Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Campbell, Karlyn Kohrs.
Man cannot speak for her.
(Contributions in women's studies, ISSN 0147-104X; no. 102)
Bibliography: p.
Includes index.
Contents: v. 1. A critical study of early feminist rhetoric.—v. 2. Key texts of the early feminists.
1. Feminism—United States—History—Sources. 2. Speeches, addresses, etc., American—Women authors—History and Criticism. 3. Political oratory—United States—History. 4. Women's rights—United States—History. 5. Rhetoric—Political aspects—United States—History. 6. Rhetoric—Social aspects—United States—History. 7. Women orators—United States—History.
I. Title. II. Series.
HQ1154.C28 1989 305.4'2'0973 88-32825
ISBN 0-313-26668-9 (set)
ISBN 0-313-25649-7 (v. 1 : lib. bdg. : alk. paper)
ISBN 0-313-25650-0 (v. 2 : lib. bdg. : alk. paper)

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data is available.

A paperback edition of *Man Cannot Speak For Her: Volume II Key Texts of the Early Feminists* is available from Praeger Publishers; ISBN: 0-275-93267-2.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 88-32825
ISBN: 0-313-26668-9 (set)
ISBN: 0-313-25649-7 (v. 1)
ISBN: 0-313-25650-0 (v. 2)
ISSN: 0147-104X

First published in 1989

Greenwood Press, Inc.
88 Post Road West, Westport, Connecticut 06881

Printed in the United States of America

The paper used in this book complies with the Permanent Paper Standard issued by the National Information Standards Organization (Z39.48-1984).

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Introduction

This is the second volume of a two-part study of the rhetoric of early feminists. What follows attempts to survey very briefly the history of the woman's rights/woman suffrage movement and to outline the critical concepts developed at length in the first volume. Those who have volume I available may wish to skip immediately to the texts.

Social movements arise and develop through the interaction of many factors, but rhetoric is a key constituent. In rhetoric, activists define their ideology, urge their demands upon outsiders, refute their opposition, maintain the morale of stalwarts, struggle to enliven familiar arguments, and attempt to keep their concerns high on the political agenda.

This volume is a collection of works of the U.S. woman's rights/woman suffrage movement from its beginnings through 1920. Those items included are key works in the history of the movement that reflect its origins and growth and represent the diversity of issues and styles that characterized it. Each work is preceded by a headnote identifying the author(s) and describing the occasion on which it appeared. The works included were created by figures of national importance and reflect the concerns of the mainstream movement; I have omitted discourse from such

distinct but related efforts as those for birth control and improving the conditions of women workers. Each work is complete; each is annotated to identify individuals and to provide historical information likely to be unfamiliar to contemporary readers. Collectively, these works are a documentary history of what became the social movement for woman's rights/ woman suffrage.

More important, these are the movement's key rhetorical works. Through these works scholars can see the processes by which the movement came into existence, its ideology developed and conflicts arose, its arguments were laid out, evidence was marshaled and presented, opposing views were answered, obstacles were transcended, and appeals were adapted to varied audiences. In other words, these works form the core of the persuasive message of early feminism. They are the basis for describing the challenges women faced and for evaluating the resourcefulness with which women deployed the available means of persuasion to encompass and transcend the obstacles they confronted.

I refer to early activists as feminists only in the sense that they worked to improve the conditions of women. To themselves, they were woman's rights advocates or suffragists; in the United States, only their opponents called them "suffragettes." In Great Britain, by contrast, the radicals of the Women's Social and Political Union, led by Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst, adopted this epithet as their own.

Early woman's rights activists faced many rhetorical challenges, some of which were unique. Most fundamentally, they struggled for the right to use the power of rhetoric--for the right to act in the public sphere by speaking, organizing, publishing newspapers, and lobbying. Women justified their right to rhetorical activism on several grounds. A major source of their ideology was natural rights philosophy, a body of belief refined in the Enlightenment and summed up in the

American Declaration of Independence. At base, particularly as expressed in the Seneca Falls "Declaration of Sentiments," a reworking of the Declaration of Independence, woman's rights was a demand for personhood. That is, women wanted inclusion in the cultural values proclaiming that individuals had inalienable rights because they were persons, that it was government's function to protect those rights, and that to do so, government had to rest on the consent of the governed, expressed through the ballot. Natural rights affirmed the right of individuals to equality of opportunity, and it presupposed that the highest good was the full development of each person's rational faculties.

Women's earliest demand was for education, the key element in Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, published in England in 1792. Addressed to Talleyrand, a leader of the French Revolution, and responding to Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution* (1790) and to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile, ou l'Éducation* (1762), it was rationalistic both in content and style. Wollstonecraft presumed that humans were distinctively rational, and thus, creatures with souls. As rational creatures with souls, then, women were created not merely for the comfort and pleasure of men but to develop their understanding and, hence, their virtue. Following Plato, Wollstonecraft held that there was no morality without knowledge or virtue without understanding. Wollstonecraft made two great demands: for education to develop woman's understanding, and for a change in attitude proclaiming a woman's duty to be development of her reason rather than pursuit of beauty and pleasure. She argued that, in addition to increasing her virtue, woman's mental development would enable her to better educate her children, to perform her household duties more systematically, to discover that true pleasure is the reward of labor, and to care for herself if left without support. The book was influen-

tial; it was read by early movement leaders such as Lucretia Coffin Mott, and after the Civil War it was reprinted in the *Revolution*, published by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Parker Pillsbury, and Susan Anthony.

Because of dominant views of woman's nature, demands for educational opportunities were controversial even when linked to women's traditional roles. In 1819, for example, educational pioneer Emma Hart Willard proposed "A Plan for Improving Female Education" to the New York legislature, urging its members to provide funds to endow a school for young women. Conscious of controversy, she was careful to state that the education offered would be "as different from those appropriate to the other sex as the female character and duties are from the male" (Willard 1819, 2). Willard did not say that education was a woman's right as a rational being, only that it was preparation to enable her to perform her special *duties*. Willard linked the duties to patriotism: "And who knows how great and good a race of men may yet arise from the forming hand of mothers, enlightened by the bounty of that beloved country, to defend her liberties, to plan her future improvement, and to raise her to unparalleled glory?" (46). Although her case was cogently argued, and although she was careful to remain seated in order to avoid any hint that she was violating taboos against speaking publicly, the Legislature responded with praise and a charter, but no money (Lutz 1931, 28). Private donors finally endowed Troy Female Seminary, which opened its doors in 1821 and offered education on the secondary level to women for the first time; the movement leader Elizabeth Cady Stanton was one of its graduates.

Resistance to woman's rights, including education, arose out of the concept of True Womanhood or the cult of domesticity, which defined females as "other," as suited only to be wives and mothers. By 1850, distinct ideas about the natures of men and women had emerged. Man's nature was thought to be

violent, lustful, and competitive; his place was public sphere, encompassing all that involved the mechanical, political, and monetary. By contrast, woman's nature was defined as pure, pious, submissive, and domestic; her place was the private sphere of the home, a haven from amoral capitalism and dirty politics. As a "ministering angel," she tended the spiritual and emotional needs of husband and children. However, woman retained her purity and moral superiority only so long as she remained at home (Welter 1976, 21).

The concept of woman contained a contradiction that became apparent as pious women responded to the moral evils of prostitution, alcohol abuse, and slavery. Despite their supposed natural moral superiority, women were attacked for public efforts to eliminate these evils. Women who joined moral reform, temperance, and abolition societies and made speeches, held conventions, and published newspapers entered the public sphere; thereby, in the eyes of society, they lost their "womanliness" and their claim to purity. The woman's rights movement arose out of this contradiction.

The careers of early women reformers illustrate how woman's rights agitation emerged from other reform efforts. Abolitionists Maria W. Miller Stewart, Sojourner Truth, and Sarah and Angelina Grimké discovered that being a woman and speaking publicly were seen as mutually exclusive. A woman who spoke violated her nature. Maria W. Miller Stewart, for example, acknowledged that by speaking publicly to men and women, she had made herself "a hissing and a reproach." A major source of criticism was the clergy, who used the Bible, particularly the epistles of Paul, to argue that pure and pious women should remain silent.

Despite theological resistance to women's public reform activities, Protestantism was an important source of woman's rights ideology. The core of Protestantism is the notion that

worshipers need no one to intercede for them with God; they can read and interpret the Scriptures for themselves. Instead of a limited priesthood, there is a priesthood of all believers. That notion is consistent with the individualism implicit in natural rights philosophy, and women used it to justify their right to speak on moral questions and to challenge scriptural interpretations that reduced woman's sphere of activities.

The struggle for the right to speak was hindered by biological misinformation, which was used to buttress arguments for excluding woman from higher education and political activity. On average, women were smaller then men. It was assumed that they also had smaller brains, brains presumably too small to sustain the rational deliberation required in politics and business. Moreover, their smaller, and, presumably more delicate and excitable nerves, it was held, could not tolerate the pressures of public debate or the marketplace. Menarche, the onset of menstruation, was viewed as a physical cataclysm that rendered women unfit for normal activity. Harvard medical professor Dr. Edward Clarke (1873) argued against higher education for women on the grounds that the blood needed to sustain development of the ovaries and womb would be diverted to the brain, which he believed was a major cause of serious illness in women.

In a rare deviation from individualistic principles, opponents sometimes argued that women should be excluded from public life on the grounds that the family rather than the individual was the fundamental unit of society. The family was to be represented in public by the husband, while the wife confined herself to domestic concerns. Women responded that, according to natural rights theory, no one could be represented by another without her consent, and they pointed to the laws that oppressed married women as evidence of how poorly husbands had represented the interests of their wives.

Problems created by the need to justify their right to speak were compounded by the powerlessness of their female listeners. Women speakers faced the dual challenge of empowering women and of appealing to males, who held virtually all political and economic power. In responding to the contradictory demands involved in appearing womanly while speaking, advocates sometimes used a "feminine" style that mirrored the experiences of women. Women learned the arts of housewifery and child-rearing from other women in supervised internships that combined expert advice with trial and error. In the same way, women speakers relied on personal experience coupled with examples to recreate the processes by which they had arrived at conclusions; they invited women in the audience to collaborate in making arguments and to test claims against their knowledge. In this type of rhetorical style, the speaker adopted a personal tone, audience members were treated as peers, with an emphasis on identification, and arguments unfolded inductively. Such a style had the advantage of making the speaker appear conventionally feminine; it appealed to women in audiences even as it encouraged them to participate actively in reaching conclusions instead of accepting claims passively.

Woman's rights activism was constrained by the legal reality. In New York in 1848, at the time of the first woman's rights convention at Seneca Falls, a married woman had no right to retain her own earnings, to control her children, to make a contract, to bring a lawsuit, or to make a will. She owned only what she inherited or received as a gift, but she could not bequeath her property, and if it was sold, the proceeds belonged to her husband. Her husband had absolute control of their children; in the rare case of divorce, they belonged to him, no matter how unfit he might be and regardless of fault. He might will them to another guardian, along with the entirety of the estate amassed in marriage. If a husband died without leaving a will, the

law was ruthless. The survivor received a "widow's portion," at best, one-third of the estate. The remainder reverted to trustees, if there were children, or to the state, if there were none.

In the period prior to the Civil War, these oppressive laws were the major target of woman's rights activities. The laws were attacked at their conventions, which called public attention to the vulnerabilities of wives. Through exercise of the power to petition, women gained hearings from state legislatures and struggled to appeal to males, sometimes by arguing that improving the lot of wives and mothers would greatly increase their ability to perform their traditional duties, sometimes by arguing from natural rights principles. The legal changes that some states enacted were not due solely to the efforts of woman's rights activists. Rapid industrialization, for example, created pressure for legal reforms that would ease commercial transactions. However, most states made no such changes, and the temperance movement that caught fire after 1874 was fueled by the problems of married women who were legally and economically at the mercy of their drunkard husbands.

From its earliest beginnings, there were conflicts between those who saw woman's rights as a struggle for a broad array of causes leading to woman's emancipation and those whose chief concern was woman suffrage, illustrated by the debate at the national woman's rights convention of 1860. These ideological differences were exacerbated by events following the Civil War.

When war came in 1861, women ceased their agitation to devote themselves to ending slavery and supporting the Union effort. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony headed a drive to gather signatures on petitions in support of what became the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution abolishing slavery. The U.S. Sanitary Commission was organized to provide for the

"comfort, security, and health of the Army." Dorothea Dix, prison reformer and advocate for the insane, became Superintendent of Nurses. Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, the first U.S. woman physician, helped recruit and train nurses. Clara Barton, who would later establish the American Red Cross, and Mary Ann "Mother" Bickerdyke went directly to the battlefields, bringing supplies and nursing the wounded. The Sanitary Commission established and ran hospitals and convalescent homes, inspected army camps and medical facilities, provided clothing, bandages, medicine, and extra food, all of which were inadequately supplied to the poorly provisioned Army. To carry on this work, some 7,000 branches of the Sanitary Commission raised some fifty million dollars and managed its disbursement.

Women believed that their Republican and abolitionist allies would reward their efforts with enfranchisement. Instead, a Fourteenth Amendment was proposed that, for the first time, inserted the word "male" into the U.S. Constitution, a change that would require passage of a constitutional amendment to effect woman suffrage. Women felt deeply betrayed when their former allies abandoned them, deferring woman's enfranchisement on the grounds that it was "the Negro's hour." The issue was political expediency. Suffrage for freedmen was controversial; suffrage for women was even more controversial. Republicans desired the political power they would gain from the votes of newly enfranchised Afro-American men in Southern and border states. They feared that if suffrage for freedmen were linked to woman suffrage, both would fail. The Fourteenth Amendment was ratified in 1868; the Fifteenth Amendment, prohibiting denial or abridgement of the right of citizens to vote, based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude, was ratified in 1870, without the inclusion of "sex."

Republicans and abolitionists saw their fears confirmed by the 1867 vote in Kansas on the first state referenda proposing enfran-

chisement for freedmen and for women. Both referenda failed, but the margin of defeat for woman suffrage was larger. These defeats were particularly noteworthy, given Kansas's special anti-slavery history and the campaigning of such renowned suffragists as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Lucy Stone. These advocates linked abolitionist appeals and natural rights principles to woman suffrage, but their persuasive impact was minimized when national and local Republican newspapers refused to support woman suffrage efforts and suppressed coverage of suffragists' speeches.

Frustration and anger led Anthony and Cady Stanton to make a momentous decision. During the Kansas campaign, they met southern dandy George Francis Train, a pro-slavery Democrat who campaigned for woman suffrage and against votes for Afro-American men. He offered them money to publish their own newspaper, the *Revolution*, and their former abolitionist allies in the woman's rights effort saw their acceptance as betrayal.

As a result, in 1869 the movement split. Cady Stanton, Anthony, and their supporters formed the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA), an all-woman organization with a broad and somewhat radical agenda. In response, Lucy Stone, Henry Blackwell, Julia Ward Howe, and others formed the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), a more conservative group that devoted itself exclusively to woman suffrage. The NWSA retained its commitment to universal suffrage--rejecting the logic behind the Fourteenth Amendment and "the Negro's hour." The AWSA accepted that logic. The NWSA, located in New York City, believed the route to suffrage was a federal amendment; the AWSA, located in Boston, concentrated on achieving suffrage state by state. When in 1870 the AWSA began publishing the *Woman's Journal*, the more radical journal, the *Revolution*, was driven out of business. Until their merger as the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) in 1890, these

two groups would divide efforts for woman's advancement.

However, the activists did not surrender meekly in the face of defeats on the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. Based on arguments developed by attorney Francis Minor, spouse of Virginia Minor, president of the Missouri Woman Suffrage Association, women claimed their right to the ballot based on the definition of citizenship in the Fourteenth Amendment: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside." Women claimed the ballot as a privilege of citizenship and argued that state laws prohibiting women from voting violated the amendment's provisions. To test their case, they attempted to register and vote in the 1872 election. When they were refused, as happened in most instances, they sued.

Susan B. Anthony persuaded registrars to accept her vote by promising to pay all court costs and fines if legal action were taken against them, but she was arrested and indicted under a law designed to prevent former supporters of the Confederacy from voting. In response, because she could not defend herself in court or testify on her own behalf, she began a speaking tour that took her to every postal district in the county in which her trial was to be held (Anthony 1874). She was so effective in making her case that the prosecutor requested and was granted a change of venue to the next county, but with the help of Matilda Joslyn Gage, her case was made to potential jurors in every postal district there as well. She was defeated when the judge, specially appointed for this trial, directed a verdict of guilty and fined her only one hundred dollars, a sum she publicly refused to pay.

When the argument that women had the votes was tested before the Supreme Court in *Minor v. Happersett* in 1875, the Court declared that the right to vote was not

entailed in citizenship. In discussing that case, Carrie Chapman Catt, who led the final campaign for passage and ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, wrote:

> To get the word "male" in effect out of the Constitution cost the women of the country 52 years of pauseless campaign thereafter. During that time they were forced to conduct 56 campaigns of referenda to male voters; 480 campaigns to get Legislatures to submit suffrage amendments to voters; 47 campaigns to get State Constitutional Conventions to write woman suffrage into State Constitutions; 277 campaigns to get state party platforms to include woman suffrage planks; 30 campaigns to get presidential party conventions to adopt woman suffrage planks in party platforms; and 19 campaigns with 19 successive Congresses. . . . It was a continuous, seemingly endless, chain of activity. (Walker 1951, 229)

The failures reflected in those statistics came because suffrage remained unpopular with a majority of men and women.

For the most part, men and women espoused the tenets of true womanhood and viewed the efforts of reformers with displeasure. True women were unselfish, devoting themselves to others; women activists were selfishly working for themselves, and although nearly all were married with many children, they were attacked as sour old maids who wanted to wear the pants and consign men to the kitchen and the nursery. As long as women relied primarily on natural rights arguments in defense of their cause, resistance remained high. However, from the beginning, there was a second line of argument, an argument based on benefits or expediency, that became more prominent after 1880 and made woman suffrage popular by making

it more acceptable to conservative women and men. The woman who effected this change was Frances E. Willard, president of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) from 1879 to 1898 (Bordin 1980, 1986).

The argument from expediency or benefits treated woman suffrage as a means to good ends rather than a natural right. Willard called woman suffrage "home protection," the means by which women would protect themselves and their loved ones from the ravages of King Alcohol. The expediency argument presupposed that women as wives and mothers were essentially different from men--purer, more spiritual, concerned for others, and naturally domestic. These distinctive qualities meant that women would use their votes to purify politics (some called this "public housekeeping") and to protect wives and children. Most particularly, their votes would close the saloon and eliminate the brothels frequently housed above them. From this perspective, women were not moving into the public sphere, they were simply claiming as theirs what was necessary to protect the home and family. Obviously, arguments based on the benefits of women's enfranchisement contradicted arguments based on natural rights, a conflict that would become bitter in the 1920s in the struggle over an equal rights amendment.

During Frances Willard's tenure as president, the WCTU grew to be the largest women's organization in the United States, with 250,000 adult members and branches in every state and territory, all cities, and most local communities. This was in contrast to an estimated membership of 13,000 in the combined NAWSA in 1890. The WCTU was popular as an all-female organization in which women did not compete with men, as an organization that promoted goals approved by the Protestant clergy, and as an association committed to traditional values and traditional gender roles. The contradictions embedded in Willard's arguments exacerbated differences between Afro-American and white women acti-

vists. As segregation became law in the 1890s and lynchings of Afro-American men accused of raping white women became epidemic, Willard decried the lawlessness and violence, but she accepted the rape charges as true. Her straddling of the issue prompted Ida B. Wells, an Afro-American journalist, to attack Willard in the press.

Willard's stand on lynching exemplified the racism that pervaded much of the early women's movement. At the outset, the strong links to abolitionism created identification between women and Afro-Americans. Freed slave Sojourner Truth, for instance, spoke in support of the abolition of slavery and for woman's rights. In her *Appeal to Christian Women of the Southern States* (1836), Angelina Grimké called on the white women of the South to work against slavery because of its terrible effects on both slave and free women. The Grimké sisters, along with Lucretia Coffin Mott, were noteworthy as abolitionists who worked for full integration of Afro-Americans.

With passage of the Fourteenth Amendment, many suffragists, including Cady Stanton and Anthony, in frustration and anger, made highly racist statements that attacked Afro-Americans as well as recent immigrants (Davis 1981). As the movement focused on passage of a federal suffrage amendment, its racism increased. In their efforts not to alienate Southerners, needed for passage and ratification, suffragists rejected the appeals of Afro-American women for support against segregation and asked Afro-Americans not to appear at conventions or to march in parades. Although some, such as Ida B. Wells and Mary Church Terrell, were active in promoting woman suffrage, Afro-American experience with the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments made them recognize that suffrage was no panacea. Afro-Americans supported the woman's ballot but directed most of their efforts to fighting against the evils of lynch law and segregation. They struggled to make the concerns of Afro-American women part of the larger effort for woman's rights.

Afro-American women led the fight against lynching, guided by Ida B. Wells. Sponsored by Afro-American women's clubs, she spoke, beginning in New York City in 1892, to reveal the facts she had uncovered in her investigation. Wells used facts gathered by the *Chicago Tribune* to show that only a tiny percentage of those lynched were even accused of rape; she used the statements of Southern white newspapers to demonstrate that the true motives were prevention of the growth of Afro-American economic and political power. The defense of white womanhood was merely an excuse, and the soundness of her analysis was reaffirmed in the 1930s by the all-white Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching (ASWPL), headed by Jessie Daniel Ames (Hall 1978, 1979).

Like Wells, Mary Church Terrell combined support of rights for women with support of rights for all Afro-Americans. She made a career of speaking and organizing against segregation, lynching, the sharecropping and tenant system that reduced Afro-Americans to peonage, and the convict lease system. In her speeches, she reviewed Afro-American women's incredible progress since slavery and attempted to reach out to white women for their help and support. Although she articulated and publicized Afro-American women's problems, and asked white women for their support, little was forthcoming.

The period from 1890 to 1915 has been called the "doldrums" of the movement because suffragists made little progress. Their arguments had become familiar, and they struggled to rejuvenate their appeals. During this period the great leaders of the early period died (Lucy Stone in 1893; Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1902; Susan B. Anthony in 1906), and anti-suffrage organizations reached their greatest strength between 1896 and 1907 (Camhi 1973). Woman suffrage advocates were compelled to respond to opposition claims, for example, that suffrage would lead to child neglect and divorce and that because women

could not fight they should not vote. Only when the Progressive movement began to flourish, particularly in the West, did the tide against woman suffrage turn.

Ultimately, women gained suffrage through their own varied exertions, aided by the climate created during World War I. Suffrage came because of long-term endeavors to persuade ordinary citizens of its rightness, epitomized by the speaking tours of the Rev. Dr. Anna Howard Shaw. Suffrage came because women organized to maximize the pressure on Congress to pass a federal amendment, symbolized by the administrative genius of Carrie Chapman Catt. Finally, suffrage came because militant agitation, exemplified by the work of Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party (NWP), put that issue at the top of the political agenda.

Anna Howard Shaw began her work for woman's rights in 1881 as a lecturer for the Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Association. In 1887 she became a paid speaker for the AWSA and continued in that role for the NAWSA until her death in 1919. During the last forty years of her life, Shaw spoke in every state, delivering hundreds of speeches each year, often speaking eight times a day. The NAWSA's own history claimed that Shaw won more people to woman suffrage than any other advocate (Catt and Shuler 1923, 268-269).

Like many others, Shaw based her arguments on the three key sources of suffragist ideology: natural rights, the Judeo-Christian tradition, and evolutionary progress. As a public advocate, Shaw had to be a skilled entertainer as well as a forceful persuader, and her speeches are full of fascinating stories and humorous anecdotes. For instance, in her 1913 presidential address, she responded to the notion that women were too emotional to vote:

> I had heard so much about our emotionalism that I went to the last Democratic national convention . . . to observe the calm repose of the male politicians. I saw some men take a picture of one gentleman whom they wanted elected . . . they were followed by hundreds of other men screaming and yelling, shouting and singing the "Houn' Dawg.". . . I saw men jump upon the seats and throw their hats in the air and shout. . . . No hysteria about it--just patriotic loyalty, splendid manly devotion to principle. And so they went on and on until 5 o'clock in the morning--the whole night long. . . . I have been to many women's conventions in my day but I never saw a woman leap on a chair and take off her bonnet and toss it up in the air and shout. . . . I never heard a body of women whooping and yelling for five minutes when somebody's name was mentioned in the convention. But we are willing to admit that we are emotional. I have actually seen women stand up and wave their handkerchiefs. I have even seen them take hold of hands and sing, "Blest be the tie that binds." (HWS 5:371)

Shaw's speeches made the idea of woman suffrage less threatening to ordinary male voters and their wives.

However, persuasive individuals were not enough. The movement needed skilled leadership, which it found in Carrie Chapman Catt, NAWSA president from 1900 to 1904 and from 1915 to 1920. In 1916 she announced her "Winning Plan" to trusted lieutenants and swore them to secrecy to prevent arousing the opposition. Her plan was based on a hard-nosed assessment of what was possible, and it combined precinct-level organization, state-by-state efforts, and lobbying Congress for passage of a federal amendment. Catt was deeply influenced by ideas of evolutionary

progress drawn from Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer. She believed that because self-government was right, its spread was inevitable, and she believed that because opposition to woman's rights was irrational, based on ignorance and prejudice, it would be overcome.

During the doldrums of the movement, politicians ignored suffrage because their constituents seemed not to support it. In 1912, Alice Paul organized what became the National Woman's Party (NWP) to demonstrate how strongly women wanted the vote and to demand that a federal amendment be passed immediately. She brought to the suffrage movement a belief in the value of militant agitation that she had learned in England working with radical "suffragettes" Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst. She and her cohorts organized parades, picketed the White House and Congress, and burned a paper effigy of President Wilson as well as copies of his speeches. These tactics demonstrated women's intense desire for the ballot; they captured and held the attention of the public, the President, and the Congress; and they highlighted the contrast between the democratic principles for which the war was being fought and the nation's treatment of women. They also provoked harsh reprisals; more than 300 women were arrested, detained, tried, and imprisoned during the second Wilson administration. However, because no legal basis for the arrests existed (Flexner 1959, 287), and because imprisoned women, demanding to be treated as political prisoners, refused to eat and were brutally force-fed, their actions generated considerable public attention and sympathy.

Ultimately, women's varied efforts succeeded. President Wilson addressed Congress to urge passage, and, after a number of delays, occasioned by defeats in the Senate, on May 21, 1919, the House re-passed the amendment, this time followed by Senate passage on June 4. The ratification campaign

quickly followed, facilitated by the exceptional organizing of the NAWSA. The Nineteenth Amendment was ratified on August 26, and all U.S. women were eligible to vote in the 1920 election.

Tragically, suffrage turned out to be only a minor victory. Most women did not vote; those who voted did not vote as a bloc and so had little political leverage. As the Depression eroded most of the gains women had made in higher education and the professions, women learned how little they had gained through the ballot. Women's legal and economic oppression continued, and the second, modern movement became inevitable.

Although earlier activists worked for the advancement of women, the first group to claim "feminism" as a label was the National Woman's Party. A 1927 editorial in *Equal Rights* affirmed: "Feminism is the only word in the language that precisely describes the purpose of our own organism" (Nelson 1976, 245). In this respect as in others, the NWP is a direct link between the early and the contemporary women's movements. In 1923, on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Seneca Falls convention, the NWP introduced an equal rights amendment in Congress, an amendment regularly reintroduced until its passage in 1972. In 1985, the amendment failed ratification, but efforts to obtain its passage continue.

One of the most visionary members of the NWP was Crystal Eastman, a lawyer and socialist. She argued against the NWP's focus on passage of an equal rights amendment and for a broad feminist agenda. In a lecture delivered in 1920 after women had won the vote, she set forth basic goals:

> What is the problem of women's freedom? It seems to me to be this: how to arrange the world so that women can be human beings, with a chance to exercise their infinitely varied gifts in infinitely varied ways, instead of being destined by

> the accident of their sex to one field of activity--housework and child-raising. And second, if and when they choose housework and child-raising, to have that occupation recognized by the world as work, requiring a definite economic reward and not merely entitling the performer to be dependent on some man. (1920, 24)

The aims she described continue to challenge contemporary feminists.

The works collected in this volume are offered in order to make a significant body of U.S. women's rhetoric available to scholars, and to challenge those who explore rhetorical literature to incorporate our mothers as well as our fathers into their studies.

Man Cannot Speak for Her