooses freely between different influencing motives. She claims that the ultimate relation between the understanding and the will is ‘a question, which metaphysicians have not yet brought to an issue’ (*Works* 7: 321).

Wollstonecraft pinpoints what Sean Greenberg has characterized as ‘a stand-off’ between eighteenth-century libertarians and necessitarians. Both sides intend to promote virtue and piety, but to do so, they rely on opposite metaphysical positions (Greenberg 2013: 262). Wollstonecraft does not take a stand on the controversy between libertarians, who claim that the will must under all circumstances be uncaused in order to be free, and necessitarians like Macaulay, who claim that humans are most free when their volitions are ‘necessarily determined’ by the understanding (Macaulay 1996: 462). Wollstonecraft emphasizes that the will is always acting upon some motive and that motives must be based on reason if one is to act virtuously. She holds that motives must be chosen freely in the sense that they are not determined by either God or mechanical laws. Humans are self-governing immediate causes of their actions, but Wollstonecraft gives no clear answer as to whether she thinks that the fully

⁷ According to Sean Greenberg, ‘Hartley’s work was one of the chief, though unstated, targets of Price’s writings on freedom’. Priestley, on the other hand, ‘defended necessitarianism in a celebrated, amicable exchange of letters with Price’ (Greenberg 2013: 249).

⁸ For further discussions of Wollstonecraft’s review of Macaulay’s *Letters on Education*, see Reuter (2007); O’Brien (2009: 176); and Tomaselli (2021: 103–4).

developed understanding determines the will to act virtuously or that the will is still at that point free to act against the motives presented by the understanding. She seems to find it irrelevant whether the human ability to govern oneself is ultimately based on the understanding or the will. The important question concerns the human ability to develop one's understanding by the free use of reason.

Rather than trying to pinpoint the exact metaphysical relation between reason and liberty, Wollstonecraft emphasizes that the two are necessarily related and that this necessary relation has moral and political consequences. She shares this emphasis with Price. In *A Discourse on the Love of Our Country*, Price reminds us that 'Liberty is . . . inseparable from knowledge and virtue' (Price 1991: 184). Here liberty is understood in its political meaning and Price draws the conclusion that an 'enlightened and virtuous country must be a free country' (Price 1991: 184).⁹ In the opening passage of *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*, defending Price against Burke's attack, Wollstonecraft explains that she contends 'for the *rights of men* and the liberty of reason' (*Works* 5: 7). In *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* she explicitly extends the demand to woman and writes that 'as sound politics diffuse liberty, mankind, including woman, will become more wise and virtuous' (*Works* 5: 106). The metaphysical idea of self-governing humans serves as the basis for a right and a duty to be morally and politically self-governing.¹⁰ To put it the other way round, in order to make the desired moral and political demands, one needs to hold that humans are able to govern themselves, but one does not need to take a final metaphysical stand on whether humans ultimately govern themselves due to their will or their reason. Therefore Price, Priestley, Macaulay and Wollstonecraft are quite able to share the same political demands despite differences in metaphysical detail.

2.3 The Exercises of Reason

We have seen that reason needs to be exercised so that humans can achieve truth and become independent beings, but what exactly does Wollstonecraft mean by the exercise of reason? When Wollstonecraft refers to reason as a human mental capacity, she writes about 'discerning truth' (*Works* 5: 122), about 'the power of generalizing ideas' (*Works* 5: 123), and she describes how 'reason deduces' (*Works* 5: 34). It is important to note that when perceived as a human capacity, reason may itself be defective. Wollstonecraft refers to 'that sluggish reason, which supinely takes opinion on trust and obstinately supports them to spare

⁹ On the relations between Price's theological metaphysics and his radical political opinions, see Hickman (2019); also Hutton (2021: 191).

¹⁰ On Wollstonecraft's understanding of the relations between rights and duties, see Halldenius (2007; 2015: 33–49).

itself the labour of thinking' (*Works* 5: 264). Reasoning and 'the cultivation of the understanding' (*Works* 5: 123) are closely related, but not always synonyms. When Wollstonecraft refers to the understanding, she is sometimes referring to a capacity and sometimes to the outcome of exercising one's faculties. In the latter case, the understanding becomes affiliated with knowledge. In Subsection 2.2, we saw that the refinement of judgement depends on the passions. A similar interaction between different capacities of the mind holds for the cultivation of the understanding (also Tomaselli 2021: 96).

Wollstonecraft refers to the capacity for deduction when she discusses the deduction of laws and rules. In *Rights of Woman*, she emphasizes that one cannot 'educate moral beings by any other rules than those deduced from pure reason' (*Works* 5: 101). This formulation brings to mind Immanuel Kant's deduction of the categorical imperative, but there are two important differences between Wollstonecraft's and Kant's views. First, whereas Kant's pure reason is purely formal and void of substantial content, Wollstonecraft's pure reason is pure in the sense of being unaffected by non-rational desires or, she would add, relations of dependence that affect the independence of reason. Her pure reason is substantial in the sense that it can discern truths – for example the truth of real good – from which it can deduce rules.¹¹ Second, whereas Kant and Wollstonecraft agree that reason is a standard internal to the human mind, for her it is also an external divine standard. In its purest form, her pure reason is the reason of God. This becomes clear from a passage in *Rights of Men*. Wollstonecraft points out that when submitting to God, 'it is not to an arbitrary will, but to unerring *reason* I submit' (*Works* 5: 34). She argues that from the conception of God as Creator and supreme unerring reason it follows that humans must submit to the moral laws they deduce from their dependence on him. The moral law is deduced from ultimate divine pure reason, upon which human reason is dependent. As J. B. Schneewind has argued regarding Price's similar position, the moral agent's dependence on an established moral law constitutes the main difference between Price's – and Wollstonecraft's – conception of self-governing and Kant's concept of autonomy, which rests on the idea of self-legislation, independent of any external foundation (Schneewind 1998: 514).¹²

As we have seen, Wollstonecraft occasionally refers to general laws and rules, but more often she writes about principles. To 'act from principle' is mostly presented in an approving light (e.g., *Works* 5: 176), but not all principles are good. A woman may be 'restrained by principle or prejudice' (*Works* 5: 96), the blind duty to obey a vicious being is 'the most arbitrary principle' (*Works* 5:

¹¹ I discuss the capacity to discern truth at the end of this Subsection.

¹² For a further discussion of Wollstonecraft's relation to Kantian philosophy and of how Schneewind's exclusion of Wollstonecraft affects his study of the invention of autonomy, see Reuter (2018).