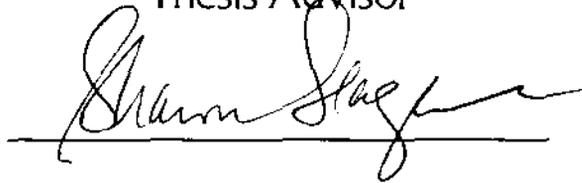


*The Women Who Spoke for
Woman's Rights and
Their Speeches*

An Honors Thesis (Honrs 499)

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sharon Seager", written over a horizontal line.

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Abstract

This discussion of the Woman's Suffrage Movement is limited mainly to four of the major speakers. Susan B. Anthony, Lucretia Coffin Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Lucy Stone are the women whose speeches are analyzed in the following sections. Two to three speeches for each speaker were researched. Along with analyzing each speaker, a short history is provided about the Woman's Suffrage Movement. This thesis explores some issues that are normally not discussed in history classes.

Introduction

It seems as if I have always been interested in the Woman's Movement. Everything about it fascinates me. That was the reason I wanted to study it in depth. The purpose of this thesis is to analyze some of the major speakers of the Woman's Movement and its history.

I felt it was important for me to learn more about these women and how they came to be involved in fighting for the rights of women. Each story is different. The strength and courage each demonstrated is inspirational. I once believed that the typical woman's advocate was one-dimensional. That is, I believed they were solely committed to the cause and did not make time for a family. However, through my research I found that each woman lead a rich life. Most were married and had children. That brought a new perspective to my ideas on the typical suffragist.

I organized the paper, so that the reader would have the opportunity to learn more about the Woman's Movement as a whole. It is amazing how much of the history of woman has gone untold, even today. The first section is devoted solely to the history of the Woman's Movement from its beginnings through 1920. I stopped there because it was a natural ending point for the first movement.

The next sections of the paper detail the speeches and the lives of Lucretia Coffin Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, and Susan B. Anthony. These sections provide more information and analysis of each woman. It also provides an opportunity to learn about their speeches and speaking ability.

The Movement for the Rights of Women

Freedom of Speech is something most women take for granted today. Less than one hundred years ago women were denied the most basic right of citizenship, the power to vote. When the Women's Movement began, however, the fight was for more than suffrage. The fight was for women to finally take their rightful place in society. They wanted to be recognized as equal beings to men.

In order to understand what culminated in the first convention of women at Seneca Falls, it is necessary to explore the issues of the day. The grievances women had did not just begin in the mid 1800's. They started with the founding of the United States of America.

In the Revolutionary War, women fought along side of men for independence. They assumed roles in both work and the economy. Women had never before participated on a large scale in those areas. However, they found that they could carry the burden of caring for both the family and a business. According to Catherine Clinton in her book *The Other Civil War*, "During the war women were seasoned to the harsh realities of building a democracy and they sought to acknowledgment of their abilities and contributions to the patriotic cause."¹ The women who fought with men in the war discovered they could be more than just a lower class. Many found that they enjoyed the independence they had achieved through the war. Although women contributed equally in the Revolutionary War, they were excluded from the Constitution. Some resented that they were denied the basic rights in a country that they helped establish.

¹Catherine Clinton, *The Other Civil War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984) p. 13.

In the time following the war, women were essential to the development of the new county. They were needed to work as well as their ability to have children. Although women were important they had few legal rights. Under the law, women were considered *femme soles* if single and *femme coverts* if they were married. In this context, married women were basically the property of her husband. Blackstone stated it best when he said; "Husband and wife are one, and that one is the husband."² Married women could not keep the wages they earned, own property, sue, or be sued. They were civilly dead in the eyes of the law.

A single woman fared some what better under the system. She was able to inherit from her parents and she could earn her own wages. However, she was not able to sit on a jury or be called as a witness because she was not considered competent. A woman could still be taxed even though under every other aspect of the law she was excluded. Women truly represented the notion of "taxation without representation" that helped to lead to the American Revolution.

Women did not revolt against their oppression. In fact, most did not feel they were oppressed at all. Most women could not conceive of participating in politics. The "cult of domesticity" helped insure that women participated in a limited sphere of society. Clinton defined the cult of domesticity as:

The redefinition of the home as the woman's domain , and was a delicate process designed to channel women's contribution into the proper course. Men of post-Revolutionary generation wanted to bridle and guide women's energies.³

Clinton demonstrated how women were given an identity not of their choosing. Again Clinton stated; "Instead of liberty and equality, subordination and

²Lynn Sherr, Failure Is Impossible (New York: Times Books, 1995), p. xviii.

³Clinton, p. 40.

restriction were drummed into women."⁴ Men used biological and theological arguments to support viewing women as inferior beings. Most people did not see a need for change in society's view of women.

Those who did see the need for change, sought new ways to achieve influence. Temperance and slavery were two issues that led women to be involved in reform. Many moral reformers were the core of the women's movement. In their quest for reform women were exposed to new ideas and the outside world. Women were finding out the injustices to which slaves were exposed. At the same time they were enlightened by the role women were in.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Coffin Mott began their reform career in fighting for the abolition of slavery. Quickly they discovered the inequality present in the anti-slavery organizations. Cady Stanton and Mott met at the World's Anti-Slavery Convention in 1840. They were enraged that their representation was violently opposed on the basis of their sex.⁵ The two became close friends because of the experience. Mott served as a mentor for Cady Stanton because as a Quaker, Mott was already educated in equality among the sexes.

Women who were involved in public speaking were amazed at the legal and societal handicaps placed upon them. Many were outraged that they were denied legal rights even though they were relatively self-supporting and most certainly self-sufficient. Women were frustrated by the amount of sexual discrimination they faced because they spoke publicly. Women who spoke publicly felt that they were just as able as their fellow men and deserved to be treated with dignity. The outrage of these females helped to lead women to a movement for the rights of women.

⁴Clinton, p. 42.

⁵Waggenpack, p. 13.

On July 19 and 20 of 1848 at Seneca Falls, over 300 men and women attended a convention to discuss women's grievances. At the convention Elizabeth Cady Stanton presented the "Declaration of Women's Rights and Sentiments," a document that was based on the "Declaration of Independence."⁶ Cady Stanton also gave her first speech to a public audience. In the resolutions, women demanded rights such as marital and property rights which had been recognized under judicial discretion and equity.⁷ Women also asked for suffrage. However, it was the only resolution that did not pass unanimously.⁸ Women wanted to reform the laws that treated them unequal.

The Seneca Falls Convention was only the beginning. The press coverage of the initial convention helped to promote the cause and gain interest among women. Susan B. Anthony was such a person. Anthony did not attend the Seneca Falls Convention and only became involved after she met Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1851.⁹ It was their friendship and partnership that proved a driving force in the women's movement for nearly fifty years. Their strengths complemented one another. Anthony was a natural organizer and Stanton was a great orator.

Another women who was committed to the cause even before Anthony, was Lucy Stone. Lucy Stone was committed to the rights of women even as a small child. She was one of the first women to receive a college education at Oberlin.¹⁰ Although her family was against the idea, she became a public speaker. She lectured on anti-slavery, but found that she was more devoted to

⁶Stanton, p. 68.

⁷Clinton, p.

⁸Stanton, p. 73.

⁹Sherr, p. xxi.

¹⁰Andrea Moore Kerr, Lucy Stone: Speaking Out for Equality, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press), p. 52.

the cause of women. Lucy Stone stated: "I was a woman before I was an abolitionist."¹¹ She was committed to changing society.

Lucy Stone and Paulina Wright Davis, a prominent anti-slavery speaker, organized the first National Women's Right Convention in 1850. It was held in Worcester, Massachusetts. Over a thousand people attended the first convention. The entire convention was covered in Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*. The *Tribune* was the most influential paper of that time.¹² The first National Convention echoed the demands of the Seneca Falls Convention; they both were calling for change.

The changing of society was approaching quickly in the 1850's. More and more it looked as if the issue of slavery could not be resolved without a war. The Civil War had a tremendous effect upon the goals and demands women were making. It was apparent that a split between the more radical ideas of Stanton and Anthony were in conflict with the conservative ones of Lucy Stone. Stanton and Anthony felt women were more deserving of suffrage than the freed slave. Stone felt it was necessary to give the freed slaves their time and rights.

After the war, Congress drafted the Fourteenth Amendment. In the Amendment, the word "male" was intentionally used to state who had the right to vote. This was the first time that voting as defined in the Constitution was ever specifically given to only men. Women became deeply divided over the issue of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. At the American Equal Rights Association (AERA) meeting in May of 1869 dissension between the different factions was at its worst.¹³ The men working for equal rights tried to

¹¹Kerr, p. 52.

¹²Kerr, p. 60.

¹³Carrie Chapman Catt, Woman Suffrage and Politics (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923) p. 67.

compel women to work for only Black suffrage. They hoped women would see the wisdom in letting the freed Black men "have their day."¹⁴

Stanton and Anthony were not willing to let their demand for suffrage be pushed aside. In response to the more conservative politics of women like Stone and the AERA, they founded the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA).¹⁵ The NWSA succeeded in undermining some of the earlier successes the movement had made because they were more radical in their beliefs.¹⁶ They demanded for women national suffrage, birth control, and equal pay. With Cady Stanton as president of NWSA, the organization followed a militant path. They were willing to discuss any issue that concerned the independence of women. For the more conservative suffragists, Cady Stanton and Anthony became troublemakers.

In November of 1869, the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) was founded as an alternate group to the radical NWSA. The AWSA wanted to push for suffrage on the state level. The AWSA felt that it had to get the state governments to change before the federal government would. From 1870 through 1910 the AWSA and later the NAWSA launched nearly 480 campaigns for the vote. Only seventeen of those campaigns made it to a referenda. Of those states that had a referenda only two won.

Susan B. Anthony and a few other women put the issue of voting to the test when they registered to vote in the 1872 election.¹⁷ She was arrested later in the month for her actions. Before her trial, she addressed fellow citizens across New York defending her actions. Her ability to speak and defend her actions led to a change in venue before the trial started. However, thanks to assistance she also spoke in that county and defended her right to vote. The

¹⁴Catt, p. 67

¹⁵Sherr, p. 41.

¹⁶Waggenpack, p. 30.

¹⁷Campbell, 2:628.

trial was interesting because the presiding judge, Judge Hunt did not allow Anthony to speak and he ordered that she be found guilty without allowing the jury to decide. Hunt was widely criticized for his actions. He took away one of the very rights guaranteed in the Bill of Rights, the right of a trial by jury.¹⁸

Women were denied equality under the law when the Supreme Court did hear the case of *Bradwell v. Illinois*. The court stated that women were not entitled to the same privileges as men. This affected both factions of the suffrage movement because it showed that society was not changing. Most still believed that women were not deserving of the same rights as men. This ruling, also enforced the ideology that women were not worthy of having the same rights and freedoms as men.

The NWSA and AWSA recognized the need to put aside their differences and come together to pursue suffrage for women. The different setbacks that occurred with trials like *Bradwell v. Illinois* demonstrated that women needed to be unified in their effort. The NWSA and AWSA, merged into the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). The process of merging began in 1887 and the first meeting was finally held in February of 1890.¹⁹ Elizabeth Cady Stanton became the President of the new group. There were still existing differences between the conservative and radical sides of the organization. Neither was sure which was the best course to achieve suffrage.

As the movement continued to gain force, a new group of women were taking over the leadership. Lucretia Coffin Mott died in 1880, Lucy Stone died in 1893, Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1902, and Susan B Anthony died in 1906. The first women to agitate were dying and the new women could not know how much Mott, Stone, Cady Stanton, and Anthony had done.

¹⁸Campbell, 2:689

¹⁹Kerr, p. 226.

Carrie Chapman Catt was a woman who did appreciate the work of the earlier suffragists. She first became involved in the national movement, when she attended the NAWSA convention in 1890.²⁰ She was immediately recognized as being a strong leader for the cause. She became president of the NAWSA and was able to see the fruition of the dream so many women had fought for. She lived to see the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920. It was passed fifty-one years after its original introduction.²¹

The passage of the Nineteenth Amendment did not become a possibility until popular opinion was in favor of it. This occurred around 1910. It was then that the NAWSA was able to really push Congress to pass an Amendment giving women the right to vote. World War I did help in influencing public opinion in favor of the vote, in addition to the efforts of the suffragists.

The success in finally achieving the vote, can be directly linked to the tireless efforts of certain individuals. The early influence of Lucretia Coffin Mott was critical for women like Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Cady Stanton and Stone completely won Susan B. Anthony because of their strong beliefs. The influence of each woman's beliefs was interwoven through their speeches, letters, and publications. Without these major influences, it might have been several more years before women achieved the right of suffrage.

In the next sections, individual speakers and their speeches are explored and analyzed. The dynamic personalities of each speaker were demonstrated through their words. They had the courage of their convictions that few people ever have. Mott, Stone, Cady Stanton, and Anthony all were part of changing society. They worked for the betterment of the United States and helped shape the Twentieth century.

²⁰Mary Gray Peck, Carrie Chapman Catt, (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1944), p. 54.

²¹Peck, p. 219.

Lucretia Coffin Mott
'A new generation of women is now upon the stage.'

Lucretia Coffin Mott was born in 1793, by Quaker parents on the island of Nantucket.²² The effect Mott's religion and her husband played in her life was profound. It guided her on a path dedicated to equality for the races and the sexes, temperance, peace, and the rights of workers.

Mott served as a minister to the Quakers, one of the few religions which ordained women as ministers. The Quaker religion believed that any individual who had experienced the indwelling of the inner light may become a minister. The members tested the individual to insure that person had a understanding of the inner light.²³ Within the Quaker community, the role of a minister was bound by belief and not by gender. Mott was recognized as a minister at the age of twenty-eight²⁴

Her religion would be constant source of comfort and conflict in her life. As stated, it was the Quaker ideas that led her to agitate for the abolition of slavery and for the equality of women. Mott first began her career with various secular groups as a reformer working to abolish slavery.

Lucretia Coffin met James Mott at the Nine Partners, a Quaker boarding school in New York.²⁵ Their subsequent marriage led to a long partnership. They were both committed to the ideas of moral reform. James Mott was also dedicated to working against slavery. Both were supporters of William Lloyd Garrison's view of slavery. James Mott supported his wife when she became involved in campaigning for woman's rights.

²² Dana Greene, *Lucretia Mott: Her Complete Speeches and Sermons* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1980), p. 4.

²³Campbell, p. 45.

²⁴Campbell, p. 38.

²⁵Greene, p. 4.

In looking at the speeches of Lucretia Mott, one can see where she developed her speaking ability. Mott was fortunate to be raised in a community where it was acceptable for a woman to speak in public. It was evident from her speeches that she recognized the obstacles she faced as a woman speaker. Her most famous speeches include "Discourse on Woman" and "The Mothers Should Depart and Give Place to the Children."

In her speech "Discourse on Women," Mott utilizes an approach that was not confrontational. She avoided any appearance of debating and violating any "taboos against female rhetorical aggressiveness"²⁶ In fact, she used male authorities to state her feelings on issues such as education, voting, and marriage laws. By citing men, she lessened any negative reactions to what she was saying.

The speech "Discourse on Woman" was given by the request of some liberal Philadelphians. They wanted Mott to respond to a lecture given by Richard Dana. No actual text exists of Dana's speech; the most complete information comes from the March 9, 1850 issue of the *Literary World* which stated:

Mr. Dana is not at all of the modern school, who affect to make Woman what she is not, never has been and never can be, man and women both... He thinks with Shakespeare that Lady Macbeth called with propriety upon the spirits to "unsex" her; a proceeding which would be quite a wasting of words with some of the modern holders of women's rights... No more resolute chivalric defender can be found than Mr. Dana.²⁷

From the article in *Literary World* it was clear why some women felt a response was necessary to answer its injustice and prejudice. Mott never directly referred to Dana's lecture, she merely calls him "the lecturer" in her speech. Before Mott

²⁶Campbell, 1:45.

²⁷Campbell, 2:72-73.

had been asked to speak, she did try to speak to Dana after his lecture. Dana would not answer her, and proceeded to turn and walk away.²⁸

The "Discourse on Woman" was remarkable because she did not give a manuscript speech. Her remarks were not prepared as an address, yet the speech was carefully reasoned. The speech was extemporaneous in that it used material from other speeches and sermons she had given over the years. According to Karyn Kohrs Campbell in her book *Man Cannot Speak for Her*, the speech was "a classic example of middle style, neither ornate and formal nor conversational and casual."²⁹ Mott balanced the two extremes prevalent in typical speeches of her day.

The speech was organized in a specific fashion. She began by discussing all of the scriptural arguments against women. She took an approach to studying *The Bible* that did not challenge the authority of it.³⁰ Instead her method attacked the traditional translation and interpretation. She moved from ancient history to modern times in respect to the position of women. She extensively quoted Catherine Beecher, an early advocate for equal education. She disproved the theory that women became "mannish" when they became active in public life.

The speech began by stating her reason for speaking on behalf of women. She stated that it was a subject that had claimed her interest for years. She wanted to clarify some of the statements that Dana had made in his speech. Mott stated that she disagreed with his statements " the more that these sentiments should be presented with such intellectual vigor and beauty, because they would be likely to ensnare the young."³¹ She did not want

²⁸Margaret Hope Bacon, *Valiant Friend: The Life of Lucretia Mott* (New York: Walker and Company, 1980) p. 134.

²⁹Campbell, 1:39.

³⁰Campbell, 1:41

³¹Greene, p. 143.

another generation to believe the ideas that Dana expressed. Mott wanted the younger generation of her time to realize that women deserved a higher place in society.

Mott established early in the speech that Dana was not expressing an argument against women's rights but rather a "sentiment." Mott, therefore was giving her views for the audience to consider and decide.

She first discussed biblical authority. The first quote she used from *The Bible* was in the first chapter of Genesis which said; "Male and female created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam." Mott continued "He gave dominion to both over the animals, but not to one over the other."³² Mott demonstrated some of the inherent problems with *The Bible*. In the following chapters of Genesis, there were conflicting stories of creation. Subjugation of women was then defended by the fall of Eve. However, according to the laws given by Moses at Mount Sinai and the teachings of Christ, men and women were equal. The view of Quakers was particularly present in the preceding notion because they believed that the coming of Christ washed away the sin of all women.

Mott wanted people to read the Scriptures and judge for themselves what the truth was. Mott ideas relied on the Protestant ideal of the priesthood of all believers. This idea was still considered radical in Mott's time. Religion and churches had always interpreted the meaning of *The Bible* for its followers. Her ideas were "hermeneutical", because they did not "challenge the authority of Scripture but rather its traditional translation, interpretation, and application."³³ At the time it was rare for someone to speak about the Scriptures in such a manner. She was challenging the advice that was given for translations because of the conditions of society. Mott argued that women were placed in a

³²Greene, p. 144.

³³Campbell, I:39.

lower status not because that was the way it was intended; rather it was due to the translation made by men.

Moving from the discussion of the interpretation of the Scriptures, Mott discussed the presence of women in public society. She challenged the idea that women who were involved in reform were "mannish" or "unsexed" which was the primary argument Dana used in his speech. She was living proof that a woman could be active and still maintain her femininity. Mott was married and had children, yet she was still active in many different reform movements. She also cited Dorothea Dix and Elizabeth Fry, who were both involved in prison reform, as women who successfully balanced their outside activities without sacrificing their womanliness.³⁴ Mott refuted Dana's claim that women could not handle both a private and a public life.

Mott was also attacking the cult of true womanhood in her speech. She attacked the idea that a woman should only be an ornament. She turned the tables on the traditional arguments against women by stating women could only become "true women" by removing all the barriers and prejudices in their way. She said that a "true woman" should be educated and allowed full rights. She demanded that a unisexual moral standard was developed to judge all people.³⁵

According to Mott, when a unisexual standard was applied, the question of what woman wanted became clear. Mott stated; "She asks nothing as favor, but as right, she wants to be acknowledged a moral, responsible being."³⁶ Mott demonstrated that women were not asking for anything outrageous by being afforded their rights. Women were not stealing anything from men. If women had full equality that would not lessen the equality of men.

³⁴Bacon, p. 135.

³⁵Campbell, 1:42.

³⁶Greene, p. 154.

Mott did not advocate in government or voting for women. She stated: Far be it from me to encourage women to vote or take active part in politics, in the present state of our government. Her right to the elective franchise however, is the same, and should be yielded to her, whether she exercise that right or not.³⁷

Mott understood that women should be given their rights whether they decided to use them or not. She was not encouraging all women to revolt and take their place in government. Far from that, she was actually encouraging women to make their own decisions.

The speech "Discourse on Woman" was about making decisions. It was the decision of the generation after Mott to evaluate the traditional view of the Scriptures. It was the decision of those women to fight for their rights or not. It was a woman's decision whether she chose to be active in reform. Mott demonstrated that it was not, a man's decision to place woman in a lower position. She cited evidence that allowed men and women to decide on their own what a woman's place was.

Later in Mott's life, she delivered the speech "The Mothers Should Depart and Give Place to the Children." This speech was delivered at the Eleventh National Woman's Rights Convention in 1866.³⁸ The speech stands as an example to encourage the younger women involved in the movement to step up and take their place in the leadership. She was making an appeal to women not to settle with the rights they had gained, but to fight to attain full citizenship.

The speech itself was organized as an appeal. She stated a few of the changes that had already occurred in the twenty years the movement had been in existence. She also encouraged the women not to become frustrated with the amount of time it was taking to achieve change in the laws and society.

³⁷Greene, p. 156.

³⁸Greene, p. 267.

The first section of the speech dealt with some of the achievements of the first twenty years. Mott began with Blackstone's definition of marital law; "husband and wife were one, and that one was the husband."³⁹ She then stated; "We labored therefore to change the law, so as to recognize the wife as a person with civil rights."⁴⁰ She discussed the fact that all the appeals made to the different state legislatures were received favorably.

Mott continued in her speech to say that it was her hope that it would not take as long to change society as it did to create the society that degrades women. She was optimistic that change would come because of the abolition of slavery. Mott said; "Abolitionists never anticipated that we should live to see the work accomplished, and yet a great work has been wrought."⁴¹ She likened the oppression of women to that of slavery. She stated:

As it was not true, that the slave was satisfied with his condition of slavery, it only proved the depth of his degradation, for liberty was no less a blessing because he was ignorant of it. So when woman assert again and again that she has as many rights as she wants, it only gives evidence to the depth of her degradation.⁴²

Mott refuted the arguments of those women who were against suffrage. She felt those women should be pitied because they did not realize how fully they had been oppressed.

According to Mott, the slavery that women were subjected to was being recognized by all parts of society. As more women became involved in new professions, people saw their equality. Women were now physicians and accepted as public speakers. Mott alluded to these things to show what progress that women were making in the world⁴³ Mott discussed her

³⁹Greene, p. 267.

⁴⁰Greene, p. 267.

⁴¹Greene, p. 268.

⁴²Greene p. 269.

⁴³Greene, p. 270.

experience at the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840 when she was denied acceptance because she was a woman. In 1866, that would not have had happened. There had been progress.

At the end of her speech, Mott appealed to the women of her audience to learn the history of the movement from the beginning. She told them to honor Mary Wollstonecraft as the pioneer of the Woman's Rights Movement. She commanded women to in her words: "note the progress of this cause, and know now that Woman's redemption is at hand, yea, even at the doors."⁴ She was encouraging the women to give the movement all they had because their goal was near.

The speech "The Mothers Should Depart and Give Place to the Children" was used to persuade her audience not to give up or become frustrated. It was given during a time when women were becoming divided over some very basic issues. The Civil War was over, and women were torn over the issue of who deserved the vote first. Mott was congratulating the women for the advances that had been made, but encouraging them not to give up yet. It was important because the original leaders of the movement were getting older and they needed to recruit more women to the cause.

Lucretia Mott was a dedicated speaker. She spent her life speaking on behalf of the issues that bothered her. She did not shy away from the conflict that came with leading a public life. Mott used the conflict to develop herself into a stronger person. She played a crucial role in the Woman's Rights Movement. Her style of speaking served to gain acceptance for other women because she was not confrontational and aggressive. She demonstrated that a woman could still be feminine and involved in moral reform.

⁴Greenc, p. 270.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton
'Moral beings can only judge of others by themselves.'

Elizabeth Cady Stanton the name invokes an image of strong womanhood. Cady Stanton along with a few others gave birth to the women's suffrage movement. She devoted her life to the education and improvement of women. As a speaker, the power of her oratory inflamed audiences across the country, both those in favor and those not. She was radical in her thinking. She believed men and women were equal. She believed women were entitled to vote. She held radical opinions on subjects ranging from abortion to divorce to work laws.⁴⁵

Cady Stanton's power of oratory, was a skill few women had during the time period. She had a natural ability when it came to speaking in public. Cady Stanton delivered hundreds of speeches in her lifetime. To understand her it is important to analyze her speeches. There are three speeches which will be analyzed; the 1848 Speech at the Seneca Falls Convention, the Address to the New York Legislature, Joint Judiciary Committee in 1854, and finally her last speech "The Solitude of Self."

On July 14, 1848 a small announcement appeared in the *Seneca County Courier* :

Seneca Falls Convention

Woman's Rights Convention.- A convention to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of woman, will be held in the Wesleyan Chapel, at Seneca Falls, N.Y., on Wednesday and Thursday the 19th and 20th of July, current; commencing at 10 o'clock A.M. During the first day the meeting will be exclusively for women, who are earnestly invited to attend. The public are generally invited to be present the second day, when Lucretia

⁴⁵ Beth M. Waggenspack, *The Search for Self-Sovereignty* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1989), p. 1.

Mott, of Philadelphia, and other ladies and gentlemen, will address the convention.⁴⁶

This announcement led to a flurry of activity on the part of the organizers who were: Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Mary Ann McClintock, Jane Hunt, and Martha C. Wright.⁴⁷ Cady Stanton recognized that there needed to be some kind of clear manifesto that stated their grievances and would guide future action. The result was to adapt the Declaration of Independence to their needs. The organizers drew up "The Declaration of Women's Rights and Sentiments" which Cady Stanton presented to the Convention.⁴⁸

Elizabeth Cady Stanton also gave her first speech in public at the Convention. Immediately this is clear to readers today by the nervousness displayed in the opening words of the speech, "I should feel exceedingly diffident to appear before you at this time, having never before spoken in public, were I not nerved by a sense of right and duty."⁴⁹ However, the speech Cady Stanton displayed none of the rhetorical weaknesses characteristic of many first speeches. Cady Stanton gave a well organized and impassioned speech addressing a wide range of concerns for women.

The first part of Cady Stanton's speech was devoted to responding to the three major claims of superiority (intellectual, moral, and physical) that men used to defend their injustice to women. She argued that none of the claims made could be proven until women were given the exact same opportunities as men were. Cady Stanton stated: "Man's intellectual superiority cannot be proven a question until woman has had a fair trial."⁵⁰ Cady Stanton was clearly challenging the idea that men were intellectually superior. In fact, she stated

⁴⁶ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, History of Woman Suffrage 6 volumes (New York: Arno & The New York Times, 1969) 1:67.

⁴⁷ Waggenspack, p. 19.

⁴⁸ Waggenspack, p. 20.

⁴⁹ Karyn Kohrs Campbell, Man Cannot Speak for Her: Key Texts of the Early Feminists 2 Volumes (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1989) 2:42.

⁵⁰ Campbell, 2: 46.

that it was impossible to even consider such a question. In each of the claims men made for being superior, Cady Stanton attacked and demonstrated how each was false. She consistently employed natural rights principles to explain her radical rationale.

Using the natural rights principles, Cady Stanton defended the demand for women's suffrage. She reaffirmed that the right to vote was an integral part of a person's natural rights, regardless of the individual's situation.⁵¹ She commented that it was an injustice that idiots, drunkards, and ignorant foreigners all had the right to vote but American-educated woman could not. Cady Stanton could not understand how any person could defend such a practice. Cady Stanton also refuted the arguments that were made against woman suffrage.

A common argument employed by those against suffrage was polling sites were not places a women should frequent because of violence and vulgarity. Cady Stanton responded by stating:

Much is said of woman's influence, might not her presence do much toward softening down this violence, refining this vulgarity? Depend upon it, the places that, by their impure atmosphere, are unfit for women, cannot but be dangerous to her sires and sons.⁵²

Cady Stanton felt that if these place were so unfit for women then it was their responsibility to make it fit for all, including men.

Cady Stanton was skilled in answering all the arguments used to oppress women. She demonstrated this ability throughout her speech to the Convention. She responded to theological, biological, and sociological rationales that defended woman's limited sphere.⁵³ For her first public

⁵¹Campbell, 1: 61

⁵²Campbell, 2: 55.

⁵³Campbell, 1: 59.

appearance Cady Stanton delivered a speech that established the key issues of the new movement.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton continued her speaking career by being the first woman to ever address a state legislature. In 1854, Cady Stanton addressed the New York State Legislature. In this address, which was also given at the New York State Woman's Rights Convention, Cady Stanton described the legal position of women in the United States.⁵⁴ She also demanded revision in the New York State constitution that would create equality among men and women. When describing the legal position of women, she broke the position of women into four categories: woman as woman, wife, widow, and mother.

In the first section she discussed woman as a woman. Cady Stanton established her case and defended her assertions. She knew she was addressing a group of men who were not sympathetic to her cause. She knew that she must go beyond getting them to question some of their ideas and principles. She had to get the Legislature to act. Cady Stanton began this section by stating:

Look at the position of woman as woman. It is not enough for us that by your laws we are permitted to live and breathe, to claim the necessaries of life from our legal protectors - to pay the penalty of our crimes; we demand the full recognition of all our rights as citizens of the Empire State...We have every qualification required by the Constitution, necessary to the legal voter, but the one of sex.⁵⁵

Cady Stanton was establishing how absurd the notion was that a woman was incapable because of her sex. She demonstrated that men were not being consistent. They recognized women as moral and rational beings, yet they

⁵⁴Waggenspack, p. 51.

⁵⁵Stanton, 1: 595.

denied women the privileges of acting like such beings. The very tools of citizenship were placed just out of reach for women.

As a citizens of the state, women were expected to follow laws and obey the Constitution. However, Cady Stanton demonstrated while women were expected to obey the laws they could not participate in the enactment of laws. She also demonstrated how the law had a higher regard for a poor free Black man than the most educated wealthy female.

Cady Stanton also demonstrated the injustice that occurred because women were not allowed to sit on a jury due to their status. Yet, a jury could still try a woman without having any of her peers as part of the jury. She describes a hypothetical situation where a woman was forced to kill her own child because she was unmarried and been seduced by some man. She used persuasive language to express the injustice this woman would face because there would not be women in the jury who could understand her feelings.

After discussing a woman's position under the law, Cady Stanton discusses woman as wife. In this section, Cady Stanton first developed her "contract" argument which she used in many later speeches.⁵⁶ Cady Stanton said, "But if you regard marriage as a civil contract, then let it be subject to the same laws which control all other contracts. Do not make it a kind of half-human, half - divine institution, which you may build up, but can not regulate."⁵⁷ She described in depth the laws governing the making of contracts stating that a man had to be twenty-one to buy land or a horse. A man was not governed by those same rules if he married. Cady Stanton said:

Upon what principle of civil jurisprudence do you permit a boy of fourteen and a girl of twelve, in violation of every natural law, to

⁵⁶Waggenpack, p. 52.

⁵⁷Stanton, 1: 598.

make a contract more momentous in importance than any other, and hold them to it, come what may.⁵⁸

Cady Stanton again was developing her later arguments for divorce. She alluded to signing the marriage contract as instant civil death. She stated that the law violated all of woman's God-given rights because it was controlled by man.

Cady Stanton third point concerned widows. It was commonly believed that a widow had many privileges and powers not accorded to other women. There was an illusion that man treated a widow fairly. In theory, it seemed widows were cared for by the laws. In reality widows were abused by the laws. If a woman's husband died without leaving a will, the law seized all but a third of the house and land for itself. It was a falsehood that widows were left with a large inheritance when their husbands died. Cady Stanton continued to argue that the widow also was taxed without representation. In all ways the widow was denied even the most basic rights.

Cady Stanton's final point concerned the position of motherhood. She pointed to the inconsistencies that gave men absolute power over a child. Fathers had full legal rights over any children until the age of twenty-one. A father could apprentice out children without the mother agreeing. He could force the children to be degraded by being molested or "bound to the owner of a brothel."⁵⁹ A father was also granted the children in cases of separation, with no regard given to his character. Cady Stanton stated, " Thus by your laws, the child is the absolute property of the father, wholly at his disposal in life or at death."⁶⁰ She established why the laws needed to be changed. In the final section of her speech she discussed her plan of action.

⁵⁸Stanton, 1: 599.

⁵⁹Stanton, 1: 602.

⁶⁰Stanton, 1: 602.

Cady Stanton asked for women to be treated equally under the law. She did not ask for any special considerations, only the same protection that was afforded to men. Cady Stanton stated: "Christ's golden rule is better than all the special legislation that the ingenuity of man can devise: 'Do unto others as you would have done unto you.' This, men and brethren is all we ask at your hands."⁶¹ She touched upon the basic want of the suffrage movement: women just wanted to be recognized as equal beings.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton's finest speech was the "Solitude of Self" speech given in 1892. The speech was delivered three times over a three day period. The last presentation was made to the Senate Committee on Woman Suffrage. This speech was her last presentation to Congress. "The Solitude of Self" speech was different from her other speeches in the structure and content.

At the beginning of Cady Stanton's speech she reflected that all people were "an imaginary Robinson Crusoe, with her woman Friday on a solitary island."⁶² She began the speech with a strong image of each person being in isolation from the world. She continued her exploration into the solitude of self by discussing a woman's place as a citizen, a woman, and the "incidental relations of life, such as mother, wife, sister, and daughter."⁶³

The content of the speech relied on the single issue solitude of the self. She demonstrated in numerous ways how each person is alone in his or her existence. Cady Stanton said:

We come into the world alone, unlike all who have gone before us; we leave it alone, under circumstances peculiar to ourselves. No mortal has ever been, no mortal ever will be like the soul just launched on the sea of life... Nature never repeats herself, and the possibilities of one human soul will never be found in another.⁶⁴

⁶¹Stanton, 1: 604.

⁶²Campbell, 2: 372.

⁶³Campbell, 2: 372.

⁶⁴Campbell, 2: 374.

Cady Stanton was clearly stating that each person is an individual. That individual must be self dependent. She was offering the finest reason of all for equality for women, the reason that each person regardless of gender had a self and must therefore become self dependent.

A person can only be self dependent when afforded the full rights of citizenship and education. Women by necessity, according to Cady Stanton had to be allowed the opportunity to develop their abilities. In discussing tragedies she described:

In youth our most bitter disappointments, our brightest hopes and ambitions are known only to ourselves. Even our friendship and love we never fully share with another; there is something of every passion, in every situation we conceal. Even so in our triumphs and our defeats... When death sunders our nearest ties, alone we sit in the shadow of our affliction.⁶⁵

Cady Stanton eloquently expresses the tragedy of being alone. We will never be able to escape ourselves, was the point she was making. As with other speeches, she employed a natural rights philosophy to explain herself. Actually, according to Ellen Carol Dubois in her book *The Elizabeth Cady Stanton - Susan B. Anthony Reader*, Stanton anticipated the existentialist philosophy that is associated with the feminist movement of today.⁶⁶

In "the Solitude of Self" the structure resembles a lyric poem more than a typical address. According to Campbell: "A lyric poem attempts to explore and express all facets of a feeling or attitude in a series of statements referring to a single idea or theme."⁶⁷ The speech focused on the essential solitude of the self in every aspect of life. Cady Stanton explained each aspect in life that a person faced alone from birth to death. According to Waggenpack, " 'The Solitude of

⁶⁵Campbell, 2: 377.

⁶⁶Ellen Carol Dubois, *The Elizabeth Cady Stanton - Susan B. Anthony Reader: Correspondence Writings, Speeches* rev. ed. (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992), p. 246.

⁶⁷Campbell, 1: 136.

Self' emphasized the tragic nature of human self dependence. It focused upon the isolation all people feel when faced with tragedy and triumph."⁶⁸ The speech was startling because it was so unlike anything Cady Stanton had ever said before.

The speech was the culmination of her beliefs and actions over the course of her lifetime. A speech such as Cady Stanton's could only be delivered by someone who had been around at the beginning of the movement, someone who knew all the arguments and suffered through the hard times. Rhetorically speaking, "The Solitude of Self" violated nearly all the traditional rules. Cady Stanton does not refute any arguments or use evidence to support her statements. She hardly even refers to any specific issues because she knows her audience to already be familiar with them.

"The Solitude of Self" stood as the pinnacle of a long and distinguished career for Elizabeth Cady Stanton. The speech was profound in its simplicity. There was no possible way for any person to refute the logic Cady Stanton uses. Frederick Douglass, the abolitionist was quoted as saying: "After her - silence."⁶⁹ The impact she made on the audience with her speech is recognized by all interested in the suffrage movement.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was the first voice of a new movement in 1848. Her determination and simple philosophy of self dependence guided her throughout her life. She was remarkable for the ability to speak in public when the vast majority could not. She was passionate about what she believed. Whether she was speaking about temperance, slavery, or a woman's rights. She conveyed her message using strong persuasion. Her rhetoric was flawless. As a speaker, Cady Stanton displayed skills most acquire only after years of study and practice. Cady Stanton displayed those skills the first time

⁶⁸Waggenpack, p. 87.

⁶⁹Campbell, p. 135.

she spoke in 1848. She truly was a moral being who taught other women that only they could judge themselves.

Lucy Stone
'How our Cause progresses.'

It would seem that Lucy Stone was born to become a champion of women's rights. From a very early age she recognized the inequality that existed between men and women. As a young girl she asked, "If the law can meddle with the woman, why should not the woman meddle with the law."⁷⁰ Even as a child she intuitively realized that the laws were unjust. She was adamant in her desire not to give up her independence and she knew she wanted to dedicate her life to woman's rights.

In Stone's quest for equality, she desired to become college educated. She was finally able to attend Oberlin College in 1843 at the age of twenty-five.⁷¹ It was at Oberlin that she became close to Antoinette Brown (Blackwell), with whom she shared a lifelong friendship. The friendship they had provided Stone strength to embark on a career as an orator.

In the beginning, Stone lectured against slavery. However, she was more committed to women. Working as a lecturer for Samuel May and the Anti-Slavery Society starting in 1848, she lectured against slavery on the weekends and for woman's rights during the week.⁷² She was successful financially by being a public speaker. Eventually, her family became reconciled to her career because of the success she found.

Once Stone began lecturing, she became well known for her powers of oratory. She was able to fill halls with two to three thousand listeners. It was written that she was able to change even the most stubborn opponent to her cause by the logic and skill she employed. When she was still involved in

⁷⁰Kerr, p. 19.

⁷¹Carol Lasser and Marlene Deahl Merrill, Friends and Sisters: Letters between Lucy Stone and Antoinette Brown Blackwell (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1987) p. 6.

⁷²Kerr, p. 52.

lecturing about slavery, Andrea Moore Kerr wrote in *Lucy Stone : Speaking Out for Equality* , about an occasion where a mob attacked the speaker's platform in Cape Cod. The other speakers fled but Stone and Stephen Foster, another famous abolitionist, stayed. Kerr stated:

The mob seized Foster, tore his jacket in two, and began to beat him. 'You had better run, Stephen,' Stone advised. Foster...asked, 'But who will take care of you?' Stone turned to the largest of the assailants... Taking his arm, she said, 'This gentleman will take care of me.' The startled man found himself leading her through the inflamed mob, and as they walked, she talked steadily to him...the man cleared a space around a tree stump and lifted Stone up so she could be heard. While she addressed the crowd, he brandished his club at those who tried to shout her down...When she finished there was an abashed silence. Someone in the crowd suggested that they take up a collection to replace Foster's coat, and twenty dollars was collected for this purpose.⁷³

This story best represented the power Lucy Stone had over an audience. She was able to win the most hostile man and audience over to her side. She even succeeded in making the audience realize how wrong their actions were towards Stephen Foster. She displayed courage that most men and women only dream of displaying. She was able to change people's minds with the power and passion of her oratory.

When it came time to devote herself solely to the rights of women she was just as successful. She used a style that did not attack men as oppressors of women. Instead, she would praise those who were helping women. She grasped that it was important to cultivate her audience's goodwill in order to achieve success.

⁷³Kerr, p. 55

Her most famous speeches included "Disappointment is the Lot of Women" and her address to Senate Committee on Women Suffrage. Although Stone was a public speaker few of her speeches are available in complete form. Her major addresses that she gave were never recorded. Many of her speeches were not covered by the *History of Woman Suffrage* because of the split that occurred in the movement in 1869.⁷⁴ All other available speeches were too short to be given proper analysis.

She first delivered her speech "Disappointment is the Lot of Women" at the 1855 National Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio. She began her speech by stating:

From the first years to which my memory stretches, I have been a disappointed woman. When with my brothers I reached forth after the sources of knowledge, I was reprov'd with 'It isn't fit for you: it doesn't belong to women.'...In education, in marriage, in religion, in everything disappointment is the lot of women.⁷⁵

Stone demonstrated the inequity that existed for a woman's entire life. In every conceivable way she was considered a lesser being than a man. Stone also stated that she wished more women would ask for their rights instead of a new bonnet.⁷⁶

She considered the issue of rights in a "practical" sense. She recognized the inherent flaws in stating that women were not equal to men. In her speech, Stone only briefly touched on the arguments against those used to keep women in their "proper sphere." She summed up all the various arguments when Stone said:

Others have supposed it a question of comparative intellect; others still, of sphere. Too much has already been said and written about woman's sphere. Trace all their doctrines to their source and they

⁷⁴Bernard K. Duffy and Halford R. Ryan, ed., *American Orators Before 1900: Critical Studies and Sources* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), p. 361.

⁷⁵Stanton, 1:165.

⁷⁶Stanton, 1:165.

will be found to have no basis except in the usages and prejudices of the age.⁷⁷

Stone demonstrated how each argument used against women was little more than prejudice that had no real evidence to support it.

The speech itself was not developed as well as some. There was no proper preview or review of her speech. The body itself of the speech is loose in its organization. Although there were apparent structural weaknesses in the speech, Stone was able to express her ideas well. The speech was one of several for which she did not prepare a full manuscript. She preferred to work from notes which she disposed of afterwards.

Stone's address made to the Senate Committee on Women Suffrage in 1892 was one of her last public addresses. In her address, she stood before the Senate as a woman who had been working for women's rights for forty years. Experience and wisdom backed everything she had to say.

Stone was one of four women who addressed the Senate Committee that day in 1892. Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Isabella Beecher Hooker were the other speakers. Cady Stanton delivered her "Solitude of Self" speech at the Committee hearing. Stone immediately followed Cady Stanton's speech.

Although Cady Stanton departed from her typical style of speaking, Stone followed the style she always had used. Stone stated her case for the millions of disenfranchised women in the United States of America. She argued that the government could not possibly be a complete government if there was no representation of women. She stated, "What I desire to impress upon this committee is the gross and grave injustice of holding thirty millions of

⁷⁷Stanton, 1:165.

women absolutely helpless under the Government."⁷⁸ She focused solely on the need for women to receive the power of the vote.

Her address was divided into two main themes. The first theme discussed how the lack of the vote hurt women. The second theme appealed to natural rights principles. The two themes wove together to create her full argument for the right of suffrage.

The first principle of Stone's speech demonstrated the ills that women suffered because they had no position of power. Discussing the power of the legislators Stone stated:

They respect the wants of the voter, but they care nothing about the wants of those who do not have votes. So, when we asked for protection for wives beaten by their husbands, and that the husband should be made to give a portion of his earnings to support the minor children, again we had leave to withdraw.⁷⁹

Stone represented the inequality that was present in the law. A woman was expected to share all of her earnings to support the family; a man was not required to share any.

She compared the plight of women to that of Jefferson Davis. The worst punishment the government could inflict upon him was to take away the power of his vote. The only people not allowed to vote under Massachusetts state law at the time were "lunatics, idiots, felons, and people who could not read and write."⁸⁰ Stone wanted to where women were placed according to such laws. After the dedication and loyalty women had displayed throughout history to the government, women were still classified with the lowest parts of society.

The second theme Stone addressed concerned natural rights principles. She appealed to men to make the case of suffrage their own. Suffrage was a

⁷⁸Stanton, 4:192.

⁷⁹Stanton, 4:192.

⁸⁰Stanton, 4:192.

fundamental principle of government. Stone said: "The government was founded upon the principle that those who obey the laws should make them, and yet it shuts out a full half."⁸¹ The Government had to establish a fair and equal standard for all citizens, including women.

Stone was addressing a powerful audience. As was common with her style of speaking, she tried her best to establish a strong rapport with her audience. She hoped to receive their goodwill so they would act on the issues she discussed. Stone was a strong persuader, but the call for suffrage would be denied for several more years.

Lucy Stone was a modest woman. She embodied all of the opposite characteristics of what her opponents thought she would. According to Beth Waggenpack in American Orators Before 1900:

Her critics pictured as a large woman with a bellowing voice, swearing, and puffing on a cigar...Stone was short, nicely proportioned, gentle, kindly, sympathetic, and sweet voiced. She loved children, was a devoted wife and mother, and had great empathy for the oppressed.⁸²

Lucy Stone defied her critics by showing a woman could be both a wife, mother, and a public speaker. Stone was a pioneer in rights of women. She devoted herself to the cause full time before the majority of women even knew about the rights or lack of rights for women.

⁸¹Stanton, 4:193.

⁸²Duffy, p. 360.

Susan B. Anthony
'Failure is impossible'

Like Lucretia Coffin Mott, Susan B. Anthony was also a Quaker. As a Quaker, Anthony enjoyed many freedoms women of other religions did not. Anthony's father was a strong influence upon her. He advocated the abolition of slavery and "was often ahead of her (Anthony) in the path to social justice."⁸³ Her family supported her actions in the course of reform.

Susan B. Anthony was not originally involved in reform. She began her career as a teacher. During her time as a teacher, Anthony became dedicated to the notion of personal independence. By 1850, Anthony wanted to become involved in reform. She chose the cause of temperance.⁸⁴ From her work with temperance, she started to recognize the limitations placed upon women. She was trivialized by the male members of temperance societies. She became fed up with the treatment she received and formed the New York State Women's Temperance Society in 1852. The cause of women was becoming more important to Anthony.

She was converted to the Woman's Rights Movement by two major influences. The first occurred in 1850 when Anthony read an account of Lucy Stone's speech to the National Convention in Worcester.⁸⁵ That was the first event that brought her closer to "the cause." The second event occurred in 1851 when Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony met for the first time.

Anthony was immediately drawn to Cady Stanton and her ideas. Cady Stanton made Anthony recognize her own feelings about the rights of women. The two formed a powerful combination. They largely controlled the movement

⁸³Sherr, p. xix.

⁸⁴Dubois, p. 16.

⁸⁵Kerr, p. 61.

for the next forty years. Cady Stanton influenced Anthony to get involved in the Woman's Rights Movement. Each caused the other to work harder for change.

Anthony's conversion to a political reformer was complete. In the winter of 1853-1854, Anthony organized a campaign to petition for women's rights in New York. In those few months, Anthony was able to secure more than ten thousand signatures to send to the state legislature.⁸⁶ She was an excellent organizer; she had the ability that Cady Stanton did not to organize the movement.

A major part of Anthony's career was speaking. Susan B. Anthony traveled the entire country in support of suffrage for women. Lynn Sherr in her book jokingly referred to her "as the original frequent flier."⁸⁷ However, she pursued a relentless pace that took her everywhere to speak for women. She addressed conventions, state legislatures, churches, and Congress. She went wherever they would hear her.

Anthony was not recognized as a truly great speaker like some of her contemporaries. She learned to become a speaker because of the force of her convictions. She developed a strong style that relied on arguments from other sources and syllogistic reasoning. Some of her most famous speeches were "Suffrage and the Working Woman" and "Is it a Crime for a U.S. Citizen to Vote?" which is also known as "Constitutional Argument." Each speech demonstrated how devoted Anthony was to women and their equality.

The speech "Suffrage and the Working Woman" was delivered in several different forms from the late 1860's through the 1890's. This speech demanded equal opportunity for women in labor and the right of the vote.⁸⁸ The speech was organized to demonstrate her style of deductive reasoning.

⁸⁶Dubois, p. 18.

⁸⁷Sherr, p. 119.

⁸⁸DuBois, p. 139.

The speech began by asking if women were supported by men. If one agreed with that premise then Anthony should not have been able to find evidence that demonstrated that women were not supported by men. Anthony did find evidence of the falsity of the claim. She was able to cite thousands of women who worked for wages to support themselves. Anthony stated: "The society is wrong which looks on labor as being any more degrading to woman than to man."⁸⁹ She supported women having the same freedom to work as men did. She did not want women to feel ashamed if they earned their own living. She asserted that women needed to claim their rights in the working world.

Anthony remarked on the falseness of the theory that it was degrading for a woman to work. She declared:

The first result of this false theory is this: no woman is even educated to work. Sons are educated while daughters are allowed to grow up mere adornments, and when the hour of necessity comes, then comes cruelty in the extreme.⁹⁰

According to Anthony, when women were not trained to be a productive part of society early on in life, then when tragedy struck they were completely unable to deal with the changes. She advocated training for women so they would be able to compete with men. She argued that although women achieved the same competence as men in the workplace, they were still paid only half the wages.

The speech continued to discuss that women were not placed in charge of offices in businesses. Women were not given such offices not because they all lacked such abilities, but because they could not return a politician's favor by voting for him. Minds were being wasted solely because they were a female's.

⁸⁹DuBois, p. 141.

⁹⁰DuBois, p. 141.

The only way Anthony felt this wrong could be reconciled was through the vote.

Anthony remarked:

How will the ballot cure evil? You tell me the ballot is not going to alleviate this. I will tell you how the ballot is going to alleviate it. Never have the disenfranchised classes had equal chances with the enfranchised...No political party can hope for success and oppose the interests of the working class.⁹¹

The ballot gave power to change a government. Women denied the vote were denied the opportunity to change society for the better. Anthony told about women who went on strike for better wages. They lost because no one was accountable to the striking women. The women were not able to vote someone out of office who ignored their plight.

Anthony also discussed the issue of the Black man. It was evident that she was bitter that once Black men had received freedom the newly freed men ignored women who were also oppressed. She told of an experience that occurred when she was lecturing in Tennessee:

I thought it would be nice to ask the legislative body to attend my lecture. A gentleman asked the courtesy of the Legislature be extended to me, and that I might be allowed the use of the Legislative Hall...The question was put on a suspension of rules and was lost by a vote of 18 to 38.⁹²

The irony of the story was that the Black members of the Legislature voted against her using the hall. It demonstrated to Anthony that the freed Black men were unwilling to help women in their struggle to end oppression.

She concluded her speech by commenting that the situations of women and Blacks were not parallel cases. Women were loved by fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons. She was sure that a man would guard his own relative from being mistreated. Anthony stated; "But is every man as careful to guard another

⁹¹DuBois, p. 142

⁹²DuBois, p. 145

man's wife, daughter, mother, and sister?"⁹³ That was a potent argument in refuting that women were cared for by men. It was clear that not all men had the best interests in mind when it came to dealing with women. Even if there were women who were protected by men, there were still many more who were not protected.

In 1872, Susan B. Anthony decided to challenge the system by voting in the election. For voting, Anthony was arrested and indicted. Before the trial, the United States of America versus Susan B. Anthony, Anthony delivered her most famous speech "Is it a Crime for a U.S. Citizen to Vote?" Anthony delivered this speech over forty times before her trial. The impact that her speech created caused the prosecutor request and was granted a change on venue. However, Anthony was able to speak in the district the trial was changed to and still influence the people.

The speech had a tremendous affect upon the people. She gained so much sympathy through her speech that a change of venue was granted for the trial. She gained the sympathy of the people because she used logical reasoning and arguments in her speech. Every bit of evidence she used was from credible sources. She cited: The Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, great statesmen of the time and historical ones, and various court decisions. The speech itself addressed the audience as jurors and compels them to find in her favor. Her powerful delivery was so convincing that the judge instructed the jury to find her guilty without allowing them to deliberate. The judge fined Anthony one hundred dollars and did not jail her when she stated publicly that she would not pay the fine.

As a speaker, Anthony was very effective in using people's own words against them. She found the loopholes in arguments and demonstrated how

⁹³Dubois, p. 145.

unjust the system was. She stated that the United States “would ignore all law to help the slave and ignore it all to protect an enslaved woman.”

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