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Michaela Mudure, ed. *Mary Wollstonecraft: Reflections and Interpretations*. Cluj-Napoca: Napoca Star, 2017. (£18.95 Hd.) Pp 265. ISBN 978-606-690-143-7.

My own sex, I hope, will excuse me, if I treat them like rational creatures, instead of flattering their *fascinating* graces, and viewing them as if they were in a state of perpetual childhood, unable to stand alone. I earnestly wish to point out in what true dignity and human happiness consists - I wish to persuade women to endeavour to acquire strength, both mind and body, and to convince them that the soft phrases, susceptibility of heart, delicacy of sentiment, and refinement of taste, are almost synonymous with epithets of weakness, and that those beings who are only objects of pity and that kind of love, which has been termed its sister, will soon become objects of contempt.

(Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*)

A good year for showbiz and the global media corporations, 2017 brought along, amid post-Brexit anxieties, a whole new set of fresh revelations regarding discriminatory income hierarchies and the persistent domestic inequality in UK employment. A series of articles published in *The Guardian* and *Huffington Post* between July and September thus disclosed the blatant gender pay gap for the year running, a gap of 19.2 % for full- and part-time workers, according to ONS, The Office for National Statistics. Whereas not entirely surprising, not even in the year of the Lord 2017, the disclosures do convey a sense of the range and substance of UK gender pay ranking, rendering tangible the continuing relevance of women's fight for equal pay. It was a particularly 'controversial summer' for the BBC management forced to admit to the issue not having been properly tackled, after revelations of the organisation's highest-paid male presenters earning a staggering five times more than their women and ethnic minority counterparts. Doubtless, hardly the province of gender studies at all, female suffrage and the predicament of women seem just as topical today as persona studies, the study of celebrity, and that of public self.

The result of assiduous international collaborative effort and comparative scholarship, the volume under review offers a rewarding and timely reconsideration of the European legacy of writer, philosopher and

political thinker Mary Wollstonecraft. Exploring Wollstonecraft's eclectic interests, her influences and impactful contribution to feminist studies from multiple disciplinary angles, it is a vivid evocation of ideas and impressions of a lifetime's achievement in advancing gender equality. A pioneering figure, Wollstonecraft set trends in a period of dramatic historical and social upheaval, of massive change in print, material, and literary culture, making an indelible mark in the intellectual history of the long eighteenth century and beyond.

Approached from complementary, mutually informing perspectives, Wollstonecraft's writing, indeed her revolutionary, spirited personality come across poignantly in what coheres into a rich and profound selection of academic essays. As well as contributing new angles to the interpretation of Wollstonecraft's seminal piece, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), the present volume examines Wollstonecraft's incessant plea for and advocacy of women's rights in letters, biography, published and unpublished fiction and non-fiction texts, appraising her explorations of the female character in a variety of modes and registers. As such, the collection sheds meaningful light on the making, engendering and re-gendering of social roles and norms in the age of the French Revolution. Wollstonecraft's image as female liberator, working toward the empowerment and emancipation of women against the backdrop of powerful cultural stereotypes and systematic practices of patriarchy and institutional sexism, represents one of the most enduring and significant achievements of the current Reader.

It has to be said, gender discriminations one always knew existed are perhaps bound to persist even in our very own 'post-capitalist' times; yet, one finds it particularly disturbing to see those making the headlines nowadays and forging ahead in global times. However 'outlandish' women militants such as Mary Wollstonecraft and the like may have proved in their day, in the age of transvestism and same-sex marriages, fighting for equal pay and the eradication of economic disparities is just as commendable an effort as was Wollstonecraft's 'ideology of feminism,' a legacy that we clearly still live today, whether we may be prepared to acknowledge it or not.

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